

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

Vol. XXI.

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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 Vol. XX., page 177.)

SAUL has given up the vain search for the asses of his father, and now proposes to his servant to return home. But this one, like a true servant, seems to have a knowledge far beyond that of the favored son of Kish. He informs Saul that the prophet Samuel is in that place, and advises that, instead of human energy or hopelessness, they should go and inquire of him. Saul evidently has had no thoughts of turning to God in this matter, and apparently no knowledge of His prophet, and now can only suggest, as human righteousness is ever prone to suggest, that some price is needed if they are to get aught from God's hand. How like the natural man this is! He must bring his present to God if he is to receive anything from Him, and He knows nothing of that liberal Giver whose delight it is to give freely to those who have nothing with which to buy.

The confession of poverty on the part of Saul makes possible the servant's offer of the fourth part of a shekel of silver, which reminds us of that half-shekel of the atonement money which every child of Israel had to pay. Thus, whatever may have been

the thought in the mind of the servant, or whether the price was ever actually handed to the prophet, there is a partial suggestion here, at least, that all approach to God, all learning of His mind, must be on the basis of atonement.

An explanation is next introduced showing the use of the terms "seer" and "prophet." In former times it was the custom to speak of the man of God as a "seer,"—one who sees the future, or that which is not visible to the eyes of sense. In other words, the people were more occupied with the result of the prophet's ministry than with its Source. The later word "prophet" suggests the Source from which he received all his inspiration, which then flowed forth from him. This explanation in itself is in keeping with all the circumstances at which we have arrived, both in Saul himself (who surely was not troubled about his relation with God, or how the man of God would gain his information, but rather with the benefit which he might receive from this divine insight) and in the nation at large, of which he was the fitting representative.

So Saul and his servant approach the city where the man of God was. What momentous changes are to occur within those walls! Inquiring their way, they find the object of their search. Everything here, no doubt, is suggestive. They are obliged to ascend to the city. A moral elevation must be reached if they are to enter in any measure into the revelations that are about to be given. Everything of God is on a plane far above the thoughts of the natural man. They are guided by the young maidens who were coming forth to draw water from the well.

This is a familiar scene in every oriental city, and frequently referred to in Scriptur . The well with its water is a figure of that Word, which is drawn out of the wells of salvation. The maidens would remind us of that weakness, lowliness and dependence which alone can draw from these wells of salvation. The future king is directed to the man of God by these feeble instruments, which reminds us that God delights to use the weak things. It was a little captive Hebrew maid who told her mistress of the prophet in Israel, by whom Naaman, the great Syrian general, could be cleansed of his leprosy. Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, sends forth her maidens with the message of invitation to the feast which she has spread. Feebleness which is getting its refreshment and strength from the word of God can point the mightiest to that which alone can give guidance or peace.

It is very suggestive, too, that it is upon the occasion of a public feast and sacrifice that Israel's future king meets the prophet. This falls in with what we have already said as to the atonement money. The basis upon which God's mind can be known, and in connection with which the anointing oil is to be poured upon the king, must be that of sacrifice.

In passing, it is well to notice that the disordered state of the nation is manifest here. There is a "high place" where the sacrificial feast is spread. This was in direct contradiction to the will of God as expressed in the book of Deuteronomy, which provides that it was to be only in the place where Jehovah put His name that sacrifices were to be offered and feasts celebrated. But the glory of the God of Israel had departed from Shiloh, where He had

placed His name at the beginning, and the ark was abiding in "the field of the woods." There was no recognized centre. Israel might be mourning after the Lord, but the time was not yet ripe for the pointing out of the true centre of gathering for His people; nor was Shiloh to be thought of, because that, once forsaken, was never again to be recognized as the central abode of the glory of Jehovah.

Thus the high place was, we might say, a sort of necessity brought in by the failure and disordered condition of the people at large. We will find, also, that it was frequently used in this way. There was one at Gibeon, where King Solomon, later on, had a revelation from God. Thus they were not necessarily connected with idolatry. As a matter of fact, they were at the beginning devoted to the true worship of God, and to a certain extent were places where He Himself in grace recognized the need and met with His people, though not according to the due order which He Himself had provided. Later on, however, when He had established His centre, placed His name at Jerusalem, and the temple of His glory was there, the worship of the high places was in direct disobedience of His will, and necessarily, therefore, became more and more connected with the idolatry to which the people were ever prone.

Thus, in the history of the faithful kings, we find that these high places were destroyed and their idolatrous worship abolished in some cases; in others, that in spite of all the manifold efforts to do away with them, they still remained, apparently not for idolatry, but for independent worship of God.

There is food for suggestive thought here. There

can be no question that God meets individual faith wherever it truly turns to Him; but He has provided in His Word and by His Spirit for a true Centre of gathering for His people, a corporate recognition of Christ Himself and His name as all-sufficient, of the word of God as the absolute guide, and the ever-present Spirit as the competent One to control, order and direct in worship, testimony, ministry, discipline, and whatever other functions there may be, of His people. To ignore this divinely provided Centre, and to turn to human thoughts, to select places and modes of worship which are not provided for in the word of God, is really to worship in the high places. There is no question that very much of this is done in all sincerity, and God, as we were saying, meets His people in grace according to the measure of their faith. But can we wonder that when the truth of the unity of the Church of Christ, the sufficiency of His name and Word, are known, to go on in independency and self-will is but to prepare the way for wide declension from God and eventually to lead to that dishonor to God which in Christianity corresponds with the material idolatry of which we have been speaking in the history of Israel?

Returning to the feast and sacrifice of which we were speaking, everything has almost a patriarchal simplicity about it. The prophet is, as we might say, another Abraham, living in a later age. The people will not eat of their feast until he comes and bestows his blessing, which at least would indicate their sense of dependence upon God and their desire to receive the blessing which His servant would bestow. The invited guests who share with the prophet in his feast were those, evidently, whose position in the

city qualified them for the enjoyment of this honor.

Having received the directions, then, as to meeting the prophet, Saul and his servant go on and find Samuel just going up to the high place. Everything has evidently been ordered of God, even to the appointed moment at which the meeting should take place. There is no waiting on the part either of the prophet or of him who was seeking him.

Moreover, Samuel is not surprised at this meeting, for the day before, the Lord had forewarned him as to all that is to take place—the visit of the man of the tribe of Benjamin, whom it was His will to anoint over His people Israel, and who should be the one to lead them in victory against their oppressors, the Philistines. At this first mention of the object for which the king was to be anointed it is very suggestive and pathetic to remember that Saul never really won great victories over these very enemies against whom he was appointed to lead the people. The nation was more or less in bondage to the Philistines during his entire reign, and he met his end in the final battle at Mount Gilboa with these very people. Into this we shall look further as we go on; but we can see thus at a glance how ineffectual is all human adaptation to the end designed by God. He had harkened to the cry of His people and looked upon them in their need, for which He provided according to their thoughts and desires, rather than according to His own knowledge of what would really deliver them.

Not only has the prophet thus been forewarned of the visit of Saul, but, as he now meets him, he is assured by the Lord that this is the man of whom He spoke. "Thus there is no possibility of mistake, and

unerringly is the prophet's hand guided to pour the oil upon the appointed head. We can well conceive the surprise of Saul, as he approaches the prophet with his question, to find that both he and his errand, and all else, are well known to the man of God. He is invited to join with Samuel in the feast, and promised on the morrow that he shall be sent on home after all that is in his heart has been made known to him. His mind is set at rest as to the asses for which he had vainly searched, and he is furthermore told of his father's anxiety at his prolonged absence.

We can well understand how this evidence of divine knowledge on the part of the prophet would solemnize the heart of Saul, and make him realize that he was having to do, not with man, but with the living God. This would prepare the way for the next word that Samuel has to say—the desire of Israel is toward him and his father's house; that is, as Saul well understood it, the people wished just such a man as himself for king. This does not necessarily mean that they had their eye upon him individually, but that he was the kind of man who would answer to the desire which they had already expressed.

We have in what is next, an apparent humility on the part of Saul, which if it had gone more deeply would doubtless have been more permanent. He declares that he is a Benjamite, belonging to the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and his family one of the least in that small tribe. He was doubtless familiar with the history of the tribe, and how it came to be reduced to such small proportions, because of the judgment inflicted upon it for the awful sin of Gibeah, and the shielding of those evil-doers. Had the tribe been properly exercised by this fearful

chastisement, it would, as a whole, have been brought into a place of true humility before God, and have been prepared for exaltation. There is no indication, however, that there was any genuine self-judgment on the part of the tribe as a whole or any individuals in it, and their humility was rather compulsory than spontaneous.

This, it is evident, was also the case with Saul, from his subsequent history. He might speak in depreciation of his family and of his tribe, but as a matter of fact there is no evidence that there was the genuine judgment of self in the presence of God. It is one thing to have low thoughts of one's self as compared with one's fellows, but quite a different thing to take one's true place in the presence of divine holiness. The flesh knows how to be humble under stress of circumstances, but it knows nothing of that which judges its very existence, and compels it to be absolutely prostrate before God.

(To be continued.)

THE POWER OF THE CROSS.

"We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

"**S**WING shut the city gates; run and tell the sentinels to stand guard and let no one pass in or out till we have made away with these preachers of other gods."

It was in the walled city of some twenty thousand inhabitants in the kingdom of Hyderabad, within twenty miles of its capital, as we were on a gospel preaching tour, the first ever made through the kingdom of the Nizam, years ago.

We had been traveling since early morning preaching in all the towns and villages on our way, and arrived before the gates of the city during the heat of the day, and camped outside of its walls.

About 3 p. m. my four native assistants went into the city to offer Scriptures and tracts for sale, I promising to join them when the heat should be a little less.

Just after entering the gate, I met my native assistants returning, with a hooting rabble following them. Speaking to them in the Tamil language, not understood by those people, they told me that it was not safe to attempt to do any work within the city. They had sold a few Gospels and tracts to both Mohammedans and Hindus.

Some of the Gospels were bound in yellowish buff bookbinder's muslin. The Mohammedans sent messengers running through the streets saying that they were bound in hog skin, and warning the faithful not to touch them. The Brahmans sent messengers to tell the Hindus that they were bound in calf skin, and skin of the sacred cow, and telling them not to be polluted by them. They had not only prevented the people from buying, but had incited the rabble to drive the preachers out of the city.

"Have you preached to the people?" said I, "Have you proclaimed the gospel message?"

"No; we have only sold a few books and tracts."

"Then we must do so now. I, at least, must go to the market-place and preach. You need not accompany me unless you think it best."

"We will go with you," said they.

The rabble had halted and quieted as they heard the foreigner talking in a strange tongue, waiting to

see what would come of it. We walked with slow and firm step up the street to the market. The crowd followed, increasing by the way. Seeing a foreigner boldly walking up the street, the Brahman and Mohammedan zealots joined the throng.

We reached the centre of the town where the main streets crossed, and where was the market-place, with a roof supported upon large masonry pillars. Stepping up the steps, I said in Tamil to my assistants, "Place your backs against these pillars, so that no one can attack you from behind, and keep a sharp watch on all, but show no signs of fear. The Master is with us; His promise is good."

As we stood there we could see three of the four city gates open, with the armed gate keepers sitting under the arch of the gateway. Turning, I spoke politely to the people in Telegu, which was understood by all.

"Leave this place at once," was the angry response.

"Friends," said I, "I have come from far to tell you some good news. I will tell that to you, and then will immediately go."

"No," said some, who were evidently leaders, "we will not hear you."

We had seen the angry mob tearing up the cobble paving-stones and gathering them in the skirts of their garments to stone us with.

"We have no desire to abuse your gods," said I, "but have come to deliver a message."

Then came the order, "Swing shut the gates; make away with these preachers of other gods."

I saw one nudge another, saying, "You throw the first stone and I will throw the second." But all who had stones to throw were in my vision, and

they quailed a little under my keen glance, and hesitated. I seemed to feel the presence of the Lord as though He were standing by my side with His hand on my shoulder, saying, "I am with you. I will tell you what to say." I was not conscious of any anxiety about my personal safety. My whole soul was wrapped in the thought, "How shall I get God's offer of salvation before these people?"

"Brothers," said I, "it is not to revile your gods that I have come this long way; far from it. I have come to you with a royal message from a King far higher than your Nizam; I have come to tell a story sweeter than mortal ear has ever heard. But it is evident that this multitude does not wish to hear it." They thought that I was weakening, and quieted down to see what was going to happen.

"But," said I, "I see five men before me who do wish to hear my story. Will you all please step back a little? I will tell these five who want to know why I have come here and what is my message, and then you may stone me. I will make no resistance then." I had been carefully scanning the crowd and had selected my men, for I had seen five honest countenances who had shown no sympathy with the abuse that had been heaped upon us.

"Brother with the red-bordered turban," said I, addressing a venerable Brahman who stood among the people at the right, "You would like to hear what my wonderful story is before they stone me, would you not? Be frank and say so, for there are four others like you who wish to hear."

"I would like to hear what your story is," said he, speaking up courageously and kindly.

"Brother with the gold-bordered turban at my

left, you, too, would like to hear,—and you with the yellow turban,—and you with the brown-bordered,—and you with the pink."

I had rightly judged those men, for each assented. They were curious to know what I had to say.

"Now will you five men please come forward, and I will tell you alone. All you others step back; step back; as soon as I have told these five the story, you may come forward and throw your stones."

The five came forward; the rest reluctantly stepped back a little. I had purposely chosen Brahmans, as I thought I could win them the better.

"Brothers," said I, in a subdued tone, "what is it you chant as you go to the river for your daily ablutions? Is it not this?

*'Papoham, papakarmahan, papatma, papa samhavanu,
Trahi mam, Krupaya Deva, Sharana gata vatsala,'"*

said I, chanting it in Sanskrit; "and is not this its meaning?" said I in Telegu:

"I am a sinner, my actions are sinful. My soul is sinful. All that pertains to me is polluted with sin. Do Thou, O God, that hast mercy on those who seek Thy refuge, do Thou take away my sin."

These five Brahmans at once became my friends. One who correctly chants their Vedas and their mantras they always look up to with respect.

"Now, do you know how God can do what you ask? How He can take away the burden of our sin, and give us relief?"

"We do not know. Would that we knew."

"I know; I have learned the secret. Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, tell us."

The multitude seeing the Brahmans conversing with the foreigner with evident respect, quieted still more and pressed forward to listen.

"Step back! step back!" said I, "it is only these five to whom I am to tell my story. If the rest of you listen it is on your own responsibility. Step back! and let me tell these five alone." This only increased their desire to hear, as I went on:

"Brothers, is it possible for us by our own acts to expiate our sins? Can we, by painful journeys to the holiest of all your holy places, change those sinful natures that you bemoan? Does not your own Telegu poet, Vemana, say:

'The Muslim who to Thrupati goes on pilgrimage,
Does not thereby become a saint of Styia's house.
Becomes a dog a Hun when he bathes in Ganges' stream?
Benares turns not harlot into pure and trusted wife.'"

Hearing their own language chanted, the people pressed forward still more intently.

"Nay, brothers, it is not by these outward acts, even to the utmost austerity, that we can attain to harmony with God. Does not your beloved Vemana again say:

'Tis not by roaming deserts wild, nor gazing at the sky;
'Tis not by bathing in the stream, nor pilgrimage to shrine;
But thine own heart must thou make pure, and then, and then alone,
Shalt thou see Him no eye hath kenned, that thou behold thy King.'

"Now, how can your hearts be made pure so that we may see God? I have learned the secret; I will tell it you."

Then I told the Story of stories; the story of redeeming love. Gradually and imperceptibly I had raised my voice until, as I spoke in the clear resonant Telegu, all down those three streets the multitudes could hear, and as I told them of His rejection by those He had come to save, and told them that it was for them, too, far away here in India, that He had suffered this agony on the cross, down many a cheek of those who had been clamoring for my life I saw

tears coursing and dropping upon the pavements that they had torn up to stone us with. Far earlier in the story I had seen them stealthily dropping their armful of stones into the gutter, and press back to listen.

How they listened as I went on to tell them further of the love of God in Christ !

"Now," said I, folding my arms and standing before them, "I have finished my story. You may stone me now. I will make no resistance."

"No, no," said they, "We don't want to stone you now. We did not know whose messenger you were, nor what you had come to tell us. Do those books tell more about this wonderful Redeemer?"

"Yes," said I, "this is the history of His life on earth—His death, His resurrection and glory."

With this their wallets were produced, and they purchased all we had of the Gospel of Luke. They purchased all the Gospels and tracts we had with us, and appointed a deputation of their best men to escort us to our camp.

Verily, the story of the Cross has not lost its power. Preach it, brother, anywhere, everywhere.—Preach it in the regions beyond and in your own homes, with a tongue of fire and a heart burning with the mighty, melting love of God.

(From a Missionary's Diary.)

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

THE book of Psalms is a storehouse of every kind of experience through which the child of God will likely pass. They are written in poetic form, which would suggest that our experiences, so far from being a hindrance to worship, form really

the occasion, if not much of the material, for our worship. Very many read these Psalms unintelligently, from an Old Testament, rather than a New Testament point of view. While such persons have many genuine experiences answering to those recorded there, they lack in that intelligence which a full establishment in the grace of God, as revealed in the New Testament, would give. The remedy for this is, first of all to be clear in the gospel; and secondly, to have an intelligent apprehension of the mold in which these Psalms are cast. Both of these, thank God, are not only possible, but easy for every believer in the Lord Jesus.

We wish to give a little outline of the book of Psalms as a whole, which may serve to help in the detailed study of its various points. For it is a complete book. It is a great mistake to think of its being merely a collection of psalms, without a definite relation one to the other. They are divided, as is well known, into five books, which would suggest a resemblance to the five books of Moses, and these five books are themselves formed by groups of psalms closely associated together and developing distinct and progressive lines of truth.

Book I. (Psa. i.-xli.)

The theme here is Christ, as indeed it is throughout the entire book. But He is seen here according to the counsels and purposes of God as the Son through whom every blessing is secured for His people. Answering, as it does, to the book of Genesis, there is a wideness of reach in this book which is perhaps not found in any other division of the Psalms. It is divided into three main parts.

1. (Psa. i.-viii.) This is rather introductory, but in it there is a progress. We have Christ as the perfect Man in the first psalm; as God's appointed King over Zion in the second; and in the eighth He is seen as Son of Man with dominion over all creation, all things put beneath His feet. The intervening psalms are occupied with the varied experiences of His people, primarily, of course, Israel, who are in faith associated with the Lord.

2. (Psa. ix.-xv.) The relation of the remnant to their oppressors, both in the nation and from the outside, is the theme of these psalms. Here the ninth and tenth are specially noteworthy as presenting the power of the enemy, really the Antichrist, and the oppressor associated with him.

3. (Psa. xvi.-xli.) This portion is particularly devoted to our blessed Lord Himself, very many of these psalms referring to Him exclusively, and others giving the experiences of His people in association with Himself. We can only select a few for special mention.

Psa. xvi. is our Lord seen in His perfect life upon earth.

In Psa. xviii. we have Him, the Victor, with dominion over all nations.

Psa. xxii. presents Him as the Sin-offering, forsaken of God on the cross for sin, and in resurrection proclaiming His name to His brethren.

Psa. xxiii. is familiar to every Christian heart.

Psa. xxiv. shows us Christ's coming in glory, taking possession of that which is His own.

Psa. xxvii. is a beautiful experience of faith in Christ, while

Psa. xxxii. shows the way of forgiveness.

Psa. xxxvii. it is well to read when tempted to envy those who are prosperous. Psa. lxxiii.—figures just reversed—has a similar theme, though there the eye is not upon the wicked so much as upon the sanctuary, as is appropriate to its place in the third or sanctuary book of Psalms.

Psa. xl. presents our Lord as the Burnt-offering in His devotedness unto death.

Book II. (Psa. xlii.—lxxii.)

The helpless and hopeless condition of the people remedied by Christ alone.

The first two psalms give the theme, their helpless longing for God's deliverance.

Their persecution is seen in Psa. xliv., while

Psa. xlv. presents in all His glory, the One through whom deliverance comes.

Psa. xlv. is the blessed result, of peace and protection, while

Psa. xlvii. leads on to music and dancing.

Psa. li. is the great penitential psalm, the confession of blood-guiltiness on the part of the people, really in their rejection of Christ.

Psa. lxv. suggests Christ amongst His people, while

Psa. lxviii. brings in fullest blessing in connection with Him acknowledged in His true place.

Psa. lxix. presents Him to us in His sufferings as the Trespass-offering, restoring that which He took not away, while

Psa. lxxii. closes the book with the full results of redemption for His earthly people restored to their land, blessing, peace, order and righteousness maintained to the ends of the earth.

Book III. (Psa. lxxiii.—lxxxix.)

As we have already said, this is the third or Levi-

tical book in which the sanctuary of God and His holiness, and the holiness of His ways are the prominent themes.

Psa. lxxiii. and lxxiv. would show this.

Psa. lxxviii. is very interesting as showing God's ways of holiness in the history of Israel.

Psa. lxxxiv. is familiar and interesting as showing the way to God's house. It is very suggestive that a number of these psalms are for the sons of Korah, spared sons of the rebellious Levite who was judged in the wilderness.

Book IV. (Psa. xc.-cvi.)

Answering to its place as a wilderness book, the general theme of this portion is the trials of the way and God's sustaining mercy in them, and blessing in the land brought in through Christ.

Psa. xc. and xci. give the general theme. In xc. we have the first man and the vanity of his life; in xci., the Second Man, and the blessedness of confidence in God.

From Psa. xciii-c. we have a beautiful group of psalms of praise connected with Jehovah's Kingdom and His coming in judgment. This worship extends to all creation.

Psa. cii. is noteworthy, linking together, as it does, psa. xc. and xci. in the expression of our Lord's sufferings and God's response to Him. He is seen as "crucified through weakness," realizing that as Man He is cut off in the midst of His days, and yet Jehovah's response to Him is addressing Him as the eternal One whose days shall never fail.

Fittingly associated with this, is the 103rd psalm, full of blessing and worship, a worship which extends into the 104th, which is occupied with the

recounting of God's goodness and mercy over all His works.

The two closing psalms of the book are again engaged with a recapitulation of Israel's history with this suggestive difference:

Psa. cv. is their history, with God's mercy as the prominent theme.

Psa. cvi. is the same history with their own failures brought distinctly into view. Thus will it be with the history of our lives; mercy and goodness at the hand of the Lord, and so far as our actions are concerned, feebleness and failure, and yet He comes in to succor.

Book V. (Psa. cvii.-cl.)

The two previous psalms paved the way for the closing Deuteronomic book, which, answering to its position, is a recapitulation and application of divine principles which have been learned in the previous books.

Psa. cvii. gives these.

Psa. cix. gives us a view of the Lord's suffering at the hand of man rather than at the hand of God. The result, therefore, is seen in judgment upon His enemies.

In Psa. cx. we have the exact opposite of this, God's response to the humiliation of His Son. He sets Him at His own right hand in glory, giving Him an eternal Priesthood.

Psa. cxviii. is another Messianic one, in which we see Christ as the Stone rejected by the builders, now become the Head-stone of the corner.

Psalm cxix. is a beautiful illustration of the absolute perfection of the inspired word of God. It is entirely devoted to extolling the preciousness of that

Word. Every verse, practically, mentions the Scriptures in some form,—the law, the testimonies, the ways, the precepts, the statutes and judgments of God. The whole alphabet, as we might say, is exhausted in telling out the wonders of God's holy Word. The fact that eight verses are given to each letter would suggest that it is in new creation alone that the beauties of the word of God can be fully entered into.

Immediately following, Psa. cxx.—cxxxiv., we have the songs of degrees which include, in progressive order, steps of progress in the knowledge of God's ways and of access to Himself.

As we draw near the close of the book, praise is still further quickened, until from Psa. cxlvi. to the end, "halleluiah" begins and closes each psalm, the last one calling upon all creation and every power and activity of man to unite in His praises:

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

A FEW THINGS, WHICH THE EYE OF FAITH SEES IN CHRIST.

(Translated from the German.)

IN the Christ of **promise** is presented to me the blessed purpose of God, to glorify Himself in the person of a man, apart from sin and the fall of Adam, the purpose of God to triumph over the ungodliness of man and to save him in spite of himself.

In the Christ **becoming flesh** I see for the first time a truly holy man upon earth, a man without sin, in whom God found full delight and satisfaction for His

heart, and a man whose delight it was on His part to do the will of God, and that even unto death. "Truly this was the Son of God."

In the **crucified** Christ I see God glorified in a place where He had been dishonored, and I see the weakness of God triumph over the power of Satan as well as the full judgment of sin brought to an end once for all. The measure of man's iniquity is full, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

In the Christ **laid in the grave** I perceive the great accomplishment of the eternal counsels of God, in that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth, to take the terror from the grave, and to conquer him who had the power of death, and to deliver us from all fear of death.

In the **risen** Christ I see the whole power of the enemy vanquished, and Satan's greatest victory turned into his greatest defeat. At the same time I am assured of the believer's justification, reconciliation, and eternal salvation.

In the **glorified** Christ I have God's answer to the sacrificial death of His Son, for the exaltation of the **man** Christ Jesus into heavenly glory declares to the whole universe, angels and men, what God thinks of the work of His beloved Son.

In the Christ **crowned at the right hand of God** I see the proof that the work, which He accomplished, is finished once for all, and that absolutely nothing can be added to it in the least, because it is a perfect work, that is eternally valid.

In the Christ, **who shall soon come** to take His own with Him, I have the realization of the blessed hope of the believer, the fulfilment of the counsels and

purposes of God in Christ from all eternity and of His exceeding great and precious promises.

In the Christ, who shall be revealed in glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, I see the fulfilment of His promises in relation to the Kingdom of God upon earth, and the blessing of the whole creation, of the responsible and irresponsible creatures both of angels and men, as well as of the whole creation, which shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, when He shall appear in glory. Then shall commence the morning without clouds.

In the Christ, who in the end delivers up everything to His God and Father, I see the glorious accomplishment of the unchangeable and unsearchable counsels of God, of His revealed and hidden plans and purposes, while righteousness and eternal bliss shall be found for man there where God has found His eternal rest.

HAPPY THE MAN WHO IS ON THE SIDE OF CHRIST.

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE begin our study for the year with that wondrous first book of all Scripture, Genesis. Familiar as we are with it in many ways, each further perusal seems to unfold to us depths which we have not fathomed, and to invite to a fuller examination of that which can only yield "things new and old."

Genesis is not a dispensational book in the ordinary sense of the word. It is in one sense beyond all dispensation, reaching back to the very sources of creation, and forward, in type, to the final consummation of blessing for this earth.

The first two chapters stand alone, solemnly separated from all the remainder of the book—we might truly say,

from all the rest of Scripture—by the awful fall which is narrated in the third chapter. To man unfallen, or, we might indeed say, to the whole creation prior to the fall, but two chapters of Scripture are given. How significant this is as showing that all revelation must be on the basis of redemption! All God's ways for time and eternity must also rest upon that eternal foundation. Thus, in the very meagreness of what we have prior to the fall there is a suggestion that redemption is no after-thought with God; that, to manifest Himself, He not only foreknew the need of redemption, but it was in a certain sense an essential element of that revelation. The creature cannot possibly stand alone. He must have a link with his Creator other than mere dependence. The entire book, then, is divided into these two portions:

1. (Chaps. i. and ii.) The original creation of the heavens and the earth; formation of this world for man's abode; the creation of man, and his authority over all the works of God.

2. (Chaps. iii.—i.) Man's fall and separation from God, and the divine provisions of grace typically brought in.

The first division, though brief, as we have seen, is pregnant with meaning. As has been beautifully brought out, the seven days of creation are typical also of the stages of the new creation, both in the individual soul and dispensationally.

The first verse is usually, and probably correctly, explained as describing that original creation of all matter apart entirely from the seven days which were devoted to the preparation of the earth for the habitation of man. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Between this verse and what follows is sufficient room for all the myriads of years claimed by geology for the successive periods recorded in the rocks. Typically, it is very suggestive that such a break should come between the first verses and the remainder. God originally created man upright, but ruin has come in; and just as

the earth was without form, and void, ere God began to prepare it for man's abode, so too man was without life, and in utter darkness toward God, ere the work of new creation was introduced.

Very briefly, we will mention each day's work, with its personal and dispensational meaning:

FIRST DAY. The creation of light, answering to new birth in the individual and to the age before the Flood, when the light of God's promise of the woman's Seed, and blessing through Him, was all that man had.

SECOND DAY. The firmament, individually corresponding to the separation between the two natures—that which is born from above, and that which is beneath. The waters above are sweet and fertilizing. Those beneath are but the bitter waters of death. In every newborn soul these two natures exist—"that which is born of the flesh," and "that which is born of the Spirit."

Dispensationally, this answers to the period of government under Noah and his successors till the time of Abraham, when a power above man was recognized as that which distinguished between righteousness and unrighteousness, and which inflicted the penalty upon the rebellious.

THIRD DAY. The appearance of the dry land. This answers in the individual to the emergence of that stability of character connected with the new creation. His life is to become a scene for fruitfulness for God. Thus, on the same day the earth brings forth every form of plant life. Fruitfulness to God is the thought suggested. Dispensationally, it represents the Jewish age when the nation was called out of the surrounding Gentile impiety to be a witness for God and to bring forth fruit for Him upon the earth. Such a nation was Israel, the only earthly people God ever had, who should have brought forth plants of righteousness for His glory.

FOURTH DAY. The establishment of lights in the heavens. Light had existed from the first day. Its

source is now seen and fully manifested. So, the sources of the divine life are developed as being in the person of Christ risen and glorified, who becomes the light of His people, and their rule.

Dispensationally, this corresponds to the present period of grace, characterized by a glorified Christ who has taken His seat upon the throne of God to illumine His people's path, and who, in authority over all things, will one day manifest His power. The moon by its reflected light would suggest that lustre which can only be reflected in the Church as it is occupied with a glorified Christ.

FIFTH DAY. The waters productive. This answers to the fruitfulness of all our experience in this life. The very exercises connected with learning the bitterness of the flesh, the trials through which we pass, all are used by the Spirit of God to produce in us that which shall be for Himself. We would be losers in eternity did we not have the experiences of this present time of tribulation.

Dispensationally, this answers to the period of distinctive tribulation in the world's history immediately after the removal of the Church to glory. This is called in the book of the Revelation "the great tribulation," and out of it will come peaceable fruits of righteousness for Israel and the nations upon the earth.

THE SIXTH DAY shows us the creation of man, with his wife, who are placed in headship over all the works of God's hands. Here the individual and the dispensational blend together. It is association with a glorified Christ as His companion throughout the Millennium and eternity, suggesting that twofold union of His Church with Himself in complete supremacy over all things; and, in a secondary sense, Israel, the earthly bride, sharing in His dominion over this world.

THE SEVENTH DAY leaves nothing but the rest of God, in which God will be "all in all," and where in new creation He can rest eternally satisfied with that redemption

work which will be perfectly exhibited "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Chap. ii. is the history of Eden, in which thoughts of responsibility and divine care are prominent. Man is put into the garden to dress and keep it, is given authority over everything, and has associated with Him Eve, the wife. Here, too, we have a foreshadowing of what is ever in God's thoughts, the marriage of His beloved Son. Thus, at the very entrance into His revelation we are brought face to face with that which shall be fully consummated only in glory.

As has been already said, the second division of the book (chaps. iii.-i.) narrates the fall, and God's remedy, which is embodied in the sevenfold development of the life of God in the soul. Genesis is not the book of redemption, which is the theme of Exodus, but has to do with the origin and springs of life in the soul. In a very striking way, too, it will be found that the various stages in the divine life, as developed in the history of the patriarchs, correspond to the manifestation of life as we have seen it in the six days of creation.

Adam is here the first, as Scripture says, the "figure of Him who was to come," "the last Adam," our Lord Jesus. He is the head of the fallen race, and typically the head too of the redeemed family. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

In the second subdivision (chaps. iv. and v.) we have the two classes of descendants from Adam—that which is according to the flesh, and that which is according to the Spirit.

The third subdivision (chaps. vi.-xi.) shows the destruction of the Old World, God's judgment upon the flesh, and, typically, the new life in the power of resurrection after the Flood. Of course, we know that this was only in type, that the heart of man was unchanged; so we find the close of this period in the tower of Babel, with its pride and resulting confusion and separation.

The fourth subdivision (chaps. xii.—xxi.) is devoted to the history of Abraham, the calling out of one in separation from all that was about him. What is emphasized in his history is the life of faith and its resultant walk. Most helpful and profitable lessons are to be gathered here. What is emphasized is, that God is to be trusted in spite of whatever obstacle there may seem to be. Thus, Abraham receives the promises when all hope from nature had gone. A solemn contrast to the liberty and power and joy of this confidence in God is seen in Lot, who, though a child of God and a righteous man, was linked with evil because he had not energy of faith to rise above the sordid things of earth.

In the fifth subdivision (chaps. xxii.—xxvi.) Isaac is prominently before us. He is a well-known type of Christ Himself, God with man; and in his surrender to his father's will we have beautifully suggested that obedience unto death which marked our blessed Lord. Purposes also of God, concerning the glory of Christ, are suggested in the fact that Isaac is heir of all that Abraham possesses.

Chap. xxiv. is familiar as unfolding in type the seeking of a heavenly bride by the Spirit of God, who is beautifully typified in Abraham's servant.

The sixth subdivision (chaps. xxvi.—xxxvii.). The life of Jacob is gone into with great detail. Here we have, not so much a type of Christ as of Israel as a nation, and the old nature in the believer. Jacob is the object of God's sovereign grace, and has sufficient faith to prize the blessings which are despised by his carnally-minded brother Esau; but throughout we see the restlessness of natural energy, resorting to expedients and deceptions which bring with them needed chastening from God. His entire life is therefore a discipline, in which he learns the lesson, slowly and reluctantly, of "no confidence in the flesh." It is beautiful to see him at the close, leaning at last upon his staff, as he worships God. This is the true

effect of all discipline—to bring us to a condition of absolute dependence upon Him, which makes worship possible.

In the last subdivision (chaps. xxxvii.—l.) we have, in striking contrast to this, the life of Joseph, where he is so constantly a type that we lose sight almost of his personal character. In Jacob discipline is prominent. In Joseph the type is before us. Personally he seems to have been a man of genuine faith and true godliness of walk. He is a type as the object of his father's love and of his brethren's envy even as our blessed Lord was. Sent on an errand of love to them, he is disowned and sold into Egypt, as the Lord Jesus was rejected and delivered over to the Gentiles. He finds a prison there, as our blessed Lord found the cross and the grave. He is lifted up out of the prison and placed upon the throne, as Christ our Lord was raised up from the dead and exalted over all things. After his exaltation, during the stress of famine which comes upon the earth, answering to "the great tribulation" and straitened times of the last days, Joseph in his glory is made known to his brethren, even as Christ will be made known to Israel according to the flesh; and as his brethren were compelled to judge their sin and confess it,—very significantly, through Judah, who answers to the *Jewish* nation as contrasted with the whole twelve tribes,—so, in the latter days, the godly remnant of the Jews will give up everything for Christ, and at the very moment of greatest darkness and distress the Lord Himself will be made known to them. The Jesus whom they rejected will be seen to be the Ruler upon the throne of God, and all things in His power. Thus, restoration will be accomplished, and Israel will be brought into blessing.

This cursory glance will show us what fulness there is in this wondrous book. May its study at this time be productive of fresh instruction and blessing for our souls!

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 8.)

SAUL is introduced, now, into the company of those who had been invited to the feast, and is given, in anticipation, the kingly place at the head of the table over all the invited guests. There is also set before him, at the command of the prophet, the special portion which had been reserved for the guest of honor; might we not say, Benjamin's portion for the leader of Benjamin's tribe? The shoulder was that part of the sacrifice of the peace offering which was eaten by the offerers. It was originally, as we see from the tenth of Leviticus, a part of the priest's portion, for himself and his family. Thus, Saul was admitted to the privileges of the priestly household: a very suggestive thought for one who needed priestly nearness if he were rightly to carry out the responsibilities which were suggested in the fact that the shoulder was set before him.

The sacrifice, as we well know, speaks of Christ as the One who, having made atonement for us, and who in His death was the Object of God's delight, is also the Food for His people's strength. In the peace offering there is a portion for the priest, for

God, and for the offerer. Thus, the thought of communion, and the strength which flows from communion is the prominent one. The shoulder reminds us of Him of whom the prophet says: "The government shall be upon His shoulder." He only has strength to bear the responsibilities of rule, who first of all laid down His life in submission to the will of God and for the salvation of His people. Never will government be what it should be until this great fact is recognized and until the true King, who is also the true Priest and the true Sacrifice, takes up the burden upon His shoulders. But, in this sacrificial feast, we have at least an indication that is suggestive. If there is to be true qualification for government, it must be as one has assimilated the mind of Christ and has received from Him that strength for service which He alone can give.

Saul remains with Samuel that day, and when about to take his departure, early on the following day, is called by the prophet at daybreak—the beginning of a new day for Israel and for Saul—to the housetop, alone in isolation and elevation above all his surroundings. The prophet then accompanies him outside the city, and, the servant being sent on ahead, Samuel declares to him the purpose of God. The holy anointing oil is poured upon his head, and he receives the kiss of the prophet's benediction, perhaps in acknowledgement too of his allegiance to him. He is assured that the Lord has anointed him to be prince over His inheritance. This anointing with oil was a figure, of course, not only of the divine designation for a specific service, but of the qualification which accompanied that. The oil, as symbol of the Holy Spirit, would suggest

the only power in which it was possible for him to carry out the responsibilities of that place into which he had now been inducted by the prophet speaking for God.

He is now ready to be sent away, but is told of three signs that will meet him that day and which will at once confirm him in the realization of the truth of all that has been done, and at the same time, no doubt, give suggestions as to his future path of service. These signs are not explained, which would suggest that Saul knew, at least, to whom he could turn for explanation, the Lord Himself. It was also to be supposed that one who realized that he was now having to do with God, would be suitably exercised by any such manifestations as are spoken of here.

The first sign was to be that, after leaving Samuel, he would find by Rachel's sepulchre at the border of Benjamin, two men who would announce to him the finding of the asses and that his father's anxiety had been transferred from their loss to the prolonged absence of his son. Rachel's tomb was a type of Israel according to the flesh, and in a special sense, perhaps, of the tribe of Benjamin, the last son at whose birth his mother, Rachel, breathed her last. All these things would appeal to Saul in an especial way. It would seem to emphasize for him the fact that if he were to be a true Benjamite, "the son of the right hand," he must enter into the fact that death must pass upon all the excellence of nature. It is by Rachel's sepulchre, at the grave of the old man, in refusal of all the excellence of mere nature, that faith is to learn its first lesson. If there is to be true service for God, it must be on the basis of

the refusal of self. Here Saul was to learn that the asses were found; and, at the grave of self, one learns all the futility of his past activities. His father now yearns for him, which might well remind Saul that if he is at the grave of all that nature might count great, he is still the object of love; if a human love, how much more also of that love of God which finds its perfect display in the Cross which sets man aside, and there too, the channel for its unrestrained outflow toward us!

The next sign would emphasize the privileges of fellowship on the basis of redemption and worship. He passes on to the "Oak of Tabor." Rachel's sepulchre, as we have seen, speaks of the rejection and refusal of nature. Where one's natural strength is recognized as weakness, he is qualified to know whence true strength comes. Thus, the sepulchre is changed for the oak, which suggests might—the might of a new "purpose," as Tabor means. There he meets three men who are going up to Bethel, "the house of God," the place of communion and of divine sovereignty. They carry with them their offering, three kids, which reminds us of the sin-offering; and three loaves of bread, which speak of the person of Christ, communion; and a bottle of wine, of the precious blood of Christ and of the joy that flows from a knowledge of redemption through that blood. They would ask of his welfare. He would thus already receive at their hands the salutation which was now his kingly prerogative, and from them also he would receive the loaves of bread, which speak, as we have said, of Christ as the food for His people. Fitting reminder for a king—"royal dainties" truly.

Passing on further, he comes to the hill of God, and finds there not only the manifestation of divine presence, but the evidence of the enemy, too. There are outposts of the Philistines in the very place where God would manifest Himself. What a two-fold suggestion to a newly made king that his work was to be, on the one hand, in the sanctuary of God's presence, and on the other, in facing the enemy who had intruded themselves there!

Here he would meet a company of prophets, men under the power of the Spirit of God and controlled by His Word; and, as he mingled with these, he too was to be changed from the man which he was, to come under the sway of that mighty, divine energy which controlled them. As we know from many Old Testament examples, it was, alas, possible for a person to come outwardly under the power of the Spirit, and even to be used as was Balaam to be the messenger of God's word, without any saving interest in His grace. There was this in this sign which was to meet Saul, and yet subsequent history shows that he was only an outward participant in this manifestation of divine power.

The prophets were not merely speaking under the power of God, but were accompanied by psaltery and harp; that is, there was the spirit of praise as well as of prophecy. In God's presence there is fullness of joy, and He dwelleth amidst the praises of His people. Thus worship should ever be an accompaniment of prophecy. Elisha, when called upon to ask counsel of God, called for a minstrel, in order that, as it were, his spirit might be fully attuned to the praise of God. We read also of prophesying with harps, where the spirit of praise gives the needed in-

struction to mind and heart. This would be a reminder to Saul that mere knowledge, even of a divine character, was never to be separated from that priestly worship and joy which cannot be simulated, but flow from a heart that is well acquainted with the grace of God, which alone can empower for true service and testimony.

Samuel had even told him that as he prophesied he would receive another heart. That is, there would be a change which would suggest permanency, while at the same time it left things open to the will of Saul himself. Surely, all that was to occur to him on that day, the testimony of the judging of the flesh at Rachel's sepulchre, of the sufficiency of Christ's atoning work and the presence of God in the second sign, and of the power of the Holy Spirit in the work of the prophets, would all tend to powerfully work upon heart and mind and conscience, so that if there were indeed life toward God, he would find here a complete revolution of his entire past.

The prophet then leaves him, as it were, to God. When all these signs came to pass, he could act under the guidance of God, for God was with him. At the same time, Samuel warns him to go on down to Gilgal and there to await his coming, where burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were to be offered up to God. He was to tarry there seven days, everything in complete abeyance, waiting for the coming of the prophet. This is most important in connection with what subsequently took place. Thus we see Saul, on the one hand, set free to act as God guided; and on the other, checked, and reminded that his place is at Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, of the refusal of all the excellence and glory of na-

ture, of which the Israelite was reminded by that place.

How everything, in this whole history of the man after the flesh, emphasizes the fact that nothing of nature can glory before God. How everthing was designed, as it were, to call Saul to judge and to refuse himself, in order that having no confidence in himself, he might be spared the terrible experiences and fall which marked his later history. It would seem as though God Himself were laboring to impress all these things upon the mind of the future king, and to spare him, so far as divine mercy could intervene, from the pride and self-righteousness which were the occasion of his final downfall and overthrow. May we not learn well these familiar lessons for our own souls, and have impressed more deeply upon us, as we grow more familiar with these facts, the necessity of having "no confidence in the flesh"?

All takes place as Samuel had predicted, and Saul seems fully to come under the control of the prophetic Spirit; but those who remembered what he was, asked, as if in mockery, as they repeated the question in later years, under different circumstances: "Is Saul also amongst the prophets?" He had evidently not been characterized, up to that time, by any fear of God or faith in Him. It was a matter of astonishment that he should thus take his place with them. Alas, we know that it was but temporary. His uncle meets him, too, with questions as to where he had been and what Samuel had told him, but here, in some Nazarite way, Saul keeps his counsel as to all that had been told him about the kingdom, and reserves for his uncle simply that which was ex-

ternal and which he had a right to know. This is good so far as it goes, and was an indication of that spirit of reserve which, to a certain extent, characterized him in after years and which was, to that extent, a safeguard against feebleness.

(To be continued.)

NOAH'S ARK.

(Gen. vi.)

A GOSPEL ADDRESS.

THIS chapter gives us the climax of man's history under the first administration of time, and covers a period of over 1600 years. This was the age that God tried and tested man in the light of conscience. From the fall in Eden to the Flood we read of no law, no government, but man left to the dictates of his conscience. Many people to-day say that conscience alone is their guide, and that it is good enough to walk by. The anarchist who clamors for no government can learn a solemn lesson from this chapter, because we see that man left to his own conscience became an utter wreck; so much so, that God had to sweep the earth with a deluge. The moral state of man is given in the fifth verse: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

What makes this chapter so interesting and solemn is that the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that what transpired before the Flood shall happen again before He returns to set up His Millennial government. The

flood of waters in Gen. 6 is but a faint type, or shadow, of the woes and tribulations described in Revelation, chapters vi. to xix.

In ver. 2 we see God's sons, the professing people, uniting themselves with the daughters of men—a union of godly and ungodly, a corruption, by mixture of what was professedly God's people with the wicked world, the result of which is disastrous, and which, if we cared to see, can be noticed to-day in the union of the Church and the world. God's testimony by this is corrupted, and it will end in judgment.

Note God's patience for 120 years. They could righteously have been destroyed at once, but God loves to save, so waits, warns, strives by His Spirit, and by Noah's preaching for 120 years, with these antediluvians. Judgment, the Scripture tells us, is God's *strange work*; His heart finds no delight in it; He loves to save; and only when men will not accept salvation does He destroy.

Note that before the Flood we get giants and mighty men of renown (ver. 4). Great as they were in the eyes of men, they were not great enough to escape the Deluge, and so to-day man is fast becoming a giant in many lines,—learning, inventions, etc.,—and making many gigantic strides. But what about the spiritual state of these men? Read the 5th and 11th verses: "Evil continually," and filling the earth with violence. They used their brute strength to gain their ends, regardless of right or wrong; and such are the actings of the world to-day, as illustrated in selfish greed and injustice.

Fair as the world might seem to its people, yet God had doomed it; and so God's judgment hangs

over this scene, as Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world." One of these days that judgment will be put into execution. (See 1 Thess. v. 3; also, 2 Pet. iii. 3-7.) It will take the world by surprise.

Before God's awful judgment falls, He in His love provides a way of escape and salvation. That is blessedly true now. Judgment will come, but God has a way of salvation. He has provided a Saviour for a lost world (John iii. 16), blessed be His name, and this salvation and Saviour is what we have pre-figured in Noah's ark.

Let us look at this wonderful figure, or type, of Christ.

It was God Himself who planned the ark. *He knew what was needed*—knew the awful storm the ark must weather, and He, the great Architect, planned a seaworthy refuge. The Lord Jesus Christ alone, God's beloved Son, is God's plan to save. All human plans and devices perished in the Flood; that will be the history of every soul who does not rest on God's Rock of salvation. Your thoughts and plans, nice as they may appear, are *deceptive* and *unsafe*. Have you God's planned salvation? or are you leaning on some human invention?

God said, "Make thee an ark." Just one ark—not two, nor six, but one. Only one way of escape! One way for all—rich and poor, high and low, young and old—only one. Jesus said, "I am the way." The only way, He meant. Men often say there are many ways and gates to heaven, and they pick ways to suit their own foolish hearts; but Jesus is the only way. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Soul, hast thou Christ?

The ark was to be made of a certain tree—not every kind of timber would do; it must be a wood that would be safe and seaworthy; one which was flawless, and which would not leak. The gopher wood, we are told, was the finest wood the world possessed, and that time did not bring decay upon it; it was almost incorruptible. What wondrous grace on God's part to provide so safe a refuge! So God has provided His own beloved Son, the spotless, perfect and holy Man, Christ Jesus, to save a ruined world. He was the sinless One, over whom God could open the heavens and say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God never did or could do that over any other man. It is this One who saves, and is love's provision for a ruined race.

But ere the ark can be made, the gopher tree must be cut down; it must die, ere Noah can escape death in the flood. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). So ere we could escape death and judgment Christ must suffer the death and judgment due to us; our penalty must be paid by Him. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Christ is the corn of wheat, and had He not died and suffered He alone would have entered heaven; we could not go there. It is His death and His blood alone which saves. Some people take Christ as a pattern, sample, and ideal; but the soul needs the blood.

Pitch is the life of the tree. And now we see that to make the ark trebly safe God ordered it to be pitched within and without with pitch. In Ex. xii. 13 we see the blood of the paschal lamb was a token to the sheltered Israelites, and also a sign for God

Himself: "And the blood shall be to you for a token; and when I (God) see the blood, I will pass over you." God's eye rested on the blood, and He was satisfied. Surely the soul that rested beneath it should have been satisfied also. How many Christians doubt their safety and salvation simply because they do not value the blood according to God's estimate! See what provision there was—pitch outside, blemishless gopher wood in the centre, and then pitch inside! They were as safe as God could make them—as *every true believer now is*. The ark never leaked. God's provision was perfect, and He was their pilot also. Christ "is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him."

The next detail is the way of access to the ark. "And the door thou shalt set in the side thereof." Only one door. All who will, must enter thereby. The Son of Man is not come to call the righteous, but *sinners*, to repentance. One class alone are saved—lost sinners. Can you come as such? You must, or perish. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If you will come as a lost but trusting sinner, Jesus will save you. Jesus says, "Come unto Me." Come as you are. Wait not to improve yourself, because you never can do that. A dying thief was not rejected, and you He will not cast out.

Inside, the ark was fitted up, the 14th verse tells us, with rooms, or nests. (See better translation in margin.) A nest is where a bird finds rest from all its toil. The Lord Jesus offers rest to all who trust in Him. He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor (for salvation), and I will give you rest." He did the work on the cross, and you are asked to rest on

that finished work. He never said, Come to Me, and I will give you some work to do, and if you do it well and faithfully you shall be saved. No! He offers rest—salvation first, and then work becomes the fruit, not the price, of salvation. It is a gift, not something God will sell. No price, however great, can buy it.

The ark had three floors—lower, second, and third stories (ver. 16). This may be used to describe God's family. John's epistle tells us that in God's family there are three classes—little children, young men, and fathers; showing the various stages of growth in the Christian life. All dear to God; not one dearer than another. Some more intelligent than others, but all redeemed by the same precious blood. If one class can perish, they all must go down, and the ark with its cargo, to the bottom. The thought is monstrous. Yet some Christians believe it. No! all were as safe as the ark; their security depended on the power of the ark, and its ability to carry them. The history tells us that all who entered it reached mount Ararat in safety; not one died on the voyage. Ararat means "holy ground," and is a figure of heaven. (See John x. 27-29.) Christ says of His own, they shall never perish.

One more detail ere we close the description (ver. 16). "A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it *above*." A window is for light, and speaks of communion. The man who lived in the *third* story enjoyed the light of that window. The number three reminds us of the day Christ rose from the grave—from among the dead; and it is the Christian who lives in resurrection atmosphere who can and does enjoy heaven's light and

sunshine. See Paul in Phil. iii. 10: "That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection." The Christian's soul can find no joy, no food, save in the scene beyond the tomb.

And now, dear friend, God has shown you in picture His Son Jesus, and His salvation. All who stepped into the ark trusted their welfare to its keeping, and were safe: it mattered not what worthless creatures they might be, the ark covered and kept them. All outside the ark, whether moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, good or bad intentioned people, respectable or otherwise, were unsafe, and I would ask you where are you? Confiding in Jesus, or confiding in your own merits? When the flood came, all the nice people as well as the others perished. To be outside the ark is to be lost; to be inside, is to be safe. And remember, the ark is not the Church—the ark is Christ. I plead with you to flee to the ark. Confiding in Christ alone makes the sinner safe. The ark stands open now, and none who come are rejected. God provides food for all who enter (ver. 21). Until you come to Christ you will not know what real joy is.

One of these days the door will shut. God waited seven days after Noah went in (vii. 4); but God's mercy ended, and He shut the door. When Jesus comes (and we know not how soon that may happen), many will be shut in, safe with Himself to spend eternity in heaven, and many shut out. *How would His coming affect you were it to happen now?* (See Luke xiii. 24, 25.) "Many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door."

Hasten, sleeping sinner; judgment is gathering

fast. Remember, it was *not* the man who admired the ark and its construction, *neither* the man who could describe its details, who was saved, but the one who by faith entered, and trusted his perishing soul to its care. "Look unto Me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." E. W. M.

THE VALUE OF THE WRITTEN WORD.

"**T**HOU hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name" (Ps. cxxxviii. 2) is an impressive and important utterance on the part of the psalmist, and lets us see the estimate he placed on the written Word. Well would it be for all professing Christians if that utterance got a firmer grip of our souls, led us to estimate it as he did. It would certainly cause us to treat it with much greater reverence, and save from the unholy handling and quoting which is, alas, so common in the present day. And at the very outset one can only say, May that profound reverence be vouchsafed to every one of us who owns and loves the name of Him who was the living Word, the blessed, holy and living expression of the mind of God here on earth.

We have a very remarkable passage of Scripture in this connection in Deut. vi. 6-9: "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine

eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Then we have added to this, in chap. xi. 21, "That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."

Observe, the first thing is, "they shall be in thy *heart*." Everything else is useless if the Word is not in our hearts. "*With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10). *In the heart* man hides the Word, so as not to sin against God (Ps. cxix. 11). *Upon the Word* he feeds to sustain the new life given and promote spiritual growth (1 Pet. ii. 2). I need not enlarge upon these, the very elementary principles of the gospel.

(2) It affects his family—he teaches his children. A most important principle for to-day! Are there not multitudes of so-called Christian homes, and the parents themselves known Christians, and yet this is never done? God commands them to do it. Is it said, "Oh, but that was law?" Are we, then, to be less particular under grace? Is it less needful, or necessary, to teach them the Word of the Lord to-day? Beloved, such a reason has an unholy savor about it, which ill becomes those who are "called with a holy calling." Then it is sometimes urged, "Oh, but they go to Sunday-school!" Possibly they do. But have you troubled yourself sufficiently to find out *what* they are taught there? or is *that* a salve to a conscience which shirks its own responsibility in the matter? Not only must *you* teach them, but you must teach them *diligently*.

One can easily picture that Eastern home, and the youthful Timothy standing at his parent's knee,

learning "the Holy Scriptures." And what more delightful scene can be imagined than Christian parents surrounded by their children, teaching them the Word of God? Not compelling them to learn what is hateful to them, and which the very compulsion makes more hateful still, but having their confidence and respect, and a gentle yet firm hold of them, and doing it in such a manner that the children find their joy and delight in their lesson. Be assured that a young mind well stored with the Scriptures is a valuable possession when brought under the life-giving and controlling influence of the Holy Ghost. Alas that so few Christians do this, or are even exercised about it! They shuffle their own responsibility onto the shoulders of Sunday-school teachers, many of whom are not even converted themselves, and never make any attempt to teach them the Word of the Lord.

Again, it is to be feared that the only sign of Christianity some children see in their parents is, they go to the church, chapel, or meeting. They never pray with them as a family. It seems almost incredible that any real Christian parents have not what has been termed "family worship;" yet, alas, it is so. There *are* such. Is it not lamentable! No reading of the Word and then bowing the knee together to seek the Lord's blessing on them as a family and on each individual; and to thank Him for family blessings and mercies received from His loving hands. No quiet, sober talk with each child as occasion may offer, and prayer with and for that particular child, and thus impressions made never to be obliterated, and seed sown to bear fruit in after days, if not then. Oh, beloved in the Lord, where is the

practical Christianity when such things can be neglected by those redeemed by blood, and who profess to love the Lord? No wonder Satan gets into such families! No wonder we see the assertion of will on the part of some who have marked out paths of their own in contrast to those the parents are walking in! The home is not walled or fenced round by prayer; hence the enemy can walk straight in, unmolested and unchallenged.

It is said, "Oh, but the parents pray privately!" Granted. But do the children *see* them, or *hear* them? How do they know their parents pray, in that case? Where is the godly example? Where, and when, do such parents teach their children *diligently* the Word of the Lord? Rest assured, where prayer in the family is neglected, teaching the family is likewise neglected, and there is consequent family loss, and great danger of the family safety.

(3) It is to be the subject of conversation in the house, and in our walks abroad. A blessed subject, surely! Is it said, "But we cannot be everlastingly talking about the Scriptures"? Quite true. But one fears you *can* be almost everlastingly talking about other things, to the complete neglect of the Scriptures. How often is the Word the subject of conversation at home or in our walks? Just put it to your own heart, and ask yourself. Saints are not exercised about it through not reading it, and have no question to ask, or subject to talk about, when together; so the active and busy brain turns to what does occupy it as subject for conversation. How much is missed in this way!

(4) It was to be written in prominent and in public places—"upon the door posts of thy house, and

upon thy gates" (xi. 20). How striking to see it written on the door posts! the place where the blood was sprinkled (Exod. xii.). The blood was sprinkled at the entrance of their houses in Egypt, to *shelter* them. Now the Word had to be written there to *instruct* them, and remind them, as they entered their houses, that they were the Lord's people; and as they came out, they were still His, and expected to act abroad as such, as well as in their homes. Moreover, it was to be seen in the place of judgment, "the gates," to remind them that there they were to "hear the cause between their brethren, and judge *rightcously* between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him" (chap. i. 16, 17).

What holiness all this breathes! If all those instructions were carried out suitably to the mind of the great lawgiver, then it would certainly put the people amongst those happy ones mentioned in Prov. viii. 34: "Blessed is the man that *heareth Me, watching* daily at My gates, *waiting* at the *posts of My doors.*" Yea, might we not say, they would be as devoted servants, saying, as it were, "I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go out free." So you can nail my ear to *the door post*, in token that I will serve thee, and here, forever. See Ex. xxi. 2-6. To such a people, acting in such a way, their days *would* be "as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. xi. 21); and the prayer of the disciples, taught them by the Lord Himself when here upon earth, would have its fulfilment, in great measure at least—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

(5) It affected the king as well as the subjects, and

we read in Deut. xvii. 18, 20, "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel." Long life, perfect happiness, and national greatness, lay wrapped up in the observance of the Word of the Lord then; nor has it ceased to be so to-day. God is ever true to His Word. "They that honor Me, I will honor; and they that despise Me, shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30); and true whether of a nation or an individual.

(6) It was to be read in the ears of *all* the people. "At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles. When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel, in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may *hear*, and that they may *learn*, and *fear* the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" (Deut. xxxi. 10-13). We thus see that none had to be igno-

rant of it. Individually and collectively, it was to be ever before them; while their blessing lay in obedience to it.

The same principles are seen and taught in the pages of the New Testament, but space forbids my taking them up. May the precious and all-important Word of our God have a deeper place in all our hearts, and be seen manifesting itself in all our lives, both in public and in private, so that in the midst of declension and departure from God, on the part of a professing and privileged people we may have the blessed sense, through grace, of "the days of heaven upon the earth." And this can only be as we allow the "Word of Christ to dwell in us richly." The Lord grant it to us, each and all. W. E.

New Zealand.

"If any man be in Christ, [it is] new creation," says the apostle (2 Cor. v. 17). That is what "in Christ" means—a new creation. At new birth there is dropped into the soul the seed of divine, eternal life. It is not, as so many think, merely a moral change which is effected, but just as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Those so born are truly partakers of His nature, and thus not simply adopted but real children of God. Christ is their life, the new Adam of a new creation, but in which He is Creator as well as Head as we have seen. F. W. G.

From "Help and Food" 1886, p. 225.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

THE Gospel of Matthew, which is to occupy us during the present month, is usually called "the Gospel of the Kingdom." It is distinctively Jewish, in its connections with the Old Testament and the entire mold in which it is cast. So much is this the case, that there was an early tradition in the Church, that the gospel was originally written in the Hebrew tongue, and that the Greek gospel was a translation. Of this, however, there is not the slightest proof. Indeed, it would be contrary to the manifest spirit of the entire New Testament for any portion of it to have been written in any other than the Gentile or world-wide language. While everything is looked at in its Jewish connections, there are distinct indications, as we shall see, of the rejection by His people, of our Lord, and the consequent extension of His kingdom to the world.

Div. I. (Chaps. i, ii). The connection with the Old Testament is strikingly seen in the opening of the New. The genealogy of our Lord is given from David and Abraham. As the Son of David, He was the Messiah, King of Israel. The Son of Abraham marks Him as not only Kinsman of all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but suggests also that wider relationship to all who have the faith of Abraham, "though they be not circumcised."

Thus, at the very beginning of the gospel, we have provision made for those who are outside the pale of Judaism.

The genealogy is traced downward, from Abraham; the earthly source being given first. This is reversed in the Gospel of Luke, where our Lord as Son of Man is presented, there His genealogy is traced upward to its source not in Abraham, but in Adam, indeed in God.

Much most profitable instruction can be gleaned from this genealogy. It is evidently divided carefully into

three periods of fourteen generations each. Thus we have the beginning, from Abraham to David. Then the period of kings from David to the captivity; and lastly, from the restoration to the birth of our Lord. We have thus, suggested by the numbers, the full and perfect testimony of God as to what man is until Christ.

It is very significant that only four females are mentioned in this genealogy, each of whom would have been omitted had human thoughts guided, and the presence of each would have marred, according to legalism, the title to blessing in Israel. Our blessed Lord thus associated Himself in that which had forfeited a blessing, in order that He might bring it in, in its fulness.

The remainder of this portion shows us the divine care and solicitude on the part of God for safeguarding this wondrous Babe, whose name, "Jesus," spoke of salvation, while the title "Immanuel," quoted from the prophet Isaiah, reminds us of His divine dignity. We have a foreshadowing of the Gentiles coming to Christ, in the visit of the wise men; and, in Herod's malignity, an indication of the cross which awaited our Lord from His infancy onward. The flight into Egypt connects, in a most interesting way, our blessed Lord individually with Israel's past history. In fact, His return to the land of Palestine is given as the fulfilment of the prophecy in Hosea: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

Div. 2. (Chaps. iii.-vii.) This portion gives us the preliminary account of our Lord's public ministry, and contains what we might call the announcement and unfolding of the principles of the kingdom of which He was King.

Chap. iii. shows us the forerunner preaching repentance, and our Lord coming in baptism to associate Himself with the penitent remnant of His people, called in the sixteenth psalm, the excellent of the earth in whom is all His delight. God looks down, well pleased, upon this wondrous scene, His spotless Son identifying Himself

with the people who had just confessed their sin, and ~~for them~~ going down, in anticipation, into the waters of death. No wonder that heaven can keep silence no longer! The voice from the excellent glory declares Him, His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

Chap. iv. shows us our Lord in the wilderness, in striking contrast to the first Adam in the garden. Here, with no provision whatever for His needs as Man, our blessed Lord meets the tempter and overcomes him. The three-fold temptation of Satan manifests fully the perfection of One in whom the prince of this world found nothing to respond to his allurements.

Our Lord passes from this scene, in the closing part of chap. iv., to His more direct work of preaching and healing. Multitudes are attracted to Him. He begins to call disciples to follow Him, and His fame spreads abroad.

The three following chapters give us that wonderful unfolding of divine truth: "The sermon on the mount." This is, in one sense, not a contradiction of the law, but an enforcement of it in its deeper, spiritual reality. He, first of all, shows who are the truly blessed, in striking contrast with the thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees. Lowliness and holiness and suffering for righteousness' sake are what characterizes those who are "the salt of the earth," preserving it from corruption, and "the light of the world," reflecting that which has already shone into their hearts.

He then goes on to say that His ministry simply establishes the law, enforces its holiness in a far deeper way than they had imagined, and removes that which was of purely a temporary character and a provision for the hardness of their heart. Thus He says, for instance, that murder is hatred manifest; that the heart may be guilty of a sin for which there has been no opportunity in the outward life. On the other hand, He forbids, as One greater than the law, all oaths, as being impossible of

fulfilment in those who had made them. The law of retaliation is displaced by the spirit of grace, in imitation of their Father in heaven.

Chap. vi. speaks of what practical righteousness should be, whether in the giving of alms, prayer or fasting. Here, reality, as contrasted with the prevailing formalism, is the thought. They are reminded that if they are to serve God, it is to be with singleness of heart, laying up treasure in heaven, and not attempting to serve two masters. They need not fear that they will be neglected. The lilies and the fowls are witnesses of the unfailing care of One whom He teaches them to call "Father."

The seventh chapter warns against the judging of others in a self-righteous way, and the confounding of holy and unholy. He encourages them in prayer and in love; warns them as to the broad way and false prophets, and closes with the solemn contrast between doers and hearers of His words.

Div. 3. (Chaps. viii.—xii.) If the sermon on the mount gives us the words of the King, this portion in like manner gives us His works. Many cases of healing are grouped together here. The great thought throughout is grace reaching the needy. Thus, we have in chap. viii. the cleansing of the leper, the faith of the centurion, the healing of Peter's wife's mother, and the casting out of demons. The closing part of the chapter narrates the calming of the storm, and the casting out of the demons from the demoniacs in the land of the Gergesenes.

Chap. ix. continues this blessed service of mercy. The sick of the palsy is not only healed, but forgiven: the one the proof of the other. Then the Lord shows what manner of men are attracted to Him. Matthew, the publican, gives Him the feast to which other publicans and sinners are invited. Many other miracles conclude this chapter.

In chap. x. He sends forth His disciples as His messengers, giving them instruction which reaches on to the time of the end.

In chap. xi. the opposition begins to come out clearly, as it ever will where grace is presented. The men of this generation have heart neither for John's faithful testimony as to their sins, nor our Lord's gracious provision for their salvation. But, while things are hidden from the wise and prudent, they are, in the sovereign grace of God, revealed unto babes, and in this our Lord rejoices. He closes with those wondrous words of invitation to all who are weary and heavy-laden, words which have brought peace to countless thousands.

In chap. xii. the opposition culminates. Taking occasion of a legal technicality, the Jews accuse Him of violating the Sabbath, and from that go on to plot against Him, accusing Him also of association with Satan in His work of casting out demons. Our blessed Lord not only shows the impossibility of Satan being divided against himself, but warns them of the awful blasphemy contained in such a charge: a blasphemy which, if meant, betokens such hardness of heart, such resistance of the Holy Ghost, that there is no forgiveness for it. This explains clearly what is meant by the "sin against the Holy Ghost," which has so often been a terror to the weak and those unestablished in the full gospel of the grace of God. The sin is wilful and with open eyes, ascribing to Satan those miracles of power which were really an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It was, in other words, calling the Holy Spirit, Satan, and meaning it. It was peculiarly a sin to which the leaders in Israel, who had the privilege and opportunity of seeing our blessed Lord, were specially liable. It is not meant by this to lessen our abhorrence of any form of sin, but to relieve anxious souls from the thought that they are in danger of having committed this unpardonable sin.

Div. 4. (Chaps. xiii.—xx. 28.) Our Lord's rejection by the leaders of the people makes a change in the character of His ministry, which is indicated in what follows. It is still the Kingdom of Heaven, but now there is such evi-

dence that the King will be rejected by His earthly people, that our Lord unfolds the character of that Kingdom as it will be in its mystery form, that is, during the period of His rejection. He is absent, but His Kingdom is here upon earth, left to the responsible hands of men, who, as the seven parables of the Kingdom indicate, are more or less faithful in their responsibilities.

Chap. xiv. gives a glimpse of Herod's court and all the lawlessness there allowed, type of the enmity of the nation of Israel. Our Lord withdraws, and in His place of distance, feeds the 5,000, suggestive of blessing to the Gentiles. The storm is calmed; His people preserved from every danger through which they may be called to pass.

Chap. xv. places side by side the self-righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, with the faith of the needy one that lays hold upon Him. Again we have abounding grace providing for the hungry at the close of this chapter.

Chap. xvi. shows us our Lord still in rejection and outside the land, where Peter's confession of Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," is recognized as declaring Himself the true foundation of that Church which He is to build. From this time He begins to declare His rejection and crucifixion.

Chap. xvii. gives us a foretaste of the glory, in His transfiguration.

Chaps. xviii.-xx. enlarge upon the varied responsibilities of those who are to be associated with Himself.

Div. 5. (Chaps. xx. 29.-xxiii.) We have in this part our Lord's entry into Jerusalem and His final presentation to the nation, giving them one more opportunity of accepting Him or of finally rejecting Him. They come to Him with their various questions, but every thing points to the fact that, though their lips are sealed, and they are left without excuse, they are determined not to accept Him. In a series of solemn parables, our blessed Lord shows their guilt, their disobedience, and their final rejection of

Himself. He also shows how they are depriving themselves of the blessings of the marriage of the King's Son by their selfish clinging to this present world.

No matter how they may differ with one another, His enemies are agreed in one thing at least, their opposition to Him.

Chap. xxiii. closes these interviews with the solemn and awful denunciation on the part of our Lord, of the leaders of the people, blind guides, leading the blind. The close of this marvelous chapter is the outpouring of the tenderest heart that ever throbbed upon this earth.

Div. 6. (Chaps. xxiv., xxv.) This is the great prophetic portion of this Gospel, our Lord's final discourse to His disciples. Everything points forward here to His coming again to set up His kingdom. We have this viewed in relation to the Jews (chaps. xxiv. 1-44); to the Church, or rather including the present or Church epoch and reaching on probably to the final kingdom (chaps. xxiv. 45-xxv. 30); and finally, chap. xxv. 31-46 dwells upon our Lord's relation to the Gentiles, His coming in glory, setting up His kingdom, and the judgment of the nations.

Div. 7. (Chaps. xxvi.-xxviii.) This portion narrates the betrayal of our Lord by Judas, His denial by Peter, His trial before the priests and before Pilate, His rejection and condemnation, His crucifixion, where He was forsaken of God as the Trespass-offering, and His glorious resurrection. There is no account of the ascension in this Gospel, everything being viewed from the standpoint of earth and His kingdom here. He meets His disciples in beloved Galilee, and there, assuring them of His omnipotence and His presence ever with them, gives them the great commission of preaching the gospel to every creature and making disciples of all.

AT HOME WITH THE LORD.

WORD from England is received, announcing the departure to be with Christ of our beloved brother Mr. C. E. Stuart. Though not known personally to many here, our beloved brother's writings, in which he had sought to serve Christ's sheep, had made his name and service familiar. He was a patient and devoted student of the word of God, seeking to unfold its beauties and treasures to His saints. His writings on the Gospels, the Acts, Romans, Hebrews, and other portions minister many most precious things. This ministry abides, while the weary servant enters into his rest, waiting *with* the Lord, as here he loved to wait *for* Him.

Thus one by one the Lord removes His servants. Solemn and yet precious thought! He does not leave us always in the wilderness, for He knows how weary we become of it. It is only a little while, and then His presence forever. But how crowded is this little while with responsibilities! Brethren, but a few more hours remain of the day. Let us work while we are left here. Let Christ be our object, our theme, our power. As one and another pass on, let us seek to be more completely emptied of self that *He* may fill and use us, each in our measure, to fill the vacant places left in the house of God here.

We extend our sympathy to our beloved brethren in England, whose loss is not only that which we all share, but the special one of his personal presence, counsel, cheer and example. May the Lord sanctify to us all these His ways which are both in the sea and in the sanctuary.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II. THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter vii.

THE NEW KING.

(1 Sam. x. 17-xl.)

(Continued from page 36.)

GOD having dealt faithfully and fully with Saul in private and through the prophet, now manifests to the nation at large the man whom He has chosen for them. Samuel is again the honored instrument here and calls the people to meet the Lord, as he had already, so far as possible, brought the future king face to face with Jehovah. The people are to come together at Mizpah, the place where God had signally manifested His delivering hand, in rescuing them from the Philistines and also one of the stations where Samuel was accustomed to judge Israel. Its name, as we have seen, means "Watch-tower," appropriate surely for those who would rightly survey the past and the future, and heed the admonitions with which God would address them. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved" (Hab. ii. 1). Good would it have been, for them and their king, had this attitude of soul truly marked them. It was that indeed to which God called them, as He ever does His people, to hearken to the admonitions and reproofs of love, and thus to be guarded from the snares into which we will other-

wise surely fall. Well would it have been for Peter had he been spiritually at Mizpah to receive the warning of our Lord.

God again reminds them of His work for them as a nation, from the time of their deliverance out of Egypt, and from all the power of the enemy up to the present. He reiterates the fact that in their desire for a king they, and not He, have been the rejectors. He, blessed be His name, never turns from His people whom He has redeemed. His love to them is measured by that redemption, and all their future experience would be but repetitions, according to need, of that deliverance; but, alas, how prone are His people to forget the past, and measure the present by their unbelief, rather than by His power as manifested for them again and again.

It is not, however, with any view of securing a change of mind on the part of the people. They were determined in their course. That wretched watchword "like all the nations" had gnawed into their spiritual vitals and produced its necessary results. A king they must and will have, and it must be the one who answers to such a state of heart as that. What other kind of one could it be?

God deigns still to serve His people, as we have been seeing, and to interpret their own wretched minds for them, giving expression to their desires, far better than they could themselves. For this purpose He uses the lot, leaving nothing to mere chance or to the caprice of any part of the people, still less to that modern fallacy, the will of the majority. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing is of the Lord." It also causes con-

tentions to cease. We cannot for a moment think that though thus guiding in the choice, God was pleased with it, or that the man selected thus would represent His desires for the people. We have already dwelt upon this.

And now the tribes are brought up one by one, and "little Benjamin" is taken, ominously significant as one which up to this time had been distinguished chiefly by its fearful rebellion. The one who rules others must rule himself first of all, and he who claims obedience from a nation must be preeminently the obedient one. How perfectly has our blessed Lord manifested His capacity for rule in this way, resigning, as we might say, the place of authority, "taking the form of a servant," learning obedience in all His life of lowliness. Truly He has qualified Himself to be the true King of Israel as well as the Ruler and Lord of all His people.

There is no account of Benjamin's repentance, and therefore we may well suppose that the tribe was still marked by that spirit of rebellion which had wrought such havoc in the days of the judges. And yet that hardihood of spirit, that rash courage which marked them at that time—one of the least of the tribes facing the entire nation, and "giving a good account of itself" in the conflicts that ensued—was doubtless rehearsed and handed down, and became matter for boasting, rather than for humiliation and true self-aborrence before God. Thus it will ever be with the flesh. It will boast in that which is its shame and plume itself upon a strength which must be broken to pieces before God can come in. It thus represents, as a tribe, the nation, and while we cannot say that all this was intensified in that branch

of the tribe from which Saul came, neither is there any indication of its absence.

The various families are sifted out and finally the choice falls upon Saul himself. We have already looked at his genealogy. Another name is here mentioned, the "family of Matri," which is said to mean "Jehovah is watching," which ought, at least, to have been a reminder that the holy eye of God had seen all their past, and knew well too their present. How the mention of this should have caused both the people and Saul to have halted! God's holy eye was upon them. He had searched out their secret thoughts. He knew their motives, their state of soul, their self-confidence, their pride. Could they, with that holy eye of love resting upon them, proceed in this wretched course of disobedience, that which was practically apostasy from Himself? Alas, while Jehovah's eye is open upon them, theirs is closed as to Him. They have eyes only for the king whom they desire, and he is soon presented to their gaze.

(To be continued.)

ALWAYS REJOICING.

PLACE a few scriptures side by side, and then let us seek to learn the lesson they teach. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice" (Phil. iv. 4). Before that it is said, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. iii. 1). These Philippian saints had not evil in their midst like the Corinthians to mourn over. Those are never told to rejoice, but rather to mourn. The Galatians had fallen from grace, had taken up law, and they could not be told to rejoice in the Lord. When

saints fall into evil ways, or into evil doctrines, the Spirit is grieved, and there cannot be joy in the Lord. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit; a saint who has grieved the Spirit cannot really rejoice. Such an one is called rather to mourning and confession, to turning away from that which has grieved the Spirit, putting it away and turning wholly to the Lord.

Then there is another side to this. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." We can take this in two ways. The mourner may be one who has not found the joy of the Lord, one learning the truth but not yet having found salvation, or we may take it as the mourning over the sin and misery around us. Paul tells us of himself, as "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," which characterized his later life. We can understand how this was, how the outward sorrows pressed upon him, but could not quench, or even dim the fire of joy that burned within his breast. So a saint of God may mourn and be sorrowful, and be always rejoicing. The mourning and the sorrow will come from the faith that sees what this world is as gone away from God, and the awful character of sin. This will keep down levity and cause a deep seriousness, but will not in the least hinder the joy which is the fruit of the Spirit.

Then as the child of God grows up into maturity, the vision of all that is seen by faith becomes clearer, and the joy grows and increases, and the sorrow and mourning; too. To such there come times of great sorrow, it may be times of almost overwhelming trial, or temptation to doubt, or there will be the chastening and discipline which is the portion of every real child of God, and of such we are expressly

told, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). Our God may be disciplining, teaching, chastening us, and in the midst of such dealings we may not realize the joy that comes after the time of trial is over, and the soul enjoying the fruits of endured chastening.

When saints go through deep trials with God, are led and kept by Him in them, and learn the lessons He has for them, they will afterwards enjoy the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And certainly one of those fruits is joy.

It is a blessed place to live in, the place of rejoicing in the Lord always. Think what it means to be always rejoicing! It means so much in a world like this. "Always," no cessation, not perhaps ever just the same, but it is always there in the heart, deep, full, overflowing joy.

It is in the Lord, in what He is, in what He has done. No more conscience of sins is one element of it. All my sins put away, gone forever, fully and completely borne by Christ on the cross. It is joy to live in the continual and vivid consciousness of this great work. It may become dim, it does become dim to many, but it need not. It should grow clearer, so that the heart is often lifted in praise to God, praise for sins all gone forever.

What joy that brings! No condemnation, no judgment. The Judge has paid the penalty, and God has accepted the payment. The One against whom the sin has been committed has fully and freely forgiven all. Is not this cause for continual joy?

Then the consciousness of what God is to us gives constant joy. The knowing that He is our God, the learning what this implies, the wonders which are wrapped up in that relation, what it means to have God for us,—as we come to know more and more what this means, it brings continual rejoicing. How much we have to learn about God. We see men searching nature, studying every kind of science, eager after knowledge, but all they learn of nature and all else dissociated from God is of so little worth compared with the knowledge of God which comes from faith, from knowing Him, becoming acquainted with Him. To live in the consciousness of His love for us, His kindness to us, to have these as realities, far more real than what we see about us or what is going on in the world, and to know that He never changes, and that the joy we have here is only a foretaste of the eternal joy we shall have there, why should we not be always rejoicing?

Men of the world dread old age, dread death, dread judgment; but for faith they are no cause for the least dread. Really, for faith which sees what God is to His people, there is nothing that can cause dread. The consciousness of His love removes all fear, the fear which hath torment. This faith and this joy are built up upon the word of God and the finished work of Christ. They cannot exist apart from these. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

This joy may be dimmed by worldliness, neglect of prayer and communion with God in secret, a careless walk, lack of watchfulness, and unconfessed sin. The believer knows when he has this joy; if he has it not, he is losing very much, and he should not rest till the joy is restored to him. J. W. N.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT—AN ERROR AS TO THIS TYPE, AND KINDRED ERRORS.

DIFFERENT LINES OF TRUTH CONSIDERED.

THE truth of salvation is presented in different ways or lines in the doctrine of the New Testament, and in the types of the Old.

The Epistles to the Romans, Colossians and Ephesians answer to the types in Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. The Epistle to the Hebrews unfolds typical teachings of the Tabernacle; and the brazen serpent, and the record that all who looked upon it lived, is explained in the Gospel of John.

In the first line of truth we see how we are delivered out of the world, and given a place or standing in Christ in heavenly places, taken out of one country into another. This is clearly what is presented in the epistles to the Romans, Colossians and Ephesians; while in the types of the Tabernacle, unfolded in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the way is made known how a people laden with sins can be—that is have been—sanctified, and perfected by the Cross, so as to be able to enter into the very presence of God.

But in the brazen serpent type, as whosoever looked lived, so in John's record it is declared that "whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Therefore to say that the brazen serpent type teaches something we have to attain to (as for example Rom. viii. 2, 3) is surely a serious misapprehension. Is it not plainly what all who are born of God possess—eternal life, that is set before us?

Are not all believers in Canaan, typically "in

heavenly places in Christ?" (Eph. i. 2) And have we not all access to God, in the holiest? (Heb. x. 19) And do not all possess eternal life (John iii. 16 and v. 24)—"life through a look at the crucified One" as well said in the hymn? To teach that what is a common and infinitely precious possession of all God's children is a stage in the soul's growth, or something not actually possessed, is to cast a shadow upon free grace. One is reminded of the word to the Galatians "he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be."

The Lord in mercy deliver souls from bondage to this teaching. "This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you."

God's children have been, and still need to be, warned against this system of error.

In the same way: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v.) is said to be an exhortation to Christians—in face of the truth that "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 10). And, "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" of 1 John i., is by this teaching confined to the apostles! whereas the same scripture tells us that what the apostles had seen and heard of the Word of life—Christ, the eternal life—was declared unto us by them, that we might have fellowship with them and so "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son." And, it is added, "these things write we unto you that your joy may be full,"—and Satan would rob us of this fulness of joy. Shall we be led captive by him? When the possession of eternal life is denied we need not be surprised that "our fellowship" with the Father and the Son should be denied also.

These two denials of blessings that Christ has secured to God's dear children by the Cross, are as consistent with each other as they are boldly unscriptural, and evil. May God work repentance! It may be said now as of old (Ps. lxxx. 13), as to God's vine "The boar out of the wood doth waste it."

So we are told we have only "title to die," in place of the precious and most important doctrine that we *are* dead (Col.iii.3) according to which God's word tells us to "reckon" ourselves to be so; that is to reckon ourselves to be "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Consistently with this; a writer (in "A Voice to the Faithful," Mch.'97) objects that some "assert that you get deliverance by the reckoning of faith, and do not see that you start on new ground and therefore that your deliverance can only be in the life of Christ."

It is true the last few words are vague, but the paragraph as a whole shows that the writer is opposing the reckoning which Rom. vi. tells us to do.

In short we are told point after point, "this is what is true," when Scripture tells us with perfect plainness the opposite. What a spell must be thrown over the mind when the word of man displaces from it the word of God!

But the truth is emphasized and made the more precious to those who are faithful.

We have noticed how the types of the Pentateuch answer to the epistles of Paul, to the epistle to the Hebrews, and to the writings of John in three lines of truth, and we may add that in Peter's presentation of things we are "strangers and pilgrims," and having a "living hope laid up for us in heaven."

It is thus interesting to note that Paul to the Heb-

rews, and John and Peter answer to different lines of types, giving different, however related, views of the work of grace. To misapprehend this is to get into great confusion, and to be robbed of a sanctifying view of the richness and perfection and harmony of the doctrines and types of Scripture.

We do not learn something from Paul to get on to something in John, but we are taught by Scripture that all believers have perfection of blessing and relationship and standing and life from the start, from the beginning, whether according to Paul, or Hebrews, or John, or Peter. To cast a shadow upon this is what calls forth severe denunciation in the Epistle to the Galatians. Should it not produce righteous indignation now, however tempered by grace, self-judgment, and godly fear?

Brethren, we have all one common standing in Christ; we have all eternal life in the Son; we have all the indwelling Spirit, and our sins are all forgiven; just as we have also one common hope, that the Lord may come at any time to take us to be forever with Himself. We are not two classes, but one; for "there is one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling" (Eph. iv).

May we confidently look upwards, rejoicing in Christ our hope, and hold fast His most precious word,—the word of His grace.

M. S. L.

SO TRULY is eternal life the portion of all believers that the apostle John writes, "These things have I written to you that ye may **know** that **ye have** eternal life; [you] who believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 13).

NOT YOUR OWN.

(1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

BOUGHT with a price"—so very great—
 Jesus alone could pay,
 My ransom from the dreadful guilt,
 And take my sins away.
 (Heb. 9: 26.)

His precious blood, the awful price,
For me He freely gave:
 And dare I doubt His tender love,
 Or willing power to save?
 (Rom. 8: 35.)

He sought me, wandering far from God,
 And took me by the hand
 To lead me forth from endless woe,
 Into the glory land.
 (Eph. 2: 13; Psalm 73: 23, 24.)

So deep a debtor to His blood,
 No wonder He should be
 Most precious to my ransomed soul,
 Now, and eternally.
 (1 Pet. 2: 7.)

But *I!*—ah, canst thou care for such—
 So worthless, wayward, cold,
 So slow of heart to apprehend
 Thy love, and grace untold?
 (Mark 14: 66-72; John 13: 1.)

Can I be loved, and prized, by Thee?
 Speak, Lord, oh, can it be?
 "Yes,—*in proportion to the price*
Which I have paid for thee."
 (Zephaniah 3: 17; Rev. 1: 5.)

Then, Jesus, Lord, with joy I yield
 Myself, my all, to Thee,
 For Thou hast loved me unto death,
 And given Thyself for me.
 (Gal. 2: 20.)

C. E. B.

THE FIRST-BORN TITLES OF CHRIST.

(Col. i. 15-18.)

THERE are two titles here given to Christ; first of all "the First-born of all creation." This implies His being part of that creation. The word in the original suggests supremacy and superiority, in the place of which it is spoken. There is no thought of primacy of birth, in point of time, which would be unholy. We would have to think of Christ as being born as a creature at some time prior to the remainder of the creation, so that He might have this title. We know Him as becoming part of creation in incarnation, but why should He by this be entitled to the title of supremacy and superiority of First-born, coming as He did so many thousands of years after the beginning of creation?

Here comes in every title of His deity. Surely if the Creator takes up creaturehood, He is, as such, by virtue of what He is in His essential being, the First-born of all creation, remaining as He does the Creator with the creaturehood added, which He has been pleased to take up. He is none the less the Creator because of becoming a creature, and therefore none the less controls the whole scene than when it was His footstool as a divine being, not linked with humanity on the throne of glory. By virtue of this very fact, if such an One be pleased to take the creature-place in creation He has become its glorious First-born. He obtains in this way the birth-right to which are attached heirship and all the promises, and having secured them to Himself, He is going on to perform a work by which He will bring into the inheritance and its blessings those who

had forfeited every claim to it because of sin. He thus takes the place in which He is able to fulfil His appointment as Heir of all things. The place of foremost and standing first is His by right.

Of course that He is the Creator, Scripture very plainly declares. By Him were all things created (Col. i. 16; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Heb. i. 2, 3; John i. 3). And this in itself is the strongest affirmation of His deity. Who else but one absolutely divine could call the universe into being? And we readily understand that He is therefore before all things, and necessarily so, if by Him the ALL things were created. And this being so we are enabled to understand how it is that all things subsist together by Him. He is not only in this way the One whose power characterizes and pervades the whole creation, but He is also the end for which it was created, Himself and His glory the objects in view all the way through. In this way He is the glorious Alpha and Omega of all, the First and the Last, the "Self-existing One." The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New in the light of perfect manifestation, and so He declares Himself to the unbelieving Jews, "before Abraham was I AM."

In connection with this eternity of being we have the title of "the Word" given to Him. "In the beginning was the Word" (go back as far as you please to mark the commencement of things, the Word is there) "and the Word was with God," His Fellow in everlasting communion with Him. "And the Word was God," His equal and a divine person. "The same was in the beginning with God." Ever with Him and in perfect fellowship.

He is therefore the image of the invisible God.

These are characters essentially connected with Him as the Word, which means not merely the expression of thought but the very thought itself. He is Himself the thought filling God's mind, and also the divine expression of it. That in which first of all He has given expression is creation, and so we are told of Him as the Word that "all things received being through Him, and without Him not one thing received being which has received being" (J. N. D.). In creation then He speaks to us. How full of meaning and of the expression of Himself we may rightly expect to find the work of His hands. For what is done must in some sort declare the One who has done it, and thus be a telling out of His character. Nature is thus full of parables concerning Him. How often the Lord used natural symbols to tell out the spiritual is evidence enough.

But this is not the only way in which His voice is to be heard. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Life in Him, who has been declared the eternal Word, can only be eternal life. "And this life the light of men," which brings in the thought of its manifestation, that it might be this light; so the apostle speaks of "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us," the Word becoming flesh and tabernacling among men. Thus we see Him as the Revealer, and all that is revealed embodied in Himself fully. This carries us along to the relationship of the Word in the Godhead, which John gives us here, that of the only-begotten Son, which expresses the fact to us that He has a divine nature peculiar to Himself, and which cannot be communicated to another. It is that which signifies the divine relationship which

He has with the Father, unique and not transmittable. Who then so fitted to declare the Father?

This marks Him out as the eternal Son. He was this in the past eternity, for as the Only-begotten He came forth from the Father (1 John iv. 9, 10). His character as the Word is what He is in His essential being as a distinct divine person, but the relationship He is in is a different question. It is put in connection with Him becoming flesh. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of an only begotten with a Father full of grace and truth;" and a little farther on, "No one has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And this thought in connection with Him being the Word is remarkably expressed for us in Hebrews, first chapter, "God . . . has spoken to us in [the person of the] Son" (J. N. D.). You will notice that the words "the person of the" are bracketed and are not in the original, which really reads "spoken to us in Son." The preposition here used denotes fixed position and instrumentality. God Himself it is who speaks, but as in the fixed position, if we may so speak, of being the Son, not as the Father, nor in the personality of the Father, nor as the Holy Spirit using some instrument, but as being God in a divine person, and that person the Son. But we find also the Son the instrument by which the word was spoken. This, of course, was in incarnation, so that He is truly the One who has declared the Father, as we have quoted from John. Here we have remarkably linked together, that He is the Word, who is God, so that it can be truly said that God has spoken to us in the person of the Son. It is

God who has spoken but as in the position of Son, so that we rightly say the Son is God. Thus He is the Word, the Revealer, but He is also the vehicle of this speech. Not only the One who has spoken but in Himself also what was spoken, its substance and expression. He is then omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, essential attributes of His deity.

J. B., Jr.

(To be continued.)

. IN THE DESERT WITH GOD.

IN these days of hurry and bustle, we find ourselves face to face with a terrible danger; and it is this—no time to be alone with God. The world in these last days is running fast; we live in what is called "the age of progress," and "you know we must keep pace with the times." So the world says. But this spirit of the world has not confined itself to the world. It is, alas, to be found among the saints of God. And what is the result? The result is—no time to be alone with God; and this is immediately followed by no *inclination* to be alone with God. And what next? Surely the question does not need an answer. Can there be any condition more deplorable than the condition of a child of God who has no inclination to be alone with his Father?

Nowadays how many of God's dear children have picked up the "spirit of the age;" and how many Christians are pushed into service for God, or thrust themselves into it, who have had no "apprenticeship"—no desert training; they have taken a terrible "short-cut" into the front of the battle; for that

"short-cut" has cut off entirely "the school of God!" How different from what meets our eye in the pages of our Father's Book. If it be an Abraham we look at, we find him sweetly communing with his God, far away yonder in the plains of Mamre, sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day (Gen. xviii. 1); while his worldly nephew is keeping pace with the spirit of the age in ungodly Sodom. If it is a Joseph, we find him at least two full years in God's school—although it were Egypt's dungeon—before he stepped up to teach her senators wisdom (Psa. cv. 22), and "save much people alive" (Gen. 1. 20). If it is a Moses, we find him at God's school in the back side of the desert (Ex. iii. 1); and then, but not till then, he appears publicly as the deliverer of the people of God. If it is a David, the wilderness for him is the school of God. There he slays the lion and the bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34-36), when no human eye was near. He gets the victory alone with God. Fresh from God's school, he steps before the thousands of Israel; and while all Israel follows Saul, the people's man "trembling," there is one there who trembles not; and he is the one who has been at God's school in the wilderness alone with Himself. Surely little wonder, then, that the Lord wrought a great victory in Israel that day! We might multiply instances from the Book of God. We might tell of an Elijah, a bold witness for God, who was longer alone with his God than standing in the place of public testimony; and who found the solitude of Cherith (1 Kings xvii. 3) and the quiet seclusion of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 9) a needed training before he delivered the messages of God. We might tell of a John the Baptist who was in the

deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel (Luke i. 80)—of the great apostle Paul, whose journey to Arabia seems to have been for no other purpose than to be at God's school in the desert (Gal. i. 17). But from the instances we have already pointed out, nothing can be clearer than this, that if you and I are to be of any use to God down here—if we would glorify Him on the earth—we must have time to be alone with Him. Whoever or whatever is put off, God must not be put off. We must have time—every one of us, "gifted" or not "gifted"—we must have time to be alone with God. It is in the closet that the "lions" and the "bears" must be slain. It is in the secret presence of God, with no one near but Him, that the spiritual Agags must be brought out and hewn in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal (1 Sam. xv. 33). Then, when we appear before our brethren or the world, we shall find ours to be the "strong confidence" which is the portion of all who have to do with God in secret. And the "Goliaths" shall be slain; no doubt of that. And God's work shall be done; no doubt of that either. We need not fear that God will not use us. It is only by being in God's school that He can use us—not perhaps in the dazzling way that the world and many Christians admire; but in His own way—in a way that shall most honor Him.

But the Lord makes all these things clear to us, while alone with Himself. It is only then we really do God's work—it is only then we do it in God's way—it is only then we do the very things God has fitted us for, and at the very time appointed of the Father. What secrets we get from the Lord alone with Himself! And if we care not for the secret of

His presence, what cares He for all our boasted service? It is ourselves He wants, and it is only service flowing out of the joy of His presence that is worthy of the name. It is only such service that shall stand the fire of the judgment-seat, and bring joy in the day of Christ that we have not run in vain, nor labored in vain.

May each one of us have an open ear to the Master's voice when He says to us, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place," remembering that though He were the Son of the Father, we find Him time after time departing "into a solitary place," and there praying, although in doing so He had to get up a "great while before day." The faithful witness Himself, as well as His faithful and trusted servants in every age, required a desert experience—a wilderness teaching alone with God; and, beloved, so do we.

(Selected.)

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE hope to read during the present month, the Lord enabling, the book of Deuteronomy. This will serve, in some sense, as a substitute for the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, read last year, while, of course, it is by no means a mere repetition. Its name in the Greek means, literally, "a second law;" that is, a repetition of the law, and this roughly describes its contents; but God never makes mere repetitions. Even when apparently they are, there is a special object in view. Deuteronomy, however, is very far from being this. Its position in connection with the other books will best give us the general thought of the book.

The people have finished their forty years' wanderings in the wilderness. Numbers brought them to the borders

of the land. The wilderness is all behind them. The land of promise is before. The generation which had come out of Egypt, all at least who had reached the years of responsibility, had fallen in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua, beautiful types of that whole-hearted devotedness to God in the power of the Holy Ghost which alone brings us unwearied through the trials of our desert journey. In one sense, of course, this weeding out of the generation which was distinguished by their unbelief and hardness of heart would be an advantage. Here was a nation which knew nothing practically of the corruptions and bondage of Egypt, which had been nurtured in the desert to a measure of hardness and dependence upon God. Time and time again had they proven His goodness in their journey, His sufficiency when all around them seemed, as it really was, a barren waste. The manna and the flowing water were witness that the God who had brought them hitherto, and sustained them with food and drink, would now make good His promise to Abraham of old, repeated to the people in Egypt, and oftentimes alluded to through their desert wanderings. He who had brought them out would bring them in.

But because of the very fact that they were a young nation, without the bitter history of failure and unbelief of their fathers; without, too, the experience and self-knowledge gained through these humiliating histories, they needed to be reminded afresh of the lessons to be learned from the wilderness.

Thus Moses, as a closing ministry, is permitted to review their past history and glean its lessons for their instruction, pressing upon them present obedience. The law, too, is gone into afresh, and, as is always the case when the Spirit of God reiterates, fresh adaptations are made to new circumstances and conditions which had not existed at the beginning. A striking illustration of this is seen in the sermon on the mount, where our Lord, so

far from repealing, emphasizes the law, but with those divine modifications and additions which, while not contradicting, bring in new light and motives. Of this Deuteronomy also affords full illustration.

But the book is not occupied with retrospect alone. After having looked at the past, the eye having traced the whole weary way through those forty years of wanderings in the wilderness, having impressed upon them afresh the necessity of obedience to God, the prophet, as it were, from the height of Pisgah, surveys the future for the people, looking forward into the land of their inheritance, and with the light of the past, giving warning, exhortation and distinct prediction as to what will take place in the future.

We have thus really seen the three main divisions of the book. They relate to the past, the present, and the future. More accurately speaking, they have been given as follows :

Division 1 (chapters i.—iv. 43). The review of the past, in view of God's dealing in righteousness and grace as a motive for the obedience of love.

Div. 2 (chaps. iv. 44—xxx.). The law restated, expounded and amplified, with a view to the land.

Div. 3 (chaps. xxxi.—xxxiv.). The outlook into the future, Moses' warning song, final blessing of the tribes, and peaceful death.

Glancing at some of the chapters, we find that the first goes back to Horeb, where they received the law, and dwells upon the journey from there to Kadesh Barnea, where the people turn back in unbelief after having sent the spies into the land, refusing to go up. In fact, there was practical apostasy from God here, and but for His merciful interposition they would have turned back into Egypt. Here they brought upon themselves the sentence of exclusion, individually, from the land. Their children, for whose safety they pretended to care so much,

would be brought through all the wilderness, and inherit that from which unbelief excluded them: "They could not enter in because of unbelief."

Chap. ii. shows how they had not been permitted to take any of the territory of their kinsmen according to the flesh, either Moab or Edom, and when the way through their territory was opposed by these, Israel was obliged to go around, rather than provoke hostility by going through. The same was true of the children of Ammon; but with the Amorites and their king Sihon no such restriction was made, and they conquered him when he opposed them, and possessed his territory. We avoid the flesh, rather than fight with it.

Chap. iii. continues the narrative of the possession of the land east of Jordan, and the overthrow of its inhabitants. A pathetic account is given also of Moses' plea to enter the land. He had had a foretaste of what God was going to do, and longed, as he had brought the people out of Egypt and through all their long journey to enjoy at last the fruits of it all in peace; but alas, one sin prevented this, and shut him out of the earthly inheritance—solemn type of how one sin, were it possible to think of it being unatoned for, and if our title to heaven depended upon our faithfulness, would shut us out of the eternal mansions. Typical reasons also are evident why Joshua, rather than Moses, should lead the people into the land. He is a type of Christ in us by the Holy Ghost, who leads us into the enjoyment of that inheritance which is ours in the heavenly places.

Chap. iv. presses upon the people their responsibility to be obedient to such a God as this.

Chap. v. repeats the Ten Commandments.

Chap. vi. shows that the law is to be diligently obeyed, and to control every circumstance of the life.

Chap. vii. forbids intercourse with the nations of the land. They are to be relentlessly exterminated. How

good would it have been for the people had they literally obeyed this command! Their subsequent history furnishes sorrowful evidence of this.

Chap. viii. again presses upon them the responsibility to cleave unto God in true-hearted obedience by all the wilderness way and all the fulness of blessing in the land. Thus looking backward and forward, everything plead with them to obey the Lord.

Chaps. ix. and x. recount the various acts of rebellion on the part of the people in order that they may be truly humbled.

Chap. xi. again looks at the miracles and acts of the Lord in the past, and promises special blessing upon them in the land, fruitfulness and prosperity, if they obey. The blessing and curse are set before them, and when they come into the land they are to proclaim it from mounts Ebal and Gerizim.

Chap. xii. and the succeeding ones go more minutely into the details of the law. Idolatry is to be shunned. The place of the Lord's choice is to be the centre of their worship. Thither are they to bring all their sacrifices and peace offerings.

Chap. xiii. is devoted to special warning against idolatry. They are relentlessly to destroy all who would seduce, or any who would connive at that which taught departure from God. The corporate responsibility of a city is seen which has yielded to the seductions of any evil men in the midst.

Chap. xiv. speaks of clean and unclean foods.

Chap. xv. treats of the seventh year of release, also of God's right in the first-born of everything.

Chap. xvi. provides for the three great yearly feasts—the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles.

Chap. xvii. again speaks of the danger of idolatry, then of the priestly position to decide difficult cases, and lastly

looks forward to the time which was reached later on, when the people would choose a king.

Chap. xviii. provides for the support of the priests and Levites; warns against the false prophet; predicts the coming of the True, Christ Himself.

Chap. xix. refers to the cities of refuge and the course of action in judicial cases.

Chap. xx. gives rules of battle and warfare.

Chap. xxi. gives a glimpse of the nation's responsibility in the death of Christ at its opening, and another allusion to His being made a curse for us at its close.

Chaps. xxii.-xxv. are filled with legal re-enactments, applications and restrictions, most instructive and profitable for study.

Chap. xxvi. speaks of the basket of first-fruits.

Chaps. xxvii. and xxviii. speak of the blessings and curses to be pronounced upon mounts Ebal and Gerizim in the land. It is most significant that the curses are dwelt upon at length; the blessings spoken of in a more secondary way, as though the Spirit of God would recognize that which would take place later on. Alas, under the legal covenant, whether given at Sinai or renewed as here, there could be nothing but curses, for "the law worketh wrath."

Chaps. xxix. and xxx. are, as we might say, the closing appeal of this part of the book, the outpouring of the heart of the lawgiver, and of the Spirit of God through him, in yearning and warning over this beloved but stiff-necked people.

The closing division of the book, as we said, is more prophetic. Moses resigns the charge to Joshua. The law of God is delivered to the priests, and God foretells the disobedience of the people after the death of Moses.

Chap. xxxii. is the song which is to witness against the people. It is in striking contrast with the song of Ex. xv. That was unmingled triumph in view of God's victory in

the past and of what He was going to do in the future. This, while God is over all, is devoted to warnings and a reminder of their evil hearts. Most blessed is it to see at the close recovery and restoration of the people. This final promise is not yet fulfilled, but is quoted by the apostle in the eleventh chapter of Romans as proof that God's people are yet beloved for the fathers' sakes.

In chap. xxxiii. we have the blessing of the tribes, which again looks forward to the Millennium. Many a weary century of Israel's history intervenes between the giving of these blessings and their accomplishment.

In chap. xxxiv. we have briefly and beautifully the account of the departure of this faithful servant into the better portion which God had reserved for him. He is not permitted to enter the earthly inheritance, which is a witness of the righteousness of divine government; but he is spared as well the sorrow of seeing the people turning from the God who had loved and done so much for them. He passes into heaven. No one knows the place of his burial. He appeared in company with Elias upon the holy mount at the transfiguration of our Lord. There all his thoughts and words were not of Israel's glory, but of Him who, as the true Servant of God, was alone worthy, and through whom also blessing at last would come upon that beloved people whom he had vainly sought to keep in the straight and narrow way.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Our readers will have long since missed this familiar department of our little paper. Illness and other unavoidable reasons caused its temporary discontinuance, but we had no thought of allowing it to lapse or indeed to remain so long absent from our pages. We will be very happy if our friends will again send questions for this department. We have already several on hand, which, with the Lord's help, we will seek to answer from time to time.

Ques. 1.—“What is meant by God's repenting? Can it ever be truly said that He does so?”

Ans.—“God is not a man that He should repent” is unquestionable true. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Both of these quotations refer to His ways with Israel. Balaam was willing enough to curse the people in answer to the demand of Balak, king of Moab, but he was face to face with the unrepenting purpose of God. These were the people of His choice. He had appointed them for blessing; He had brought them out of their bondage, was bringing them into their inheritance and would eventually fulfil every promise which He had made. How long those promises have been in abeyance, the whole intervening history will declare. The people are still unblest. In a certain sense the very desire of Balak, king of Moab, seems to have been accomplished, for apparently the curse of God rests upon them, and yet we know this is but temporary. He that scattered Israel will gather him, and the later prophecies of poor Balaam will be fulfilled to the letter in connection, too, with that “Star” which shall rise out of Jacob.

This is but one illustration of the fact that God is unchanging in His purposes. We need hardly refer to another use of the word “repent;” the one which must ever apply to us, where it means a judgment of that which has been contrary to God, a judgment of evil and of that which is the root of all evil, the heart from which it springs. It would be blasphemy, of course, to think of God’s repenting in this sense.

But there is a scriptural use of this term. God is said to have repented that He had made man. He also repented of His thought to destroy Israel for the golden calf apostasy, and when the men of Nineveh repented, the Lord also repented of His purpose. But all these uses of the term are manifestly to bring within the range of our comprehension that which otherwise would remain above it. God’s counsel and purpose had never changed, but His manifest action with regard to man was altered by certain results. So far as mere creation is concerned, it has been a complete failure. We can understand how complete, when God, to use our language, expresses regret that He ever made it. We know that back of this is the eternal purpose in Christ and the new creation, which rests solidly, not upon the first man, but the Second. It is this which will explain all similar passages. God is using language from our point of view, looking at outward events rather than His own secret purposes. This will really suffice to any one who will patiently take up all the references and apply the principle that we have been speaking of.

KING SAUL :
THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.
THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter vii.

THE NEW KING.

(1 Sam. x. 17-xi.)

(Continued from page 61.)

THE lot declares that Saul, the son of Kish, is the appointed man. But he is nowhere to be found. Flesh-like, he hides himself when he ought to be present and obtrudes himself when he should be out of sight. Self-depreciation is a very different thing from true lowliness of spirit. As the poet says; Satan's "darling sin is the pride which apes humility." He had already spoken to Samuel of his tribe being the smallest in Israel and his family the least in that tribe. All this had been overruled by the prophet who had anointed him. He had already received the assurance that he was the appointed king. God Himself had spoken to him through the signs that we have been looking at, and in the spirit of prophecy which had indeed also fallen upon himself. Why, then, this feigned modesty, this shrinking from the gaze of his subjects? Does it not indicate one who is not truly in the presence of God? For when in His presence, man is rightly accounted of. The fear of man indicates the lack of the fear of God, and "bringeth a snare." In God's presence, the lowliest can face the mightiest unflinchingly. Hear the faithful witnesses refusing to obey the command of king Nebuchadnezzar. There is no hiding there:

"We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. iii. 16-18).

But even if this shrinking from the people did not indicate the extreme of fear, it yet showed a self-occupation which is utterly incompatible with the true spirit of rule. Saul indeed does not appear to advantage here, and we get a glimpse of his character as he hides amongst the baggage, which bodes ill for himself and the people.

Indeed it is the Lord Himself who must go further in this patient care for a perverse people and tell them what has become of their king. The baggage seems a strange place in which to look for royalty; not much dignity about that, and one can almost imagine the ludicrousness of the scene. No wonder that carnal men ask, a little later on, How shall this man save us? He was indeed a part of the baggage and an illustration of the old Latin word for that, "an impediment," no help, but a hindrance to those whom he should lead on to victory.

But he at least appears better than his people. Judged according to the appearance, he is "every inch a king," head and shoulders above all the rest, one to whom they could look up and in whom they could boast, and if fleshly strength were to count, one who was more than a match for any who would dare dispute his right and title to the place. Do we not all know something of this stateliness of the flesh when it stands in full length before us? Hear another son of Benjamin describing how he stood head

and shoulders above his countrymen: "If any other man thinketh he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. iii. 4-6). I "profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. i. 14).

Here is another Saul, a king amongst men, too; but, ah how all this shrivels up under the eye of divine holiness and love; in the very noontide of his carnal greatness, he beholds One who had been crucified but now was glorified, and as he catches sight of that glorious Object on high, from the dust he can declare for the remainder of his life: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Would that we ever remembered this when tempted to glory in our flesh, or measure ourselves by ourselves and compare ourselves among ourselves!

Paul was ashamed even to speak of the work of Christ in and through him, save as it was needed to deliver the poor Corinthians who were, like the Israel we are examining, tempted to judge according to the flesh. The only man in whom he could glory was the man in Christ, and well he knew that that man was "not I, but Christ." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20).

However, there is none of this knowledge of the flesh, even in an Old Testament measure, amongst the people. They compare their king with them-

selves. He is better than they are, head and shoulders above them, and exultantly they shout aloud: "Long live the king!" They have found their man. How that cry has re-echoed down the centuries ever since! King after king has been brought into view over great or small nations, and when he is seen, his prowess, his knowledge, his ability, in some sense has been recognized as above the average; at least his position has put him upon a pedestal, and "Long live the king!" has been the people's acclaim!

But faith can detect the wail in this exultation, and the unconscious yearning for One who is indeed the true King, One who is not to be compared with the sons of men, surely not head and shoulders above them; One who took His place as Servant to the lowest, humbled even unto death, the death of the cross, and who now in *His* exaltation is far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named. Who could compare himself with the King, even to acknowledge His superiority? No, "my beloved is One," "the chiefest among ten thousand;" "yea, He is altogether lovely."

"The shout of a king is in her"; but in this shout there is the echo of that other shout when the Ark was brought out to the camp of Israel and they supposed that God was going to link His holy name with their unrighteousness and give them victory over the Philistines. As we saw, He would rather let His glory be carried captive into the enemy's land than dishonor His name among His people. This shout is like that. We yet wait for the true shout of a King, but it will come, thank God, for Israel and for this poor, groaning earth; the time

when all creation shall burst forth in the shout. "With trumpets and sound of a cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He cometh to judge the earth. With righteousness shall He judge the world."

The scene, however, is not allowed to close with mere enthusiasm. This is not checked; but "the manner of the kingdom" is described, God's will still impressed upon them, if they will but hear it, together no doubt with His warning which we have been considering. All is written in a book, to leave them without excuse, to be there, too, no doubt, for reference, should penitence or faith ever turn to it, a proof of God's faithful care, though His heart was grieved and wounded at the treatment He had received from those He had fed from His hand for so long. The book is laid up before the Lord. Surely it is there yet. He has not forgotten. He never can forget. In His own patience He still waits, and the time is coming when all will be gone over with them and they shall acknowledge, with shame, their own folly as well as His love and faithfulness.

We, too, have the book of the Lord in which His faithful testimony as to the unprofitableness of the flesh is fully recorded. This He never forgets, and oh, may we remember always that God has put a mark upon it even as He did upon Cain, and may we shrink from every form of that exaltation of the natural man, "hating even the garments spotted by the flesh."

Saul again retires for the time, into private life.

The second stage has been reached, the first being his private anointing. Still, however, opportunity must be afforded for him to make good practically that which has been publicly declared. A band of young men are touched by the hand of God and follow Saul. Many yet, however, are skeptical and ask how such an one could save them out of the hand of their enemies. The king is still despised by many of his people. There is none of the honor paid to him, no presents brought to him which would show he is enthroned in their hearts. He, however, is impressed, for a time at least, by the solemnity of all that he had been passing through, and makes no attempt to vaunt himself or claim a place which was not willingly accorded to him. He holds his peace and waits a suited time. Had he continued to do this, a different history would follow.

(To be continued.)

THE FIRST-BORN TITLES OF CHRIST.

(Col. i. 15-18.)

(Continued from page 74.)

WE pass on now to His second title, "First-born from among the dead." This brings in a different line of truth. It brings, first, the thought of His death, which is the prime consideration in such a connection. But, of course, we cannot think of His death and not bring in all that is connected with it. We must consider what death means in relation to the creature. Introduced with man's fall, we know it as part of the judgment he fell into because of sin. It is therefore the judicial means in God's hands for the removal of the creature from the scene of his rebellion and wickedness, and it is the introduction

into that unending sphere of existence, the character of which is governed by the course and conduct followed before the removal of the responsible creature from the place he occupied. "By one man sin entered the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We understand then that the wages of sin is death and that it is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment. This is the inevitable result for the creature, who remains in his fallen condition. Death in this way is a real mercy from God to ruined men. For have they not fallen and filled the world with all the sorrow and pain of sin, with all its bitter fruit and suffering? What, if they were allowed to live on and on without death's hand to smite? Can we comprehend what this scene would develop into, and the awful character it would assume? Words would fail to describe it. How well God knew all this and brought in, therefore, that judicial removal of man by death. It means removal into judgment for them from which there is no escape, but which is eternal. Is it interposed that such a thought is against the character of God and His love for the creature? It is not. Does not the man who dies a sinner remain that eternally in the condition into which he passes? And this being so, can judgment, which was his rightful due as a sinful man, be anything less than eternal since he remains in the character of a sinner for eternity? The holiness of God's character could allow of nothing less. But the judgment is not only the due of sin, but of necessity also the means of restraining it.

Death and judgment after it bring in of necessity resurrection after death for judgment, and the man

must be raised up to receive the execution upon himself of the sentence of his condemnation.

To be the first-born one, therefore, from among those who are under the sentence of death and under judgment, it would necessitate an absolute passing beyond the ultimate end of which death speaks, and the reception of a new life as new born beyond all the power of death and what it is the judicial entrance into—eternal judgment. The one doing this for the first time is, the First-born from among the dead. It is plain that no mere creature could arrive at this position of blessedness, because death removing him as such, judgment awaits and his doom is fixed. We are told, therefore, that Christ is the First-born from among the dead. This implies that He passed through death and judgment and reached the other side, as it were, with a life beyond all touch of death and its consequences. This required Him to be in the creature's place to which death and judgment attached. Has not He, who being in the form of God, counted equality with Him a thing not to be grasped at, taken upon Himself the form of a servant, taken His place in the likeness of man, and having been found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death? A man then He was, and that in all the full meaning which this implies. He grew in wisdom and stature. He could be weary at times and sleep. He would weep with the sorrowing, and be grieved in His spirit, while He could rejoice also in season. All perfect in their exhibition in Him as in no other, but nevertheless showing how truly man He was, preeminently therefore the Son of man, a title in itself which implies creaturehood.

Sonship always implies likeness to him with whom this relationship is connected, and to be a son of man means to be in the likeness of man. But Christ is not a son but *the* Son, the One who above all others is in the likeness of man because according to God's mind. What then is man properly? I do not mean as fallen, for he is not that properly, but as a creature of God? He was created in the image of God, and that image should have been manifested in him and his associates. A son of man is one in whom this likeness is reproduced. But man has fallen, the image is broken, its character marred, and God is not manifested by that which He had made in His own image. Therefore Christ as a man among men is *the* Son of man, because in Him we find the likeness of man, fully and perfectly developed and exhibited. The image of God how perfectly it showed itself in Him, and how the relationship, which thus existed was fully manifested to the praise of God and also to the vindication of His work in making man in His likeness, and the perfect fulfilment of His purpose in so doing.

But how then, since He was so perfect, can death and ensuing judgment which He must pass through and beyond to be First-born from the dead, attach to Him? Death and judgment were the fruits of man's fall. But Christ was the perfect expression as a man of God's purpose, without taint of sin, perfect in His every part. The shadow of the fall had never been thrown on Him. He was the unique Man in Himself, the embodiment of the thought of the Creator.

Here comes in the blessed truth that meets the need of the creature in his ruin. Can we think of Him as coming into this world simply to be a justifi-

cation of God's creation? Surely this would only add to the condemnation of the creature. Man had ruined himself and come under judgment, because God is light and cannot look upon sin. But God is love, and He will not, if it be possible, execute the sentence of eternal doom upon him. So we have a note of deliverance and promised victory at the very beginning. The woman's seed is to bruise the serpent's head. And this develops and expands as the ages roll on, voicing the one essential truth, in all type and shadow, of the deliverance first promised.

The reason for all this is plain. We have said that death and ensuing judgment are the creature's portion as fallen, and God cannot in one iota abate the holiness which claims this as the righteous judgment of sin; and therefore if the creature is to be delivered, these must be born and endured to the full. Then His love can flow in an unobstructed channel of endless blessing. Who then shall meet this requirement and bring deliverance to the creature? One under the ban of them never can. It must be one who nevertheless is a creature, and yet beyond their power or applicability to him. Who has ever occupied this position but the peerless Son of man, alone qualified to be the Substitute for fallen creatures and bear what was their due because of sin?

Will He take this place? He had claim upon life beyond all reach of death and judgment because of His own perfection. Will He be the Substitute for those who have forfeited all claim to such a life? He is the only one that can be; if He will not, there is no hope. Thanks be to His all worthy Name, that when the agonizing anticipation of what this meant for Him was upon His soul, He said: "Not My will

but Thine be done." And God's will was for the blessing of His creatures, and the endurance by Him of death and judgment was the only possible way to accomplish it.

We know Him thus as having been made an offering for sin, the load of our sins borne in His own body on the tree, making in this way full and perfect atonement for sin, effecting propitiation, that is the appeasal of God's righteous wrath, and as a result, accomplishing reconciliation between God and His rebel creatures, and insuring all the blessing of His hand being bestowed upon them.

The glorious witness to all this is in resurrection. He was raised up by the glory of the Father. The glory He had so wonderfully served demanded the exaltation of the servant, and so, He having made purification of sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But in this very resurrection, the passing beyond death and judgment, He is the First-born from among the dead. He has come out the triumphant Victor over all, and the only One having rightful title to life eternal beyond the power of death and judgment, the necessity of bearing which devolves on every creature, but which now He has borne for them, if they will receive the provision thus made.

J. B. Jr.

(To be continued.)

"ABSOLUTE consecration to Jesus is the strongest bond between human hearts. It strips them of self, and they have but one soul in thought, intent and settled purpose, because they have only one object."

J. N. D.

THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE AS TO FALSE TEACHERS.

A Study in John's Epistles.

JOHN was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and perhaps nowhere in the entire Scriptures do we find a more beautiful embodiment of God's truth on the precious theme of love, than in his writings. John iii. 16, in relation to the world, and 1 John iii. 1 and 16, toward the saints, are illustrations of this.

John has, then, in a certain sense, become a synonym for affection; but, as is often the case in the things of God, this affection has been considered human rather than divine. We must not forget that the two sons of Zebedee were called Boanerges (sons of thunder) by our Lord Himself, which would not suggest anything weakly amiable. As a matter of fact, the apostle of love sets forth its divine, and not its human, characteristics.

Paul is the apostle of righteousness. This theme permeates many of his epistles, and yet when it comes to a subject like the one we are to consider, it is to John's writings, and not Paul's, that we would turn.

The person of the Son of God is distinctively the theme both of his Gospel and the Epistles. Everything is measured in relation to this, as the value is put upon everything in comparison with this.

Let us, then, glean from the Epistles what teaching we can upon our subject.

I. THE TRUE FELLOWSHIP.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jno. i. 1-3).

The eternal life which was with the Father, but which was manifested here, seen and handled as the Word of life, is the basis of all fellowship. It is the knowledge of Him and the Father who hath sent Him, that characterizes eternal life at the present, a life more abundant, as our Lord tells us, because of the divine fulness of the Father and the Son now made known.

Knowing the Son and enjoying holy fellowship with Him and the Father, it is the yearning desire of the apostle to introduce others into this same blessed fellowship and that which characterizes it, light and love, both of which God is. Coming into the light of His holy presence, the precious blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and on the basis of a known redemption we enjoy fellowship with the Father and His Son. We are in the sanctuary, partakers of the life which finds its divine expression in the blessed Son of God Himself. Henceforth, everything must be tested by this fellowship. Darkness is seen to be that, in contrast with the light of God's

presence. Evil is judged, whether moral or doctrinal, by the same standard. Truth is that which gives the knowledge of this blessed Person; and error, everything that is not according to it.

2. FALSE TEACHERS.

"Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be manifest that they were not all of us." "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 Jno. ii. 18, 19, 22, 23).

It will be noticed that it is the little children, not the young men or the fathers, who are warned as to false teachers, showing that the plea, which is often made, that babes in Christ are not to be held accountable for failure to recognize false teachers, is a mistake. It will be noticed also, that these teachers have come in anticipative fulfilment of the prediction of Antichrist. While that wicked one will not be personally developed until the rapture of the Church and the departure of the Holy Spirit with it, yet even now there are many antichrists; that is, embodiments of the mystery of lawlessness which is even now at work. The apostle marks out that which constitutes an antichrist. It is one who denies the Father and the Son; and lest there should be

any mistake as to this, he specifies that it is one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, with all that this implies,—His coming in the flesh, His spotlessness, His atoning death, His resurrection, His present place in glory, and future return.

The apostle further specifies that the denial of the Son (whether as the eternal Son of God before all ages, or the Son of God in time, manifested as such "by the Spirit of holiness and resurrection of the dead") means also the denial of the Father. To acknowledge the Son is the only way to have the Father. Thus, it is impossible to separate the two blessed persons of Deity.

How all this strikes at the very root, we need hardly say. There is scarcely a heresy in the past or present (in fact, such a thing would be well nigh impossible) that is not based upon the denial of one or the other of the characteristics which go to make up the Christ of God. A mention of names would hardly make this thought plainer. Wherever the deity or the humanity of the Son of God is denied, His sinlessness, His death, His atoning work, the doom of the ungodly if they reject His atonement, the lost condition of man—we have that character of error which the apostle says marks an antichrist. How many of the systems of the day, unlike the errors of a century ago based largely on infidel reasoning, claim for themselves the authority of the Scriptures! Therefore it requires that "unction from the Holy One" spoken of in this immediate connection, to discern that which is "the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." We must also notice that this does not refer to what might be called infidelity, which makes no profession of Christianity;

but to that which, while bearing the name of Christ, is not true to Him. It refers, thus, to professed Christianity.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LOVE.

"Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous even as He is righteous." "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death" (1 John iii. 6, 7, 10, 11, 14).

Here is no uncertain sound. The apostle of love has no difficulty in calling things by their right names. He warns against the deception of mere profession. It is the one that doeth righteousness that is righteous. The one who lives in sin is of the devil and partaker of his nature. The one who is born of God is manifested by not sinning. Here the lines are so clear, that, at times, persons have been almost stumbled at what might be called their extreme statements. When we bear in mind that the apostle, dwelling in the atmosphere of the sanctuary where all is light and love, is comparing all things with the infallible standard of Christ and His perfection, we need not be surprised that no mention is made of what is perfectly scriptural in its place,—the two natures in the believer, wandering from God, loss of communion, the dishonoring Him by any of

His own. Alas, Scripture, as well as experience, shows us the possibility of these things in a true child of God, but the apostle is not speaking of blemishes upon Christian character, but its full, normal fruits.

It is in this connection that he goes on to speak of love as well as light. One born of God must love his brother, who is also born of God. It is impossible not to do so. Anything else is to be like Cain. To hate one's brother is to be a murderer, and "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." How uncompromising, how well nigh harsh are these statements from the apostle of love! How it shows us that there was no sentimentality in that love! All was controlled by the presence of God.

4. THE TEST OF FALSE TEACHERS.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 Jno. iv. 1-3, 6).

Again the faithfulness of divine love is seen in warning beloved saints not to be imposed upon by those who profess to be prophets of God; "spirits," as they are called here, connecting them with the

Satanic power that energizes them. Every spirit is not to be believed. The test is, Is Christ come in the flesh, confessed? As we have already seen, this does not mean the mere fact of incarnation, though it includes that; but covers all that relates to the person and work of our Lord. Here we have a touchstone which will detect the false and the true — "What think ye of Christ?" by which one stands or falls. If He is not fully confessed, as we have already been seeing, we are in the presence of a spirit of antichrist. The apostle specifies further in this connection: "We are of God." Doubtless, the apostles themselves are here first of all referred to. "He that is of God heareth us," that is, hears the revelation given by the Holy Ghost through the apostles. "He that is not of God heareth not us." Here, then, we have the test of truth and error. Let it be noticed that we are bound to try the spirits. So far from it being true that we are to take every man upon his profession, as is frequently said, we are bound to do the very opposite. It is sometimes said we should receive all against whom we know nothing. As a matter of fact, we should receive none of whom we do not know positively that they bring the full doctrine of Christ.

"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars" is said with approval of Ephesus: and the apostle Paul goes further yet in the epistle to the Galatians, where he says: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that ye have heard, let him be accursed." Here, then, we have found that the apostle of love has not closed his eyes to the condition of evil all about him. On the con-

trary, his knowledge of Jesus Christ come in the flesh has enabled him to test everything which is not according to this, and to be exceedingly jealous for the priceless possession entrusted to him and to us. Everything that is not this, is not of God. We shall see in a little while what is to be done with it.

(Concluded in next number.)

"HEIMWEH."

O, glorious home!
The place of blessed rest on high,
For thee I sigh,
The home of Him
Who left it all, and came to earth
(For me to die,)
A babe of humble birth.

My heart is sick
With hope deferred; I've journeyed long.
The world's mad throng
Oppresseth me.
I'm wearied with its heartless mirth,
Its ribald song;
It savors all of earth.

When wilt Thou call
My name, O Lord, and bid me come
To my loved home?
This foreign shore
Is bare, and lonely, without Thee,
Who here didst roam
So patiently for me.

This empty world
Hath naught wherewith my heart to fill;
'Tis just Thy will
That holds me here,
That some desire, Lord, of Thine
I may fulfil,
Or something yet resign.

I find Thee not,
The "Man of Sorrows" midst the throng;
My soul doth long
For one sweet face.
Thine absence is the saddest strain
In all my song:
So death to me were gain.

But 'tis not home;
Its very ways and tongue are strange;
And oh the change
On change the years
Have brought, (of tempest, cloud, and rain)
In their short range:
Thy discipline of pain.

Tho' exiled here,
By faith I have Thee in my heart,
And naught can part
What God hath joined.
Yet, Lord, I long to be at home,
Where friends ne'er part,
And sorrows ne'er can come.

My heart rebounds,
As when the homesick wanderer nears
The shore, nor fears
His loved to meet;
But eager, as the end draws nigh,
Through joyful tears,
Expectant strains the eye.

Thou wilt not chide
Me Lord, for Thou hast weaned me
From all to Thee.
Thou'st won my love,
And made my home; it is Thy heart.
I'll never be
Content from Thee apart.

H. McD.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

OUR readings for the present month are the epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews.

The great theme of Romans is "the righteousness of God" as manifested in the justification of the ungodly, and the full acceptance of the believer in Christ. Its general divisions mark most clearly the wondrous unfolding of divine reasoning we have here.

Div. I. (chaps. i.—v. 11.) God's righteousness, in contrast with man's unrighteousness, and yet the basis upon which the sinner is justified.

The first seventeen verses of the first chapter are of an introductory character in which the apostle declares the basis of the gospel and its sources. The theme of this portion is given in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses.

From chap. i. 18—iii. 20, we have a most needful, but painful unfolding of the awful and hopeless corruption of the natural man. God lets in the light of His truth, both in nature and in revelation, and both alike prove man to be utterly and hopelessly away from Him. He first applies this to the Gentiles who have not the law, but who are nevertheless responsible to know and to obey God as revealed in the work of nature. His eternal power and deity are manifested here, so that men are without excuse. So far, however, from this bringing them to the knowledge of God, the very light that was in them became darkness, and, turning away from the Source of life, their very nature was corrupted by all the unspeakable passions which fester in the darkness, and are the natural offspring of a mind and heart that have shut God out.

Coming to the Jew, with all his privileges under the law, the oracles of God having been committed to him, and divine love shown in his history, is the record any better? Alas, no. The Jew has simply boasted in the law and used

it as a prop for his self-righteousness; but, as a matter of fact, has not kept it, and is therefore proved guilty under it.

The conclusion of the whole of this part is, that both Jew and Gentile are all under sin, and the effect is that every mouth should be "stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

This leads on to the divine remedy, which is as efficacious and complete as the ruin was hopeless.

From chap. iii. 21 to the close of this portion, God's righteousness, in contrast with man's unrighteousness, is brought out; and the amazing thing is that the very righteousness which would brand forever the ungodly as unworthy a place in His presence, instead of doing so, is manifested in the justification of every one who believes in Jesus.

This is upon the ground of the sacrifice of the blessed Son of God, the One whom God, in His love, has "set forth to be a propitiatory," (or mercy-seat) "through faith, by His blood." As there was no difference in the condition of all, Jew and Gentile alike, so now for believers there is no difference in their justification. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Boasting is shut out. The Jew cannot exalt himself above the Gentile, but both alike are justified on the same divine principle of "faith without works."

This is the grand statement of the gospel, which is illustrated and supported by quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures. Abraham and David are given, in the forth chapter, as examples of justification by faith without works, circumcision having come in only after the justification was effected, but never as a ground of it.

The conclusion is reached in the fifth chapter, where justification, peace with God, access into His presence and joy in the hope of His glory, are the delightful contrasts to the condemnation, wrath of God, distance from

Him, and "fearful looking for of judgment" of the natural man. When the soul has entered into these divine truths, tribulation by the way becomes but the blessed means of casting us more fully upon God and working in us the fruits of divine grace. Thus, we can joy in God as the Object of our souls' delight, "through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

There is no thought here of attainment or classes of the people of God. It simply sets before us the full, precious results of justification, the portion of the weakest and youngest believer in Christ. Reconciliation was effected when we were enemies; and received, the moment we believed in God, through Christ. Therefore to make it an advanced stage of Christian experience, is to miss entirely the teaching of the Spirit of God, and to becloud by self-occupation those who otherwise would be rejoicing "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Div. 2. (chaps. v. 12—viii.) The theme of this portion is *entirely different from the first*. There, it was the justification of the sinner from his sins. Here, it is the deliverance of the believer from sin. The gospel provides this twofold remedy: for man's guilt, and for his helplessness. The most humbling lesson, perhaps, that a believer has to learn, is that there is no strength in him; that even with a new nature, there is no power to live for God; and here, alas, most of the people of God spend their lives, looking upon constant failure and recovery, sin and groaning, as the normal condition of a believer.

The first division would answer to the sheltering blood of the passover lamb; the people being still in Egypt, but feasting with comfort upon the roasted lamb whose blood has sheltered them. This second portion is God's leading them forth out of the land of Egypt, bringing them through the Red Sea to sing their song of triumph, and walk with pilgrim vigor through the wilderness.

The last half of the fifth chapter shows us the two

heads of the human race: the first Adam, whose descendants all partake of his nature and upon whom the sentence of death rests because of sin; and the Last Adam, Christ Himself, in whom His people are identified with Him, partakers of His life and all that accompanies it.

The sixth chapter applies this identification to the question of sin, and shows that in the death of Christ we too are dead to sin and are, therefore, to reckon ourselves that, and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 'Thus, we can bring forth fruit unto God, being no longer servants to sin, but unto God.

Chap. vii. introduces the law and shows the believer's relation to it. Having done its holy work, it has been magnified and made honorable by our Lord, who bore its curse upon the cross. This chapter shows that believers are no longer under the law, and that if they seek to produce holiness through the law, they will find themselves in a bondage which causes them to cry aloud, "O wretched man that I am!" It is well that this exercise should be deep and complete, in order that one may get to the full end of himself, learning that in him, that is, in his flesh "dwelleth no good thing;" that he has not the power to perform that which even the new nature desires and delights in. Here, Christ comes in most blessedly, and through Him deliverance is accomplished.

This is dwelt upon at the beginning of the eighth chapter, where the law of the Spirit, which is "life in Christ Jesus," sets free from the law of sin and death. The result is now, for those who walk in the Spirit, that the practical righteousness of the law is secured. The liberty, joy, and power of the Spirit are seen throughout the wondrous eighth chapter; the creation in which we are, groaning under bondage yet, the liberty of the glory not having been manifest; but even here we tread in peace our onward way; and God, who knows the heart, delighting to answer the prayers of His dependent people. For

such, all things must work together for good. Nor can there be an accusation laid to their charge, for God is for them. Who can be against them? It is God who has justified them.

Furthermore, as they look up at Christ in glory now, making intercession for them, the One who bore their sins upon the cross, they can ask, with all boldness, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And then the whole catalogue of possible evils that might overtake them in this world is enumerated, and faith flashes forth its triumphant answer: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Nothing can separate us from that love. Dear brethren, how the heart is filled and overflows with these delightful themes!

Div. 3. (chaps. ix.—xi.) This division is devoted to showing how God's perfect grace, which we have been looking at, is absolutely consistent with all His ways with Israel as a nation, past, present, and future.

Chap. ix. dwells upon God's sovereignty in election, and applies it to Israel. Not all the descendants of Abraham formed a part of the chosen nation. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." So, also, Esau was excluded. This election of grace reaches out also to the Gentiles, and in His sovereignty, they too have been brought into the participation of blessing, not by works of law, but through faith in Christ.

Chap. x. This righteousness by the law was a great stumblingblock for the Jew. He failed to see that he was only condemned by the law, although his history would have given numberless illustrations of that fact. Moses, in principle, had declared that righteousness must be only by faith. Israel had not harkened to God, and therefore the blessing had gone out to the Gentiles.

In chap. xi. this is enlarged upon. There has ever been an election in Israel according to grace, but the

nation as a whole are in blindness, because of their rejection of the Lord. This will continue until "the fulness of the Gentiles" is brought in. Then, when the Church is taken out of the world, God will resume His dealings with the people who are "beloved for the fathers' sakes," and all Israel will then be saved; that is, as a nation, in contrast with individuals, who are now brought out.

Div. 4. (chaps. xii.-xvi.) The closing part of our Epistle is devoted to practical exhortations, based upon the great truths of grace of the first two parts.

Chap. xii. speaks of the happy life of devotedness to God shown in mutual love and service.

Chap. xiii. dwells upon our responsibility, largely to "the powers that be," and stirs us up to put on the armor of light.

Chap. xiv. inculcates most tender regard for weak consciences, avoiding the stumbling of a brother who may not have the same liberty which we enjoy.

Chap. xv. continues this theme and also recalls to the Romans the grace which had reached out to them as Gentiles.

The close, chap. xvi, is devoted to salutations and the faithful warnings against those who cause divisions and offences.

Our notice of the epistle to the Hebrews must be brief. We would refer our readers to the lectures on that Epistle just coming out in the "Treasury of Truth" for this month.

The great theme here is the Person of Christ in contrast with all else.

Div. 1. (chaps. i.-ii. 4.) Christ supreme as Son of God and divine, though manifested upon earth, the truth of which is witnessed by Scripture.

Div. 2. (chaps. ii. 5-iv. 13.) Christ as Son of Man humbled to a place lower than the angels, in order that He might die, thus becoming a merciful and faithful

High Priest over the house of God, leading them on to their rest.

Div. 3. (chaps. iv. 14-x.) Here we have Christ as the Priest who has passed through the heavens, into the sanctuary "which the Lord pitched and not man." Here He ministers for His people, and, not according to the law, but having accomplished a perfect redemption has sat down upon the throne of God. He is, thus, after the order of Melchisedec, an eternal Priest.

The old covenant of the law is set aside, and we have "boldness to enter into the holiest," by virtue of an accomplished redemption.

Div. 4. (chap. xi.) Faith is the principle of relationship with God. This is manifested in the history of the saints of all time, beginning with Abel.

Div. 5. (chaps. xii. and xiii.) Here we have an enlargement, we might say, of the eleventh chapter, or bringing it down to the present time. We, too, are to run with patience the race, to endure chastening, to be on our guard against that which would lead us away from the grace of God or to take up divers and strange doctrines.

Addressed, as it was, to Hebrew Christians, it will readily be seen how the effect of this epistle would be to detach from all that the Jewish system in a carnal way had exalted. The law, the Levitical ordinances, the ministry of angels, the great leaders, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, are all set aside, and Christ is left alone. But Christ suffered without the gate; He was rejected by His own people, a new order has been established, and faith now "goes forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Thus, the effect of the whole Epistle would be to deliver from Judaism.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Ques. 2.—Does Rom. viii. 8, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," apply to a saved man or an unbeliever?"

Ans.—We can hardly conceive how any one for a moment would think it could apply to a saved person. How can one who cannot

please God belong to Him? How can one who is "in the flesh" be anything but a child of the first Adam, an heir of wrath? In fact, the ninth verse, immediately following, states this: "But ye" (believers) "are not 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*." The Scripture evidently, then, teaches that a man in the flesh is an unsaved person.

This being clearly the teaching of the passage, we can now mention the familiar fact that while the believer is not in the flesh, the flesh is in him. He has the old nature, which has the same tendencies and desires that it ever had. Unless he is walking by faith, judging himself constantly, this flesh will produce its legitimate fruits, which surely can never please God. This, however, is entirely different from the man being in the flesh.

Ques. 3.—"Why is it that the golden altar is not mentioned in Heb. ix.? Is it because, being typical of Christ in His glorified character and thus ascended up on high, it could not represent Him as down here in the outer sanctuary? Has the rent veil anything to do with it?"

Ans.—The omission of the golden altar is very significant in the enumeration of the articles of furniture in the outer sanctuary. It will be remembered also that, in the appointments for the furniture of the holy place, the altar of incense was not provided for until after the directions for the induction of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood. An altar requires a priest to minister at it. But we know, also, that these priests themselves were but shadows, and that not of the heavenly order; our blessed Lord had to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and open the way into the inner sanctuary of the presence of God, where true worship alone can be offered. Without doubt the rent veil is the explanation here. There is now really no outer sanctuary. The veil rent has done away with the distinction. Faith rejoices to be in the presence of God; and the Holy Spirit (typified in the candlestick) and communion with our blessed Lord (as in the table of show-bread, together with the service of the golden altar) are enjoyed in the immediate presence of God.

We have also an interesting suggestion of this in the same passage, not only in the omission of the altar of incense from the articles of furniture in the holy place, but in the addition of the golden censer in the holiest of all. The censer, of course, was carried in by the high priest on the day of atonement when he brought in the blood and sprinkled it on the mercy-seat. It was, as we might say, a portable golden altar, and emphasizes the very truth we have been considering. Worship must ever be on the basis of accomplished redemption and in the immediate presence of God.

KING SAUL :

THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.

THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter vii.

THE NEW KING.

(1 Sam. x. 17-xl.)

(Continued from page 90.)

THE occasion is not long wanting to show what manner of man the new king is. With the nation prone to wander from God, as the whole book of Judges shows, attacks were constantly invited by the enemy from various quarters. Morally, their condition was unchanged from the times of the Judges; and, as is abundantly shown in that book, so far from there being true progress, the periods of captivity increase as the years roll on. Nature never improves with time. It can only deteriorate. However, there was some gracious recovery on God's part, of the people, which preserved them from complete disintegration. But the constant danger when they were left to themselves was from the hands of enemies, who were all too ready to take advantage of every weakness. The outbreak narrated now was significantly on the east side of Jordan, in Gilead, and by the Ammonites, kinsmen according to the flesh, of Israel.

Remembering that the whole settlement of the two tribes and a half on the east side of Jordan was practically dictated by self-interest, that they seemed never fully to be identified with the mass of the nation on the west side of the river, it can easily be

gathered that there was less devotedness to God there than even in the proper inheritance of the people. Looking at it spiritually, it is, of course, very significant. Settling down in the world, allowing selfish interests to dictate our path and testimony, is to open the gates for the enemy's assault. Alas, how frequently this is done, and what subtle tendencies there are in our hearts to repeat it!

These two tribes and a half are finally carried captive before even the remnant of the kingdom of Israel. They would answer, in that way, to the hindmost of the people in the march through the wilderness, who were specially exposed to the assaults of Amalek.

It is also worthy of note that the men of Jabesh Gilead, who were the special object of the assault in this case, had refused to unite with the rest of the nation in revenging the awful iniquity of Gibeah in which the tribe of Benjamin was involved. There is a significant connection in this, at which we will look later on.

As to Ammon, the assailing power, as has been said, he was a descendant of Lot and related, according to nature, with the people whom now he would overthrow; and so far from this forming any tie of affection, it was really the occasion of special hatred, as the history will show. Moab and Ammon are the inveterate enemies of Israel, constantly threatening and frequently bringing them into subjection. Spiritually speaking, we have learned to dread that which can claim a sort of kinship to the things of God without being truly His. Thus, Judaism was the bitterest enemy of Christianity, and at the present time everything that apes the true faith

of God is all the more dangerous, because of a certain external similarity. Satan's weapon, liar that he is, is dissimulation. He makes a counterfeit, with which he assails the truth, as Jannes and Jambres, by imitating it.

As has been seen in the book of Judges, Moab and Ammon represent the two sides of the flesh: Moab, an empty profession, accompanied by carnal indulgence, as seen in Eglon their king (see Judges iii. 17-25); and Ammon, living further north, with apparently more vigor, answering rather to intellectual perversion and the intrusion of doctrinal evil into the things of God.

What would complete this array of fleshly religionists is the Philistines, who represent the religion of the flesh, as Moab does its profession, and Ammon, its doctrines.

The king of Ammon is Nahash, which primarily means "serpent," and, in that connection, suggests the thought of sorcery and divination and other Satanic practices. Thus, the association of evil doctrine with its author is clearly seen. The serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts of the field. It is the cunning of Satan which has mingled together some outward forms of truth with the deadly poison of error. We need only to look about us at the present time to see the Ammonites, under the leadership of their cunning king. False doctrines of every kind flourish under the very shadow of Christianity, and bearing its name. In fact, these, so far from decreasing as the knowledge of Scripture increases, seem to multiply. Satan has many forms of untruth, all alike proceeding from the common source. These, then, would represent the enemy

now attacking a portion of the nation of Israel; that portion, as we have seen, which was most exposed to such an assault, but least able to cope with it.

We must notice also another thing in striking similarity with the revival of a power which also, to some extent, resembles that of Ammon. It will be remembered that in the time of Joshua, Jabin, king of Hazor, was completely overthrown and his capital laid in ruins. Notwithstanding this, again we find the same enemy, with the same name, revived in the times of the Judges, threatening the people with destruction, as though he had never been overthrown. This is characteristic of evil, of that which assails doctrinal truth. Jabin stands for the spirit of infidelity, and Ammon, as we have just been seeing, is the same spirit of untruth, only applied more intimately to the doctrines of God's word.

As Jabin had once been overthrown, so Ammon had been completely conquered by Jephthah during the Judges, and yet we find him here re-asserting his power with all the vigor of the early day. All this scarcely needs any comment in the way of spiritual application. We know too well how ancient heresies revive, and how it is not sufficient to have overcome them once. They must be ever kept beneath the feet of God's people, or they will quickly reassert themselves and bring havoc and destruction. At the present day, very many of the blasphemous doctrines which are being held and taught under the name of Christian truth, are the revival of old heresies which were apparently exploded centuries ago. This shows a perennial activity in things of evil, which must be met by a perennial vigor of faith far greater than the evil which it opposes.

Nahash is sufficiently insolent in his demands upon the men of Jabesh Gilead to awaken in them any slumbering manhood; but this seems impossible. He is not satisfied with their subjugation. He will rob them of their eyesight, taking away their right eye, and lay this as a reproach upon the whole nation of Israel. Thus we see the pride which is not satisfied with the local triumph, but would array itself against the entire mass of God's people. And it is just in these ways that Satan overreaches himself. He seems never to have learned, in all the centuries of his experience and with all the power of his cunning, to control that malice which, after all, is the strongest feature of his character.

It has been suggestively remarked that the right eye would speak of faith, as the left would of reason. So far from being fanciful, this seems perfectly simple. The right is the place of priority and importance, and surely faith is above reason; and yet reason has its place even in the things of God. We are not deprived of that, but where it is under the control of faith, reason can put forth all its powers without danger of leading us astray.

The challenge of Nahash, then, would be that faith is to be sacrificed. That which they know to be the truth of God is to be given up, and this is to be laid as a reproach upon all the people of God. And surely is not this the case? Wherever faith is compelled to close its eyes, it is a shame upon the saints of God throughout the world. Alas, how much there is to bring the blush to our cheek as we see how many reproaches have been laid upon us!

The men of Jabesh apparently have little hope, but are not ready to submit to this loss and indignity

without at least an appeal to one who had been pointed out by God as a leader and deliverer for them. Thus they ask for a seven days' respite, and send for succor to Saul.

(To be continued.)

OPPORTUNITY.

“**A**s we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

A fellow-worker was dead—one with whom we had for some time past come in close daily contact.

He was not a popular man. At times a little crotchety, sometimes really disagreeable and noted among his fellows as “close.” We were somewhat prejudiced against him by another, and would often laugh at his queer ways and the pleasure he took in trifling attentions. He was undoubtedly eccentric. Since he has passed away, and the true story of his life has been brought out from one and another, shame and sorrow fill our heart as we realize that “we have left undone the things we ought to have done,” to cheer a fellow-christian's life. His life had been one of sorrow and trouble. An only child died at the age of two years. His closeness (often characterized as meanness) was owing to the fact that he supported his wife in an insane asylum. His life was narrow and lonely:—no pleasure or change in life except as one or another would once in awhile invite him home to tea, and then we would the next day laugh at the things he did. Even these attentions were from people of the world, and not from those who were the Lord's people. The latter were more inclined to shun him than do for him.

Now he is gone, and the thoughts come, how many little things we could have done for him, trifling in themselves, that would have cheered his oft-times lonely path; how we could have shown him a kindness now and then; how we could have given him a cheering word or some of the Lord's precious things that would have been as a glint of sunshine in his life.

But he is gone. Nothing is left now but vain regrets. May the Lord forgive us for refusing the cup of cold water in His name that would have refreshed the soul of one of His thirsty ones!

But are there not others for whom we can do? Are there not those around us to whom we can speak a word in season?—which, fitly spoken, is “like apples of gold in pictures of silver!” are not some of Christ's dear ones languishing for a cup of cold water? Sit a moment in the quiet of your own thoughts, and see if you do not remember someone who is sad and lonely and burdened whom you can help. Do not leave the doing of it until nought shall be left but opportunity for regret. *Do it now.*

“As ye have therefore opportunity.” That means right *now*. When does the opportunity fail in a world full of care and trouble and sorrow? When does the opportunity fail when our blessed Lord is absent from us and heavy hearts are longing for His return? A word of grace and love to them would cheer and comfort their hearts wonderfully. When does the opportunity fail when there are hearts of the unsaved burdened with sin, and longing, aching, dying almost to be rid of its burden?

The opportunities are *thick* around us; let us “do with our might what our hands find to do.” Let us

give the cup of cold water, perform the act of kindness, or speak the word of cheer and comfort. Let us point sinners to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. "Blessed is that servant, whom His Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

"Especially unto them who are of the household of faith." We do not, we cannot always harmonize with all the Lord's people. Some we like more than others. Some seem to us strange in their ways. All are not "congenial"(!)

But they are the Lord's.

They are washed in the same precious blood as we. They are members of the same body of Christ. They are redeemed by the Lord as are we. They are saved by faith in Him as are we. We shall spend all eternity in the same blessed work of praising our adorable Redeemer and Lord. Let us be kind to *all* in the household of faith. Let us love and cherish one another. Let us seek each other's welfare and happiness and blessing. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Even Christ pleased not Himself." Let Him be our example. By love let us serve one another. Paul's word of exhortation was, "comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all." Is any "of the household" not as strong as we? Let him be the one on whom "we bestow the more abundant honor." Those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary. May the Lord lead us to think of others and comfort their hearts with His own blessed truth.

F.

THE SPOTLESS LAMB OF GOD.

1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Gal. iii. 13; Rom. v. 1.

ON Calvary's blood-stained tree,
Where I deserved to be,
Was sacrificed for me
The spotless Lamb of God.

And when I stood in awe
Of God's oft-broken law,
One, cursed for me, I saw—
The spotless Lamb of God.

So Christ was judged for me;
And I, forever free,
By faith rejoiced to see
The spotless Lamb of God.

What wondrous grace was shown
To me, a wretch undone,
That, for me, should atone
The spotless Lamb of God!

In peace I now abide;
For God is satisfied
With Him, who for me died—
The spotless Lamb of God.

REFRAIN

O, blessed, spotless Sacrifice,
How costly was Thy love for me!
For Thou didst pay the ransom price—
"Thy precious blood"—to make me free.
G. K.

[The beloved author of these sweet lines has lately gone home to the Lord. Ed.]

THE FIRST BORN TITLES OF CHRIST.

(Col. i. 15-18.)

Continued from page 95.

WE have seen something of the significance of our Lord's title as First-born from among the dead, as applied to Himself personally. But His resurrection is also the God-given witness of the acceptability of the work accomplished in His being delivered up for our offences; and His resurrection is our justification. If we are therefore seen as having died with Christ as our Substitute and Sin-bearer, if He who has thus taken our place be raised up, then we are looked at as being raised up with Him. We see at once that we occupy an entirely new place as linked with our raised Substitute. We have newness of life, and this, in the very nature of the case, takes us out from under the Adam headship to which death and judgment attached, but which have now been borne; and we are under the headship of Christ in resurrection life. Christ in this way is not only the First-born from among the dead, the First-born One of the new order of life, but He truly is also the First-born among many brethren, who are even now conformed in spirit to His image, and in glory will be so displayed.

He is thus also the last Adam, "a quickening Spirit." He is the Last, because in Him God's thought, as first expressed in Adam, who "was the figure of Him who was to come," has found its full and perfect expression, so that there can be no other to come after Him. He is the Last, the divine fulfilment of all God's purposes and counsels. He is therefore the Beginning of the creation of God (Rev. iii. 14)—a very beautiful expression. The race, that

creation of which we see Him as the beginning, the First-born, is one with which God can with evident delight link His own name as He never could nor did with the old. It had fallen away from its first beauty and perfection in innocency so that He could not own it as His any more. But here is a new creation, which can never fail, but is perfect in the perfection of its blessed Head, of which God says, That is Mine—His own special portion.

Further contrasts, however, come in here. Adam became a living soul, Christ the Last Adam a quickening (making alive) Spirit. But in immediate connection with this, and speaking of resurrection as to the body, we are told "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body;" and "if there is a natural body there is also a spiritual one." The connection here is this: a natural body, and Adam a living soul; a spiritual body, and the last Adam a quickening Spirit. The natural body is therefore that which is characterized by the soul living in it. This is the old order. Now that which connects itself with resurrection is different; the spiritual body and the quickening Spirit—the last Adam. Thus as in the old the life of the body was characterized by the soul in it, making it natural, so that Adam is called a living soul, in the new order the body is spiritual. The apostle says, flesh and blood—the soul-life communicated by Adam—cannot inherit God's kingdom; only the life derived from Christ making the body a spiritual one—a vehicle suited for the spirit—can enter into this inheritance. The order connected with all this is first the natural, and then the spiritual, and of necessity so, as must be plain: before there can be the spiritual for us, there must be the natural, upon

which death is to pass, so that resurrection may come in and in connection with it the communication of the spiritual.

This brings us to another title in direct connection with that of last Adam, that is the second Man. "The first man out of the earth, made of dust, the second Man out of heaven;" and linked with this the race associated with each. "Such as he made of dust, such also those made of dust; and such as the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones; and as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly One" (1 Cor. xv. 47-49, J. N. D.). This is carrying out as to the condition the contrast between the first and second Man and those associated with them, and the natural and spiritual bodies connected with the first and last Adam. The condition of the first, as being a natural body, was of the earth and made of dust, but now the second Man is out of heaven; that is, He whom we know as the second Man is He who came out of heaven and became flesh. As a Man living on earth, He was unique. He must needs remain alone if in this life He continue, for none can ever hope for association with Him in the blessing of His perfect obedience; but in passing through death, not in any sense His due but endured by Him as the due of fallen man, He takes their place, linking them in this marvelous way with Himself and carries them on and up into resurrection life. So that we are associated in life with the Man out of heaven, and the result is, as is this heavenly One so also the heavenly ones; that is, those who are associated with Him in the way we have spoken about through death. And here is the beautiful thought, that we have by this

link with Him obtained a heavenly character in this new order, a character which attaches to the life-giving Spirit, and the body thus animated becomes in this way spiritual. Thus we shall have the image of the heavenly as united through death with the heavenly Man.

In all this we see then the new creation, the new race united in one, under its glorious Head and First-born. We understand then how being in Christ means new creation (2 Cor. v. 17 and Gal. vi. 15); the portion of which is heavenly things; its sphere heaven itself. This is what the apostle brings us to in Ephesians, the sphere of new-creation-life, as he has developed it in Romans and Galatians, which doctrinally connect with Ephesians.

But if we are thus created in Christ Jesus, as we truly are as those in new creation, he shows us many wonderful relationships in this connection, and the glory of Christ associated therewith. Chief of all, the Body, the Church, of which He is the Head. The revelation of this is given in Ephesians, and in Colossians it is put in direct connection with this First-born title of His that we have been considering. "And He is the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the beginning, the First-born from among the dead." As the Head we think of Him being the Governor, and the power directing all activity and life of the Body. "From Him all the Body ministered to and united together by the bands and joints increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19 and Eph. iv. 16, J.N.D.). He orders in this way the function of each member. As Head of the Church He is over all things, for they are all to be gathered together in one, in Him; that He, having subjected all, may be

able, as having all under His power, to subject Himself to God, that He may be all in all. The thought implied in this is that God has given to Christ to reign as Son of Man until all enemies be under His feet (1 Cor. xv. 24-26). Thus having gained absolute rule over all, He subjects Himself to God, while keeping His place with the Father of reigning and rule, as I apprehend it, over all those things which He had subjected. As One who reigns till all is in subjection, and thus brings in the eternal state, He is the "Father of eternity," the One who is the Progenitor of that state; and then having brought it in, He subjects Himself to God that He may be all in all. Thus He remains unchangingly, although in a different position relatively, Head over all things.

This Headship, as to the open manifestation of it, He obtains in exercise of the absolute reigning power given by God to Him, and He keeps the Headship for all eternity in subjection to God. Thus, as the heir of all things, in this connection we see Him first of all bringing by His power the inheritance of which He was heir under His blessed control and into subjection to Him, and then keeping it and entering into it in eternity as the Son subject to God the Father; and *we* have, wonderful to say, obtained an inheritance in Him.

J. B. JR.

(Concluded in next number.)

"IN ALL things let us seek to walk in the light with God: kindly and humbly toward our fellow-men, godly in our inward life individually, and thus in blessed freedom according to Christ."

THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE AS TO FALSE TEACHERS.

A Study in John's Epistles.

(Concluded.)

5. LOVE PROVED BY OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

"**W**HOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments: for this is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous" (1 Jno. v. 1-3).

New birth is manifested by faith that Jesus is the Christ. There can be no new birth apart from this, since Christ has come; even as faith could not truly be said to exist apart from the life which ever accompanies it. The question is not raised, which of these precedes. As a matter of fact, it will be found that they are simultaneous: one giving the divine side, and the other its manifestation in man.

To be born of God, means to be a partaker of life from Him and of the divine nature, manifested, as we have already seen, by the twofold characteristics of light and love. To be born of God, then, is to be a member of His family. Instinctively, "We love Him because He first loved us," but with equal instinct, we love every member of the family of God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

But here, again, the apostle of love most carefully guards against any imitation of that which is divine. What is love, after all? Alas, much that passes for that in the world is but selfishness in another form. We love those that love us. It is to our interest to do so. We salute those who salute us, the Publicans doing the same. We associate with those who are congenial, or from whom we hope to get some advantage. Alas, human love, like everything else human, is tainted by the fall. It smells of earth and of the grave; but divine love has been lifted out of all this atmosphere and brought upon another plane. It is known by other tests. We know that we love the children of God, not because they are peculiarly attractive to us, or go on with our failures and weaknesses, leaving them unrebuked; but we know that we love them "when we love God and keep His commandments." Obedience to God is the test, as it is also the sphere of true love to one's brethren.

How this cuts the root of much that passes even for Christian love! Fear to rebuke, weakly going on with that which we know to be contrary to the mind of God, favoritism amongst the saints, and much else, when tested in this way, shows itself not to be divine love. God and His commands are supreme. Everything else must fall into its place behind these. So far from these being irksome, it is a necessity of the new nature. The commandments of God are not "a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear," but rather give direction and power for a path of joy and love. This obedience, then, proves love. Let no one claim to love his fellow-saints who does not put obedience to God above everything else—that love itself included.

6. REFUSAL OF FALSE TEACHERS.

"And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 Jno. 6-11).

We have now reached the point where we are prepared to learn the truth of God regarding our attitude towards false teachers. The apostle in this second epistle is addressing "the elect lady," a sister; and woman instinctively is more gentle and loving than man. He reiterates to her, as he had done throughout his first epistle, that love is to characterize us; but reminds her that this love is shown by walking after His commandments. This commandment is what we have heard from the beginning, as he says at the close of his first epistle: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." Christ, then, is what we have heard from the beginning. Many deceivers have come in who do not confess this blessed person in all His fulness. He

warns us that we are to be careful that we lose not the things that we have wrought in our own souls or in our service. A professor of Christ may not abide in His doctrine. If he does not, he has not God.

The apostle concludes by saying that if any come unto this sister, and, of course, to any one of us, and bring not the doctrine of Christ as it has been revealed to us in the word of God, the blessed fulness of His person and work, which we have already dwelt upon, such a person is not to be received into the house, nor can we bid him Godspeed. Let it be carefully noted that this last expression in the original does not mean at all what we would think. As a matter of fact, in the Revised Version, it is given as simple greeting or salutation; and this is the evident meaning. We cannot salute a professor who does not bring the doctrine of Christ, still less receive him into our house. Such persons, according to this scripture, should be treated not with courtesy, as it is called, (for courtesy has no place here) but with the most absolute, complete refusal to recognize or to entertain them. How solemn is this! Does our reader shrink from acknowledging its truth? Let him dwell upon the scriptures which we have quoted. It is not our word, but the word of God. It has not to do with man, but with the blessed Son of God.

Suppose some one had maligned your mother, your sister or wife; had brought accusations against their character and continued to do so in a subtle and specious way, what would be your attitude toward such an one? Would you greet him as though nothing were the matter? Would you receive him into your house, invite him to your table? If, then, nature teaches you to resent an insult to one who is dear to

you, shall not grace teach us, not to have hatred, but to have most jealous care for the honor of Him who is dearer to us than our lives and all that we have?

Oh, may God, in these closing days, when the honor of His blessed Son is being more subtly and determinedly attacked by Satan than ever before, open the eyes of His beloved people; nay, rather, warm their hearts into such loyalty to Himself that they shall maintain a testimony against every form of false doctrine, which shall be as uncompromising and rigid as that marked down for us in the pages of Inspiration upon which we have been dwelling !

THIS "desert life," as we may call it, is of an importance that cannot be overvalued. And, as if with a trumpet, we would sound it in the ears of our brethren. Let us turn to the pages of God's own Book, for we can turn nowhere else if we are seeking light on this or any subject. On scanning its precious pages, we find that the men of God—God's mighty men—were those who had been in "the school of God," as it has been well called; and His school was simply this: "in the desert alone with Himself." It was there they got their teaching. Far removed from the din and bustle of the haunts of men—distant alike from human eye and ear—there they met alone with God; there they were equipped for the battle. And when the time came that they stood forth in public service for God, their faces were not ashamed, nay they had faces as lions; they were bold and fearless, yea, and victorious for God, for the battle had been won already in the desert alone with Him.—*Selected.*

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

OUR portion this month is first Chronicles, in the Old Testament, and the brief epistle to the Colossians in the New.

The books of Chronicles correspond quite closely to Deuteronomy in their relation to the other historical books. As we learned in the case of Deuteronomy that it was not a mere repetition, but rather a re-statement of the law, with special lessons in view and looking forward to the future, so the books of Chronicles, while narrating largely the same events as are recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings, do so with a specific purpose. Externally, we might say that the book of Kings is largely the history of the ten tribes; while Chronicles is equally confined to the history of Judah or the two tribes. In Samuel and Kings, the failures of David and Solomon are clearly brought out. In Chronicles this is minimized. The object in Chronicles is evidently prophetic and typical; the Spirit of God bringing out the future glories of the kingdom when in the hands of One greater than David and Solomon. Things point thus largely to the Millennium.

In a similar way, the causes of declension on the part of many of the kings subsequent to Solomon, and the moral effect of their declension, are mostly dwelt upon at greater length than in Kings. The evident reason for this is to impress upon the people the one great lesson written over every page of Scripture, that it is an evil and bitter thing to depart from the Lord.

The first nine chapters of first Chronicles are devoted to genealogies, beginning with Adam, as though showing the descent by nature, which was the fruitful source of all subsequent failure. What could be expected from children of a disobedient parent, but the same disobedience? In beautiful contrast with this tracing of geneal-

ogy down from our first parent, is the reverse order in the case of our blessed Lord's genealogy in Luke, where His human ancestry is traced back, not only to Adam, but then to God, showing Him as the Son of man who had in infinite grace taken that place and would reverse the dark stream of evil which had been flowing from Eden onward.

The second chapter is devoted more specifically to the children of Israel, singling out the line of Jesse, of whom David was born.

Chap. iii. traces the line of David onward.

Chap. iv. gives others of the children of Judah.

Chap. v., the line of Reuben; chap. vi. the Levites; chap. vii. the descendants of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher.

Chap. viii. traces the descendants of Benjamin in detail down to Saul and Jonathan.

The first verse of chap. ix. has this significant summary of all that has gone before: "So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies, and behold they were written in the books of the Kings of Israel and Judah who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression." Everything ended, thus, in captivity because of transgression. The rest of the chapter gives certain other summaries, more specially of priests and Levites with their duties at Jerusalem, and closes with the brief genealogy of Saul and Jonathan.

Chap. x. closes this part of the book with the account of the sad ending of Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboah.

The rest of the book is practically the history of David in the glory and righteousness of his reign, omitting the dark, personal blots which would be out of place in what is, as we said, largely typical.

Chaps. xi. and xii., after briefly recounting David's being made king over Israel at Hebron and his taking Jerusalem for his permanent capital, are devoted to the

deeds of his mighty men, things which significantly come in the narrative of the close of his life in Samuel, but which here are looked at from the beginning.

Chaps. xiii.—xvi. recount the bringing of the ark, which had practically been put aside since the days of Saul, to its place of prominence at Jerusalem. It was the recognition of the throne of Jehovah as supreme. We have the mistaken expedient of bringing it on the new cart in imitation of the Philistines, with the judgment upon Uzzah for his profane attempt to steady the ark; and in chap. xv., the proper carriers, the Levites, have charge of it with the result that it is brought into its place with unmingled joy and liberty.

The parenthetic chapter, xiv, shows how God blessed David, both in building up at home and victories abroad, so that, confirmed in His goodness, he was emboldened to attempt again in an orderly manner, the bringing in of the ark.

Chap. xvi. gives the psalm of celebration composed of selections from the 105th, 96th, and 106th psalms.

Chap. xvii. tells of his desire to build a house for God; which, while recognized by Jehovah, is not permitted; God declaring how He would build David a sure house—looking forward to the coming of Christ. This calls forth the outflow of praise from David's heart.

In chap. xviii., we have his triumph over his enemies, answering somewhat to our Lord's victories at the beginning of the Millennium.

Chap. xix. relates the offered mercy to the Syrians, which is rejected, corresponding to the folly of those who shall, in the latter day, reject the offered blessing of the Kingdom.

Chap. xx. gives also a narrative of victories, most significantly omitting the account of the dreadful sin with Uriah the Hittite, which would have come in at this very place.

Chap. xxi. tells of the only failure recorded of David in this book, that of numbering the people, but it is as leading up to the selection of the temple site, as though reminding us that there could be no dwelling place for Jehovah except in the midst of a people who were not merely numbered, but redeemed; for it will be remembered that provision was made for paying the ransom of every Israelite who was enrolled.

From chaps. xxii.—xxix., we have most elaborate and complete preparations for the building of the temple and the ordering of its service by king David. While not permitted to build it himself, he is allowed to gather gold and other precious material for the purpose, and to make all arrangements, somewhat as we saw Moses leading the people in their preliminary victories on the east side of Jordan, and making full provision for their conduct as a nation when they entered the land, while not himself permitted to go in thither. So David is seen here, not as the decrepit old man in the first of Kings, where mere nature is manifest, but in all the vigor and energy of faith and love, devoting all his powers to the plans and ordering of that which was dearer to his heart than life itself,—the glory of the dwelling place of Jehovah. How fitting it is that such an object should command all the powers of the man after God's own heart! Most beautifully in all this does he prefigure our blessed Lord, who has established, not in any typical, but in a real way, the foundations for God's dwelling place in the midst of His earthly people during the Millennium, and the eternal basis of His relationship with mankind in the new heavens and new earth.

Thus, the book which begins with the humbling witness of the descent of man from our common father who had fallen, closes with preparations of glory and an outburst of praise which show that grace has come in through the second Man: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the

power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted above all" (1 Chron. xxix. 11).

Colossians is a brief, but most full unfolding of the glories of our blessed Lord. It has some points strikingly in common with the epistle to the Ephesians, but differs from that in its main theme. Ephesians shows us the Church in relation to Christ, its present position, future glory, with the walk that results from that known relationship.

Colossians presents to us, rather, Christ in His own glory as the Object to fill His people's heart, and in whose power they can walk the resurrection-life even here.

Its five divisions bring out the gradual development of these truths.

Div. 1. (chap. i. 1-18) presents Christ as Head and Lord over all. We see Him as First-born of all creation—its Head because He is its Creator; and also as First-born from the dead in resurrection, and thus Head to His Church.

Div. 2. (chap. i. 19-29). He has by His death made reconciliation for His people and brought all things into subjection to God. The twofold Headship over creation and the Church suggest a twofold ministry, which is dwelt upon in this division. In connection with His world-wide dominion and world-wide reconciliation, the gospel also has been preached to every creature that is under heaven; while, in connection with His Headship over the Church, His body, the apostle presents the mystery in which the whole word of God is fulfilled. He labors earnestly and desires to present the saints complete in Christ, in accordance with the ministry of the mystery.

Div. 3. (chap. ii. 1-23) dwells upon the infinite fulness

of Christ, in whom we also are complete or filled up. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid here. Whether, with many editors, we omit the words, "Father and Christ" or only the word, "Father"—as evidently should be omitted—the truth remains the same, that in connection with Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid. These are fully brought out in the mystery, which thus becomes, as we might say, the repository of the truth that is in Christ. The saints are to walk as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, entering into the precious fact that they have been crucified and buried with Him, and now, as risen, are freed forever from the external demands of Judaism or the vagaries of human philosophy and vain deceit. Christ is thus seen as the full and perfect remedy for all the thoughts of man, whether they be intellectual or religious.

The fourth division (chap. iii. 1-17) shows the practical effect of the truth of resurrection with Christ in our lives. It means the putting off of the works of the old man and seeking those things which are above, where Christ is, and the putting on of all the gracious fruits which flow from this new relationship.

Fifth division (chaps. iii. 18-iv.) This might be treated as a second portion of the fourth division. It goes, however, more fully into details, and, very much after the manner of Ephesians, gives us the various earthly responsibilities in the order that has been established in God's creation,—the love of husbands and subjection of wives to their husbands; children to parents; the mutual responsibilities of servants and masters; the need of prayer, and the careful walk before the world.

The apostle closes, after the beautiful manner of the New Testament fellowship, with the account of his own experiences, and salutations to many beloved saints.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Ques. 4.—“Can the sons of God of Job xxxviii. 7 be said to be angels? At the creation, all the son of God shouted for joy. If these are angels, we must think of Satan as being amongst them as yet unfallen; but Jno. viii. 44 tells us he was a murderer from the beginning. How can we think of him, then, as shouting for joy at creation?”

Ans.—We fully believe the passage in Job refers to angels. God is “the Father of spirits,” which, while it directly is in contrast with the fathers according to the flesh, would be wide enough to include all orders of His intelligent creation. Every family in heaven and earth is created by Himself. Our correspondent must remember that “from the beginning” as applied to Satan does not necessarily mean from his creation, but from the beginning of his career as Satan. Scripture is perfectly clear that Satan was originally one of the chiefest of God’s creatures; (See Ezek. xxviii.) that he was a “son of the morning,” and through pride fell from the original beauty and glory which God, in His goodness, had given him. Therefore, there is nothing unlikely in Satan and all who subsequently fell with him, rejoicing with all the heavenly host in the creation of the physical universe.

Ques. 5.—“What is to be thought of the teaching now common amongst men, that Sheol is the heart of the earth, composed of two compartments in one of which the spirits of the Old Testament saints were imprisoned until the death of Christ, at which time He descended into the lowest part of the earth and liberated them? Matt. xii. 40, Eph. iv. 8-10.”

Ans.—The view referred to is thoroughly crude and unscriptural, and really dishonoring to the mercy of God. The thought that Old Testament saints were imprisoned in some place from which they were liberated by our blessed Lord, who “descended into Hades” has no warrant whatever in the word of God. The passage alluded to in Eph. iv. does not mean this. “The lower parts of the earth” unquestionably refers to the grave, into which our blessed Lord reached the lowest point of His outward humiliation, from whence He was raised up and exalted, and now fills all heaven.

The “leading captivity captive,” which is also spoken of in that passage, does not refer, as it has been made to do, to the liberation

of the multitude who up to that time were held in captivity; but the triumph over Satan and sin who held in bondage the people of God. By death, He "annulled him who had the power of death . . . and delivered those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Sheol is the Old Testament expression for the Greek "Hades." Its etymology is very likely from the root meaning "to inquire." "Man giveth up the ghost and where is he?" He is no longer upon earth, no longer visible here, he has gone—whither? The Greek word "Hades," (the unseen) is equally indefinite. It is in contrast with that which is seen and present here. Neither term, therefore, refers to a district or geographical locality, but rather to that which is not here and not visible. As a matter of fact, the spirits of saints depart to be with Christ, and Lazarus was seen in Abraham's bosom after his death. It would be the grossest misrepresentation to think that Old Testament saints did not share in this blessedness.

Ques. 6.—"At Ornan's threshing-floor, where the plague was stayed, why is it that David offered only the burnt- and peace-offerings, and not the sin-offering? Why should the sin-offering be omitted? When they came up out of Babylon, under Ezra, they offered both burnt- and sin-offerings."

Ans.—There was undoubtedly full conviction of sin on the part of David and naturally we would think of the sin-offering being offered. On the other hand, the burnt-offering was, as we might say, that which was generic, not exactly including, but suggesting the entire scope of the sacrifices. Thus, in Lev. i., the burnt-offering was presented, as it should be translated, "for the offerer's acceptance," emphasizing, as it does, the infinite preciousness of the death of Christ to God in the very circumstances where our sin had brought Him—to death upon the cross. It would in that way fittingly provide for the guilty king's acceptance, and be the basis of the restoration to communion, which is typified in peace-offerings. The sin, too, of numbering the people seems to be somewhat different from an ordinary trespass.

When Israel returned from Babylon, there was actual guilt and manifold departure from God in every way, which would need to be provided for by a sin-offering. When the people were to be numbered a ransom price had to be given, and the sin of David seems to have been the ignoring of the fact that all the people needed this ransom. This is really what the burnt-offering would

provide; so that in that sense we may look upon it as a tardy payment of what should have been done at the beginning, rather than at the close of the enumeration. We simply suggest these thoughts without confining the explanation within these limits.

Ques. 7.—“In reference to the coming of our Lord and the judging of the living saints at that time, is it exactly scriptural to say that ‘millions will be changed and not die?’ Does not Scripture suggest that, in the remnant times of the last days, not a multitude, but the opposite, is suggested? Is it not much better to adhere in this matter to the plain language of Scripture: ‘We who are alive and remain,’” etc., etc.?

Ans.—Of course, no one would seek for a moment, in using any figure, to speak of the number of the saints living upon earth at the coming of the Lord. Scripture does not do so, and we can safely leave it there. On the other hand, we must carefully distinguish between the remnant of those who manifest themselves as His and who are intelligently waiting for Him, and the entire mass of the redeemed who are upon earth at that time. Thank God, all the false teaching and error cannot blot out a single name from the Lamb's book of life, and “they that are Christ's at His coming” will be caught up.

As to the number of these, we may be sure that God will do that which is absolutely wise and best. While there are few who are upon the narrow road at any given place or time, in contrast with the untold millions who are on the broad road leading to destruction, yet it is a joy to know that heaven will not be a lonely place, but that a great multitude which no man can number will there pour forth eternal praises which, for volume, are compared to the sound of many waters. Thus it is a joy to believe that at the present time the “7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal” represent a large number washed in the precious blood of Christ. Of course we agree with our correspondent, that the use of any figure which would indicate an unlimited number is going beyond Scripture.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.

THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter vii.

THE NEW KING.

(1 Sam. x. 17-xi.)

(Continued from page 118.)

AFTER his public recognition, Saul had returned to the privacy of his daily work and is here found by the messengers from Jabesh Gilead. The humiliating story of the threat of Nahash produces in the people at least sorrow, if not indignation, but there are no stirrings of faith, only a helpless lamenting that such things should be possible. It is different, however, when Saul returns from his labor in the field. Inquiring what the cause of their grief is, he is told the shameful story; there is no weeping on his part, but rather the righteous indignation of God by His Spirit against the insolence of the enemy.

As we said, Saul shows well here. He passes from service into conflict, and the one is a fitting preparation for the other. However, certain things are wanting, which are suggestive. In the first place, let it be noticed that the Spirit of God may come upon one in whom He has not effectually wrought for salvation. The Old Testament gives instances of this, notably in the case of Balaam, who declares the whole mind of God as to Israel, while himself willing to pronounce a curse upon them, and, in fact, afterwards plotting for their overthrow. Thus, it must not be understood that the Spirit that moved

Saul was anything more than the external power which the Spirit of God put upon him in connection with his official place. The threat, also, against the people, with the bloody message evidenced through the oxen hewn in pieces, does not savor of that dignity of faith which alone endures. Threats may energize into temporary faithfulness and spasmodic courage, but it is only the inward abiding which can produce lasting results for God. Then, too, we see that Saul is still leaning upon another arm than that of God, even though it be the arm of the faithful servant of the Lord, Samuel. The threat is, that "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." Samuel never claimed a place of equality with the new king. He was perfectly willing to be his servant and that of Jehovah, and it does not look as though Saul fully realized how his relations were to be directly with the Lord, without any human intervention whatever.

However, there is, at any rate, thorough earnestness for the time being, and a real purpose to deliver Israel; and this God recognizes—as He ever does in whatever measure He can, a turning to Himself. Multitudes respond to the threatening call and are gathered after Saul. A reassuring message is sent to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and all is ready for the deliverance. Saul shows skill and wisdom in disposing his army in three companies. There is an absence of precipitateness which argues well. The early rising, too, before daylight, shows an intentness of purpose and prudence in taking the first step, which always is a presage of victory.

This reminds us of some of the old conflicts of days gone by, under Abraham and Joshua. In fact, it

was under the same leadership, though perhaps with people not so willing and ready as in those days. The result is not for a moment in any uncertainty. Ammon is thoroughly discomfited, his vast hosts beaten down and multitudes destroyed, while the remainder are scattered to the winds, no two remaining together. Thus, the proud flesh, with its knowledge and insolence, is overthrown. Heresy, false doctrine, cannot stand before an attack like this. It is quite significant that King Saul should be more successful in this conflict with the Ammonites than in any of his subsequent wars. There was that in him which peculiarly fitted him, typically speaking, for such warfare.

After all, a successful conflict with doctrinal evil is not the highest form of victory. The history of the Church has shown men who were vigorous contestants for doctrinal truth and scriptural exactness, who had, alas, but little heart for the Lord Jesus, and little in their lives that would commend Him. A certain form of the flesh may, for the time being, take special pleasure in overthrowing error. Jephthah, who had previously conquered the Ammonites, showed that a victory over false doctrine can go with bitter hatred of one's brethren; and of this, too, we have illustrations in the history of the Church. Doctrinal contentions that sprang up in connection with the great work of the Reformation are the common shame of Protestantism.

However, the victory is won, and God can be thanked for it. The people, in that revulsion of feeling which is common to human nature, wish to know who it was that had opposed Saul being appointed king. They are ready to put them to death

at once, when perhaps multitudes of themselves had looked with much suspicion upon him.

Saul, however, checks all this, and still shows well in his ascribing the glory of the victory to Jehovah; at the same time he would show perfect clemency to his enemies. There is wisdom as well as mercy in this.

Samuel, however, goes further. He calls the people back: "Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." Strikingly fitting place indeed was it for all to return to. The normal camping ground after every victory, as we remember in Joshua's day, it is the true place to which we should ever come. Gilgal teaches the great lesson of the sentence of death upon ourselves, having no confidence in the flesh. It was the true circumcision, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled off, the first camping ground in the land after the people had crossed Jordan. It thus emphasizes, as we were saying, the great truth of the Cross applied practically to our lives and persons. It was the one lesson which the nation as a whole needed to learn in fuller measure than they had yet done, and which, for Saul, as their leader and representative, was absolutely indispensable.

So, it is a call of mercy which is harkened to externally, and all congregate at Gilgal. Here Saul is again made king in connection with sacrifices of peace-offerings. It is rather significant that these are the only offerings mentioned. Nothing is said whatever of the burnt- or sin-offering. The peace-offering speaks of fellowship with God and with one another; the burnt-offering, of the infinite acceptability of Christ, in His death, to God; while the sin-

offering tells how He has borne our sins and put them away. Communion cannot be the first thought. It is appropriate, at Gilgal particularly, where death to the flesh comes in, that there should be prominent mention of that death of the cross which has put away sin and which is infinitely precious in God's sight. However, peace-offerings show at least a unity of fellowship, which, as far as it goes, is good. We read that Saul and all Israel rejoiced greatly. Poor man, would that that joy had had a deeper root! It would have borne more abundant and abiding fruit. Nothing is said of Samuel's joy. Doubtless it was there in some measure, though perhaps chastened as he remembered the cause of their being there. He could not forget, spite of all this brave show and recent victory, that the people had rejected the Lord, and that the man before them was not the man of God's choice, but of their own.

(To be continued.)

PROGRESS IN THE WORD OF GOD.

SARDIS may be naturally called to repent in view of what she had received, but in Philadelphia's keeping the word of Christ there is found, not simply the abiding by what has been already received, the keeping a certain fixed and limited deposit of truth, but rather the listening to a living voice which leads on in necessary progress. If we will keep the word of Christ, if there is in us the heart to do this, then it will be found that we have a creed which is continually enlarging. The Word is becoming more and more to us a living voice that leads us on; and certainly there is no holding fast where there is no progress. A certain measure of truth held but not increased, tends inevitably to become less to the one who holds it. It becomes dulled by that sort of familiarity with it which demonstrates its nature by the

very lack of desire for increase. Exercise about it is gone. We are established in it perhaps. We cannot, or think we cannot, be moved from it; but it no more calls up in us the energy that it once did, and thus the decline is already manifest: for as all error is connected together, so that one little point of it that we hold, followed out to its results, will blight all the truth that is in connection with it; so, on the other hand, all truth is so connected that every point in this way gained is a point of vantage, and gives us a view of that which is still beyond—a blessed, attractive view also, which leads us on to the attainment of what is not yet attained. It is still the apostle's rule, "Forgetting that which is behind, and pressing on to that which is before;" for indeed, is not all truth, in one way or another, just the knowledge of Christ Himself? and can there be any right pressing on after Himself which does not take advantage of that which He has given, in order to make Himself known to us, and to give us fellowship with Himself?

Thus the word of Christ and growth in knowledge of it become an inevitable necessity. God has not erred in His knowledge of our need and in that which He has given us, but of which we have not yet possessed ourselves. How can we even imagine what there may be for us stored up in that which we have to confess we know not what it is? How can we measure the unknown? Alas, in our estimate of what is essential and what is non-essential, let us remember that if we apply this to the formation in us of the mind of Christ, we must not tell Him that what we know *not* is not essential to know—that we can afford to leave it out and find no loss by it. Let us be sure that if we would have for ourselves that commendation which the Lord gives to Philadelphia, there must be that quick ear for everything He utters, or *would* utter to us, which will enable Him thus to lead us on. We may be sure that he who is truly a keeper of the word of Christ shall, in proportion as he is so, find that Word becoming more clear; He will emphasize for us the encouragement of this word, "I have set before thee an open door, and no one can shut it."

From the Numerical Bible on Revelation.

THE LANGUAGE OF NATURE.

THE BUTTERFLY.

THE butterfly has long been recognized as a type of resurrection, though there is no statement of it in the Word. It is intimated that there are other parables in nature than those explained, and that we are expected to know them. Mark iv. 13; 1 Cor xi. 14; Psal. xix. 1; 1 Cor. xiv. 10; Psal. iii. 2; Job xii. 7-9; Prov. vi. 6; Matt. xiii.; Prov. xxv. 2.

The family *Lepidoptera* (scale wings) is the most conspicuous of a number of insects which go through a complete transformation in three stages. Those which fly by day and have knobbed antennæ are called butterflies. The body is small compared with the size of wing, allowing the motion of the wings to be slow, and the insect often floats without any motion, thus displaying the brilliant colors to advantage.

Moths generally fly at night, evening, or morning, and have heavier bodies in proportion to size of wing. Hence the wing motion must be more rapid, sometimes like a humming bird, and the beauty is not seen. They generally hide by day, so the colors are sober, or match their hiding places in order to protect them from enemies; the antennæ are never knobbed but clubbed, feathery, or thread-like. Butterflies as a rule are handsomer, and the finest varieties are found in the tropics.

The parent, with remarkable intelligence, lays the eggs on or near the leaves which are to be their future food, and leaves them to take care of themselves. After a number of moultings the pupa stops feeding. Then some varieties burrow in the earth,

where they pass the pupa stage; others remain above ground, spinning cocoons or hanging to trees or bushes. After a longer or shorter time comes the phenomenon which has attracted so much attention—it breaks the case and comes out a perfect butterfly. All traces of the slow, crawling, despised worm have disappeared, and instead it has a new body, mouth, eyes, and wings—a being fitted for and belonging to the free air of heaven and the sunshine, with a wide range of vision, new powers and tastes, a spiral tongue fitted to sip the nectar from flowers—in short a perfect picture of a life of pleasure in a higher sphere.

This seems plainly a type of resurrection—when the Lord comes. Those transforming below ground (the grave) might suggest the sleeping saints, and those above ground the saints which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 51, etc; 1 Thess. iv. 13).

But the analogy does not end with this. In connection with the marvelous change, see 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43; first a caterpillar, afterwards a butterfly. Vers. 47-49, whatever the butterfly was that laid the egg just such will the worm be, every one after its kind. 2 Cor. v. 1-9; 1 John iii. 2; Phil. iii. 20, 21. It is the butterfly that gives name to the caterpillar, though the latter may not look like its parent. Just so we are *now* children of God. This is only our larval stage, we do not look like heavenly beings, or different from the rest of the world, and the world knows us not (1 John iii. 1).

Who that had never seen or heard of it would believe this phenomenon? If God is left out it is contrary to reason, just as resurrection is. It is strangely

interesting to note that Prof. Drummond, a pioneer in the line of things we are looking at, quotes approvingly a passage which distinctly denies resurrection, ("Natural Law in the Spiritual World," p. 236.) What would he have to say as to this type?

As to the change in the nature, who that knows and mourns the evil of his own heart could believe that at "that day" we shall leave all the evil, the flesh, the carnal mind (Rom. viii. 1-8) forever behind? Rom. viii. 29 and 1 John iii. 2 refer not only to the body but the whole being. See again 1 Cor. xv. 47-49.

"No stain within, no foes or snares around,
No jarring notes shall there discordant sound;
All pure without, all pure within the breast;
No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest."

MOTHS.

Butterflies flying by day seem to represent the children of light, Eph. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 4-8; John xii. 36; Prov. iv. 18; and moths flying by night, the children of darkness, Eph. v. 6, 7. There shall be a resurrection of both, John v. 28, 29. Most of them shun the light, John i. 5; iii. 19-21; Prov. iv. 19; Rom. i. 21; Eph. iv. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 9; Jude 13; Col. i. 13, etc.

How striking that we find among the moths most of the remarkable cases of imitation or deception. They imitate the bark of the trees or bushes where they hide, or various leaves in color or shape so closely that it is difficult to recognize them, though looking at them. In the economy of nature this is a marvelous adaptation of means to an end—protection from their enemies displaying God's wisdom, Psal. cxlv. 10; xix. 2; civ. 24. Still the spiritual lesson

remains: deception is very naturally and suitably associated with darkness, and there should be no association of light with darkness, Gen. i. 4; Eph. v. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. The above as to deception applies rather to the winged insect than the worm, and there are exceptions. I have no doubt with more knowledge each variety would yield a special lesson.

The worm and the butterfly seem to be living pictures of 2 Cor. v. 1-9. The worm, like this earthly house in which we groan; and the butterfly, our house which is from heaven. Wings in nature seem always to speak in some way of heaven; and if so, what a simple language! In an evil sense, the birds of the air, Matt. xiii. 4-19; in a good sense, Isa. vi. 2; Ezra i. 6; Psa. lxxxiv. 3; and in Matt. xxiv. 28, indicate that judgment will come from heaven.

The worm has two kinds of legs fitted for slow crawling. The butterfly has six legs, uses them only to crawl out of the cocoon and resting on flowers while feeding, but seldom walks. This only emphasizes the fact that it lives on the wing.

THE EYES.

The contrast between the eyes of the caterpillar and the butterfly is very marked: what is commonly supposed to be a large eye on each side of the head of the worm, is only the rudiment of what will be eyes in the butterfly. The real eyes are very small, twelve in number, and are set six on each side on the under side of the head. Apparently they are of not much use except to see what is close to the mouth. When they travel they raise the whole front of the body and move the head about, apparently indicating poor vision, 2 Cor. v. 7. As we constantly use sight as

synonymous with knowledge this illustrates our scanty knowledge in the body of our humiliation in contrast with the future condition, Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12. (The butterfly has, in some of the varieties, as many as 30,000 eyes.) As twelve is the number of government, it shows we are now learning God's ways in government. The butterflies' eyes are arranged nearly like a ball to see perfectly in every direction—backward, forward, up, and down. Backward, to the present time; forward, into the future; upward, things in heaven; downward, things in hell; 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5; Luke xii. 2, 3.

Each of these 30,000 eyes is six-sided like a honeycomb, and six is the number of victory. This may perhaps indicate the manifestation then of our character now as overcomers, 1 John v. 4, 5; iv. 4; ii. 13, 14; Rev. ii. 7, etc; xxi. 7; possibly that the whole scene in heaven is a scene of victory, and the Victor the one who fills the vision—the Centre of the worshipping throng.

THE WINGS.

Butterflies are among the most beautiful things in nature. As we have seen, the beauty is mainly in the wings, due to the tiny scales which cover the colorless membrane. If you brush off the scales it can fly as well, so the beauty put upon the wing is not a necessary part of it. These scales are deeply corrugated to get more color in the same space; and moreover the color of each scale is due to the refraction of the light by its thin skin for the same reason that a soap bubble and mother of pearl are bright red, blue, etc.—no coloring matter in it, only the light refracted. If you look at a chromotype picture with a magnifying glass you will find all the delicate

shades of color are made up by only three—red, blue, and yellow—arranged in such proportions and in such small spots that the general effect is of delicate shades and neutral tones. Just so the minute parts of each scale are of such thickness that the different pure colors are sent back to the eye in such proportions as result in the beautiful tints we see in the wings. When we consider the wonderful range of color, such an elaborate system to accomplish it becomes marvelous, especially when a simple pigment-like paint, would have answered just as well but for the spiritual truth involved which is this—that all the glory of the saint in heaven will not be due to what we have accumulated here, but that which comes directly and continually from the Sun of Righteousness, the glory of Christ reflected—not that which belongs to us naturally, even as saints.

“The bride eyes not her garments,
But her dear bridegroom’s face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of Grace;
Not on the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand:—
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel’s Land.”

How suitable that the beauty should be on the wings which indicate the heavenly condition, and that the insect should fly by day in the sunshine!

God in all this has not omitted the question of our responsibility. One of the most prominent characteristics of the caterpillar is that it is an enormous feeder. In the economy of nature this fits it for a scourge as suggested in the Scriptures where the word is found. The spiritual lesson is that, if we are really God’s caterpillars, we should be large spiritual

feeders. The provision is the word of God, John vi. 27, etc; Jer. xv. 16; the only thing by which we can grow, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

It is the worm that increases in size, not the butterfly. So our capacity for the enjoyment of heaven must be made here and now: there will be no increase of capacity up there. Each one will enjoy it to the full extent of his capacity, but a cup differs from a barrel though both may be full. Thousands of Christians who neglect their Bible here, expecting to make it up in heaven, will be wofully disappointed when it is too late. A neglected Bible and a lean soul go hand in hand.

There are those who hold that at death the soul sleeps in unconsciousness till the resurrection. The pupa answers to this period, and whenever it is handled it shows unmistakable signs of life and consciousness by its squirming. Does not this indicate that God has carefully guarded against the doctrine in question in type, as He surely has in the Word?

Caterpillars are often handsome, but not as compared with butterflies; and often the plainest worms become the handsomest butterflies, Luke xiii. 30.

One summer evening I stood in a crowd listening to the preaching of the gospel on the street. After a while I noticed an old woman who had gradually found her way to the front and stood, quite unconscious of those around, drinking in the glad tidings of God's grace. She was old, not handsome, and poorly dressed. I watched her with a good deal of interest, and after the speaker stopped I offered her a leaflet and said, "You know the Lord Jesus don't you?" "Oh yes," she said, "He's all I've got. Isn't it good! oh isn't it good!" Her hearty answer left

no doubt that she was a child of God. I had a short conversation with her, then we noticed some well-dressed rude young men standing around ridiculing her. As she turned away she said, "You may make fun of a poor old woman, but I've got what you haven't—the Lord Jesus Christ." And I thought as she disappeared through the crowd, "Here is one of God's caterpillars, poor, unknown, and despised now; but wait till the resurrection, then the shriveled, homely old woman will be changed in a moment, with a body like His glorious body; and the old grey shawl and dilapidated straw hat will be exchanged for shining garments beautiful beyond anything on earth."

"We wait, blessed Lord, in Thy beauties to shine,
To see Thee in glory—the glory divine;
With all Thy redeemed, from the earth, from the tomb,
To be to Thy praise, blessed Saviour at home."

T. M.

NO TEARS.

THOSE words, "no tears," will look so sweet
To eyes grown dim from weeping;
Those words, "no death," will come so glad
To bodies graveward creeping.
"No sorrow" makes a thrill in hearts
Long dead to other thrilling;
"No crying" sounds so soft to ears
Earth's moan have long been filling.
"No night there" seems so bright to those
Whose sun sank back at dawning;
"No sea" sounds calm to those who sail
Long tempest-tossed and mourning.
"No pain" drops blessed on aching hearts,
Which fear their deepest dreading;
"That rest" falls sweet on weary feet
Unchosen pathways treading. *(Selected.)*

THE FIRST-BORN TITLES OF CHRIST.

(Col. i. 15-18.)

(Concluded.)

THERE is also another line of thought, which comes in here in connection with this first-born title of Christ. We have seen that pre-eminently connected with it is His headship of a new race, and that this race is formed from the material of the old. The formation of this new race is carried on in the world, and thus that which is the part of it on earth is constituted of weak and failing men, who are in creature-impotence as to the circumstances they are placed in. The Head of the race of which they form a part is in heaven on the Father's throne, their Forerunner, and upon Him, as the Head, devolves the responsibility to care for and succor those to whom He has communicated a life like His own, the proper sphere of which is heaven, where He is; but these are on earth, in the midst of a scene of evil and trial, filled with everything contrary to the life of the new race indwelling them.

In this relation comes in His title as Priest—the Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. The office of the priest we know is that of presenting himself on behalf of others, so that the priesthood of Christ began on earth with the presentation of Himself as the sacrifice for sin. And this work being accomplished, He is perfected as the Originator of salvation to all them that obey Him. The full perfection of His authorship of eternal salvation is accomplished in resurrection, that being the answer to the perfect work wrought out by Him; and perfected in this way, He is saluted of God in resurrection a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec;

Then we have His heavenly service as Priest on the throne; that is characterized by continual intercession, which is on behalf of our weakness and frailty, and with which He is fully acquainted, since He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, having been tempted in like manner—sin apart.

He is thus able to help those who are being tempted, those whom He calls brethren, among whom He is First-born. His intercession, therefore, secures the working of the power of God on our behalf, by which we are kept unto salvation, so that it is said of Christ, as Priest, He is able to save completely, because He continues forever, therefore has an unchangeable priesthood, the surety of God's power working on our behalf for the accomplishment of all His purposes and counsels, which is really what to be saved completely implies.

Still another title comes in here. Connected with our weakness and frailty we find sin. And here we have Him as the Advocate. It implies the maintenance of our case before the bar of God's holiness and righteousness in heaven against the charge of the adversary. It is He Himself who is the Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. His occupation of the place upon the Father's throne is in itself the advocacy of our case. God, to silence all accusations against us, has but to turn to Christ; and is He not the propitiation for our sins? And it is the being this, and as being this on the Father's throne, that constitutes the advocacy, and Him as the Advocate for us. But this has to do also with the maintenance of our communion. Sin is that which shuts the soul out from God and hinders the proper fellowship with Him. The removal of it, therefore, is an absolute

necessity. Christ effects this on God's part, and repentance being wrought and confession made on *our* part, the way is open for the fullest fellowship between the Father and His child.

Briefly, these are the titles and characters which associate themselves with and are implied in these First-born titles of Christ. They are both in connection with His incarnation. We have seen how the first one implies all His glory as a divine person, and that it is the fact of this glory being His, that makes Him truly the First-born of all creation. He is supreme, and in the place of superiority, as a Man over every other creature. He occupies the foremost place as a Man in the creation; but this is not all God had in His mind; His purpose reached out to a new creation, in view of the failure of the first; and the new is to be the bringing of His glory out of the ruins of the first, a fallen one. The accomplishment of this is through death, as we have seen, and ensuing resurrection and the giving of a new life; and in the new race thus formed God is to find His centre of exhibit for all His glory, and in it He is to rest with eternal complacency.

This being God's purpose, failure is impossible to come in; but this new creation will thus be the pre-eminent order of life in eternity, and the Head of it—for it must have a head also, in whom it stands or falls; the head of the old fell, and the creation linked with him fell of necessity—will therefore be the first and foremost in the eternal order, pre-eminent in this way above all else. Therefore, that Christ might have the first place in all things, He is not only the First-born of all creation, but also the First-born from among the dead, thus becoming the Head

of the new creation, as we have been seeing. The divine reason for Him having taken the creature-place, suffered death and been raised up, the Communicant of the new life, is that in all things He might have the pre-eminence (Col. i. 18). Occupying the first place over all creation as a Man, He must also occupy the first place as being the Head of the new, in which all the purpose and glory of God is to find fulfilment.

Who can comprehend the wonderful thought that with this all-glorious One, the centre of creation now and to come, in time and eternity, we are associated in the possession of life eternal, a life given to us by Him, so that in Him we have an inheritance? We will be associated with Him in His headship during all eternity—we with Him the vessel of display for God's glory to every created intelligence. We are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power, blessed—oh how richly!—with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We can contemplate Him in the sorrow and trial of His path, the pain that rent His heart as He felt the keen edge, as none other could, of the scorn and hatred of men, who nevertheless were dependent upon Him for the very breath with which they cast their reproaches at Him. *Alone.* How trying to Him who found His delight in the sons of man, but with no response from them—alone in the uniqueness of His perfection and the depths of sufferings endured at the hand of those for whom His heart yearned with an eternal love! Man has counted the cross a fitting reward for His love and ministering power for every need. God has placed Him on the throne of glory, Head over all. What joy it is to think that He

shall be manifested as this before the whole universe, and we manifested with Him! We are going on to this, it is the portion that God has set before us, but we are to enjoy by faith what He has been pleased in this connection to reveal to us.

What questions of the most practical importance this brings us to consider! Are we to be associated with Him in glory, and should we not, then, be also in His rejection and sorrow? Can we be associated with a world which has cast Him out? The world has not changed in its enmity and hatred to Him. Is He any more accepted by them now than when He was here? How clear must be, if faithful to His name, the line of demarcation! and oh, for the grace to draw that line and maintain it for His glory! Shall we compare the sufferings of this little while with the glory that is to follow? Oh, I love to think how His smile will recompense it all! His face we shall gaze upon; God's glory we shall read where once were graven the lines of pain and sorrow, and that, beloved, for us. May the hope, the bright reality for faith now, of seeing Him face to face, make our hearts bound with that joy which shall fill us and lead our whole being out to Himself, so that every step of the path will then be ordered in conformity to His mind and heart's desire concerning us! Let us be careful not to grieve Him.

We need God's grace that it may be so. Surely, having suffered for us as He has, He is worthy of being now made glad by us. We know the way of it. His delight is to dwell with us, to have our hearts empty of all else that He may fill them, our communion thus to be with Him now as in eternity it shall be, when as perfected He shall see of the

travail of His soul and be satisfied. What a heavenly privilege and portion is ours! May God in His grace awake us to it more fully, that faith may gain its victory for His name and glory! J. B., JR.

· WHAT IS HOLINESS?

HOLINESS is not the absence of sin, but the non-allowance of it. If to live a holy life it were required that no sin be in me, then were it impossible for me to be holy, for sin is in me despite my being a child of God and the Holy Spirit's abode in me. Struggle to rid myself of it as I may, or make myself believe that I have succeeded, it nevertheless is there and will be there till the Lord comes. Then, and not till then, will that great change be accomplished "in the twinkling of an eye" which will make an end of the sin that dwells in me.

But let the child of God realize first in his soul that God has judged sin at the cross; that sin—indwelling sin—is therefore no more before God but put out of His sight forever. Let him learn thereby to abhor it as God abhors it, and judge every motion of it as God has judged it on the cross; and that man will be a holy man, will lead a holy life, will enjoy the grace of God, and will be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psa. i. 3).

P. J. L.

ETERNAL LIFE.

IT is said that eternal life could not have been possessed by the Old Testament saints, because of the word "the Son of man must be lifted up" that the believer might have eternal life. As well might it be said that they could not have been justified, for the Lord had not been delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. But Abraham we know was justified. But there is a reason why eternal life was not proclaimed in the Old Testament—though possessed then by the believer. After the first book of the Old Testament, which showed the end of the first life in death, Israel is called out, and put under the law. This occupies the rest of the Old Testament; man is on trial, under law, to see if he could get life. Naturally, therefore, the gospel proclaiming life and justification to the believer, is postponed until the close of the trial.

But the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. Those who had learned their lesson by the law—the knowledge of sin—believed on the coming Saviour, and were born again—were possessors of eternal life. Thus Andrew said to Peter (John i. 41), "We have found the Messiah" that is, "the Christ." So Moses endured "the reproach of Christ." Enoch and Elijah went in triumph to heaven. Did they go to heaven without eternal life? Let us recall what was said to some by the Lord, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

B. S. L.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE continue our reading of the books of Chronicles during the present month. First Chronicles, as we saw, was largely devoted to David and his provision for the coming of the glorious reign of his son Solomon. The second book begins with that reign. In many ways it seems to be a wonderful new beginning. We are again introduced to the Tabernacle for the first time since the captivity of the Ark. True, it is not now at Shiloh, but is found at Gibeah (chap. i. 3). The Ark, however, had been brought by David up to Mount Zion and the place which he had prepared for it. The Brazen Altar, however, was still in connection with the Tabernacle, and it was to this that Solomon resorted. He offered multitudes of burnt-sacrifices there, and there God appeared to him. He asks him his wish, a most testing question, for it would bring out the state of the king. But there is evidently genuine faith in this young man, however much there was also of that which would subsequently prove a peril if it were not judged, and Solomon shows, in his desire for wisdom to reign in the fear of God over His people, that he appreciated the responsibilities and the needs of his position. God gives him not merely what he had asked, but that which he had not asked,—riches and glory.

The first part of the book is devoted to the account of his glorious reign. The house of God, provided for by David, is built largely through the help of the king of Tyre. Most of this is, as we have said, typical. In the assistance of the king of Tyre we have the coming in of the Gentiles in connection with our Lord's Millennial reign. "Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. lx. 3).

The house of God is built in all its splendor, and many most interesting details are given here. Everything is in beautiful accord with the typical place which

it occupies, looking forward, as we have said, to the splendor of the Millennial kingdom of our Lord. Solomon's priestly prayer would seem to be a typical fulfilment of the reign of our blessed Lord, who shall sit as a Priest upon His throne and between whom and Jehovah will be the counsel of abiding peace. He is the true Solomon, the peaceable One, the effect of whose righteousness shall be "quietness and assurance forever."

The closing chapter of his life (chap. ix.) records the visit of the queen of Sheba, where we have in fuller measure even yet, the typical fulfilment of the gathering of the Gentiles to the Lord and to His house. No mention is made of Solomon's fearful failures. As we have said, the history is typical and dispensational, rather than personal, and we see the man laid quietly to rest without any account being given of the fearful fall and dishonor to God, of his later years.

From chap. x. to the end of the book we have a sad contrast to the brilliancy of the reign of Solomon. That had given us typically our Lord's reign. Although, being but a type, it had in it the seeds of decay. These manifest themselves all too quickly after the king's death, and under his son Rehoboam, division comes in. From there to the close of the book, it is a narrative of departure from God on the part of the kings; God's chastening of the people by allowing their enemy to prevail over them; the hostility of the ten tribes, who, under Jeroboam have apostatized from the true worship of God, worshiping Him, as distinctly forbidden, in the golden calves set up at Bethel and Dan.

As has already been said, the history is largely that of Judah. Many of the kings were men of faith and obedience to God, with considerable lowliness. Indeed, some of those who had grievously dishonored Him, still in the time of their strait turned to Him, and found Him the unchanging God who shows mercy.

Abijah, the successor of Rehoboam, is a man of considerable obedience and faith in God. He is succeeded by his son, Asa, who is particularly marked as a faithful man, especially at the beginning of his reign. He is correspondingly successful, purging out idolatry and even deposing the wicked queen-mother. His testing, alas, however, brings out elements of self-will unjudged, shown in the refusal of the message of God, and therefore chastening at His hands. He dies somewhat under a cloud, although in the main his life had been a faithful one.

Jehoshaphat, his son, succeeds him, also a man of fine and striking character, but much marred in his testimony by weakly joining affinity with the idolatrous king of the ten tribes. This unequal yoke brings its sure consequences, but in the main, personally, Jehoshaphat was a man of faith, although too weak to be a genuine deliverer for the people. However, in chap. xx., when there was an immense irruption of Moab and Ammon, Jehoshaphat laid fast hold upon God, and there was a wonderful victory.

Jehoram, his son, (chap. xxi.) was in sad contrast with Jehoshaphat, and a proof of the defiling nature of all unholy alliances. He united himself with the house of the wicked Ahab and showed fully the character that belongs to the northern kingdom.

His son, Ahaziah, shows this in even a more marked way, and his mother Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, does her utmost to blot out the whole family of king David. But God has other purposes in view surely, as His beloved Son is to come of the seed of David. Therefore, the little Joash is preserved, through the faithfulness of Jehoiada, the priest, in the midst of all this anarchy, and in due time is in his place as king (chaps. xxiii., xxiv.).

Joash is a negative character, faithful so long as the

strong hand of Jehoiada, the priest, is with him; but after his death, the king weakly yields to the seductions of the princes of Judah and departs from the Lord. His end is tragic. He is assassinated: an end which he had escaped in early childhood, through the faithfulness of one who was truly devoted to God (chap. xxiv.).

His son, Amaziah, makes a good beginning and is correspondingly successful; then falling into idolatry, he too comes under the judgment of God and is also slain (chap. xxv.).

His son, Uzziah, called in Kings, Azariah, succeeds him. The same story is repeated here. Beginning in faithfulness, there is much blessing. Lifted up with pride, he intrudes into the priest's office and is smitten with leprosy and dies, a separated man, though having lived a long life. It is noteworthy that the prophetic ministry of Isaiah begins at this time.

Nothing special is laid to the charge of Jotham, his successor (chap. xxvii.). Significantly it is said he "became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." But he is succeeded (chap. xxviii.) by that fearful apostate Ahaz, who deliberately turns away from God and follows idolatry.

After his death, we have the admirable reign of Hezekiah. How striking it is that an unfaithful king is succeeded by one who seeks to recover the people to God, as showing that the Spirit of God was still at work in this beloved nation of Judah! But things grow darker, though individually faith comes out brightly in the history of Hezekiah (chaps. xxix-xxxii.).

Manasseh, his son, is in fearful contrast with the faithful Hezekiah, and yet here, God's mercy is brought out in the most striking way, for the wicked king is brought to repentance, after he was carried in captivity to Babylon. In answer to his repentant prayers, he is restored to Jerusalem. What a lesson this should have been to the

people at large; but alas, their own unrepentant rebellion against God necessitated that they, too, should be carried to the very same place from which Manasseh had been restored.

Of Amon, his wicked son, we need say little, but faith shines out more brightly than ever in all this gloom, in king Josiah, whose life of devoted obedience to God is most edifying. In his reign the temple was restored, and the word of God given its proper place. But he passes away, and little is left but for the wretched unbelief and heartless disobedience of the people to manifest themselves in their kings until there is no remedy, and Jerusalem is captured, the temple destroyed, the people carried away captive to Babylon. But it is most beautiful to mark that the very close of the book (chap. xxxvi. 22) gives the proclamation of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the Lord's house in Jerusalem. Thus there is an intimation of recovery at the very close.

We must also say a word as to the brief epistle to the Philippians, in the New Testament. This is so familiar to our readers that we need only mention that its theme throughout is Christ as the object of the heart. Each of the four chapters brings this out beautifully.

Chap. i., Christ is the Source and Object of our life; Chap. ii., the Example; Chap. iii., the Object before us in glory; Chap. iv., the all-sufficient supply of our need in every circumstance.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Ques. 8.—“Was the bread used at the Lord's Supper, leavened or not? In 1 Cor. x. 16, ‘the bread which we break’ is the communion of the body of Christ. As there was no evil in Him, could that which speaks of evil be used in the symbol?”

Ans.—It is very likely that, the Lord's Supper being instituted at the close of the passover feast, where no leavened bread was

allowed, our Lord used that which was at hand, the unleavened bread of the passover. We must remember, however, that for us, being no longer under Judaism, the significance of literal leaven in our daily use is entirely of the past. The point to note is that bread was used—the ordinary food of man. Our blessed Lord gave up His body unto death in order that He might be the food of His people. In taking, at the Lord's Table, that which ordinarily is our food, we do not raise the question at all whether it is leavened or unleavened. It is Christ Himself whom we remember and who is typified in the bread which we break.

Ques. 9.—“What is the meaning of Jude 6? ‘Angels being kept in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day?’ Peter speaks of angels being cast down to hell and also of spirits in prison. Did the Lord Jesus preach to these when His holy body lay in the grave? Will both men and angels be judged at the Great White Throne?”

Ans.—Jude teaches that a certain part of the fallen angels are reserved in chains. We know from the Gospels that another part were allowed to range the earth; and Eph. speaks of “wicked spirits in heavenly places.” Without doubt, at least two classes of fallen spirits are suggested here, those who are in bondage and those who are free. Cannot divine wisdom be seen in this, as though God would show that neither repression nor liberty have changed their moral character?

The passage in 2 Peter ii. 4 seems to refer to the class of angels who are kept in chains under darkness; but “the spirits in prison” evidently refer to the disembodied spirits of the sinners before the flood who, rejecting the preaching of Noah, perished then, and their spirits are now in prison. It was by the Holy Spirit in Noah that the Lord Jesus went and preached to these, and not during the time when His body lay in the grave. He, blessed be His name, was enjoying the Father's presence during that time, as He committed His Spirit into His Father's hands.

As to angels being judged at the Great White Throne, Scripture is silent, and so we must be content with the general statement of Jude; they will be judged at the great day. The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. vi., tells us that we shall judge angels in association with Christ.

Ques. 10.—“Please explain 1 Cor. xi. 33, ‘Tarry one for another,’”

Ans.—It was evidently to correct the dreadful abuses which had fastened upon the observance of the Lord's Supper in connection perhaps with the "Love-feast" (*agapee*) preceding it; feasting and exhibitions of pride were common. One was hungry and another drunken. Instead of all this fearful disorder, they were to satisfy their proper appetites at home, so that their coming together would be unitedly to show the Lord's death, and to remember Him. "Tarry one for another" would suggest the unity which is so essential for true remembrance of the Lord. No doubt there are many applications of this to present needs. The Lord's Supper is not to be taken merely in an individual way, that is, as though others were not present. Personally, we may be in communion with Him and yet others may need that waiting upon God which so searches the heart and brings us into His presence. Thus, due deliberation will mark the holy season.

On the other hand, we must guard against a slavish fear to take the bread, and beware of suspecting that others may not be in a proper spiritual condition for this. We ought to esteem others more highly than ourselves, and unless there is manifest proof that saints are eating unworthily, we should keep the feast with all confidence in the Lord and in one another through the Lord.

Q. 11.—"In the April number of *Help & Food*, p. 94, I find the expression, 'It must be one who nevertheless is a creature' etc. Is it ever proper to speak of the Lord in His humanity as in any sense a creature, even though by coming into the world by the gates of birth He took His body from creation?"

Ans.—Perhaps the expression might have been more guarded. While the truth of incarnation is the thought presented, our questioner of course does not mean to say that our Lord's *body* merely was taken from creation. We know He had a human soul and spirit as well. The difficulty in the expression seems to be that the term "creature" suggests personality, and we know as to His personality, our blessed Lord was ever Son of God. He had a creature-nature, however, and this is all that is intended in the passage.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II. THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter vii.

THE NEW KING.

(1 Sam. x. 17-xi.)

(Continued from page 451.)

THEY had come to Gilgal at the invitation of Samuel to renew the kingdom; and this he proceeds to do in the divine, rather than in the human way. Man's thought of reorganization, or renewal, is to strengthen everything on the basis upon which it rests. The people evidently had this in mind in connection with the celebration of their victory over the Ammonites, and the joy which accompanied it. Samuel, however, appropriately with the place, seeks to lead the people into deeper self-judgment, goes back indeed to the roots which had made possible their present condition, and shows how their desire for a king was connected with their sin and departure from God.

First of all, he speaks of himself. He is about to lay aside that government which, as judge, he had exercised for God. There was no longer need for a judge if they had a king. How significant it was that there was still the same need for him as ever, showing the utter incompetence of the king, who occupied a place officially which he could not actually fill! Samuel spreads his whole life before them, going back to his childhood days, when he had taken his place publicly before the nation as one who was to be a servant for God. From that day to the pres-

ent he had walked before them. His sons also were with them. Of these indeed, as we have already seen, not much could be said, and yet the very contrast of their unfaithfulness with his uprightness would only serve to bring into bolder relief the integrity which had marked his entire course. He asks them to witness against him, even as Paul did at a later day. Had covetousness, self-interest in any of its forms, characterized him? Whom had he defrauded? Whom had he oppressed? From whom had he received a bribe, that he might pervert justice? It is the last opportunity the people will have of having their wrongs righted, if indeed there were such. What a sense of integrity must have filled his heart thus to challenge their accusations!

Not even calumny can raise its voice against this faithful old man. His pure, unselfish life spoke for itself, and they can only reply, "Thou hast not defrauded us nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught out of any man's hand." He calls God to witness that they have made this statement; and in thus silently passing over rule to the hands of Saul, he calls him also to witness that there has been nothing unjust in all his past life. Again the people reply, "God is witness." Will they be able to say the same of the young king, flushed with his recent victory, and the man of their choice? Will he prove as unselfish, as devoted, as single-eyed, as this aged servant of God, whose care is not so much for his own good name as for the honor of that gracious God whose servant and representative he has been? Samuel would have shrunk from the thought that he in any way had been a king. All his authority was derived from God; all his appeal was to God, and he

had never sought to interpose between the people and their direct obedience to their rightful King and Ruler, Jehovah.

This is ever the character of all true rule. Self is obliterated. If it speak of its own faithfulness, it is simply to silence false accusation, and to awaken conscience. Thus Paul, in the eleventh and thirteenth chapters of 2 Corinthians, is compelled to speak of his own course, but is well-nigh ashamed to do so. It is only to leave the Corinthians without excuse as to the character of ministry there had been amongst them.

True service, as we have said, ever has clean hands. Love, which is the spring of all service, "seeketh not her own." Fruit-bearing is for others, and not for our own enjoyment. Samuel never sought a place nor claimed dignities for himself. It was his one desire to witness for God and to be a help to His beloved people. This his whole well-spent life testified to.

It is a searching question for us: What is our motive in ministering to the saints of God? Is it simply for the honor of our Lord and for the blessing of His people, or does self enter, as an important element, into it all? The Lord keep us in that true lowliness of spirit which desires simply the blessing of others!

Having cleared his own skirts and secured from the people themselves a witness of his integrity, Samuel next speaks of the faithfulness of God, and with it of the unfaithfulness of His people. He goes back, as he had once before done, to Egypt, and rapidly reviews the salient features of their history. In their distress in Egypt they had cried to Him. Had

He failed them? He sent Moses and Aaron to deliver them out of their bondage and bring them into the place which they were now occupying. Moses and Aaron were not kings. They were God's instruments accomplishing His will; but so far from displacing Him, they were the means of preserving the people in closer relationship with Himself. So, too, in the trials which had beset them since their entering into the land: all these trials were produced by their own departure from God, and He had never delivered them into the hands of enemies save when they had forsaken Him. But even when, in faithfulness, He was compelled to turn them over to such enemies as Sisera in the north, or the Philistines in the west, or the Moabites on the east, it had only been that they might learn the difference between serving God and serving evil. It would only intensify in their souls the absolute necessity of cleaving to the Lord in true-hearted obedience. As soon as they had begun to learn their lesson, how quickly did He respond to their cry! He had sent them one deliverer after another. Gideon, Jephthah, Barak, and Samuel himself, amongst others, had been used of God to rescue them from the most cruel bondage. But, as we have already seen, did these deliverers become kings? Gideon distinctly refuses the crown, and even Jephthah, though he apparently dallied with it, never usurped full kingly authority; and as to Samuel, we have already seen.

Their past lessons should have taught the people, surely, both the cause of their trouble and the way of escape. What deliverance could be more brilliant and complete than that of Gideon, or of Barak? Was anything lacking in it? Had not Samuel led

them victoriously against the Philistines? Could a king do more than these had done? And yet, when a fresh evil menaces them, caused unquestionably by the same spirit of departure from God, they turn now to other relief than to the living God. The Ammonites assail, and instead of crying to God with confession of the sin which had made such an assault possible, they ask for a king, thus displacing Him who was King in Jeshurun. How faithfully the aged prophet shuts the people up to a sense of their folly! They cannot escape it. They have turned away from the One who has been their Saviour and Deliverer from Egypt to that present time. They have dishonored and rejected Him, and now they may look at their king. Surely his stature and goodly appearance would shrivel into nothingness in the presence of the mighty God whom the prophet had been holding up before them. Surely, if there was a heart to hearken, such a review as this could not fail to bring them to that true self-abasement which answers to Gilgal.

He has now unburdened himself, and therefore next speaks of the future. Even though they have thus slighted the Lord, let the time past for all this suffice, and let them with their king now go on in obedience to His will; for, after all, the king, as the people, must be subject to God. If so, they will find that His path is still open for them, and blessing will follow them; but if they turn away from Him, and refuse the voice of the Lord, and depart from Him, His hand will be against them, and they will go on to the bitter end, to learn that God is as true as His word, and that departure from Him can only bring one result.

But he will not leave them even with this last word alone. There must be visible manifestation that he is speaking for God, and that God will speak with him. It is the time of their wheat harvest, a season when all nature seems at rest; but in answer to his cry, God will send storm and thunder as tokens of His displeasure at His people's course—a witness of His resistless majesty and power. As at Sinai, the people tremble. Alas, the flesh can only tremble in the presence of God. It cannot profit by the solemn lessons of His majesty. Its one desire is to get out of that Presence, that it may do its own will. So they seem contrite enough for the time being. They acknowledge their sin in having desired a king, and ask God's mercy. Alas, all this too is superficial, as is abundantly seen in a short time.

The prophet has not meant to overwhelm them, but only to test them. And so comes the reassuring word "Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart."

How patient and long-suffering is our gracious God! He will test the flesh down to the last, give opportunity after opportunity to see if there is still any true desire to cleave to Him. The prophet's one anxiety is that the people should not depart from God. There is no danger that the Lord would forsake them. For His own great name, for that grace which has set its love upon them, He will not depart from them. They are His people. The very chastenings which fall upon them are but a proof of this, and so far as He is concerned they can rest assured that His love will be with them to the end. So, too, the aged prophet will ever remain loyal to the people

dearer to him than his own life. It would be a sin against God to cease to pray for them. He will continue, therefore, to be their intercessor, though they have rejected him as their leader. How beautiful and gracious is all this! Into his retirement the servant bears no grudge against an ungrateful nation. He enters simply into his closet, there to pour into the willing ear of a loving God the needs of this foolish, self-confident, fickle people.

How beautifully all this speaks of the unchanging purpose of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need hardly say. All on that side is secure: divine love and power pledged to bring us safely through, even in spite of the folly which would forget that grace alone can preserve. Our Intercessor abides before God, and bears His people's names and needs before His Father. So, too, will it be with all true ministry for God. One will not be soured by the indifference of those whom he is seeking to help. If he has truly been ministering for God, he will continue to pray for those who, for the time being, have no desire for his service, and are glorying in the flesh.

How the prophet rings the changes on his message! "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you"—words surely that need not exposition, but the impress of the Holy Spirit upon our own souls! How great things has He done for us! Shall we then for a moment boast in that flesh which He condemned by the cross?

Lastly, there is a final word of warning: "But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." How solemnly this was fulfilled

in their later history, the captivity of many a king, with the people too, makes only too manifest.

(*To be continued.*)

AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

THE word which is looked at as significant of present day advance is "Science;" and the great principle of science, so far as it is really that, is *induction*, or, to state it more fully, induction before deduction; which merely means that you must have your facts before you can argue upon them. Nobody, surely, would be likely to dispute that, and yet all error in reasoning comes from the disregard of it. Induction, or the gathering of facts, must be as full as possible in order that the result may be in any way a success. This, in what is commonly called "Science," creates indeed the uncertainty of much that is counted so. The field is so vast, the facts are so many, who can be sure that he has gathered all that are necessary to be taken into account? Theory will not do here. All theories are tentative merely. You must start with what cannot be questioned, or questions will grow upon you as you proceed.

What an immense advantage the study of Scripture has here when, in the mercy of God, we have His complete revelation, with all its immensity, nevertheless put for us in so small a compass! But here also the trouble has been,—is constantly everywhere—in the *incomplete gathering of the facts of Scripture*. It is almost incredible, until you begin to search for yourself, how loosely Scripture has been read, how little it can be fairly said to have been *studied*. If it

be the word of God, then it is a mere insult to Him to credit Him with any idle word. "All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine." If that be true, then whatever be before us in it, it may be a date, it may be a list of names, it has to be accepted as in this way "profitable;" not to enable men merely to write history, but "for *doctrine*,"—for truth which is to be blessing to the soul. But who proceeds upon this principle altogether? How much really has Scripture been studied after this fashion, every part of it given its place and its proportionate place? Yet apart from this, any commentary upon it must of necessity be vitiated in result just as much as the conclusions of science from an imperfect induction.

It has long been my desire to take up once more the book of Genesis throughout, seeking to apply everywhere this principle, to leave no fact of Scripture unexamined, to treat nothing in it as of no importance (or even of little), but to seek, as God may enable, to get everywhere to the bottom of things, where assuredly we shall find the perfection of Scripture fully established in its blessing everywhere for the soul. Such an attempt as this will of necessity make one very conscious of utter feebleness, and that God alone, after all, can give us in any wise that which we seek. But the attempt, nevertheless, is that which alone can give Him fully the honor that is His due, and is therefore that in which one can count upon the fullest blessing.

It is proposed in this way to take up a book which is the introduction to all Scripture, the divine account of everything from its beginning, and which faith can surely receive as an account complete and

even exhaustive for the purpose for which it is given. It is, however little as people may accredit it as that, the primary book of science itself, giving all the fundamental principles which are outside the reach of human investigation. What science can teach us of creation? The beginning of everything is just that which is least of all accessible to man. The germs of all living things are perhaps as such undistinguishable from one another, yet in development the diversity of their nature soon becomes apparent. But think of an account of all this by the Author of it! How can we talk of any science whatever that can be compared to this? And people say Scripture is not intended to teach science! Who told them so? It was intended to teach just what it does teach. God's work is none of it without significance. Nature itself will be universally allowed to have much to teach us. Why should not *God* then teach us about *nature*? How poor and unworthy must be that knowledge of things which it is unworthy of Himself to give us! It is not so. The whole beautiful perfection of nature itself rebukes the supposition. Is there no message from God to us in all this? Christians, alas, in their decision to think only of what they call spiritual, and let all material things drop almost out of account spiritually, have thus given the infidel the surest possible ground for his attack upon Scripture. If there are laws in nature, whose laws are they? And will they reveal nothing of the Lawgiver? If Christ is He in whom all things subsist, will not the whole frame of nature, His handiwork, declare Himself? How false and dishonoring to Christ is any other thought! It will be the endeavor, then, in this contemplated study of the

book of Genesis, to follow every statement that we find in it, as far as possible, to its legitimate results; to seek to explore every track that leads into the known or into the unknown; not theorizing beforehand as to what we shall find there, nor seeking to do anything, but to allow Scripture to speak for itself, and to reveal its own perfection without any supplement of mere human thought or theory, yet not fearing to examine, by what will thus be divine light, whatever in human thought may seem to be in opposition to it. Are there not many to whom a voyage of discovery such as this may prove, will have not merely attraction for the mind, but be of deepest spiritual interest and importance? Yet it is hoped in all this to preserve all practicable simplicity, that none of the Lord's people may be shut out from whatever is of Himself. If they are His, they have already within them that Spirit that "searcheth the deep things of God," and who is given to guide us into *all* truth. We must be subject to Him, to learn of Him, and there is no hope as to Scripture that any but the man of God will be "furnished" by it "thoroughly to every good work." For such, however, *all* truth will be found practical, and in all Scripture, from cover to cover, not a part of it that is not stored with divine riches, and accessible to us just so far as there is faith to lay hold of that which God has given.

Nov. 1901.

F. W. GRANT.

[The above is inserted as being of touching interest as one of the last articles written by our beloved brother, who hoped to be permitted to take up more exhaustively than he had hitherto done, the study of the book of Genesis. But our God willed otherwise, and our brother has gone to his rest. But besides this, which we may call personal interest attaching to the article, it contains that which we believe will be for edification, and we trust a fresh stimulus to study the word of God. ED.]

THE CHILD ON THE JUDGMENT-SEAT.

WHERE hast thou been toiling all day, my child,
 That thy brow is so burdened and sad?
 The Master's work may make weary feet,
 But it leaves the spirit glad.

Was thy garden nipped with the midnight frost,
 Or scorched with the midday glare?
 Were thy vines laid low, or thy lilies crushed,
 That thy face is so full of care?

"No pleasant garden toils were mine—
 I have sat on the judgment-seat,
 Where the Master sits at eve, and calls
 His servants around His feet."

How can'st *thou* on the judgment-seat,
 My child—who set thee there?
 'Tis a lonely and lofty seat for thee,
 And well might fill thee with care.

"I climbed on the judgment-seat myself;
 I have sat there alone all day;
 For it grieved me to see the children around,
 All idling their life away:

They wasted the Master's precious seed,
 They wasted the precious hours,
 They trained not the vines, nor gathered the fruits,
 And they trampled the sweet-scented flowers."

And what hast thou done on the judgment-seat,
 My child—what didst thou there?
 Would the idlers heed thy childish voice?
 Did the garden mend by thy care?

"Nay, that grieved me more. I called and I cried,
 But they left me there forlorn;
 My voice was weak, and they heeded not,
 Or they laughed my words to scorn."

Ah! the judgment-seat was not for thee—

These servants, they were not thine:

And the Eye which adjudges the praise and the blame,
Sees further far than thine.

The Voice that shall sound there at eve, my child,

Will not raise its tones to be heard;

It will hush the earth, and hush the hearts,

And none will resist its word.

“Should I see my Master’s treasures lost,

The stores that should feed His poor,

And not lift my voice—be it weak as it may—

And not be grievèd sore?”

Wait till the evening falls, my child,

Wait till the evening falls;

The Master is near, and knoweth it all—

Wait till the Master calls.

But how fared *thy* garden-plot, my child,

While thou sat’st on the judgment-seat?

Who watered thy roses, and trained thy vines,

And kept them from careless feet?

“Nay, that is the saddest of all to me—

Oh, that is the saddest of all!

My vines are trailing, my roses are parched,

My lilies droop and fall.”

Go back to thy garden-plot, my child—

Go back till the evening falls;

And bind thy lilies, and train thy vines,

Till for thee the Master calls.

Go make thy garden as fair as thou canst—

Thou workest never alone;

Perchance he whose plot is next to thine

Will see it, and mend his own.

And the next may copy his, my child,

Till all grows fair and sweet:

And when the Master comes at eve,
 Happy faces His coming will greet.

And then shall thy joy be full, my child,
 In the garden so fair to see,
 In the Master's words of praise for all,
 In a look of His own for thee.—*Selected.*

"NOTHING BUT CHRIST."

"And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons" (1 Sam. xvi. 1).

DOUBTLESS all who read this article are acquainted with the way in which Saul was selected as Israel's king, and his rejection by Jehovah for his disobedience in the matter of sparing Agag. Chaps. viii. and xv. give the account. Saul was "from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people" (1 Sam. ix. 2); and as such, too, he was the people's choice, and pictures the natural man at his extreme best; but Jehovah rejected him, and calls to Samuel, and in a kindly way reproves him for mourning about him, and would turn his eyes and mind to another, whom He selects as "a man after His own heart" (1 Sam. xiii. 14).

Here we get a thought which pervades all Scripture, God turning our eyes off from self, or flesh, for anything, to Christ.

In the Old Testament we find this taught in type, and in the New we see the fulfilled reality in the One of whom God says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17).

If to the sinner He would speak concerning salvation, it is not for mourning over the past failures towards improvement of a nature which is not, and can not, be "subject to God" (Rom. viii. 7), but in presenting Christ, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7); by whom "all who believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

If to the saint, for encouragement in this wilderness walk and "the race that is set before us," it is "looking unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 2).

Is it for comfort in suffering, persecution, or trial? He draws the mind and heart to Christ, who has left us "an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). Is it for the Christian grace of "humility"? God again sets before us Christ, who "humbled Himself" from the throne of glory, the highest apex of honor, majesty, dominion, down to the cross, with its shame, indignity, and dishonor. Ah, when we see Him, where does poor flesh come in with any claim, or right?

And so, all through the vicissitudes of the Christian life and experience, it is Christ God would have us keep "the eyes of our heart" fixed upon.

And for the future, also, it is the "Lord Jesus Christ our hope" (1 Tim. i. 1); not for a "hope to be saved," but for His coming, when these poor, humiliated bodies shall "be fashioned like unto the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21).

And what will it be in heaven for eternity? what is it will make heaven? Is it merely freedom from care, from sin, trial, suffering, death, sorrow, etc.? Ah no! it will be the presence of Christ. What

would heaven be, with even all these blessings, (which, of course, will be true for His own,) if Christ were not there? So all the way through, even into eternity, it is

“NOTHING BUT CHRIST, THE CHRIST OF GOD.”

What will make heaven most blessed is that “we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 2), and “ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 17). B. W. J.

THE FIRST BURIAL SCENE, AND WHAT PRECEDED IT.

“MACHPELAH,” THE BURIAL-GROUND OF GENESIS: ITS MEANING.

BEFORE Abraham buried his dead, he had received Isaac in a figure from the dead, as seen in Gen. xxii.

In Gen. xxiii. he buries Sarah.

Thus, before the first burial scene the hope of resurrection—the resurrection of Christ—is set before us in type.

How it tells of the tender mercy of God: “And Sarah died in Hebron, in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her”! How much is contained in these words, “to weep for her”!

“And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

“I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”

"His dead," the Spirit of God says. "My dead," the mourner says. The departed one still lives—the body is to be tenderly entombed, to await the resurrection. "Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv.).

He "stood up from before his dead." He had taken a last look. He arouses himself to face the cold world and the tomb.

Abraham conducts himself with dignity and with respect towards the sons of Heth, in securing from them a burial-place for Sarah.

"And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land." And then he offers money for the land, and pays it,—400 shekels of silver,—and the field was made sure to him "in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city."

This field for a burying-place, this first burial-ground recorded in the history of men, of God's people, is minutely described. Our attention seems to be invited to it.

"And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession."

"And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan."

There is the "field" and the "trees;" it is not a barren spot; it is fruitful, and suggests what is pleasant, and peaceful, and restful. We are reminded of Eden, of the garden and its trees; that is, we have an object-lesson, for our benefit, of what was passing

in Abraham's mind. We have suggested to us life out of death—resurrection; and the fruitfulness of God's salvation—the "paradise of God" and the "tree of life." This is the tender mercy and goodness of God.

We are reminded of the eleventh chapter of John, and of the tomb of Lazarus. He who wept with them that wept, and said, "I am the resurrection and the life," comforted Abraham in his sorrow, by the figurative resurrection of Isaac.

We can face death and the world, resting in the love of Christ, who died and rose again for us (2 Cor. v.).

"Machpelah" is said to mean "turning back," and doubtless suggests resurrection. "Mamre" is fatness, and "Hebron" communion, or of kindred meaning, and no doubt, from the connection, suggesting these precious appropriate thoughts. Throughout Genesis "Machpelah" is the burial-ground, and burial scenes are more or less prominent in this book of the first life, in the history of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

In chap. xxiii. we have Sarah's burial; in chap. xxv., Abraham's.

In the account of Isaac's burial, in chap. xxxv., the burial-place is not mentioned, and *Esau* takes the lead in burying him. "Esau and Jacob buried him." In all this there is something sadly in accord with Isaac's long dimness of sight and weakness towards Esau and his venison. But nevertheless Isaac was buried in Machpelah. It is recorded later, in chap. xlix, 29, in Jacob's last words, "Bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpe-

lah, which is opposite to Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought of Ephron the Hittite, along with the field, for a possession of a sepulchre."

And now follows a registration: "There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth."

The careful and detailed way in which Jacob describes the ancestral burial-ground contrasts favorably with the case of Isaac. He was in Egypt, and dying, but type of a Christian who in a world of death calmly and peacefully looks for Him to come who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Thus there are six mentioned who were buried in Machpelah: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. A seventh, whose death closes the Genesis record, is Joseph. He is not buried, but embalmed and put in a coffin *in Egypt*—a perpetual reminder of the departure of the one they had once despised and rejected, but equally an assurance of the certainty of deliverance at the appointed time.

Wonderfully associated thus with the history of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, whose history fills the main part of Genesis, are these burial scenes—all at the same ancestral burial-ground, Machpelah, which is intertwined with their history: these burial scenes being introduced by the figurative resurrection of Isaac; the name Machpelah, "turning back," confirming the thought of resurrection; and the description of the ground, with its trees,—a peaceful, Eden-like suggestion,—carrying the mind on to the paradise of God above, where the true Isaac, the Tree of Life, is in the midst.

Thus the Lord of life leads His own through a scene of death, comforting them, and assuring them by line upon line of precious and wonderful types.

The sons of Heth knew not Abraham's secret—his faith in God, who raises the dead: nor the meaning to him of "Machpelah." They were but onlookers, as are the people of the world now at a Christian funeral. Sad is the condition of the world, and God's people are ever distinguished from it. But the believer can look upon the open grave, and upon the world around, rejoicing inwardly in Jesus. His word always to us is, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Death may come, but "death is ours." We are victors in every direction, and the Lord's farewell word to us is, "Behold, I come quickly."

May this hope be real, and precious, and constant in our hearts. May we steadfastly follow in His steps who has gone through death for us, into the presence of God, to the "Father's house." What a life becomes us, if such is our character, and such our hope!

May things that make us halt, and linger, and turn aside, be put away. May we purify ourselves "as He is pure." Joy becomes the Christian, but not levity, or trifling, or self-indulgence; nor selfish aims; nor the "lust of the flesh, nor the lust of the eye, nor the pride of life."

All that passes away: the believer abides forever in Christ, who is "risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." E. S. L.

THE INFLUENCE OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

M— ALWAYS had plenty of money from his very babyhood, but had known nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true riches.

He grew up worldly, without a thought of God, went into business for a time to amuse himself, but tiring of that gave it up and devoted his entire time to the world, the flesh and the devil. He went into society and enjoyed to the full its pleasures and lusts. There was nothing seemingly that the heart desired that he did not have. Wickedness and sin had full sway over him, and he traveled at a very fast pace until, worn out in body and mind he came to a full and sudden stop in his career. His physician told him he must quit his fast life and take a complete rest, or he would find a place in the insane asylum.

M— stopped his mad career, obeyed the physician's orders and was put in charge of **R**—, a trained nurse.

But rest! Rest? As well tell the waves of ocean, as they break unceasingly night and day on the rock-bound coast to rest. The soul that has not known God, but gone on with a free-rein in sin, cannot rest "There is no peace saith my God, to the wicked. There is a blessed word to the soul that rests in Jesus "My peace I give unto you," but not a word of peace to the wicked.

And so the restless **M**— found a vent for his feelings by endeavoring to make miserable the life of his nurse. Swearing, outbursts of passion, disagreement, disobedience to the doctor's orders, and doing whatever lay in his power to make **R**—'s work

harder filled the hours of M—'s life. Always there was in return the same gentleness, love and courtesy. Firmness of course, but railing and cursing quietly borne, until at last M— wondered and said one day to R—, "How is it R— that I treat you so and yet you are always kind and gentle?"

"The Lord is my Shepherd" answered R— "and if it were not for that I could not stand it. But He comforts and sustains me, and He would do the same for you too would you but let Him." And with many another precious passage from God's word did R— strive to point his patient to the Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world.

And finally he succeeded. The Spirit of God used and blessed R—'s efforts, and soon the nurse had the unequalled joy of seeing his patient a happy, humble Christian, sitting at the feet of Jesus, "clothed and in his right mind."

M—'s death-bed a short time afterward was a scene of happy, joyous faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "None of us liveth to himself and no one dieth to himself." The persecutions meekly borne and the patient showing forth of the Christ-life on the part of the nurse led his patient first to wonder, then to love, and then to praise. We are influencing each day a friend or neighbor or companion. Let us influence them for the blessed Lord Jesus; and this will be possible only as we realize "whether we live or die, therefore, we are the Lord's.

F.

EVERY right feeling in a creature must have an object, and, to be right, that object must be God, and God revealed in Christ as the Father; for in that way God possesses our souls.

J. N. D.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

OUR reading during this month is the book of Job, a portion of Scripture with which most of God's people are little familiar, and yet its lessons are most important. There is but little of a dispensational or historical character in it. It is hardly a biography, but rather the narrative of God's ways in faithfulness with one of His own who had indeed lessons to learn. The age in which Job lived is not given in the book itself, though the whole scene is so patriarchal that it has been thought, with considerable degree of probability, that he lived in the time covered by the book of Genesis. He might well be one of those who had the true knowledge of God, though not of the chosen seed of Israel—one of Noah's descendants who maintained in his own life and walk a consistent testimony. Be that as it may, there is no indication whatever that he was an Israelite, and therefore his knowledge of the true God is suggestive. There may have been others also, and doubtless were who had preserved the knowledge of the Lord in face of all idolatry; but it is significant that they were individuals and had but little influence out of their own ordinary circle.

The general theme of the book is clear, and is brought out in its divisions.

1. Job's prosperity, and his affliction at the hand of Satan (chaps. i. and ii.).
2. Job's conversations with his friends, who accuse him of hypocrisy and outward unfaithfulness to God (chaps. iii.—xxxi.).
3. Elihu's testimony against Job and his friends, witnessing for God (chaps. xxxii.—xxxvii.).
4. God's solemn testimony of His majesty and glory in creation, which brings Job to his face, acknowledging his utter helplessness (chaps. xxxviii.—xli.).

5. God's recovery of His penitent, and restoration of all his former prosperity (chap. xlii.).

The great lesson of the whole book is the necessity of a true knowledge of one's self. Job was personally a righteous man, and evidently a child of God; but there was in him an undiscovered self-righteousness which indicated a failure to know himself. His righteousness makes him the object of Satan's malice, and we learn some very interesting things with regard to this enemy of man. He has access to the presence of God, along with the angels (chap. i.). He there accuses God's faithful child, and demands that he be allowed to test the reality of his faith and obedience. Of course, God is over all, and has His own wise purposes in view. Satan is permitted to do just so much, and no more. Job may be bereft of his family, his property may be taken away, his own health may be shattered, but not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground without the knowledge of his God and Father. Satan can only do that which God allows.

In all this terrible trial Job's character comes out very beautifully. He is upright. He receives all at the hands of God. Satan is lost sight of, and all attempts to induce him to dishonor the Holy One who had hitherto blessed his life with temporal prosperity are thwarted. We hear no more of Satan after these first two chapters. But though Job has stood this test, there is still in him an enormous amount of pride, the bottom of which he has never reached, and this is brought out in his conversations with his three friends, who have themselves far less knowledge than Job of God's ways. Their general contention, through long and almost wearisome reiterations, is that God is good and righteous, and that if men are righteous they will be blessed in temporal things. They intimate more and more clearly and strongly that Job must have gone on with secret sin which God has now brought to the light. They reach no deeper, thus, than

the surface, and Job indignantly repudiates all their charges; and the fact that he is the object of his friends' suspicion stirs up the corruption of his own heart of which he had not yet dreamed. Thus he manifests, in these conversations, his doubt of God's love, goodness, and justice, and finally exhibits, in the most offensive way, all his own faithfulness and uprightness in contrast with the apparent injustice of the Lord. This, indeed, is a sad fall for one in whom God Himself had found much to commend; but how good it is that the undiscovered evil of our hearts should be brought out, that we may see what we really are in ourselves! However, in the midst of all this, there are bright gleams of faith in this dear man, who is indeed groping in darkness, but can say in the very depths of his suffering, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." This is a true mark of faith; and where it is present, we know that its trial, though more precious than of gold that perisheth, shall yet be found unto glory and honor.

Job's friends show their pitiable weakness and retire to silence, at last discomfited by the wordy self-righteousness of the poor man, who was afflicted more by his friends' suspicions and accusations than he was by the persecutions of Satan.

But God, in faithfulness, will not let His dear servant die, nor will He allow him to pass through such a dreadful experience without the salutary lessons which he needed to learn. So Elihu comes on the scene, one who speaks for God, and who yet is a man. In this way he seems strikingly to suggest the position of our blessed Lord, the Daysman between God and us; One who knows the mind and heart of God, and yet can lay His hand upon the poor, trembling and distracted saint and speak words of wisdom and comfort to him. Elihu does not spare his friends nor Job, but in the midst of all that he has to say there is an evident opening up of relief in the only true direction. He would hide pride from man, and

he would show man God's uprightness. If there were true brokenness and humility, he shows how God was ready at once to say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom."

Elihu's testimony opens the way for Jehovah Himself to speak in all His majesty. We have, in this marvelous address, simply the setting forth of God's greatness, power and wisdom in creation. These things declare His goodness and faithfulness also. They bring Job where he needed to be brought—into the presence of the infinite God. How puny is he, compared with this all-glorious, mighty One who has but shown a part of His power! But enough is said to recall Job to his true position, and also to put before his eye, not himself, boasting in his righteousness and maintaining his integrity and accusing God, as in the twenty-ninth chapter, but rather that God against whom his proud words have been directed. The effect is utter self-abasement. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Is this the man who had been glorying in himself, in his conflicts with his friends, and refusing to acknowledge that there was in him the slightest thing except goodness? Thus God has had His own way, and brought His dear child to the only place where there can be blessing—in the dust in His presence. Now He can lift him up; and, instead of the pride which had been subtilly developing through all his past prosperity, Job now, in his latter end, blessed more than at his beginning, can magnify the goodness of that God whom he had learned to know through darkness as he had never learned Him in the light of this world's prosperity.

We read, with Job, the first epistle of Peter, which is in many ways in keeping with that book. It presents the people of God as pilgrims in the wilderness, rather than

worshippers in the sanctuary, as in Paul's epistles. The main theme throughout is suffering in the Christian's pilgrim way, and looking forward to the glory. Its divisions bring this out suggestively.

1. (Chap. i. 1-21.) God's people, chosen of Him to an inheritance which is reserved for them in heaven.

2. (Chaps. i. 22-ii. 10.) The development of divine life in His children: birth (vers. 22-25); growth (chap. ii. 1-3); worship (chap. ii. 4-10).

3. (Chaps. ii. 11-iii. 9.) Practical sanctification in the daily life. Here, obedience to God is manifested in subjection to all forms of authority instituted by Him. Servants are to obey their masters even though unkind and unjust, following the example of our blessed Lord, "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again." Wives, in like manner, are to obey their husbands, though they be froward, seeking to win them without the Word, by their own lives illustrating that Word. Husbands also are to give honor to their wives and walk in holy fellowship as heirs together of the grace of life.

4. (Chaps. iii. 10-iv. 6.) Suffering for righteousness in a world where all is contrary to God.

This is illustrated in our Lord's own life; and as He has suffered for us in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind.

5. (Chaps. iv. 7-v. 14.) Responsibilities flowing from our position. Here, love is to guide, a sense of stewardship, taking suffering with gladness, and caring for the beloved people of God; he exhorts them to be sober, and to remember that a subtle adversary is walking about, more dangerous than a roaring lion. Him they are to resist, well knowing that the God of all grace will soon bring them into His eternal glory. The sufferings of Christ are to be followed by the glory; and we too, after having suffered our appointed portion, shall enter into the rest and joy of our Lord.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 12.—"Is not the first book of the New Testament entirely Jewish, the book of the Kingdom and not of the Church, which is future? Matt. xvi. 18. Do not even the parables of the thirteenth chapter apply to the Jews during the time of the tribulation, rather than to the present Church period?"

Ans.—Unquestionably, Matthew is the Jewish Gospel and is closely linked with the Old Testament prophets. The Church, too, as in all the Gospels, is future, formed, as we well know, at Pentecost, by the descent of the Holy Ghost; but it would be a great mistake to think that the present period was entirely ignored in the prophetic outlook of that Gospel. The parables of the Kingdom, unquestionably many of them at least, have distinct reference to the present time, notably that of the sower, the mustard seed, the leaven and the pearl of great price. We must not forget that there is a Kingdom aspect of divine truth as well as a Church aspect. We cannot close our eyes to the fact that God holds all profession of allegiance to Himself, responsible. This if false could not be in the Church, which, as the body of Christ, is composed only of true believers. Neither is it in the world, for profession puts one in a different place. The parables in Matt. xiii. show how clearly all applies to the Kingdom, that sphere of things where God's authority is outwardly acknowledged by a vast multitude, a part of whom also truly are His. Unquestionably, too, much in Matthew goes on to the resumption of God's ways with His earthly people in the latter days, but we believe it would be a great mistake to eliminate the present period from that Gospel. Much erroneous teaching would follow this; notably that, which we fear is beginning to make inroads already, the denial of water baptism as applicable to the present period. Let us be careful not to allow the entering wedge of any error. God's truth is self-consistent and perfect in its place. To ignore the Kingdom is both to degrade the Church from its high and heavenly place, and to lower the sense of responsibility to God on the part of all who profess the name of Christ.

KING SAUL :
THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.
THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter viii.
TESTED AND FOUND WANTING.

(1 Sam. xii., xlii. 14).
(Continued from page 176.)

WE come now to that which manifests the character of the new king in a far more searching way than was possible in the matter of the children of Ammon, and this for two reasons. The enemy, the Philistines, were nearer at hand and had had a longer and more complete hold upon Israel than the enemy on the east. Saul also was to be tested as to his dependence upon God, and patient waiting brings out the inherent unbelief of the heart more quickly than activity. The nature of the Philistine oppression has already been dwelt upon, and therefore there is little need to enlarge upon it again. We need only remark how natural such a state of bondage is where such a man as Saul is reigning. He exemplifies the condition of the people at large, and this is, after all, in a spiritual sense, Philistinism itself. The flesh can be religious. We shall find this as we go on with Saul. Philistinism stands for the religiousness of the flesh, and therefore is fittingly that which oppresses those who are walking according to the flesh. On the other hand, there is an apparent resistance of this enemy, with but little power, however.

After the scene at Gilgal, which we have dwelt

upon, there was an apparent season of quiet, as suggested in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter. All Israel have returned to their various homes, save 3,000 men, chosen to be the personal guard about Saul; 2,000 of these are with himself, and 1,000 with Jonathan. We have here the first mention of that beautiful character whose presence relieves the gloom of Saul's history, and the pride and self-righteousness which developed apace. Jonathan was altogether a lovely character, a man of genuine faith and devotedness to God; as unlike his father as it is possible to conceive. It will be a pleasure to trace his course, which is brought into clearer relief by contrast with his father's.

Jonathan is really the forerunner of David, and in a marked way he is merged into the man after God's own heart. We will doubtless have occasion to speak of him in other respects at the proper time, but unquestionably the main lessons of his life are most profitable and attractive. From the very beginning, he takes the initiative against the proud enemy, and smites their garrison in Geba the fortified hill.

Of course this was most audacious on the part of a subject people, as evidently the Israelites had become, even so soon after the deliverance effected by Samuel. The Philistines hear of it, and of course at once begin to move against the people who were even in such little measure as this bestirring themselves. Faith does not fear to strike, no matter how absolute the oppression. Formalism may have laid its deadly hand upon the saints of God so completely that none dare lift his voice in protest; but faith will smite wherever there is an opportunity. It does not

coldly calculate the effect, nor count up the numbers the enemy will be able to bring into the field to crush it. It counts rather upon God alone. Here is that which is not according to Him,—it must be denounced—it must be smitten. Such faith was that exhibited on many a page of Church history, where some genuine soul has seen and smitten abuses which had become so intrenched that it seemed an impossibility that God's people could ever be delivered from them,—and what results have followed!

As we said, it is Jonathan who does this, and not Saul; but he will be at least a second in such work. His own pride, perhaps also a real interest on his part, would lead him not to be behindhand. He blows the trumpet, therefore, to assemble all Israel, saying: "Let the Hebrews hear." He does not use the familiar name "Israel," which had so many blessed suggestions in it; but rather the natural name of the people, going back to their descent from Abraham, the Hebrew. Of course there is a spiritual use of the word "Hebrew" which suggests pilgrim character, but this evidently is not in Saul's mind. He simply arrayed the nation of Hebrews against the Philistines. But there does not seem the same energy and decision that marked him in the case of Ammon. There, he would take no refusal of the people, but urged them with threats to go out with him and Samuel against the enemy. He is evidently on even lower ground here than there. Israel hears the report, too, of this preliminary victory of Jonathan, only ascribing it to Saul, as the prowess of many a subordinate has been ascribed to his commanding general.

The state of the people, however, is sadly brought

out by the manner of their reception of the news. So far from it thrilling them with vigor and arming them as one man now to make an end of this proud enemy, they are filled with terror. They realize that they are now held in abomination by the Philistines, and are more occupied with that than the possibility of their deliverance from them. How like unbelief in all time is this! It fears the consequences of any measure of faithfulness. "Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" said the disciples to our Lord when He had been boldly denouncing the formalism of the leaders of the people. They were afraid of the consequences of such faithfulness, and while perhaps acknowledging the truth of what our Lord had said, shrank from stirring up opposition. Alas, we know much of this timidity in view of opposition. What will men say? What will our friends say? Oh, how often has this deterred many an one whose conscience has been awakened as to his path, from going on in simple obedience to God, regardless of what men say! Truly, "the fear of man bringeth a snare;" and to be occupied with the effect of our action upon the enemies of God, rather than with Himself, is indeed to invite defeat.

Truly the Philistines had gathered together in enormous numbers to fight with Israel, chariots and horsemen and people as the sand on the seashore, a most formidable host; and if they have only conferred with flesh and blood, no wonder the children of Israel are terror-stricken. This is too sadly the case, and the people, instead of boldly confronting this host, remembering that it was against the Lord that they had come forth and not against His feeble peo-

ple, they flee to the caves, and hide in the thickets and rocks, in high places and pits. Some of them also flee further yet, over to the east side of Jordan and the land of Gad and Gilead, and there is apparently utter nervelessness in the whole nation.

Poor material indeed is this, and yet doubtless many amongst this terror stricken people were groaning with the sense of the dishonor done to God by their subjection to this enemy.

(To be continued.)

THE SECRET OF TRUE SUCCESS IN MISSIONARY LABOR.

WHEN the Moravian missionaries went to Greenland, in 1733, they thought that the most rational way of instructing the heathen was to speak first of the existence and perfections of God, and to enforce obedience to the divine law; and they hoped by these means gradually to prepare their minds for the reception of the gospel. But this proved wholly ineffectual. For five years they labored in this style, and could scarcely obtain a patient hearing from the savages. But circumstances, unexpected and uncontrived by themselves, led to an entire change of procedure.

In the beginning of June, 1738, Bro. Beck, one of the missionaries, was copying a translation of a portion of the Gospels. He read a few sentences to the heathen; and after some conversation with them, he gave them an account of the creation of the world, the fall of man, and his salvation by Christ. In speaking of the redemption of man, he enlarged with

more than usual energy on the sufferings and death of our Saviour, and exhorted his hearers seriously to consider the vast expense at which Jesus had ransomed the souls of His people. He then read to them out of the New Testament the history of our Saviour's agony in the garden. Upon this, the Lord opened the heart of one of the company whose name was Kayarnak, who, stepping to the table, in an earnest manner exclaimed, "How was that? tell me that once more; for I too desire to be saved." These words, which were such as had never before been uttered by a Greenlander, penetrated the soul of Bro. Beck, who, with great emotion, gave them a fuller account of the life and death of our Saviour, and the scheme of salvation through Him. Some of the pagans laid their hands on their mouth (which is their usual custom when struck with amazement). On Kayarnak an impression was made that was not transient, but had taken deep root in his heart. By means of his conversation his family, or those who lived in the same tent with him, were brought under conviction; and before the end of the month three large families came with all their property and pitched their tents near the dwelling of the missionaries, in order, as they said, to hear the joyful news of man's redemption. Kayarnak became eminently serviceable to the mission as a teacher of his countrymen, and adorned his Christian profession until his death.

The missionaries now understood the divine mode of reaching and changing the heart of savage or of civilized. They began to preach at once Christ, and Him crucified. And no sooner did they declare to the Greenlanders "the word of reconciliation" in its native simplicity than they beheld its converting and

saving power. This reached the hearts of their audience, and produced the most astonishing effects. It opened a way to their consciences, and illuminated their understandings. They remained no longer the stupid and brutish creatures they had once been: they felt they were sinners, and trembled at their danger: they rejoiced in the Saviour, and were rendered capable of sublimer pleasures than those arising from plenty of seals, and the low gratification of sensual appetites. A sure foundation being thus laid in the knowledge of a crucified Redeemer, the missionaries soon found that this supplied their young converts with a powerful motive to the abhorrence of sin and the performance of every moral duty towards God and their neighbor. It taught them to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; animated them with the glorious hope of life and immortality; and gave them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as the Creator and Saviour of men. The missionaries themselves derived benefit from this. The doctrines of the cross of Christ warmed and enlivened their own souls in so powerful a manner that they could address the heathen with uncommon liberty and fervor, and were often astonished at each other's power of utterance.

And is this to be wondered at? Is it not that which the apostle Paul taught of old: "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 22-24)? The Christian ministry is one of "reconcili-

ation," and its great theme is "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It was this "word of reconciliation" that the apostles addressed to the hearts and consciences of men to bring them back to God. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. *For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Cor. v. 19-21). The death of Christ in man's stead is the only basis of reconciliation between the offended God and the offending creature; the announcement of it is the only means by which the heart of the offender can be subdued and won back to loyalty; and the belief of it the only means by which his conscience can be freed from the burden of guilt.—*Selected.*

HE REFRESHETH MY SOUL.

G LORD, Thy gracious hand
 In love, but heaviness,
 Hath brought me once again
 Submissively, (through pain
 And grief) to lowliness,
 To see how little like I am
 To Christ, my Lord, Thy chosen Lamb.

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

O Christ, my heart's resource,
In whom all fulness is—
My life, my light, my joy,
My peace without alloy,
My everlasting bliss:
My longing soul desires to be
For Thee, my God, and only Thee.

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

I know Thou wilt not choose
The heart, to be for Thee,
O'erfilled with earthly things.
No heart like this e'er sings
The heavenly melody
Thou'lt ever stoop to hear
From those who thus draw near.

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

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

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

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

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

H. Mc. D.

THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

(Neh. iii.)

IN the New Jerusalem there are to be twelve gates (Rev. xxi. 12), and each several gate of one pearl; so that, look upon the city from whichever standpoint one may, he will be reminded of the precious truth that Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. v. 25). He came from heaven as a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor" by selling all that He had to buy it.

Jerusalem of old, as rebuilt in the revival days of Nehemiah, Ezra and Zerubbabel, had *ten* gates, the number that, it has well been said, sets forth responsibility towards God and man, of which the ten words in the law were the measure; while the twelve of the heavenly city (and note how many twelves there are in Rev. xxi.), some have suggested, would set forth perfect administration, or governmental completeness, only to be known in the day that the kings of the earth bring the glory and the honor of the nations unto it.

I have thought there might be divine lessons for us in the names and order of the gates of the old city. That there is danger always of being fanciful, I realize, and would therefore seek to avoid letting an insubject imagination, which is only "evil continually" (Gen. vi. 5), run riot in the holy things of the Lord.

But, in looking at these gates, it is not so much my thought to seek to give the interpretation of them as to make a practical application of truth which, I am convinced, is much needed in this Laodicean day. It is my thought, then, to look at the ten ports in order, just as we find them in the third of Nehemiah—an order which is, without doubt, divinely perfect.

We begin, then, with

THE SHEEP GATE,

of which we read in the first verse: "Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel."

This was priestly work indeed, for through this

gate the beasts were led whose death and blood-shedding were to picture the one Offering of the ninth of Hebrews. They pointed on to the perfect sacrifice of that unnamed One of Isaiah liii., who was "led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

Thankful we are that for us it is not necessary to ask, as did the eunuch, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" (Acts viii. 34). The other Man is well known indeed to those of us who have been brought to trust the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. In Him we have beheld the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world (John i. 29).

The Sheep Gate clearly speaks to us, then, of the Cross. Here the remnant of old began to build the wall, priestly hands piling stone upon stone, and setting up the beams and bars. And here every one must begin who has really to do with God other than in judgment. The wall speaks of holiness, which must shut out evil; but what evil is, we can never rightly know until we have understood in some measure the meaning of the Cross. It was there that all the iniquity of man's heart was fully revealed; there too that the absolute holiness of God's character was declared in an even more marked way than it will be made known in the lake of fire. In the Cross it was that mercy and truth met together, and that righteousness and peace kissed each other (Ps. lxxxv. 10).

"'Tis in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be."

The most important truth of Scripture is, that on the cross the judgment of a holy God against sin fell

upon His spotless Son when He "suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). There is nothing like the apprehension of this to give peace to a troubled soul. I have been awakened to see myself a lost, guilty sinner. Perhaps for years I have been going about to establish my own righteousness, and trusting that all would surely be well with me because of fancied merit in myself. I have deluded myself with the notion that God, who is love, must therefore allow sin to pass unpunished, or that my sin was, at any rate, of weight so light it would never sink me down to the pit of woe. But now all is changed. I have learned that I am a lost man! My sins, which once seemed like trifles, insignificant as molehills, now rise before my terrified vision as dark, shapeless mountains, which I fear will bury me beneath their awful weight in the nethermost depths of the abyss of divine wrath. I look on my right hand, but I find no helper. Refuge fails me. In my despair I cry out, "No man cares for my soul!" (Ps. cxlii. 4); and in the hour of my deepest distress there comes to me one with feet beautiful upon the mountains, a messenger, one among a thousand, who tells me the good news that God, the God whom I have so grievously sinned against, and so flagrantly dishonored, has found a Ransom, and can thus deliver me from going down into the pit (Job xxxiii. 24). My sins and guilt have all been laid on Jesus. My judgment has fallen upon His holy head, and thus I can go righteously free.

Well does such a message deserve the name of "gospel"! Good news indeed! more welcome than cold water to a thirsty soul.

As of old, when Noah took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings upon the altar (Gen. viii. 20), so now Jehovah has looked upon the work of His beloved Son and "smelled a sweet savor," which is truly a "savor of rest" (margin); for sin is thus canceled, and God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Of all this, and much more, may the Sheep Gate remind us. A gate of judgment it is too; for of judgment, in Scripture, the gate often speaks. But here it is judgment falling, not upon the guilty, but upon the guiltless One who voluntarily stood in the place of the sinner. "He was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification; therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1).

Let me press it upon the reader—has all this been made good to your soul? Is your confidence for eternity based upon the work of Christ? Are you trusting alone in Jesus, who in those solemn hours of deeper than Egyptian darkness "fought the fight alone," vanquished Satan's power in resurrection, and is now exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour?

O, be persuaded! If you are resting on anything short of this, your soul is in peril most grave and fearful; for it is only "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7). If, however, this is the ground of your confidence, if you are saved and know it, if the lesson of the Sheep Gate has been truly learned in the presence of God, I ask you to pass on with me now to

THE FISH GATE.

"But the Fish Gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof" (ver. 3).

The name of this port at once brings to mind the word of the Lord addressed to Simon and Andrew when He found them "casting a net into the sea." "He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Precious it is to learn that, without a word as to delay, they "*straightway* left their nets and followed Him" (Matt. iv. 17-20).

It is a weighty truth, often I fear forgotten in this pushing, restless age, that the great business of those already saved should be to bring others to Christ. Alas, alas, the indifference as to this among many of the people of God is most appalling.

The Fish Gate is tightly closed, or fallen in ruins, and there are no devoted "sons of Hassenaah" who are enough in earnest about the condition of the lost to build it up again.

Shame, a crying shame, that it should ever be true of saints going to heaven that they are unconcerned about sinners going to hell! And God has said, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him."

Oh, the heartlessness of it! Souls perishing under one's very eyes, and no hand stretched out to help, no voice raised to proclaim God's message of love to the lost!

Brothers! sisters! be honest with God! Face the question in His presence, *What are you doing for souls?* Will friends, neighbors, relatives, rise up in that day and cry in their anguish and woe, "I lived

beside him for years. He knew I was going to hell. He never warned me. I'm damned, and he never told me how I might have been saved!"

Don't, I beseech you—don't turn it aside by a lot of unholy cant about "so much fleshly energy," and "the need of building up the saints." In the mouths of men who lift not a finger to keep others from going down to eternal ruin, such language is positively disgusting; yea, it is worse; for it is actually wicked and abhorrent in the ears of Him who saith, "He that is wise winneth souls." (R. V.)

Build up the Fish Gate, brethren; go out after the lost, and bring them inside the wall, where, after having been saved, they will be cared for and helped in the things of God.

I know all have not the same gift. All cannot preach to thousands. But surely it is not gift that is lacking so much as grace. It takes no special gift to distribute gospel tracts, or speak a loving word in season to needy souls. If you have "gift" enough to spend hours talking about the weather, or the various questions of domestic, business, or political life, you have all the gift that is needed to drop a tender, warning message in the ear of a careless one, or to point an anxious person to Christ.

Let none shirk this work. On another part of the wall labored the Tekoites; and the Holy Ghost has noted that "their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord" (ver. 5). They will have to face this record at the judgment-seat of Christ; and I fear there are some God-made, and many self-made, "nobles" among the people of the Lord to-day who manifest as gross indifference to the work of God.

That, on the other hand, mere fleshly zeal will not

be owned of God I quite admit; and this brings before us the need of enforcing the lessons suggested by the next five gates. H. A. I.

(To be continued.)

THREE INSCRUTABLE THINGS.

THE heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17. 9.)

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11. 33-36.)

The love of Christ which passeth knowledge. (Eph. 3. 19.)

IF our affections and desires are lingering on earth, or stopping short of a glorified Christ in heaven, as the One in whom our life is hid, and to whom we are presently to be conformed in glory, and that in the glory where He is, we shall find soon that earthly things are something more than dross.

J. N. D.

THERE is a constant tendency in earthly things to press down the affections. Duties are more apt to lead the soul away from God than open sin. Many a Christian has been ensnared by duties, whose heart would have shrunk from open sin. But we have only one duty in all the varying circumstances of life—to serve Christ.

J. N. D.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

ONLY in John's Gospel is this miracle recorded. The other Gospels were written much earlier, but this first miracle, like every other portion of God's word, comes to us in its right place. It is in accord with John's Gospel because it is the foreshadowing of this new dispensation of the Spirit. Matthew, Mark and Luke were more on Jewish ground, when the Lord came to His own and His own received Him not; but in John almost the opening word is, "As many as did receive Him, to them gave He the power to become THE SONS OF GOD, even to them that believe on His name, who were born . . . of God." This is the first mention of the New Birth in Scripture.

In this miracle, opening, as it were, the new dispensation, we have in symbol its chief characteristics beautifully set forth.

First—It is *the Third Day*—resurrection day. Resurrection characterizes the dispensation. Our Lord rose from the dead on the third day, and the cross implies the end of man as before God. If God had not done with the Adam race—the natural man—Jesus need not have died. He could have come amongst us as a teacher, and thus brought the word of God to us. But so evil was our nature that, like the Jews, we never could have received Him as the declarer of God. This method had been tried throughout the world's history, and ended at the cross of Christ. Now is the circumcision truly. The end of the flesh has come. Man, to suit God, must be dead, buried, risen; which baptism figures. The Lord Jesus took the penalty of sin for us, and

only asks of man to willingly accept death, burial, and resurrection—or a new life, giving up the old one and accepting the new by Jesus Christ the divine Man. So here in this first miracle of our Lord it is resurrection day—a new dispensation!

Second—It is a marriage, a union, and a union of God and man that is before us. Jesus the Lord is the Head of this new race. He is the first one in whom this union was ever effected. He is the first divine Man. And Mary “the mother of Jesus was there.” It was in connection with her that the divine union was first miraculously wrought. Now, as ever, such a union can be effected only by the miraculous power of God. Every new-born soul is a miracle, and can only be wrought by almighty power. Hence it is, “BORN OF GOD,” “sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ!”—a miracle of grace! “By *grace* are ye saved, through faith; and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

Third—“And both Jesus and His disciples were called to the marriage”—Jesus the power, and the disciples to be the subjects. They were as yet not fully initiated into this new life, but were disciples, learners. Here in the beginning it was symbolically set before them, to be sure; probably after many days to be dwelt upon and meditated upon after He had returned to His Father; even as we now dwell upon it with rapture in our hearts and thanksgivings on our lips.

Fourth.—No wine, no joy, no gladness. So was man in his sin, separated from God, in darkness and ruin, helpless, lost, all resting under the judgment of God, dead to Him.

Fifth—Nothing but “earthen vessels”! What can

they do? Nothing but hold the water, which is a figure of the word of God. That makes up for everything else. Receive "*the Word*," and that brings the joy of salvation. There is now not only plenty of wine, but the vessels are "full to the brim," and everybody is full of joy. "Of His own will begat He us with *the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures," "being born again by *the word of God*."

Sixth—"Whatsoever He saith unto you *do*." Yes, do it. Obey Him, and all spiritual good follows. Miracles even follow obedience. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or not." God will let him know by His Spirit. "In Him is *life*" (the new life), "and the life is *the light* of men." Men cannot see until they get this life. The Lord Jesus opens the eyes of the spiritually blind now, just as He did of the physically blind when He was down here among men—all the result of obedience, subjection to God. God must be God; man must be subject.

Seventh—"The best wine at the last"—the last administration, or dispensation, the best. It is even the eternal perfection of man with God. "*Every man, when he is perfected, shall be as his Master*" (Luke vi. 40). Every true Christian shall be conformed to the image of his Master (Rom. viii. 29). It is united to God in Christ, as our miracle sets forth in the most perfect and beautiful symbols.

Eighth—This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and *manifested forth His glory*, and His disciples believed on Him—set forth His glory to all creation. Here in the very beginning is the whole dispensation set out before us in figure, so

that all men, once in the light of God, may see His purposes manifested from the very beginning of the Lord's public service. In it we see a magnificent prophecy of the glorious future for all the true saints of God. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also *glorified*" (Rom viii. 30). "What then shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Ib. 31.)

J. S. P.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

FROM time to time during the remainder of the year, we trust to read through the entire book of Psalms. Our portion of these for the present month is Psalms i.-lxii., or the first two books of these. We would refer our readers to an article in the January number upon the Psalms in general, which will render unnecessary our going into the same details at this time. These first two books are perhaps the fullest of any in the entire collection of Psalms, especially the first (Psalms i.-xli.), the theme of which is God's sovereignty and purposes of blessing in Christ for His people. Of course the blessing here is considered primarily in relation to God's earthly people Israel, but where Christ is the theme, blessing cannot be limited. It is as wide as the sway which He will exercise over all creation.

The main divisions of this first book are:

I. (Psalms i.-viii.) Christ in His supremacy, King in Zion and Ruler over all creation.

We might say in general that there are two main features of all of the Psalms which it is necessary to distinguish if we are to understand their full, prophetic meaning. Christ is the theme, but He is seen in connection

with His people, and even only a remnant of these. The times, prophetically speaking, to which the Psalms refer, are those of abounding national apostasy, when the mass of the people have no heart for God and when the enemy from outside also oppresses. This will help us to understand the frequent references to the oppression of the enemy and the heartlessness of the mass of the nation, also the exercise through which this remnant passes; for it is only too evident that they have but a partial apprehension of God's goodness and but little knowledge of His grace. They are unable to distinguish between His chastening hand upon them for their sins and their testing as they pass through affliction. Thus, from time to time, they are tempted to cry out under the hand of their oppressors and to appeal to God as though He had forgotten. Psalms which are devoted to such subjects as these, develop the varied exercises through which the remnant passes. We find in them much that is of God, a faith that lays hold upon Him, abhorrence of evil and a spirit of separation from the ungodly. On the other hand, we find an impatience and feebleness, a depression which, at times, is well nigh overwhelming, but faith gradually triumphs and emerges from the gloom all the brighter for its exercise.

We will find some of the psalms which apply exclusively to Christ, as the second and eighth. Others apply to Him to a certain extent and also to His people, as the first; while others give exclusively the exercise of the remnant, as *Psa. iii.-vii.*

Space will not permit us to characterize each psalm in detail. It will be noticed that the first psalm is a general statement of the walk of the godly in separation from evil and in dependence upon God, feeding upon His Word. The results are fruitfulness and spiritual prosperity in contrast with the ungodly who will soon pass away in judgment. How perfectly our blessed Lord exemplified

this godly separation unto His Father we need hardly say; and His people for all time, by His grace, will seek to walk in the same steps.

In Psa. ii. we have the opposition of the nations to God's King, who, however, is established by Him in Zion and will one day rule to the ends of the earth.

Psa. iii.-vii. give the exercises of the remnant. Each of these has a different character. In Psa. iii., faith seems to be prominent. God is unchanging and will protect the believer from those who have risen up against him.

Psa. iv. dwells upon this further, becoming bolder in one way as it challenges the evil men by whom it is surrounded. Psa. v. emphasizes God's holiness, and under a sense of this, the wickedness of the world becomes all the more apparent, and faith clings to God's mercy.

In the sixth, however, the oppression of the enemy is felt so keenly that the soul is well nigh overwhelmed. Still it cries out to God for help and mercy, and in anticipation at least, rejoices in the victory which He will give.

Psa. vii. protests its own righteousness in the face of false accusation and persecution, and pleads for God's judgment to fall upon His enemies. As has been frequently said, the prayer for judgment is most appropriate to a people whose deliverance can only come through God's judgment upon His and their enemies. It is not as though there were still hope for them through the gospel. Many of them have doubtless been rejectors of that gospel and given over to believe the lie. They are utterly incorrigible, and a fresh presentation of divine mercy would simply be casting pearls before swine. They have manifested themselves to be that, and nothing but the judgment of the Lord upon His enemies will teach the inhabitants of the earth righteousness.

Psa. viii., as we have said, celebrates the glories of

Christ as Son of man in a wider reign even than that over Israel. It is from this psalm that the apostle Paul so frequently quotes: "Thou hast put all things under His feet." We see Jesus, even now, crowned with glory and honor, anticipatively celebrating the dominion of of the eighth psalm.

2. (Psa. ix-xv.) Here we have, as a prominent theme, not Christ, but the enemy, not merely in the ungodly nation as a whole, but centered in the wicked one himself, (Psa. ix., x.) who has many features which would correspond to the Antichrist.

Then, from Psa. xi.-xv., we have the exercise of the remnant, in view of all this oppression of the enemy.

In Psa. xi., God is seen as supreme, and the soul would put its trust in Him, — nor will it flee away to any mountain of human reliance.

Psa. xii. shows how suitably the word of God is in contrast with all the deceits of the enemy.

Psa. xiii. cries unto God with that familiar expression of the remnant, "How long?" from the very jaws of death, and counts upon His deliverance.

Psa. xiv. shows how wide-spread evil is. God looks down upon the sons of men and finds them all gone astray. This is the moral condition of things at the present time, as the apostle says in the third chapter of Romans; but it is particularly applicable to the last days, when iniquity shall abound.

Psa. xv., in contrast with this iniquity, describes the righteous One who shall abide in God's tabernacle and dwell in His holy hill.

3. (Psa. xvi.-xli.) The preciousness of Christ in His person and work, with the exercise of His people in connection with Him.

Space will not permit our going into detail here. The psalms which particularly refer to our Lord are quite familiar. He is seen in His spotless humanity in the

sixteenth; as the Man separate from sinners, in the seventeenth; and as the Victor, in the eighteenth. Psa. xix. shows God's glory in His works in the heavens above and in the Word in our hands, which speaks far more of the display of that glory than the starry worlds above us. Psa. xx. brings out the great truths of salvation through Christ the King. Psa. xxi. looks forward to the coming glory of Christ. Psa. xxii., we need hardly say, is the great sin-offering psalm; xxiii., the resulting salvation; and xxiv., Christ's manifestation in glory. Thus, the main theme of these nine psalms is Christ, a trinity of glories thrice repeated. Well may we see all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him!

From Psa. xxv.—xli., we have the exercises of faith in connection with this unfolding of Christ, into which we cannot enter with any further detail.

The second book, (Psa. xlii.—lxxii.) while dealing with the same general subjects, approaches them from another point of view—that of Israel's suffering under the hand of God in responsibility: but here, too, the Spirit of God leads the suffering saints, who feel the weight of His hand, up to occupation with Christ and the blessed results which flow from that.

1. Thus, Psa. xlii.—xliv. are wails of distress. Psa. xlv. shows us Christ in His glory as King, united with His people; and, flowing from that, in Psa. xlvi.—xlix., we have the glory of His reign. Psa. l. is God's witness to His people of His own faithfulness, and their sin; while Psa. li. is their response, which goes even more deeply to the root of sin, showing it to be blood-guiltiness in having rejected Christ.

2. (Psa. lii.—lx.) Here we have quite similar exercises to those already looked at in the earlier psalms, and these lead up to joy in the Lord and triumph over evil through Him, as seen in Psa. lx.

3. (Psa. lxi.—lxxii.) Full blessing headed up in Christ.

In these psalms, our Lord is again prominent; in some of them perhaps not so distinctly as others. Still, it is His faith and dependence upon God and delight in Him that speak in the first three, while, of course, Psa. lxix, dwells upon His sufferings as the trespass-offering. His voice will be heard even in such psalms as lxxv., while lxxviii. of course is a majestic and beautiful celebration of His glory in connection with the throne of Jehovah.

Psa. lxxi. and lxxii. go beautifully together, the first being the pleadings of faith on the part of the nation, seen, as we might say, in its age and decrepitude; while in the second, the King is before us in all His glory, with dominion and blessing reaching to the ends of the earth. All creation groans until the coming of that happy time. Well may we sing:

“Hasten, Lord, the glorious time.”

Quick temper is no trifle. The one sin recorded of Moses, and for which he was shut out of the land, was his hastiness which blinded his eyes to the true glory of God. The important question is how to get rid of it. This can never be done until we *judge its root*. We must see that it is but the fruit of that flesh which has been judged in the cross of Christ. If self is truly judged in the presence of God, we will walk in His fear, and there will be no place for quick temper.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. 13.—“Please explain John ii. 4. ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.’”

Ans.—Mary, in common with the disciples of our Lord, did not realize that the path to the throne lay by the way of the cross. There was the constant tendency to think of the Kingdom as about to be set up immediately in power and glory. Therefore this had to be checked. Besides a possible dictation of what was to be done by our Lord, His reply shows her that all must be left to His own judgment. The time had not yet come for the outward manifestation of the Kingdom, and she must leave Him free to act according to the Father’s will and purposes into which she could not intrude.

But this rebuke is not, as we know, inconsistent with most perfect love for her, as witness her tender commitment to John by our Lord when He hung upon the cross. There we see perfect human love. Here we see that her love cannot intrude for a moment into God’s things.

Q. 14.—“What is the Christian’s work? sowing and reaping, or reaping only?”

Ans.—We are still living in times spoken of in the parable of the sower. “In the morning sow thy seed” we might apply to the pentecostal and early apostolic times; but, though darkness has come in and the day is far spent, it adds: “And in the evening withhold not thy hand.” So, we continue to sow beside all waters the precious seed of the word of God, knowing that it will be our joy also to reap. Of course, in the full sense of the harvest, the time has not yet come when sheaves will be gathered in, but every precious soul brought to Christ is part of the first-fruits of that happy time. May we be diligent, both in sowing the seed and seeking to gather in precious souls also!

Q. 15.—“What is the difference between the Jews’ inquiry in Acts ii. 37. ‘What shall we do?’ and that of the jailer in Acts xvi. 30?”

Ans.—There seems to be very little difference. Both are the question of awakened souls. That at Pentecost was under the direct preaching of the Word by Peter; and the Gentile’s anxious inquiry was produced by the manifest power of God. The answer

was suited to each case. To the Jews, Peter said: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." This repentance and confession of Christ were called for. In the case of the jailer there was evident knowledge of his lost condition, so faith in Christ is what is presented.

Q. 16.—In Col. iii. 3 what life is "hid with Christ in God?"

Ans.—The general connection shows that believers are dead with Christ to everything of human religiousness—"the rudiments of the world." He is also risen with Christ, associated with Him in the new place He occupies. The life then means both its *sphere* and its character. It is hid, so far as the world is concerned. "Therefore the world knoweth us not." The time of manifestation will be when Christ shall appear. The hidden life is a risen life, beyond the power of death, linked with Christ.

Q. 17.—If the wretchedness described in Romans vii is not the normal condition of the believer, can we say that it must be the experience of every one?

Ans.—We must remember that true experiences are measured not by time nor by apparent intensity, but by their reality. Thus a conviction of sin may be instantaneous, yet most real. So also the conviction of helplessness of Rom. vii. With others there may be a prolonged struggle. Yet every child of God must and will learn the lesson of "no good thing in me."

Q. 18.—Were the elders of James v. 14 officials, or elder brethren?

Ans.—It would seem they were officials of the Jewish assembly to which the Epistle of James refers.

Q. 19.—If elder brethren should be called to the bedside of a sick brother, would there be any objection to anointing with oil?

Ans.—As the previous answer says, Elders are doubtless official, or at least suggest the assembly in an unfailed condition. In days of confusion where could we find the Elders of the assembly, which is so scattered? Then too the tone of James' Epistle is Jewish; the Lord's beloved people are not viewed as distinct yet from the nation. Anointing was a Jewish practice, and typical. For us, we have the reality of the "prayer of faith," and this surely should be sufficient.

ALONE WITH CHRIST.

MAN is a social being, and grace by no means ignores this characteristic. In fact, the joys of fellowship with fellow believers are infinitely greater than any earthly companionship; and yet this fellowship must have a solid substratum of individuality, or it will be neither helpful nor lasting. There are a few scriptures which illustrate the dealings of our Lord with individuals, that will bring out the importance of this.

I. IN CONVICTION.

If there is to be genuine measurement of sin, it must be in the presence of God alone, with no distraction from one's fellows, which would either lessen the true sense of guilt, or so oppress the soul with shame that it will become self-occupation instead of self-judgment. A familiar example of how the Lord deals in a solitary way with a soul, to produce conviction, is found in the fourth of John, in the case of the woman of Samaria. It is scarcely necessary to more than mention this. No one is present to hear what she has to say to Him who discloses to her the fact that He knows all about her. Thus, quietly, she is brought to measure the solemn fact that God knows all her past and all the secrets of her heart. Everything is brought out into the light, and the effect of it is not to drive her away, nor to overwhelm her, but in all sobriety, knowing her true condition, to cast herself upon Him who had told her all things that ever she did.

Souls may be awakened in companies. As a matter of fact, conviction of sin may take place, and

often does, in the presence of others; but there is an isolation of spirit which answers to the case of the woman of Samaria. None is seen but the Lord and one's guilty soul. Everything else is forgotten or ignored; and until He has done His holy work, one's fellow men are entirely in the background. Where this is not the case, even when there is a genuine work of the Spirit of God, He is much hampered by the fear of man, or, what is perhaps worse, the comfort of man. It is far more dangerous to tell one that his case is not so bad or hopeless as it might be, than it would be to tell him there was no hope. Neither of these is done when the soul is alone with the Lord.

II. NEED MET.

We see twin mercies in the healing of the woman with the issue and the raising of Jairus' daughter. It is as our Lord was on the way to heal the latter, that the woman comes behind Him and touches the border of His garment. Strikingly, she had been afflicted twelve years, even as Jairus' daughter was twelve years of age. The life of a fallen creature, after all, is but a lingering disease, sure to end, unless grace interpose, in death. So, Jairus' daughter would represent the feebleness and decay of nature from the beginning, as the woman would suggest the defilement that comes in in connection with that.

The crowd surges about our Lord, the multitudes throng Him and press Him, some with interest, some with hostility, many with indifference, probably merely attracted by the crowd. His disciples are close about Him; but in the midst of all that throng there is

one spark of faith, one hand that is reached out to lay hold of the everlasting mercy that is there for her—equally there for all the crowd, who, alas, pass on with indifference, unconscious of their need. But oh, how good it is to think that He notes the faith which feels its need; He recognizes the reality of that which timidly and in secret, as it were, would lay hold upon His mercy! He recognizes and marks it all. Faith gets what it needs. This is ever true. Most blessed fact! Let the multitude press and throng. It cannot press away or check one single soul who would creep, with its need, to the border of Jesus' garment. And so, in this poor world, with its multitudes passing here and there, if our needy souls desire it, we can ever lay hold upon One who meets that need.

III. FINDING PEACE.

The scene in the seventh of Luke is in striking contrast with that in the fourth of John, so far as externals are concerned. Instead of a lonely seat by the well-side, speaking with the woman, we see Him at a feast in the Pharisee's house, with all its accompaniments. Is it possible that in such a presence as this there can be solitary dealing with a soul? Most beautifully does the narrative of the woman that was a sinner answer this. She had an apprehension of the grace of Christ; how deep and full, we know not, but sufficiently so to have stirred the inmost depths of her soul, and to bring her, with her double gift of tears and precious ointment, to the feet of Him who would never spurn even such as she.

The crowd that is about her, the sneering Pharisees, with their self-complacency and contempt even

of Christ, are all ignored or forgotten by her. One only occupies her mind and heart, and that One is He who knows all about her, and, knowing it, does not turn her from Him. What boldness simple faith gives!—boldness in the presence of those who despise! She is not overwhelmed by their greatness or neglect. What overwhelms her is the sense of that wondrous grace that has stooped to meet her need and guilt. So she pours out together tears of bitter shame and sorrow—tears, too, of love; and, mingling with it, may we not say, not more fragrant or acceptable to our Lord, the sweet perfume that tells of the preciousness of His own name, which is like ointment poured forth.

How blessed it is to be alone with Him thus, alone even in the midst of everything that is contrary to Him and us, alone as worshipers where the cold smile of self-righteous contempt in vain would distract our hearts!

IV. TESTIMONY AND WORSHIP.

The blind man in John ix. illustrates a further phase of this solitary intercourse with Christ. His very blessings had isolated him. Until Christ opened his eyes, he at least had a home and a place in the synagogue, with the pity and the pittances of his co-religionists. All that is changed when he has a Hand laid upon his eyes and obeys the word which tells him to wash and receive his sight. He has eyes now, but he has lost apparently everything else. The men of the synagogue turn him out. His own parents refuse to stand by him. He is left all alone, no one apparently even to wish him joy with his new-found treasure; alone so far as man is con-

cerned, but that loneliness is but the occasion for One to make His presence known which amply repays for every loss.

He had received blessing from the Lord as the Opener of his eyes, but he was now to use those eyes in beholding the Son of God. Our blessings, after all, are but means to enter more fully into the glories of the Person of Christ. There is no holier place, no more wonderful in all the Gospels, than the nameless place where Jesus found the man and manifested Himself to him as the Son of God. There the worship of heaven is anticipated, as the once sightless beggar bows prostrate at the feet of Him who is, for faith, "my Lord and my God!" Unquestionably, he will find his place later on in association with others who, like himself, have learned in solitude to know this blessed One: but who can intrude between the soul and this meeting with Him who has made Himself all in all to it?

V. SERVICE.

There was a subtle pride in Peter which led him to think more of his own devotion to Christ than of that of his brethren: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." This savors little of that self-knowledge which would rather ask, "Lord, is it I?" Left to ourselves, what are we not capable of? But the same grace that called Peter, and bore with him through all his waywardness and instructed him, is sufficient here too, and, though he must bitterly learn his lesson, when he has learned it, restores him fully to the joy of communion and of service again.

Simultaneously with his restoration to the Lord is

his reinstatement in service. "Lovest thou Me?" "Feed My Lambs." "Shepherd My sheep." It all goes together. If there is love to Christ, love that is deeper because based now upon self-distrust, it is to find expression in showing Christ's love to those who are its objects. Yet even here Peter forgets for a moment that to be alone in the path of service to the Lord must ever be first, and fellowship next. He had heard the words "Follow thou Me." Were not these sufficient? He turns, however, to see another disciple whom Jesus loved, who also is following as surely he would, and the sudden question, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" shows occupation rather with his brother's service than his own. Our Lord's loving rebuke is a word for us all. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Even should John be left here, spared from the cross which Peter was to endure, it was in the Hands of love and power, which could make no mistake. Peter's care was not to know what would befall John, but rather keeping so close to his Lord, to see that *he* was in the place where he could do and suffer for his Master.

Let us hear that word for ourselves! We look at others who seem busily and happily engaged in the Lord's service, it may be, whose lot in life seems far happier than our own perhaps—who know nothing apparently of the ruggedness of the way; and are we not at times tempted to say, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" It may be that we are called to some arduous service, or to that which is harder yet, the rasping of a position which ever lets us feel the thorns of the way. We are tempted to repine, to fret, and to look with longing at some one else

who seems to have a smother path. Let us never forget that the path which love has chosen for us is the best that love could choose, best even that divine love could possibly choose. If only Christ is seen in it, if it is only following Him individually, irrespective of all others, it will be a path whose brightness increases more and more unto the perfect day.

Thus, having been dealt with in the solitude of our own bosoms, in the presence of the Lord, as to sin, as to need, as to peace with Himself, as to worship, and as to service, we are prepared for that fellowship of kindred minds which is our joy on earth. Others, too, have been led as we have. They, too, have been isolated, and felt it keenly. They, too, have found the sufficiency of Christ, all alone, with no one else, and, finding Him sufficient, are now ready both to help and to be helped by all the holy intercourse of those to whom Christ is all, and therefore His people are dear to them.

THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

THOSE who have given themselves over entirely to the written word of God for a revelation of Himself may fail to realize what a powerful instrument of communication from God to man nature (whose God the Bible declares) is.

No doubt, while Adam and Eve were still in innocence, nature was God's voice in an unmistakable way. They could look to the heavens in the day, and lift their eyes up by night, and see the glory of God. They could study the mighty sun as he majestically ran his course, the moon in her reflected beauty, and the host of twinkling stars set like dia-

monds in the velvet of heaven, and stand in silent admiration at His handiwork. They could view the beautiful flowers sending back to the eye the sunlight in many and varied colors, the mighty trees of the earth, the feathered songsters, the waving grain of the fields, the crystal waters, and see God in it all, to His glory.

But sin has entered; and while all nature still is a true witness of God, man will not receive her message, be it ever so plain; and when taken by surprise, he will hear, yet deny, what she says. But she is faithful, and her mute appeal never ceases :

“The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth His handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech, and
Night unto night showeth knowledge.
There is no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.”

So important is this that men will be held accountable for the way they treat this voice of God. This is plainly set forth in Rom. i. 18-23. Here we are told that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” God is jealous of truth, and will hold all men accountable how they hold it: if in righteousness, well; if in unrighteousness, God’s anger is aroused. The reason is, that truth reveals Him who is truth: this the next verse explains: “*Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.*” For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that *are made*, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without

excuse." Think of this! Could nature speak more clearly? The fault is not in nature's voice, but in those who seeing God in nature, yet through pride and love of sin refuse the light, and are without excuse, "because that when they *knew* God, they glorified Him not *as* God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination," etc. What a responsibility men of science assume when they come into such close touch with nature, hear her voice, and deliberately turn upon their heel from the face of Him thus revealed, and who would welcome with delight a true confession of Himself by them! No! men will not "retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. i. 28).

I will give here an instance of how an eminent physicist came face to face with God through nature, and absolutely refused the light she had for him. Prof. Tyndall, in one of his lectures on light, summing up the wonders of light in relation to the eye, said: "Meanwhile we may profitably glance back on the web of relation which these experiments reveal to us. We have, in the first place, in solar light, an agent of exceeding complexity, composed of innumerable constituents, refrangible in different degrees. We find, secondly, the atoms and molecules of bodies gifted with the power of sifting solar light in the most various ways, and producing by the sifting the colors observable in nature and art. To do this they must possess a molecular structure commensurate in complexity with light itself. Thirdly, we have the human eye and brain so organized as to be able to take in and distinguish the multitude of impressions thus generated. The light, therefore, at starting, is complex: to sift and select it as they do, natural bodies must be complex; while, to take

in the impression thus generated, the human eye and brain, however we may simplify our conception of their action, must be highly complex. Whence this triple complexity? *If what are called material purposes were the only end to be served, a much simpler mechanism would be sufficient. But, instead of simplicity, we have prodigality of relation and adaptation—and this, apparently, for the sole purpose of enabling us to see things robed in the splendor of color. Would it not seem that nature harbored the intention of educating us for other enjoyments than those derivable from meat and drink?* At all events, whatever nature meant,—and it would be mere presumption to dogmatize as to what she meant,—we find ourselves here, as the upshot of her operation, endowed with capacities to enjoy not only the materially useful, but endowed with others of indefinite scope and application, which deal alone with the beautiful and the true."

What a testimony! What a blunder, writing *Nature* instead of *God*! We can but wish that the great scientist had not done so. Dear brethren, do we realize that God is speaking to us at every turn? Do we see nothing more than an impersonal nature in it all? If there are such stupendous responsibilities devolving upon us from the voice and witness of nature, what must it be to have the truth from God by direct revelation—the Scriptures! May the Lord lay the importance of these things upon our hearts, that we might be found more and more walking softly in the very presence of God!

F. H. J.

KING SAUL :
THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.
THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter viii.
TESTED AND FOUND WANTING.

(1 Sam. xli., xlii. 14).

(Continued from page 201.)

SAUL, at least, does not follow the people in their hiding. In fact, he abides at Gilgal, the place which Samuel had appointed for the meeting with himself, which was soon to take place. During all the time that had intervened between his anointing and the present, there had not been the real opportunity to manifest his true obedience to the prophet's directions (chap. x. 8).

Saul is at Gilgal, where, had he truly entered into the spirit of the place, he would have found an impregnable position, and from which he could have gone forth victoriously to triumph over all the host of the enemy. A few follow him also so tremblingly that evidently their eye is upon their human leader, and they have forgotten the living God. This wretched remnant of an army is really a mockery of any true resistance, and would have been found so had it been tested. Even this little handful, Saul is not able to hold together. He must, according to the prophet's directions, remain seven days, or until Samuel appears to offer the appointed sacrifices. Surely without these, it would be madness to attempt to meet the enemy. It must be ever on the basis of a sacrifice that we dwell with God, and from

the strength of His presence go out to meet the enemy. Saul recognizes this in his way, and evidently waits with impatience the coming of the prophet. Meanwhile, the people are melting away and he will be left alone, and this the flesh cannot endure. It has not God before it, and therefore must look upon apparent resources. With his army gone, what could the king do? Surely, God would not have this: therefore he must take some steps to inspire confidence in the people, and be prepared to go forth to fight.

Alas, we know something, doubtless, in our own experience, of this restlessness of the flesh, which recognizes that something must be done, but never does the only thing that is suitable,—wait upon God for His time.

So, Saul offers the sacrifices, intruding himself in this way into the priest's office and practically ignoring all need of that which was at the basis of sacrifice, a mediator. The flesh, with all its religiousness and punctiliousness, never grasps the fact that it has no standing before God. It would intrude into the holiest things, and, as we have already said, this is the very essence of Philistinism, which would thrust nature into the presence of God, and, according to its own thoughts, build up a system of approach to Him which would at the same time quiet natural conscience and foster the pride of the unregenerate heart.

This was an awful fall for the king. It was the very thing against which the prophet had guarded him in the beginning; the very thing, too, which was the peril of the people,—acting without God. Their choice of a king had really been this, and

therefore all is in fitting keeping with that act of independence. Saul had had ample warning, abundant opportunity to manifest his faith and obedience if he had any. The very place where he was had but lately witnessed the solemn testimony of Samuel, and heard the voice of Jehovah in thunder at the time of harvest. Had the fear of God really filled his soul, it would have eclipsed all other fear, and the king would have waited patiently, though he waited alone, for the word from the Lord. But he is tested and fails. So soon as the failure occurs, in divine mercy on the one hand, and justice on the other, Samuel appears on the scene.

What unavailing regrets doubtless filled Saul's bosom as he saw the prophet! Oh, had he only waited but a few moments longer! But this is not the point. God would test him to see whether he would wait. He had not almost held out, but he had simply manifested the state of his soul. There is no such thing as almost obeying the Lord. The heart that is truly His, will obey; and testing, no matter how far carried, will never bring out disobedience from a heart that is truly subject to God. How perfectly this was brought out in the life of our blessed Lord, who was constantly subjected to pressure in one form or another to depart from the path of simple obedience to God. There was no danger of waiting too long in His case. All the testing would only bring out the reality of that obedience which controlled His whole spirit, and He is the only true King of men, the only Man after God's heart to lead His people; and it is only as His Spirit fills our souls, that we will walk in His steps, having the mind in us which was in Christ.

Saul runs out officiously to greet the prophet, as he does in a more marked way after a still deeper failure a little later on; but there is no responsive greeting from the dear faithful servant of God whose soul burned with indignation at the king's palpable unbelief and disobedience. Sternly he asks, "What hast thou done?" He need not go further with his question, nor can Saul pretend to be ignorant of what is meant. What he had done was in known violation of the prophet's word. Therefore he had practically forfeited all claim upon the prophet's service or the approval of God. He, however, puts up a feeble defence; and notice the character of that defence. "I saw that the people were scattered from me." In other words, his eye was on the people, who were as full of unbelief as himself, instead of upon God. Then, Samuel had not come during the appointed days. This, as we have already seen, was simply to test the genuineness of his faith.

And lastly, the Philistines were gathering together in great numbers. Not a word, we notice, of the Lord. Now, however, he says the enemy will come down to attack him (a most unlikely thing for an enemy to do in such a place as Gilgal) and he must make supplication unto the Lord. At last the Lord is brought in, but we notice that it is only in this feeble way. Really what filled the foreground of the king's vision was the melting of the people, the menace of the enemy's attack, and the absence of the human prop in Samuel. So he says: "I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering." How many have fallen in the same way! His words are a confession that he knew he had disobeyed God in offering the sacrifices. It was contrary, he would

have Samuel believe, to his own inclinations. He had to do it in spite of his convictions and desires. All the more, then, did it fully manifest the unbelief which will not cling to God, at all costs, in obedience. How much is excused in the same way! Human expedients are condoned, fleshly activity is encouraged, fellowship with the world is allowed, all under the plea of expediency. The reluctant conscience has to be forced, for it knows that these things are contrary to God; but force itself it will, if not subject to God in living faith.

In a minor way, how saints of God may dishonor Him in the assembly of His people by allowing the flesh to dictate what shall be done. It knows that what is being done is not according to God, and yet, for fear of man, forces itself to fall in with what others are doing. Thus, the Spirit is quenched and grieved. This will ever be the case where the flesh is allowed to dictate.

Samuel's reply is startlingly frank. Saul has done foolishly. He does not attempt to take up his reasons in detail. The people may have been scattered. He does not refer to that. The enemy may be threatening. He does not even explain his own tarrying, though its purpose was manifest. One thing he has to say to the king: "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which He commanded thee." How all his paltry excuses are scattered to the winds by that solemn arraignment! What excuse can there be for disobedience? Then, too, as to the consequences of this they were not temporary, nor would they be immediately manifested, but this act had shown him to be utterly incapable of rule, to be certainly not the man after

God's heart. If indeed he had stood this test, his kingdom would have been established, for it would have been seen that he was a man of genuine faith. One thing he lacked, and that one thing was absolutely needful. It was really everything. It was faith in God. Everything else may be present, but where this is wanting, one cannot be used of Him.

His kingdom, therefore, shall not continue. God must have a man after His own heart; one who knows Him and His goodness and love, and who, spite of many shortcomings, still has a true spirit of obedience to God, which springs from confidence in Him. A little later on will see poor Saul with wonderful zeal and rigidity of external obedience; but we will notice always that wherever the will of God came in conflict with the wishes of man or the desires of his own heart, Saul was wanting. How unspeakably sad and solemn is this, yea, how searching to our hearts! God grant that it may search out every vestige of self-confidence in us, every particle of unbelief which would turn us from obeying God rather than man!

(To be continued.)

THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

THE OLD GATE.

(Neh. iii.)

(Continued from page 213.)

MOREOVER the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof."

Nature has its place in the economy of grace. Those who utterly decry it show but poor acquaintance with their Bibles. Our bodies, with all their marvelous members, belong to the old creation still; but He who will glorify them by and by finds use for them in His own service even now in the day of their humiliation.

Evil is not in natural things themselves, but is in the abuse of them. Every talent we have is to be used for His glory. Woe to the man who hides one of them away, under pretense that nature—in this sense—is opposed to grace!

I have thought the Old Gate might remind us of this. It has its place in the wall. It might speak of the old used in the new, and thus it would seem to say, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom xii. 1). The child of God should remember that he has been bought with a price. His body is purchased with the blood of Christ. He is not called to "consecrate" himself, as people put it to-day, but to gladly own that he is already consecrated by the death of the Lord Jesus. The blood and oil have been placed on the ear, the hand, and the foot. He belongs to Christ:—the ear, to listen for His commandment; the hand, to do His bidding; the foot, to run in His ways.

Can any one truly enter into this, and yet be careless in regard to service? Impossible. You are not only saved from hell, but purchased to be the bondman of Jesus Christ.

There is a depth of meaning in the word "present," as noted above. Your body is His already.

He might simply demand His own. But in grace He says, "I beseech you . . . present your body." Have you done so? Have you, in other words, owned His claims upon you? If not, will you longer delay? O beloved, yield yourself unto Him, that thus you may bring forth fruit unto God. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John xv. 8).

I do not press it that the Old Gate was meant to intimate this special truth, and I trust none will quibble over an application. It might also suggest the judgment of the old man—the recognition that God has condemned him *in toto*, and the mortification of his deeds. Without this there can be no true service; and in fact the two things run very closely together.

But whatever the meaning one more spiritually-minded may discern, the fact remains that "ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." It is this I seek to emphasize, for it is, with many, well-nigh forgotten. Vast numbers of Christians live as though their only thought was to enjoy the present scene, "on the east of Jordan;" pampering every whim of their blood-purchased bodies, and looking forward to going to heaven at last without having ever known the toil and conflict—yet the deep, hidden joy—of the servant's path.

Especially is this often so of those in comfortable and easy circumstances. The willing workers of verse 8 might well rebuke such. "Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries." I question if goldsmiths' and apothecaries' sons had known much of

downright labor, but here we see them hard at work helping to fortify Jerusalem. God has not forgotten that their soft white hands became hardened and sun-burned as they used trowel and mortar on the walls of the holy city.

Nor does He forget the devoted women of verse 12. "Next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, *he and his daughters.*" It must have been a grand sight to behold their ruler and his daughters so zealously affected in a good thing. Our sisters have here a bright example of devotedness to the Lord. Would that it might be followed by many to-day!

But if we are to be used of God there must be not only this recognizing of His claims upon us, but also that lowliness of spirit that ever commends a servant; and so we pass on to

THE VALLEY GATE.

"The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah" (ver. 13).

This surely suggests humility—a willingness to take a lowly place that thus the Lord may be exalted. One fears it is a gate little used by many of us nowadays.

Pride is ever characteristic of fallen creatures, who have nothing to be proud of; for "what hast thou that thou hast not received?" Even in connection with service for the Lord, how this unholy thing creeps in, leading one servant to be jealous of another, instead of catching the Master's voice as He says, "What is that to thee? follow *thou* Me"!

What Cowper says of sin in general may be predicated of pride in particular:

"It twines itself about my thoughts,
And slides into my prayer."

It is indeed the root-sin of all. By it Satan himself fell, and one "being lifted up with pride, falls into the condemnation of the devil."

God has said, "To this man will I look; to him that is humble, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word." It is perhaps only a truism to write that, only as one walks humbly before Him, is he in a condition of soul to be safely used in service. I do not mean that God cannot overrule all things, and in a sense use even the basest of men. The devil himself has to serve. God used Balaam, and others equally ungodly. But in such cases it is to the condemnation of the very one used.

To go on preaching and handling the truth of God while the heart is lifted up and the eyes lofty is one of the most dangerous courses one can take, and certain to end in ruin and disaster.

We have much cause, as we contemplate our coldness and indifference, and the appalling power of the world over us, to be on our faces before God, instead of walking in pride, only to learn eventually that He "is able to abase" us, as in the case of Babylon's haughty king. If we humble not ourselves, He must humble us in His own way, for it is part of His purpose to "hide pride from man."

Keeping this, then, before our minds, we pass on to the solemn and much-needed lesson of

THE DUNG GATE.

"But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem" (ver. 14).

Humbling work this, for a ruler, but necessary labor surely.

The Dung Gate was the port whence they carried forth the filth, that the city might not be defiled. And so we read, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1).

Real blessing there cannot be if this is forgotten; but if we have truly learned the lesson of the Valley Gate, that of the Dung Gate will be no difficulty. As saints and servants we are called, not to uncleanness, but to holiness. We are to cleanse ourselves; that is, to judge, in the presence of God, and turn away from, all filthiness—let its form be the grosser one of the flesh, or the more unobjectionable (in the eyes of men) of the spirit.

In the first three chapters of Romans we have sharply delineated the naked hideousness of the filthiness of the flesh. In the first three chapters of 1st Corinthians we have unveiled the filthiness of the spirit: a mind exalting itself against God and His Christ—a wisdom that is earthly, sensual, devilish. So we read elsewhere of the "desires of the flesh and of the mind," in which we *once* walked. (See Eph. ii.)

From all these things we are now called to cleanse ourselves. Body and mind alike are to be preserved free from impurity, for the glory of God.

"Flee also youthful lusts" is a much-needed word. In the world about us, men live to pander to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It should be otherwise with the Christian, and must be otherwise if he is to be a vessel unto

honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Down with the bars of the Dung Gate, brethren, out with the filth! "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

H. A. I.

(*To be continued.*)

"THE FIRST MIRACLE."

(*A Word of Explanation.*)

OUR attention has been called by a brother to the above article, which appeared in our last month's issue. He points out that the expressions in the second head, if taken literally, would teach that man is brought into union with deity, just as Christ the divine Son took up a sinless human nature into union with Himself. "He is the first divine man;" and this would imply that there are others.

We are grateful to our brother for calling attention to what most certainly, if taken literally, would teach dreadful error, and which should have been more carefully edited. We are equally sure no such error was in the mind of the writer of the article, who would, with all of us, shrink with horror from the thought of our Lord being but one man linked with deity, out of many others. We simply understood the writer to mean that the marriage was a *figure* of union of saved souls with Christ; and that this in its way was supernatural, even as, in another way, our Lord, in a supernatural way, united in Himself the human and divine natures, and as His birth was also miraculous.

We must take upon ourselves the responsibility and the blame of having allowed such expressions to go into print, and again thank our brother for his faithfulness in pointing out the error.

THE EDITOR.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE have already had the last half of the prophet Isaiah, and during the present month will devote our attention to the first half of the same book.

In many respects, it is the most remarkable of the prophets, as it is also the introductory one. Answering to its place at the head of the prophetic books, from the diversity of its subjects and the wide reach of the prophet's vision, it is appropriately a Genesis in the prophetic pentateuch. Its main theme, we might say, is the sovereignty of God. Things are looked at from a divine point of view, quite the reverse of the prophet Jeremiah, who takes his place in the midst of the people and largely gives us the human side even of the divine witness.

Our portion in Isaiah for the present month is chaps. i.-xxxix. These form the first four divisions of the book, as the last half of the prophecy gives us the remaining three. As has been frequently said, the theme of any prophet must be largely a reminder of the people's sin. As a matter of fact, the prophetic office was instituted after the failure of the priest, and when the people were in a condition of departure from God which required a special ministry if His mercy was to abide with them. Morally, the character of the whole book of Isaiah and of all the prophets is the same as that of Samuel, the first of them. Indeed, when Moses takes the prophetic place, it is largely in foretelling the people's failure to meet their responsibilities.

But if the failure of the people is the dark background of all prophetic writing, it brings out into striking relief the glorious picture of future blessing through Christ: thus, parallel with the faithfulness which leaves no secret places where the people can hide themselves, no evils unrepented, are the promises of future recovery after their enemies have been judged, and they purged from

their sins. The latter part of the prophet shows how this purgation was to be effected by the giving up of their Messiah to judgment, who thus made atonement for their sins.

Thus the two great themes of prophecy are, the sin of the people, and future glory. Along with these we have the character of the enemy, who constantly oppresses, ever ready to assail when the wickedness of the people necessitates God's permitting his oppression. The enemy, however, with all his malignity, is, after all, but the instrument in the hands of God; and when he has accomplished God's work in chastening the people, he himself will be broken and judged for the malignity shown and for his own deeper wickedness. Thus judgment upon the nations forms a salient feature of our prophet.

Having said thus much of prophecy in general, which applies in a marked way to the one we are considering, we will now look briefly at the four divisions of this portion of the book.

Div. 1. (Chaps. i.-xii.) The whole state of the people is gone into nationally, in relation to Christ and to their enemy used of God for their chastening. This last is the Assyrian.

The first four chapters of the book are more general, and of an introductory character.

Chap. i. speaks largely of the sinful condition of the people, in spite of all their profession. The Lord was weary of their new moons and feast days, which had no effect upon their moral condition. He likens them to Sodom and Gomorrah, as we remember our Lord declares that it will be more tolerable for those cities in the day of judgment than for the Jews of His day. Along with this, in ver. 18, we have the most precious assurance of forgiveness, would they but turn to God in repentance. However, this is scarcely looked for, and the purgation of the people is to be effected by judgment.

Chap. ii. looks forward to this recovery (vers. 1-5), but the remainder of the chapter is devoted to declaring the people's sins and foretelling the awful judgments of the day of the Lord. In view of that, how paltry and worthless is man !

Chap. iii. continues the same general subject of sin and the judgment on it, while chap. iv., when evil seems to have reached its climax, dwells upon the coming of the the Branch of the Lord—Christ,—beautiful and glorious, whose fruit shall be excellent and comely for the remnant of Israel.

Chap. v., in parabolic form, much after the manner of our Lord's parable of the vineyard, narrates the privileges enjoyed by Israel, and the judgment upon them because of failure. The six woes of this chapter (vers. 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22) are very striking when taken in connection with the seventh, found in chap. vi., where not individual sins are spoken of, but the whole man.

Chap. vi. narrates the wondrous vision of the glory of the Lord by the prophet ; his conviction, as the representative of the people, of sin, and the grace which has put it away.

Chaps. vii. and viii. are historical, and are introductory to the subject of the Assyrian, dwelt upon in chaps. ix. and x. We have here the apostasy of king Ahaz associated with the even more apostate ten tribes. How beautifully God's grace comes out when the wicked king refuses the invitation of the prophet to seek a sign of the Lord, and the Lord Himself gives His own sign, the Son of the virgin, through whom indeed full blessing and deliverance will be brought to the people !

Chap. ix. is quoted in the Gospel of Matthew, and also refers to the coming of our blessed Lord when darkness is prevailing. The enemy has been coming in like a flood. The people have been afflicted for their sins ; but in the midst of it all, "Unto us a Child is born ; unto us

a Son is given"—the true Son of David, also the mighty God and the Father of eternity. What power of the enemy can prevail when this sign and this Ruler shall bring all things under the sway of peace?

Chap. x. shows that after Assyria, who is the rod of God's anger, has effected His whole purpose in humbling His people, he himself shall be broken. The high cedars of Lebanon shall be cut down.

Chap. xi. shows the springing up of a shoot from the stem of Jesse, the Branch of the Lord, who takes the place of all the proud cedars of Lebanon and fills the earth with the blessing of His reign. This is a most lovely chapter, and its pictures of millennial blessing are delightful indeed. The Gentiles shall be gathered to Him, and the entire nation of His beloved people—not only Judah, but the scattered ten tribes as well—shall be brought back to their inheritance, no more to be two kingdoms; the rod which has been broken in twain, taken up by His priestly hand, becomes one again, and the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

Chap. xii. is the thanksgiving and worship when they behold this. What a delightful portion! We need not say how richly it will reward diligent, prayerful study.

Div. 2. (Chaps. xiii.—xxvii.) This portion is, we might say, an enlargement of the judgment already pronounced upon Assyria. Its general theme is the judgment on the nations; and significantly Babylon, which later on carries Judah into captivity, here has judgment pronounced upon it. In like manner, Moab is judged (chaps. xv., xvi.); Damascus and Syria, also Egypt, the land shadowing with wings (chaps. xviii.—xx.). The final doom of Babylon is narrated in chap. xxi., while chap. xxii. very strikingly associates Jerusalem with the rest, looked upon here in this way as a Gentile subject to judgment.

Chap. xxiii. declares the judgment of Tyre, while chap.

xxiv. shows the desolation of the whole land, which may include not merely the land of Israel, but the whole habitable earth. Out of the midst of such desolations as are described in these chapters, the prophet raises his voice in exultation, praising God for these judgments, which have not hurt a single one of His loyal ones who have trusted in Him.

Chap. xxvi. continues the praise, while chap. xxvii. concludes the general subject of judgment and of blessing after the storm.

Div. 3. (Chaps. xxviii.—xxxv.) This portion is devoted to the moral condition of God's people, with particular reference to their condition in the latter days, and in view of the association of the mass of the people with the anti-christ, the refuge of lies which the hail of God's judgment shall sweep away. This is figured under the warning as to seeking shelter in Egypt.

Chap. xxxii. gives a glimpse of the coming of Christ and the shelter from the coming storm from Him; while chap. xxxv. closes what would otherwise be a dark picture with the glorious description of the reign of our Lord in the earth when the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose.

Div. 4. (Chaps. xxxvi.—xxxix.). We have the historical account of the threatened Assyrian invasion, which was repulsed through the faith of Hezekiah. Alas for the most faithful of men! When fully tested, the subtle confidence in the arm of flesh is seen, and Hezekiah, who in the time of his weakness repelled the enemy, and when the sentence of death had been passed upon himself, was brought, as it were, from the very gates of the grave, yields to the blandishments of the king of Babylon and is obliged to hear of his people's captivity in that land.

The general theme of 2 Peter, which we also read, is sim-

ilar to his first epistle, with special reference to the further decline and corruption, which have become more general. In the midst of all this, God's righteousness will maintain His people, bringing them safely through; but on their part they must give all diligence to grow in the truth which is already theirs (chap. i.).

Chap. ii. speaks of the false prophets who come in with their seducing ways, leading many from the truth. This chapter has very much in common with the epistle to Jude, but with certain striking differences. Jude seems to dwell more upon the apostate condition of profession, while Peter speaks rather of the coming in of false prophets from outside.

Chap. iii. looks forward to the coming of the day of the Lord; yea, even, of the eternal state, the "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 20.—What kingdom is meant in the prayer the Lord taught His disciples?

ANS.—It is the Father who is addressed in that prayer, and the kingdom therefore is His. But this does not seem to be in contrast with the kingdom of the Son of man, but rather with that of man and Satan as then existing. In Matt. xiii. 41, 43, we have the two expressions, "His kingdom" (of the Son of man) and kingdom of their Father, put closely together. The kingdom of the Father is a wider expression, and links with eternity. Thus, in the petition the desire is for the Father in heaven's kingdom, rather than man's. That petition will be realized in the Millennium, when the Son shall have received the kingdom from the Father, but goes on fully to the eternal state, when the Son shall have delivered it up again to the Father.

KING SAUL :
THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.
THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter viii.
TESTED AND FOUND WANTING.

(1 Sam. xli., xlii. 14).

(Continued from page 240.)

HAVING delivered his faithful witness to the king, nothing further holds Samuel at Gilgal. The place had lost, for the time being at least, its spiritual significance—the state of the king little answering to it. We hear of the prophet no more, for Samuel—though, as we know, his heart was sorely grieved at the development of evil—cannot go on with it. He apparently withdraws to the same place, Gibeah of Benjamin, whither Saul comes; but as no mention is made of any intercourse between them there, it is probable that the prophet did not tarry long.

The people have dwindled down to a paltry 600; enough surely, if they were with God, to do all the works which David with a like number did later on; but the one thing needful is lacking. They abide in Gibeah of Benjamin, near Saul's native place, and with painful suggestions of the past associated with it. The Philistines encamp in all their power at Michmash—as Young gives it, "the place of Chemoth," or, translating the latter name, "a fire," answering to the desolation which marked their occupation of the land—a burnt-over territory with no verdure or fruit.

From this centre they devastate the entire land. One company goes to Ophrah, the city of Gideon, to the land of Shual, "the jackal;" very significant in this connection, for surely wild beasts were devouring the heritage of Israel.

Another goes to Beth-horon, "the house of destruction;" and still another passes on across the land until they can look down into the valley of Zeboim, where all fertility had been quenched with the fire from heaven, at the time of the destruction of Sodom. Thus, fittingly, from Michmash, "the place of fire," radiates that which consumes all the fair heritage which God had given them. How true it is that religious formalism burns up every Christian thing, every sign of real life to God!

How are the people to meet this devastating horde? Their pitiable condition is seen in the fact that there was no smith found throughout all the land. The Philistines had taken them away to prevent them from manufacturing weapons of war for the Israelites. Even for the peaceful pursuits of agriculture they were dependent upon their masters, and were obliged to go down to them to have their plowshares sharpened, or the ax, or even the mattock. Nothing remained for them but a file for the mattocks and plows, which could put a poor and temporary edge upon their implements. We are reminded of the lament of Deborah over the condition of the people in her day: "Was there a shield or spear seen among 40,000 in Israel?"

Can it be possible that these are the people who have, but a short time ago, gone so valiantly against their enemies? Their condition is pitiable. They have been reduced to a worse condition than servi-

tude, being dependent upon their masters even for the means of tilling the soil. But more pitiable is the spiritual condition of the people of God when under similar circumstances. Wherever the power of formalism prevails, as seen in its completeness in Rome, not only are all spiritual weapons taken out of the hands of God's people, but even the needful spiritual implements for cultivating the peaceful means of satisfying our soul's hunger are removed. Our inheritance is a spiritual one. We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and this answers, as we know, to Israel's position in Canaan; but the soil, though fruitful and drinking of the water of the rain of heaven, needed to be cultivated if it were to yield its increase. So, too, in spiritual things. There is no lack in what is ours in Christ. As far as the eye of faith can reach, north, south, east and west, all is ours, and every part that the foot of faith treads upon practically belongs to the saints; but if the soil is not cultivated, of what use is it? We might say that our inheritance is contained in the precious word of God, and that our cultivation of this, the diligent digging beneath the surface for its precious things, the turning it over with the plow of conscience, applying it thus to ourselves, answers to the various agricultural pursuits indicated here. The domination of religious formalism would rob us of the means of doing this. Need we ask, With how many of us does our portion lie fallow because we are apparently without implements for its cultivation? The Bible, in other words, is a closed book; or, if read, seems to be but barren because there is no searching into its wondrous depths; or, if there is this, alas, how the dulness of our spiritual

implements, our diligence, our faith, our spiritual judgment, prevents anything like a full yielding of an abundant harvest! To be sure, there is the rubbing of the file, as iron sharpeneth iron through mutual intercourse, which even formalism would completely destroy; but the fire is needed also, and the beating down of that which even in proper use becomes dulled, so that its keen edge may be again restored to it.

These smiths might well answer to what we have later in Israel's history—the schools of the prophets, places where the fire and the hammer of God's word and truth are applied under the direction of the Holy Spirit. They would thus correspond to all proper and scriptural means for developing activity among God's saints. Might we not say that, in their place, institutions of learning would answer to these smiths' shops, where furnishing in the knowledge of the languages in which the word of God is written, and other truths, would equip one to be a diligent seeker in the Word? Thus, schools and colleges, when in proper hands and used in faith, are most helpful in developing an ability to dig into the word of God. The same is true of all assembly fellowship. Where the Spirit of God is ungrieved, how much spiritual furnishing do we get from association together! We can see, then, what it is for all this to be in the hands of the Philistines. And has not that been the case all too often in the history of God's saints? Nay, may we not say that it is that which particularly characterizes them at the present day, religious formalism having charge of all education, both elementary and advanced, and even, in great measure, of the people of God?

A Christian parent puts his child to school; and what is the character of the influence exerted over the little one there? How often is it Philistine—that which is often in open enmity against God, of so formal a character that no genuine faith is inculcated! This is seen in still greater measure when the youth passes on to college, where infidelity is taught; and if his intellectual implements have a keen edge upon them, he is taught rather to turn them against the truth of God than to explore its wondrous depths.

Institutions of theological education only bring this out still more glaringly, for here the things of God are professedly the objects. Alas, higher criticism, evolution, and various forms of infidelity, are taught in the very places where one should be thoroughly furnished to cultivate the inheritance of the Lord.

We have been speaking merely of the implements used in times of peace; but when we think of the necessary weapons of warfare with which to meet the manifold enemies who are constantly threatening our heritage, here the lack is even more glaring, for not even are there dull weapons. The enemy knows too well that it will never do to leave spear and sword in the hands of those who may be nerved to use them. As we look abroad to-day, how many of God's people are able to meet the attacks of evil on all hands? Infidelity presses in one direction, worldliness in another, the Philistine formalism in another; and what power is there to meet it with those weapons of warfare which the apostle says are "not carnal, but mighty through God"? Surely, we can never expect Philistia to furnish weapons against itself.

In God's mercy, however, faith can triumph even here. We remember it was with an ox goad, a weapon which could be pointed up with a file, that Shamgar wrought deliverance from these very Philistines. The goad would seem to answer to those words of the wise which are as goads; a word of simple exhortation, admonition, appealing to the conscience, which true faith will ever make use of. Even Philistines cannot deprive God's people of that; and what is an ordinary and needful implement in times of peace can, in the hands of faith, be turned against the enemy with terrible effectiveness.

(To be continued.)

THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

(Neh. iii.)

(Continued from page 246.)

THUS we pass on our journey round the walls, and come next to

THE GATE OF THE FOUNTAIN.

"The gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah;" (ver. 15).

This is surely in beautiful order. First, the body owned as the Lord's; 2d, humility; 3d, judgment of what is unclean; and now, the freshness and power of the Holy Spirit in the life; for of this, clearly, the Gate of the Fountain speaks to us.

It has been asserted by many that until the Christian surrenders himself fully to God, he does not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is a mistake,

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. viii. 9); “After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13)—sealed, too, “until the day of redemption” (Eph. iv. 30); “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Gal. iv. 6).

But that there is often in the experience of many what looks, indeed, like a “second blessing,” no observant believer can deny. What is really meant by it? Simply this: that though the Holy Spirit indwells all children of God in this dispensation, yet in many worldliness and self-pleasing are so characteristic that He who should control us for Christ, and fill us with freshness and power as He ministers Christ to our souls, is become like a fountain choked with stones and rubbish, and thus the life is barren and the testimony powerless. Awakened at last to see the folly of such a life of uselessness to God and reproach to Christ, the saint humbles himself in self-judgment, the filth is put away, and now the once-choked fountain is running over, and the Spirit of God in power takes control of the believer to use him for the Lord’s glory, and to make him a vessel of refreshment to others. There is a fountain of living water within, and out of his inward parts flow rivers of living water for others (John vii. 38).

“Be ye filled with the Spirit” is a word the importance of which cannot be overestimated. May every child of grace go on to know more of it in power as he walks in obedience to the word of God! For there are two things that in Scripture are practically inseparable: I refer to the Spirit and the Word. A Spirit-filled Christian will be a Word-filled Christian.

THE WATER GATE.

"Moreover the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out" (ver. 26).

The Nethinim were servants, and it is meet that they build up the Water Gate, for water is very generally a type of the word of God. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (Ps. 119, 9).

"Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word," etc. (Eph. v. 25, 26.)

It is remarkable that what in Ephesians is connected with the Spirit, is in Colossians joined to the Word.

Compare Eph. v. 18, 20, with Col. iii. 16. Both alike are a source of joy and blessing. And we need not wonder at this similarity in effect, for of the Word it is said, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

In chap. viii. of this book (Nehemiah) we see all the people gathered together "as one man into the street that was before the water gate," there to listen to the reading of the word of God. The result is joy and blessing.

O fellow-believer, I beseech you, "meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them," and thus "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). This, then, is the servant's furnishing. He is to study to show himself

"approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."

And this means far more than reading books, however helpful, written on the Bible. It necessitates diligent, painstaking study of the sacred Word itself. Other books may help, often, to lead out the mind on certain broad lines, but *the* Book must supersede them all if there is to be real growth in the knowledge of God.

By this alone will you overcome the wicked one, if "the word of God abideth in you" (1 John ii. 14).

It is this that fits us to carry out the lesson suggested by

THE HORSE GATE.

"From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house" (ver. 28).

The horse is used with striking frequency in Scripture as a figure of the warrior.

It is so described in Job xxxix. 19-25, where "He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off." In Zech. i. 8, and in Rev. vi., we read of four symbolic horses, which speak of warrior powers; and when the eternal Word of God, clad in blood-dipped vesture, descends from heaven to the battle preceding the awful supper of the great God, at the beginning of the Millennium, He is seen in vision riding on a white horse, and the saints are seen similarly mounted.

The ass is the symbol of peace; the horse, of war. When the Prince of peace rode into Jerusalem of old, it was on the ass. When He comes to judgment, it is on the horse.

The Horse Gate may speak, then, of soldier-service in a world opposed to God and His truth. It

bids us "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3, R. V.).

The truth has been given to us at great cost, not only to the One who is Himself "The Truth;" but for its preservation, and recovery when lost at times, myriads of warrior-saints have suffered and died.

Alas that we, children of such glorious sires, should so lightly value what to them was dearer than life!

We live in a day, not so much of open persecution, as of laxity and latitudinarianism. We are affected much by the spirit of the times. Hence there are few among us who, like that mighty man of old, grasp the sword of the Spirit to defend the truth of God, and fight till the hand cleaves to the very weapon it holds. (See 2 Sam. xxiii. 9, 10.) But God's Eleazars will have rich reward in the day when many will be saved, but so as by fire.

Let me quote here the words of another, which might well be written in letters of living fire:

"Renounce all the policy of the age. Trample upon Saul's armor. Grasp the book of God. Trust the Spirit who wrote its pages. Fight with this weapon only and always. Cease to amuse, and seek to arouse. Shun the clap of a delighted audience, and listen for the sobs of a convicted one. Give up trying to *please* men who have only the thickness of their ribs between their souls and hell; and warn, and plead, and entreat, as those who feel the waters of eternity creeping upon them."*

And remember, beloved, as you fight, that the day of testimony for God is fast passing away. It will

* Archibald Brown, London.

soon be too late to stand for the truth, and too late to minister Christ to needy souls.

Of this we are reminded as we pass on to

THE EAST GATE.

"After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate" (ver. 29).

The gate of the sunrising points on, does it not, to the morning without clouds, when He shall come down upon the mown grass, and as clear shining after rain?

For that glad morning weary saints of all ages have waited and longed, straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the bright and Morning Star. Wicked servants have said, "My Lord delayeth His coming;" but He "is not slack, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. iii.).

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." It is high time to be aroused from our lethargy, for already the long-expected midnight cry is ringing through the world, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet Him!"

The shout of the Lord, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, will soon resound through the vaulted heavens, announcing the return of the long-absent One, and ushering in the morning. But for many it will be the beginning of the darkest night earth has ever known.

Oh, let us be up and doing while it is called to-day, that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming. "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

THE GATE MIPHKAD

is the last in order. "After him repaired Malchiah

the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinim, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner" (ver. 31).

The word Miphkad, according to the dictionaries, means review, or appointment (for judgment). It was doubtless the gate where controversies were tried, after the Eastern fashion. How solemn is this! For it is when the Lord comes that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." That will be the gate Miphkad for the believer. There will be the last great review. Every detail of the saint's life will come up for inspection. It will be then that

"Deeds of merit, as we thought them,

He will show us were but sin;

Little acts we had forgotten,

He will tell us were for Him."

Oh, the unspeakable solemnity of it! All our ease-loving and self-seeking brought to light then! All our pride and vanity manifested! Everything put on its own proper level! All our works inspected by Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire!

In that day how many of us will wish we had been more true and real in our work down here. Things we valued highly on earth, how lightly will they weigh up there!—as the very small dust of the balance; yea, lighter even than that; altogether lighter than vanity!

And those things we have neglected and foolishly ignored in the days of our pilgrimage, how much more precious than gold will they appear in the light of that judgment-seat!

O beloved, shall we not seek to be now what we

shall wish we had been then; do now what we shall wish we had done then; turn now from what we shall wish we had judged then?

The Lord grant to awaken His people to the reality of these things, and the importance of living for eternity!

And thus we have traveled round the wall from one part to another, and have, I trust, been blessed in doing so. We might close our meditations here, only that God does not end in this way, for in the last verse we come back again, having made the circuit, to that with which we began,—

THE SHEEP GATE.

“And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.”

It is as though God would not have us turn away without reminding us that that the Cross with which we began will be before our souls for eternity. After all has been gone into at the judgment-seat, we shall turn from it to the Judge Himself, who is our Redeemer and Bridegroom. We shall see Him as a Lamb that had been slain. At His once-pierced feet we shall fall in adoration, and forever sing praises “unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

We shall never get beyond the Cross. It shall be the theme of our praises throughout all the ages to come. Oh, to ever live in the light of it now! It speaks of sins forever put away, and also of a world under judgment for the rejection of God's Son. Our place, then, is outside of it all. “Let us go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp, bearing His

reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. xiii. 13, 14).

So shall we be in a position to learn aright the lessons of THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

H. A. I.

THREE STAGES IN OPPOSITION TO GOD'S TESTIMONY.

(2 Tim., chaps. i., ii., iii.)

THERE are just one or two thoughts on my mind, beloved brethren, in connection with this scripture, that I would like to give expression to for our mutual profit. It is very blessed, surely, to have brought before us those wonderful blessings that God has given us in Christ. How sweet to know that we have died *with* Christ: not only that He died for us, blessed as that is, but that we have died *with* Him—that we are risen with Him—and that we are seated *in Him* in the heavenlies, as the epistle to the Ephesians teaches us! All that is surely very blessed. But then, there other lines of truth as well as those, and it behooves us to be prepared to look at and take in any truth that God by His Spirit may bring before us.

The tendency of the day is to set aside certain truths—to let them drop out of our ministry—out of our conversation; in fact, to drop them altogether, as being subjects on which we shall never all agree, and which are therefore best left alone; and this is just the very thing Satan desires and aims at. It is admitted they are truths taught in the Word; "*but*," it is said, "you know it would not be wise to take up church truth, or the question of separation, as Chris-

tians may be present who do not agree with us on those subjects, and it would perhaps be wiser to let them alone and speak of what we are all agreed upon."

Beloved brethren, are we the servants of God, or men? "*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable;" and whatever the Holy Ghost leads to must be for profit to some one, if not to all, and must not be withheld to please either the devil or worldly-minded saints who think more of being friendly with Christians than they do of the glory of God. Never was there a time when it was more needful for us to understand and maintain the truth of God "as good soldiers of Jesus Christ" than at the present—to understand our orders and obey them at all cost, and thus stand for God in an evil day, and in spite of the increasing difficulties.

We only need to read these verses in 2 Tim. iii., and look around, to see that we are living in the last days, and that the perilous times *have* come. The characteristics of those times are seen full blown on every hand. It is really a very solemn thing to think that the very same things which characterized the heathen world as set forth in Rom. i. 29-31, are here set forth as characterizing the so-called Christian world, and at the close of its history on earth, with this addition: "Lovers of pleasure more than lover of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" and the Spirit of God adds, "From such turn away."

Now, beloved brethren, are we doing that? Do we turn away from such, and accept the path of separation from evil as being the path where we can expect God to walk with us? It is He who says,

"From such turn away." How often we find that when the Word begins to press on our conscience, and narrow up our path by its insistence on separation, we then want to set it aside! Have we not heard it said, "We will leave that question, and talk about something we shall agree about"? But is not separation a truth taught in the Word? Are we not to agree about all God's word? or is it just certain parts, that suit ourselves, and we can let all the rest go? We need to beware of all these and such-like efforts of Satan to hinder our progress in the things of God.

If we look at this second epistle to Timothy I think we shall see the marks of failure and declension, and now they come in and work. But first of all we see how wonderfully God has blest us in saving us and calling us with a holy calling, etc., as chapter one shows us. He has also given us the Holy Ghost to dwell *in* us, as well as *with* us, in answer to the Lord's prayer in John xiv. 16-17. We must not forget there are these two aspects of the Spirit's presence; nor must we confound them. All the children of God have the Spirit dwelling in them; and that brings in the thought of union. We are united to Christ as the head of the body, and we are united to each other as members of the body, as 1 Cor. xii. shows us. Then there is the other thought, "Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth among you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16—New Version); and "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22). Here, then, we have a set of totally distinct ideas from the other. Here we have the Spirit as controlling in the house of God—leading, guiding, directing, helping—the power for worship,

prayer, or discipline; and thus by the ministry of the Word teaching us "how to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii.).

We need to look at God's truth as one blessed, harmonious whole, and not pit one bit against another. It is one blessed whole, and all connected with Christ and His glory. It is not the gospel as against the Church, or the Church as against the gospel, but one blessed whole; and no part can be dispensed with—all is needful. Were there no gospel to preach to sinners, there could be no Church to be loved by Christ and presented to Himself. It is by the gospel that sinners become saints, and find their place in the Church and outside the world. A *holy* place surely, but a *happy* place when taken up in faith and pursued in faith. In walking in that path we find we have to turn away from many true children of God, because of their associations, and because the Word commands our consciences, and says, "From such turn away;" while at the same time it exhorts us to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, *with* those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." We love *all* the Lord's people nevertheless, though at such times it is very difficult to get them to believe it. But the Word says, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him" (1 John ii. 8).

Then, if we think of the apostle's own path as set forth in this epistle, what a path of separation and isolation it was! What pain it must have given him to have to write, "All they that are in Asia be turned away from me"! and he then names two men who

seemed to be leaders in that path of declension, Phygellus and Hermogenes. They found the path too narrow for them. They had no faith to go on in it. They were not whole-hearted for Christ, like Paul, and they turned away and left Paul to go on alone—yet not alone.

It is very striking that, in this epistle, we have in each of the first three chapters two men mentioned. They seem to be leaders, and characterize the decline and its progress. In chapter one, as I have noted, they have turned away from Paul, not necessarily from Christ; but they could not go on any longer with the testimony. This is the first *outward* step in declension; for surely the heart must have been wrong before such a step was taken. It is the evil servant who first says in *his heart*, "My lord delayeth his coming," and then begins to show his state by his public acts; and he "begins to eat and drink with the drunken," etc. Beloved brethren, we need to keep our hearts with all diligence. The moment true affection for Christ begins to wane, we are then open to receive any suggestion of Satan, and are soon manifested in our true state: we cannot long hide it.

Then, again, it will ever be found that when once our hearts get away from God the testimony of the Lord soon becomes irksome and the path too narrow, and we want to widen out and be more liberal-minded, and not so exclusive, especially towards nice Christians whom we meet and who are not with us (and perhaps do not want to be); and thus we put our foot into that delusive current, and are ignorant of the power that causes its flow; and sometimes Christians in such circumstances only wake up when

they find themselves wholly carried away. There is a power behind these seductive thoughts that even Christians do not reckon on—an awful power; and when once we get off our feet into it, the moral senses become blunted, the vision becomes dimmed, and the spiritual judgment becomes wholly perverted, while honestly *thinking* we are still all right and doing right.

The next thing we find in the steps of declension as set forth in this epistle is, bad doctrine (chapter two). Now, you will often find that when saints do turn away from the testimony of the Lord, they fall into bad doctrine. They have no safeguard, for they have given up faith and a good conscience. In this chapter we have other two men brought before us—"Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." How dreadful to think that men could be so foolish and so deceived as to believe and teach such a stupid doctrine! Is it not another proof of the blinding influence of Satan?

Then, again, is it not a solemn thing for us to know that none of us can take a false step without affecting some one else? These leaders "overthrew the faith of some." We all know that once a back-slidden saint gets hold of false doctrine, he is most anxious to propagate it—much more so than he was the truth, and he is delighted to make proselytes to his new faith. We might well ask, Does it end there? Alas, no; and I turn you just for a moment to the other and further step in this decline. In chapter three we have other two names mentioned—

representative men. It is true they are men of a past age; but they are representative men none the less—Jannes and Jambres. They withstood Moses. They were open opposers of the truth of the living God.

Beloved brethren, these things may well solemnize us as we look at them; they are set forth as beacons to warn us. (1) Turning away from the testimony of the Lord; (2) Falling into false doctrine; (3) Open and downright opposition to the truth. Have some of us not seen it in our own short histories? Have we not seen men who went on well for a time, then they got cold, and began to complain, first, of the inconsistencies of their brethren (never of themselves); then of the narrowness of the path; then they turned away from it—in some cases becoming more energetic in their new path than ever they were in the true one. Then they embraced false doctrine, and at last became bitter enemies and opponents of the truth. And is it not always the case that those who have most light, when once they are turned aside, are the most bitter against those who let that light shine? Does it not fulfill that word, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

What then remains for us? What is the great preservative against this awful state we have been looking at? Things will not get better. There will be no wholesale recovery. Nay, rather, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." But God remains, and His Spirit and Word remain. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Have we found our path from that Word? Then let us "continue in the things which

we have learned, knowing of whom we have learned them." Let there be increased dependence on God and subjection and obedience to His Word, and then, and only then, shall we be preserved from the snares of the enemy, and from that awful declension which ends so disastrously. May the Lord Himself enable us to take warning from these beacons, and encouragement from the fact that He is with us, and will help us, if we desire to do His will.

New Zealand.

W. E.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE will resume our reading of the book of Psalms during the present month. Our portion will be psalms lxxxiii.—cvi. These form the third and fourth books of the entire collection, answering much as the two previous do to the corresponding books in the Pentateuch. Thus, psalms lxxiii.—lxxxix. would answer to Leviticus, and it is significant that the authorship of many of these is Levitical. Thus, Asaph wrote psalms lxxiii.—lxxxiii.; and psalms lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii. and lxxxviii. were written for the sons of Korah, and the concluding one by Ethan the Ezrahite. Only one psalm in this third book has the name of David mentioned with it.

Appropriately with this Levitical authorship, the general theme of the book relates to the sanctuary, the holiness of God, the inheritance of His people, and His corresponding ways with them.

The first ten psalms present the great truths of God's holiness manifested in grace. Psalm lxxiii. teaches the great lesson of the sanctuary, the only place where the problem can be solved why the wicked are prosperous and the righteous suffer.

Psalm lxxiv. brings in the enemy who has intruded into

the sanctuary. The prayer is an earnest plea to God to bestir Himself for the people's need, yea, to plead His own cause.

Psalm lxxv. passes out into the light. God's name is near. His wondrous works declare this. It is Christ alone who can manifest the excellence of this name.

Psalm lxxvi. magnifies the glory of God in His sanctuary, and His rebuke and judgment upon the ungodly. The wrath of man is restrained, or else turned into praise.

Psalm lxxvii. dwells upon God's ways in the sea, in the midst of all the confusion, and in the sanctuary, where everything is made plain.

Psalm lxxviii. is one of the didactic psalms, gleaning lessons from God's deliverance of His people. It is in many respects similar to the 105th and 106th psalms. The faithfulness of God is *fittingly seen in establishing* His name and His sanctuary in mount Zion.

Again, in psalm lxxix. we have the intrusion of the enemy, while psalm lxxx. is another prayer for reviving, beautifully bringing out, in *crescendo* order, the glories of God's name.

Psalm lxxxi. is God's voice speaking in peace and blessing to His people—a most beautiful psalm. In psalm lxxxii. we see the Judge, the Judge of judges; while lxxxiii. shows a climax when evil reaches its height, and God overthrows it. This will be fulfilled in the last days.

The second subdivision, from psalms lxxxiv.—lxxxix., presents the same theme of divine holiness, but now more closely connected with the person of Christ than the previous ones.

Psalm lxxxiv. is familiar, and most beautiful. God's tabernacles are before the soul, the desire which leads on His people through all the intervening trials until they shall appear before Him. He is a sun and shield, and will give grace and glory.

Psalm lxxxv. celebrates the salvation of God for His people.

In psalm lxxxvi. we have the loyal One who can, in His fulness, be none other than Christ, pouring out His soul in dependence upon God. Beautifully associated with this is psalm lxxxvii., where the full result of deliverance is celebrated. Not only is "this Man" born there, but "this and that man."

Psalm lxxxviii. cannot but remind us of the sufferings of our blessed Lord, though doubtless the sufferings of His people are also suggested.

In psalm lxxxix. we have the deliverance flowing, surely, from the sufferings of Christ, and which will succeed the afflictions of His people. God has laid help upon One that is mighty. This closes the third book.

Book four (psalms xc.-cvi.) presents quite a different theme. Answering to the book of Numbers, what is prominent here is the wilderness experience of God's people, and final blessing brought into the earth through Christ. The book most appropriately opens (psalm xc.) with the prayer of the great wilderness-hero, Moses, who spent forty years of his own life, and forty years more as companion of the people, in their testing, in the wilderness. The general thought of psalms xc.-xciii. is the testimony as to creation, the vanity of man, the blessedness of confidence in God exemplified in Christ, and the joyful celebration of God's praise.

Psalm xc., as we have said, is by Moses. It celebrates the vanity, feebleness and brevity of human life, suggestively reminding us of the fall and our association with the first man.

Psalm xci. is an entirely different atmosphere. Here we have the second Man, who is preserved in all His ways because He trusts in the Lord. It requires little skill to see here the perfect Man of psalm xvi.; and, thank God, it is our privilege to walk in His steps, by His grace.

Psalm xcii. then will follow. Sweet praises of God will be declared as His sabbath rest is entered into. The ten-stringed instrument will be brought into full use, every capacity of our once ruined nature engaged in praising Him.

Psalm xciii. peacefully closes this portion, looking forward really to the close of the whole book. Jehovah reigns, His majesty and glory are established over the earth, which, therefore, is established in security. Let the floods lift their voices; let the waves dash upon the shore: they can but break themselves against the mighty Rock where His throne is established, and that Rock is Christ.

The second portion of this book (psalms xciv.-c.) celebrates the blessing that is coming upon the earth, but which must be introduced by judgments; for it is only when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth that the inhabitants will learn righteousness.

Psalm xciv. is a celebration of what we have already spoken of, the absolute need for vengeance upon His adversaries, if God is to bless His people. Thus faith will put itself upon the side of God, and plead for that judgment which is His only way of purging the earth of evil that will not judge itself. How solemn is the thought that this time is steadily drawing nearer when the proud in heart must bow to His righteousness whose grace they now refuse!

Psalm xcv. opens with the joyous notes of praise to the great God and King—surely Christ—who holds in His hands the deep places of earth and sea, as well as the high mountains. Let us bow ourselves before Him our Maker, and no longer harden our hearts as our forefathers did in the wilderness, and were thus shut out from entering into rest. Now, the rest so near, let us bow to Him who brings it in.

Psalm xcvi. continues this praise. A new song is sung,

in which all the earth can join. Jehovah's name is blessed, and made known to the ends of the earth. When this is done, heaven will rejoice with the earth, and roaring sea and trees of the wood will unite their voices in praises to Him who comes, though as Judge, still to bring peace and blessing.

Psalm xcvi. is similar. Fire and judgment have prepared the way for the Lord. Zion is at peace, and can rejoice in Him who is thus exalted.

Psalm xcvi. celebrates the wondrous acts of the Lord, quite similar to psalm xcvi.

In psalm xcix. the King is seen triumphant over all evil. A glance backward is taken at His faithful servants, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, who are associated with the remnant of the latter day in praising the holy name of Him who triumphs over all evil.

Lastly, psalm c., brief as it is, is an outburst of praise. "The Lord is good, His mercy endureth forever, and His faithfulness from generation to generation."

The closing portion of this book (psalms ci.-cvi.) enters more minutely into the dwelling of God with His people, and therefore manifests, if in a less exalted way perhaps more completely even, the full results of what salvation from sin means.

In psalm ci. we see in type Christ, the true King, purging His kingdom of all that offends, and them that do iniquity; but we are not to look upon Him alone in His Kingly authority. We know that His path to that throne of glory lay through the anguish of Gethsemane and the darkness of the cross. This is magnificently brought out in psalm cii., where we have the sorrows of our holy Lord at the hands of God, the witness of His perfect manhood and His extreme sufferings; and yet in this very psalm Jehovah addresses Him as the everlasting God, whose years shall never fail. Nowhere in all the pages of inspiration is there a more amazing and magnificent declara-

tion of the absolute humanity and lowliness of our adorable Lord, coupled with His eternal Godhead. Little wonder it is that the praise of His people should now flow forth unhindered in celebrating Jehovah's name in psalm ciii. Let us add from our hearts ever our amen: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

The praise now widens, and in psalm civ. all God's works are made to tell His ways of goodness and mercy. This is the great nature-psalm. Well would it be for us did we learn more of the perfection of the divine ways in the works of His hands! We would find them but an echo of that grace which has been made known to us in the work of His heart.

The book closes with the two companion psalms (cv. and cvi.). Psalm cv. is a review of God's ways with His people from a divine standpoint. Their course is traced, but by His various acts of mercy, from Egypt all through the land. On the other hand, psalm cvi. goes over the same ground, but now dwells upon the failures of His people at the various stages. What a comfort it is to know that if at the judgment-seat of Christ there is a faithful review of our history, in which all our own evil and shortcomings are brought out, there will be, parallel with it, the record of the unfailing grace and faithfulness which triumphed over all our evil, and brought us safely through to sing His praises!

A brief word must suffice for the first epistle to the Thessalonians. As is known, it is perhaps the first of Paul's fourteen epistles, written a few weeks after having left the beloved saints at Thessalonica, who manifested such wondrous energy from the very outset of their course. How significant it is that in this earliest epistle the prominent theme throughout should be the coming of our Lord! This is seen in the four divisions of the epistle.

In chapter one the conversion of the Thessalonians is described as turning to God from idols, that they might wait for His Son from heaven (ver. 10).

Division two, chapters ii.-iv. 12. The apostle here dwells upon his service amongst them, recalling his faithfulness and unworldliness while there, dwelling also upon the persecution which the saints had suffered at the hands of the enemy, and his earnest desire that they might stand in the midst of this persecution. He therefore exhorts them to faithfulness and godliness and love. Once and again does he speak of the bright hope of the Lord's coming. He desires that they may be established. They are his crown and boasting at the coming of Christ. He desires that they be established until that coming, with all His saints.

The third division (chapters iv. 13-vii.) is exclusively devoted to the coming of the Lord in its twofold aspect, in relation to His saints (chapter iv. 13-18) and to the world (chapter v. 1-11).

The last division (chapter v. 12-28) is devoted to practical exhortations as to their walk, which is to correspond with the blessed hope which had been unfolded in the previous chapters. Love, holiness, diligence, faithfulness, will ever mark a true waiting for the coming of our Lord.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 21.—What was the law given for?

ANS.—“By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. iii. 20). “It was added because of transgressions” (Gal. iii. 19), that is, to bring out the sin in man's heart in the form of actual transgression, or violation of God's command. “The law entered that the offense might abound” (Rom. v. 20). These and other passages show why the law was given—to prove man guilty and helpless, and to shut him up to Christ alone.

QUES. 22.—Is there any baptism of the Spirit since Pentecost?

ANS.—Some have thought the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost was the only baptism of the Spirit. Unquestionably it was His only *descent* for that purpose, but 1 Cor. xii. 13—"by one Spirit ye are all baptized into one body"—would show that all believers are so baptized. That is, while the descent at Pentecost was the great outward act of forming the Church, by the baptism of the Spirit, yet as each one believes, he is baptized by the Spirit—united to Christ in glory, and thus introduced into the Church, the body of Christ.

QUES. 23.—In what relation did the priests stand with the judges in Israel?

ANS.—The judges seem to have been raised up by God for the special deliverance of His people in times of failure and ruin. While doubtless the priesthood existed, and perhaps carried on its functions to some extent, yet the judges do not seem to have acted in connection with them. Thus, Gideon was his own priest, and after his victory fell into the snare of desiring to be permanently a priest, setting up a golden ephod, which was idolatry in another form. Later on, Eli the priest, and Samuel the prophet, were also judges. The judge was exceptional, the priest was permanent, though often lost sight of in times of darkness.

QUES. 24.—In Gen. xviii. we read that three men came to Abraham, and they ate with him. In Gen. xix. only two came to Lot. Were these really men, or heavenly beings?

ANS.—Undoubtedly they were from heaven (see Heb. ii. 2). One of the three who visited Abraham was evidently the Lord (vers. 1, 13). After their visit they go toward Sodom, but the Lord remains with Abraham, who interceded for the wicked city. The other two go on to rescue Lot, but they are not called *men*, but *angels* (chap. xix. i.). This change is significant, showing the moral distance between them and Lot, while with Abraham they could take a place of nearness, and eat and drink with him. If we ask *how* could angels appear as men, we can only answer, So it is, and it only shows how intimately connected heaven and earth are, were it not for sin.

"NO LONGER STEWARD."

WHATEVER the difficulties in the interpretation of the parable of the unjust steward (Luke xvi.),—and these are only apparent,—it is clear that he is put out of his stewardship. Man has been entrusted with responsibilities for God. His creation, his presence in the world, is a proof of this. He is not here for himself, nor in independence, but to make diligent use of that which is not his own, but God's. This, of course, was true in the fullest sense in the case of our first parents. The garden was not merely a place of delight for Adam, but of service too. He was to dress and to keep it, and keep himself inviolate from sin. He failed miserably, and was put out of the garden. God declared as to it, "Thou mayest be no longer steward." Outside the garden, his sentence of expulsion from stewardship was not removed. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," was the dark writing on the wall ever before his eyes.

"Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Every man's life, then, leading on to death, as it does, is a witness that his tenure of stewardship is brief. God has passed the sentence upon all, "Thou mayest be no longer steward;" and this is because man has dealt unfaithfully with what God had committed to him.

How the sin of Eden has been reenacted, with endless variations, by every descendant of Adam! Disobedience of God, even though He were known but dimly, has marked the human race. Nor does grace, blessedly though it removes the sentence of eternal doom, alter this solemn declaration. The

saints of God, like all the rest of the world, grow old, are subject to sickness, and lie down and die. Thank God, the sting of death has been removed, for sin has been judged in the person of our blessed Saviour, and no wrath lies against us. But, so far as our earthly circumstances in the body are concerned, we still hear the solemn declaration, "Thou mayest be no longer steward." Man has not been reinstated. The believer does not get back Eden blessings. This world is a witness of his unfaithfulness, and the solemn declaration of God must be adhered to, "Thou mayest be no longer steward."

How this should solemnize and chasten our hearts as we realize we are soon to be turned out of the world into which we have been put! This is but little realized, oftentimes, by the young; but as years go on and the powers of nature begin to fail, it is more and more clearly seen. If we judge merely according to sense, there is nothing before us but the grave, and that at no great distance, while of course the truth of the uncertainty of life is applicable to all alike, both old and young.

We have wasted our Master's goods surely in our unconverted days; and alas, since we have known the Lord we have not always been as careful as the trust put upon us would call for. We are unprofitable servants in a far fuller way than those who can say, "We have done that which it was our duty to do;" for our unprofitableness has gone further than the mere negative, not glorifying God beyond what was our appointed duty; we have failed in that which was actually put into our hands.

All this unfaithfulness has been due to the fall, and is closely connected with it, as we have seen. We can

therefore also connect it with that which has existed since the fall—that old nature, called "the flesh." It is because of the presence of the flesh in the believer that he is unfaithful, though this is no excuse. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." But as faith is that which has practically anticipated the judgment by accepting God's sentence of condemnation and His remedy, so also it can anticipate the setting aside of the unfaithful steward. God has already, in His own mind, put the unfaithful steward out of his office. He has "condemned sin in the flesh." Where we recognize this in its fulness we cease to be practically in the sphere in which unfaithfulness operates. The flesh, while still in us, and needing to be watched most carefully, is no longer our master. We can pass the rest of our lives, not according to the lusts of man, but according to the will of God. What liberty this gives! We bow in glad recognition of the fact that, so far as the flesh is concerned, no faithfulness in stewardship can be expected from it. We thankfully recognize that it has been judged and set aside, and now, instead of vainly seeking to secure faithfulness from that which has proved itself unfaithful, we are at leisure to be occupied with Him who was faithful in all things, even Christ; occupation with whom produces, according to our measure of faith, a like result in us.

So, as we look about us and see unfaithfulness in the world, or as we look at ourselves and see witness of the fact that, as to our bodies, the inevitable day when we shall be put out of our stewardship is approaching, we can with joy realize that that day is past for faith. We have already been put out, and

in the new sphere where Christ is all, and in the power of that "law of the Spirit" which is "life in Christ Jesus," we are walking now in the "newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." We yield ourselves unto God as those that are "alive from the dead."

May the Lord give us, as we realize the unprofitableness of the flesh, to be even yet, in the little time that we remain in the body, "good stewards of the manifold grace of God"!

A SONG OF REDEMPTION.

Exodus xv. 1-21.

IN Ex. xii. the people of Israel are sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood of the pascal lamb. Outside of that there would have been no more safety for them than for the Egyptians. What God saw was the blood—the blood applied on the door-posts of the houses; and where He saw that, He passed over them who had taken refuge behind it. If it is impossible for God not to judge where He does not see the blood, it is no less impossible for Him to judge where He sees it, for the blood bears witness of propitiation. The victim has borne the judgment, that they may be spared who deserved judgment. If my sins were judged in Christ, it is impossible that I be judged for them. Justice exacts but one payment, an essentially perfect one surely, but only one. I am the debtor and have nothing to pay, but Christ has given Himself to substitute me, and He has made integral payment. My ransom cost His life. God can ask no more, and He asks no more.

The Israelites thus, in figure, redeemed by the blood of the pascal lamb, had nothing more to fear from God, judicially speaking. Indeed they had God *for* them, and if God be for us who can be against us? If God justifies, who can condemn? Christ my Surety has died; much more, He is risen, He is at the right hand of God, and He makes intercession for me. Who can separate me from the love of Christ? From that side, therefore, all is secure.

But redemption has a double aspect and a double effect. This is what is too often forgotten. It is written that our Lord Jesus Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 4). Could you think of the Israelites, after the sacrifice of the Passover, staying in Egypt? They were to eat the lamb roast with fire, (attesting thus the judgment it had gone through for them) and in haste: it was the signal that the hour had come to go. Egypt is "this present evil world," and Christ takes us out of it in leading us through the Red Sea, as He took us from under the judgment of God by passing through it for us.

They are out of Egypt then; past the sea which has opened itself to let them out, and is going to close upon their enemies. It will never be reopened to let them back again. Now it is they sing their redemption; they have been cleared of their sins, and taken out of this present evil world—for them, Egypt; for us, the world. They are not yet in the land of promise, but they are going there, with impossibility to return to the land of bondage. In their backsliding moments they might desire to return, for alas, what fainting may not the redeemed

go through? But a God as faithful as He is good is with them: He has shut the door, none can reopen it.

In Ex. xv. lust has not yet enticed them, not yet conceived to bring forth sin. Their whole mind and heart is absorbed, on the one hand by the deliverance of which they have just been the objects, and on the other, by the glorious prospect of their entering Canaan. Had they kept these things steadily in view it would never have happened to them to murmur in the wilderness. The wilderness, they are in it when they sing their song, but they see it not. Thus it is with us when we look not on the things which are seen, which are only for a time, but on those which are not seen, and which are for eternity. The redemption and the heritage which are ours by the death of Christ are for eternity.

What a theme redemption is! There is none like it. Israel never sang perhaps on such a high note, not even in Canaan. They do not merely triumph over their enemies, whether those behind or those before them—all at once—they glory in God Himself, which is yet better (Rom. v. 11). Indeed it was good to say as to the enemies of yesterday: "Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea;" and as to those of to-morrow: "Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina; then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed . . . all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." But how much more joyful to foresee that home which the Lord had prepared, that sanctuary which His hands had founded, where He would find His joy in the midst of His people, and His people would find their joy around their God. It is this which is the very bliss of heaven.

But between Egypt and Canaan there is the wilderness, whatever you do, and it must be gone through. God has ordained it so. What for? To humble us, to try us, to prove the dispositions of our heart, and if we would keep His commandments or not (Deut. viii. 2). It is a place of testing.

We know how Israel behaved there. Scarcely had they finished their song when they raised a murmur. We do not love Marahs, and there are some along the way. God does not make us miss them, because He has said: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (Jas. i. 12). In each trial, and at the end of each trial God has put a blessing. Into the trial He puts a wood (the Cross) which sweetens the bitter water; and at the end of the trial He puts the crown of life. This is worthy of Him who is ever and infinitely good.

In Deut. viii. not a word, alas, could be said to the praise of the children of Israel. They had ceased to sing, to murmur and strive instead. By the trial they had proved *not* faithful. Happily for them God remained faithful to them: "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."

The heart is the same in us as in them: "All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the world are come (1 Cor. x. 11). It is song that God expects of us, His redeemed people, no murmurs. If in the midst of all our circumstances we keep before us our redemption and our inheritance, we shall find the way neither too long nor too

wearisome, and we shall say with the psalmist,
"The Lord is good, and His mercy endureth forever."

(Translated from the French.)

THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER.

I asked a follower of the Christ,
Tell me, I pray,
What is thy life, thy hope, thy faith—
Why didst thou choose this narrow path,
This rugged way ?
Why with earth's joys dissatisfied ?
I fain would know. Then he replied :

My life is but a vapor,
To constantly ascend
To Him, the one Lifegiver,
On whom life must depend.
For He who giveth keepeth still,
And will keep to the end.

My fleeting breath the incense
Of prayer to Him who gave
The best He had in heaven
My precious soul to save—
The Christ, who left my weight of sin,
Deep buried in His grave.

My faith is but the clinging
Of heart that leans upon
The might of God; nor wrestles,
Because its strength is gone—
The halting of the soul that's found
The place whence strength is drawn.

My work is just love's labor
For Him who first loved me;
The service of obedience
As full as it is free;

His gracious smile my sweet reward
Until His face I see.

My path is of His choosing;
I would not if I might
Direct my falt'ring footsteps,
I would not walk by sight;
But let Him lead me where He will,
For then I walk aright.

I walk this narrow pathway
Because He walked therein—
Because there is no other
But leadeth me to sin;
Because I count all things but loss
My Lord's "Well done" to win.

My past, His *cross* has told out
The story of my life,
My only hope of glory,
The end of all my strife,
The shadow o'er a sin-sick world,
With death and sorrow rife.

My present, but to follow
The guiding of His Word,
The only weapon left me,
The Spirit's mighty sword,
The daily food by which I grow,
Which all things doth afford.

My future is the glory
Where I shall weary not
Of drinking in His fulness;
And oh, the strange, sweet thought
That I shall soon be like Him,
And love Him as I ought!

H. McD.

KING SAUL :
THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.
THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter ix.

SAUL AND JONATHAN CONTRASTED.

(1 Sam. xlii. 15-xlv. 46.)

(Continued from page 288.)

WHEREVER there is a living faith that lays hold upon God, no apparent helplessness will prevent His manifesting His power, and we have now a refreshing contrast to the timidity and helplessness of Saul and the people with him in the energy of faith on the part of two. Jonathan, Saul's son, and his armor-bearer, act in independence of the king. Apparently seeing the uselessness of waiting for his father to take any initiative, the soul of Jonathan is stirred, and he proposes to his armor-bearer to go out alone. Saul still tarries at Gibeah, with his 600 men and with the priests, who would seem to speak of the presence of God, but whose names and connections remind us of the period of priestly ruin at the time of Eli. It is Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, who is there. The glory had departed from Israel, and so far as these priests were concerned it had not returned. Neither Saul nor the people with him know anything of Jonathan's determination, and the priests are apparently as ignorant as the rest. How truly must faith not confer with flesh and blood, nor count upon the slightest assistance from those who have but the name without the reality of priestly communion!

Things are as discouraging as possible for Jona-

than. The garrison of the Philistines is strongly intrenched upon an almost inaccessible height, separated by a deep ravine from where Jonathan was. A sharp rock on either side of this ravine would prevent his approach to the enemy, except as he had strength and courage to surmount almost impassable obstacles. The names of these two rocks are given—Bozez, which means "shining," and would dazzle the eyes and prevent any rapid climbing, while its white, bare surface would most effectually prevent any concealment needed in an ambush; Seneh, the sharp declivity down which he must climb before he can ascend Bozez, means "a thorn," which might easily pierce, and evidently suggests the extreme difficulty of his undertaking.

The spiritual meaning of all this seems quite clear. The enemy is strongly intrenched on its rock, surrounded by brilliant, shining heights, both intellectual and material. It would seem like madness to attempt to scale these shining heights in the hope of dislodging the proud enemy. All that can be associated with the side which is to make the attack is the barrenness, and even the apparent curse, suggested by the thorn. Is not God's hand that which has permitted all this oppression, and does it not seem like resisting Him to resist the authority of those who have gained ascendancy over us under His chastening hand? But faith does not reason in this way, nor does it look at either thorns or brightness. The way of the slothful is as a hedge of thorns, but the way of faith is with God, and neither thorns nor heights are aught to Him.

Jonathan confers with his armor-bearer, who is but a young man, even nameless. He proposes to

him to go over unto the camp of the Philistines. Notice how they are designated—uncircumcised, people who are without the mark of covenant relationship with God, that covenant which had been made with Abraham, and the sign given to him which was ever the mark upon the Israelite. Spiritually, we know that circumcision answers to that sentence of death upon ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in the living God. It is that which was renewed at Gilgal, at which we have already looked, and speaks thus of "no confidence in the flesh." Circumcision does not trust the flesh, knows its helplessness, its hopeless enmity against God. Uncircumcision would in like manner answer to confidence in the flesh; and after all, what are the Philistines, with all their greatness, with all their intrenchment on the shining heights of power and position? What are they, after all, in the eyes of faith, but those who have confidence in the flesh? They trust in human power, human wisdom, human forms, everything of man, and God is left out.

What is this, after all, for faith? Does not faith know that these things cannot be trusted in, that there is no spiritual power in them whatever? So Jonathan, as he looks at them, sees only those whose confidence is false, in the arm of flesh. On the other hand, looking at God, while not absolutely sure that He will do so, he knows His ability. "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." He sees that the battle is not his, but the Lord's. What difference does it make whether the Lord uses a host, or uses his own feeble arm? Nay, if He please, can He not act without any means? What victory already is in the air as we listen to such brave

words as these, coming from a heart that is fed upon the strength of God! Is not every word true? Is there any restraint with the Lord? Can He not save by the few, as well as by the many? Has He become reconciled to His bitter enemies? Has He come under the oppression of the Philistines? To ask such questions is to answer them, and one would fain feel the quickening pulsations of a courage that partakes of Jonathan's faith.

How noble is the response of the nameless armor-bearer! "Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee, according to thy heart." "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" And here is the faith which responds to faith, and is developed by it.

But courage does not mean rashness, though it may often seem like that. Jonathan is really working with God, as the people say later on, and therefore he must be sure that he is in God's path. He proposes, therefore, that the sign shall come from God Himself, even as Gideon in his day had his faith fortified by various signs in confirmation. Jonathan and his armor-bearer will show themselves to the Philistines. They will attract their attention. If this excites them sufficiently to come down to their position, they will stand and wait the attack. If, on the other hand, they invite them to come up to them, they will go forward in the confidence that God is leading them on to victory.

We notice, however, that no provision is made for retreating, and apparently there is nothing in his mind but a conflict and victory. It is simply a question whether he or the Philistines shall be the aggressors. Faith has its armor on the right hand and

the left, has its breastplate, shield and helmet, but never any armor for the back. No provision is made for the cowardice which runs away. Jonathan will either go forward or stand his ground. He will not retreat. Neither, by God's grace, will we.

How graciously God responds to the faith that lays hold upon Him in this bold way! The two show themselves to their enemies, and are invited to come up. We can well imagine the supercilious smile of contempt with which the Philistines say, "The Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves." What a reproach, beloved, it is when we are afraid to say that we are the Lord's, and hide in secret places—when we are afraid to let our neighbors know that we are Christ's, and that the word of God is our sufficient guide, which we are seeking to obey! Is not such a reproach merited by the mass of the Lord's people at this time, hidden so that even those in closest contact with them would not suspect that they are genuinely for Christ? Of course there may be, as there is, a morality and outward walk of rectitude—even to a certain extent religious observances in which Philistines themselves can join; but where is that bold confession of loyalty to Christ our Lord? doing what we do because we belong to Christ, and not merely because it is right, or expected, or the habit of others? And when one, in the boldness and simplicity of faith, does thus show himself, speaking out frankly for his Lord's honor, how the reproach may well fall upon all the rest of the people of God that at least a few are coming out of their holes and showing themselves!

But this very showing is the presage of victory. The Philistines will amuse themselves with this little

morsel of opposition, and have no hesitation in inviting the bold climbers to come up to them. This they do, and a sorry day it was for the Philistines that they ever invited them up! Jonathan speaks out. The Lord has already delivered the enemy, not into his hands, mark, but into the hand of Israel; for Jonathan realizes that the victory is not for himself individually, but for all the people of God. How important it is, for all our spiritual conflicts, to realize that we are first of all fighting with God; secondly, for God; and thirdly, for all His people!

They climb up, as has been said, upon their hands and feet, suggesting both work and prayer. It is neither idleness nor vain confidence, but the toil of those who realize that in themselves is no strength. We read very little of the details of this conflict. The victory has already been won in Jonathan's heart, and further details might attract us from the real lesson involved. Faith that has conquered our own coward heart can conquer any Philistines that oppose. The slaughter does not seem to be very great, judged from human standpoint, and yet what mighty results flow from it! There is a trembling everywhere. It is as though God were laying His mighty hand upon all, and causing proud oppressors and the camp of Israel, yea, the land itself, to feel the weight of that arm which will shake not only earth, but heaven too. There is a trembling of God.

(To be continued.)

THE RESURRECTION PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

(Numbers iv. 16.)

ELEAZAR, the third son of Aaron, and the one who takes up the office of priesthood after the death of Nadab and Abihu, brings in for us the thought of resurrection. The service connected with his office typifies that service of Christ as Priest in resurrection. Eleazar has the oversight of the tabernacle, both holy and most holy places; and so Christ is the minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle of which Israel's was the type (Heb. viii. 2). So, also, Christ is Head over all things to the Church: they are all put under His feet.

“And to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, pertaineth the oil for the light.” The golden lampstand presents to us Christ in the glory of resurrection; for the bud, flower and fruit of the almond, the emblem of resurrection in Aaron's rod that budded, cover it. Upon its seven branches are placed the lamps from which the light shines which is thrown upon the lampstand itself. These lamps give us a picture of the saints united to Christ, and borne up by Him in resurrection glory before God, just as these lamps are made part of and are supported by the lampstand. The oil in these lamps which give the light is the Holy Spirit who indwells every saint of God, and through whom alone that light comes which, shining, reveals somewhat of Christ's glory. It is olive oil, beaten,—that is, made pure,—which gives the light. The word here used for pure, in the original, is from a root “to bruise or

break in pieces." The oil is therefore that which is of the Spirit in the saint, and coming from him as light to the glory of Christ, as a result of the bruising and breaking of love's discipline, by which we are conformed to the image of Christ and made partakers of His holiness. In this way God "has shone in our hearts" by the giving of the Spirit; and this is "for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Part, then, of the work of Christ as our great High Priest who has passed through the heavens pertaineth to the oil for the light.

Is it not His tender ministry and gracious care which secure for us the work of sanctification and discipline, through which the bruising and breaking of all that which is contrary to His holy mind and will is accomplished, so that as a result there will be the pure oil olive to give forth the light which is thrown on Christ Himself to show forth His glory? This surely is always the object of the Spirit in us, and through us to magnify and glorify Him.

May we, through God's grace, more fully submit to His tending to the oil for the light in us, that we may be bright testimonies to Him.

The second thing is "the sweet incense." In this we have the fragrance of Christ for God. It was Eleazar's duty to see that there was always sweet incense for the offerings. This incense is the fragrance of Christ as offered by His priestly people to God. It is Christ in the activities of His priestly office who draws from the saint that sweet incense of praise that goes up as a sweet odor of Christ, a perpetual delight to God. That which draws forth praise and worship of this sort is surely the making known of

Himself to the heart and soul; and this will be according to the measure we permit Him to reveal Himself to us; and, accordingly, great or small will be the measure of our incense offering. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). The praise and incense of our hearts is drawn forth by the knowing of Himself. His priestly service is ever to maintain us in the enjoyment of communion and fellowship, from the realization of which flow praise and worship. Here His advocacy comes in, and the blessed provision in it for us.

We next have "the daily meat offering" pertaining to Eleazar's office. The prescription for this offering is "a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil" (Ex. xxix. 40). The fine flour speaks to us of the perfect humanity of Christ. The oil is the symbol of the Spirit in Him, and with whom God sealed Him as perfect. Under the hand of Christ, in resurrection-priesthood, is the ministry of what this implies for us. We see Christ in this offering, the perfect second Man, replacing for God all of the first and old creation. But if we are to participate in the blessing of this, much must be accomplished. So it is only through His death that the way is found. Resurrection, of necessity, must come in, or His death would not avail; there would be no witness from God of its acceptance. Those, then, who find their place in participation in His death, are carried through, in Him, into resurrection, and are administered an entrance, as partakers with Him, into new creation and its attendant blessings, of which He is the Head and Source,

as this offering under the ministry of Eleazar's office typifies. It is in resurrection, as the First-born from among the dead, that the ministry to us of the blessing of new creation, Himself the second Man, its Head, comes under His hand. How much the entrance of these things into our hearts means for us! Separation from all that which is of the old, and induction into the glorious new—participation in the meal-offering given us by our heavenly Priest! In this also is to be found the food for our souls; for all we have and shall be is bound up in participation with Christ in new creation; His every glory is linked with it. May we feed more on this precious food!

Finally, "the anointing oil." This brings in the thought of sanctification, separation to Himself, and holiness. This is, of course, the work of the Spirit; therefore the oil is used. This likewise is connected with Christ in resurrection. It is the glorifying of Christ which brings down the Spirit to dwell in the believer. He it is who is the "Spirit of Truth," who does not speak of Himself, but will guide us into all truth. The work of sanctification is by the truth (John xvii. 17), and it is the Spirit who alone can minister it in such a way that this end shall be accomplished. "He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you" (John xvi. 14), and Christ declares that all things are His. We have a great High Priest over the house of God, under whose hand all things have been put, and who orders all in connection with that house. Of these things He gives to the Spirit and they constitute the truth, the revelation, His Word; the Spirit is to impart it to us, and by it we are to be sanctified. We are chosen therefore by God "from the beginning to salvation in sanctifica-

tion of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13—J. N. D.). Thus the anointing oil is under the hand of our Eleazar also.

May we, through His all-sufficient grace, seek to walk in such a way that the Spirit shall not be grieved, but shall be able to minister to our souls the precious truth which sanctifies and separates us to our blessed Lord!

How blessed the fulness of that provision made for the saints of God in the priesthood of Christ! The more we lay hold of what has been done for us in God's infinite love, the more we realize what Christ is in glory for us at God's right hand, the deeper will be the work in our hearts, so that the light shall shine forth, the sweet incense of praise go up before the throne; and then that glory shall be entered into by us which is ours in participation with Christ in the meal-offering character; finally, the blessed work of sanctification will be wrought out in us to the praise of the glory of His grace—all the fruit of His loving ministry as our Priest.

J. B., Jr.

THOUGHTS ON I. THESS. IV. 15-18.

OH, wonderful, glorious promise!
 It sets our lone hearts all aglow,
 Come quickly. Come *quickly*, Lord Jesus,
 Thy people grow weary below.

Oh, surely the night shades are passing;
 The dawn is more near now than far,
 We're waiting and watching, blest Saviour,
 The rise of the "Bright Morning Star."

And then in that long-awaited moment,
 Thy voice we shall hear bid us come
 Right upward and into Thy presence,—
 Oh, the joy of that gathering home!

G. A. T.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE conclude this month our readings of the precious book of Psalms, which we hope has indeed been increasingly endeared to all our hearts. That which will occupy us during the present month is the fifth book, or Deuteronomy—psalms cvii.—cl. It is of somewhat a recapitulatory character, though by no means, as we have always found in Scripture, is it a mere repetition. Divine principles are gathered up, and the lessons unfolded in the four previous books are here grouped together and emphasized in a fresh way.

The first division here is psalms cvii.—cxiii., where we have the general character of God's ways in dealing with His people, and the results. Psalm cvii. gives the general character of the entire book, man's evil in departure from God, His faithful chastening and equally faithful grace when they cry to Him for mercy. This is beautifully enlarged upon.

Psa. cviii. shows God's victory for His people, who are thus brought into blessing. It is very significant that this psalm is composed of the last part of two previous ones—psalms lvii. and lx. The next two psalms, cix. and cx., give us respectively the sufferings of Christ and the glory that follows.

In psalm cix. we have suffering at the hands of man rather than of God, and the result is judgment upon the wicked. What a contrast to psalm xxii., where the wicked have but small place and God's forsaking is prominent; the result is unmingled blessing.

In psalm cx. we see Him as King and Priest upon His throne, after the order of Melchizedec. The remaining psalms of this division (cxi.-cxiii.) are the outburst of praise which flows from the suffering and glorification of Christ. Each of them is introduced with the word "hal-lelujah." It will be noticed that the psalms of this latter portion of the book which are devoted to His people's exercises are quite different from the similar ones in the earlier books. There, the work of Christ and His glory were seen as objects of faith by His people who still were in the midst of an ungodly nation, and therefore subject to all manner of persecution. Here our Lord's sufferings and glory are celebrated as accomplished facts by a people who have been introduced into permanent blessing, and therefore exultant praise is the result.

Psalm cxi. is an alphabetic acrostic which describes the works of Jehovah and His faithfulness.

Psalm cxii., also acrostic, dwells upon the blessedness of trust in the Lord, while psalm cxiii. is solely occupied with the glory of the name of the Lord.

The next division of the book (psalms cxiv.-cxix.) enlarges upon the character of God's salvation, and communion flowing from that.

Psalm cxiv. celebrates God's power in delivering His people out of Egypt, in face of which the sea fled and Jordan stopped its course.

Psalm cxv. contrasts the excellence of God with the folly of idols. How significant, in view not only of the past idolatry of the people, but of their future recognition of the image of the beast in the latter days!

Psalm cxvi. celebrates the deliverance of the remnant as from the jaws of death, brought up by the Lord. It is a suited companion to psalm xl., which refers to our blessed Lord in similar circumstances.

Psalm cxvii., brief as it is, has a mighty theme, in which all the nations of the earth are invited to join.

Psalm cxviii. refers to our blessed Lord rejected and disallowed of men, chosen of God and precious, and the Head of the corner.

Psalm cxix. is in many respects the most wonderful of the entire book. It is a perfect acrostic, in which each letter of the Hebrew alphabet stands at the head of a section of eight verses, each of which also is introduced by the same letter. Eight is the number of new creation. The theme of this psalm is the celebration of the perfections of God's written Word. How beautifully, then, does the acrostic suggest this! The whole alphabet is exhausted in setting forth the perfections of that Word, which is no longer seen as the law of requirement, written upon tables of stone, which could only bring condemnation; but now written in the heart of His people, even as it was ever enshrined in the heart of their blessed Lord, it becomes the ground of constant thanksgiving and their strength in the face of all temptation.

The third division (psalms cxx.—cxxxvi.) of the book is composed of a large number of brief psalms, each of which brings out some salient feature of divine blessing. Nearly the entire division is taken up by the fifteen "songs of degrees," which are a wonderful witness to the perfection, not merely of literal, verbal inspiration, but of the order of the psalms. They are divided into five groups of three psalms each, and thus form a miniature pentateuch in the larger pentateuch of psalms. They are called "songs of degrees," or "ascents," which suggests their use in the service of the temple, being sung, as is supposed, by the people upon the steps of the temple as they drew nearer and nearer to the sanctuary. Morally, they celebrate the praises of God, as His saints in the latter days draw ever nearer to His presence. While the form, of course, is Jewish, the principles abide for all time, and, with appropriate modifications, contain many a precious lesson for the present dispensation.

The first group here (psalms cxx.—cxxii.) dwells upon the faithfulness of God, who delivers His people who are at a distance from Him (psalm cxx.). God is seen as their Helper and Preserver (cxx. and cxxi.), and thus they enter with gladness into the house of the Lord (psalm cxxii.).

The second group of three psalms (cxxiii.—cxxv.) brings out the enemy, whose pride is seen (psalm cxxiii.), their opposition like the floods of proud waters (psalm cxxiv.), but from which His people emerge, steadfast upon mount Zion (psalm cxxv.).

The third group (psalm cxxvi.—cxxviii.) dwells upon details of the people's restoration.

Psalm cxxvi. shows us their captivity turned, those who sowed in tears now reaping in joy; the need of absolute dependence upon God if His house and city are to be builded (psalm cxxvii.), while the fruitfulness and blessedness of the man who trusts in the Lord are seen in psalm cxxviii.).

The fourth group (psalms cxxix.—cxxx.) form a little wilderness experience. The affliction of Israel from his youth is seen in psalm cxxix. Deliverance from the results of sin, yea, from the depths, is the theme of psalm cxxx., and childlike praise in psalm cxxxi.

The last group brings in Christ. Psalm cxxxii. shows Him in David as type, not resting until He had found a habitation for the ark of the Lord, the throne in His house. In psalm cxxxiii. we see Him as the Priest anointed and exalted, the fragrance of whose name reaches down to the very skirts of His garments, binding His people in unity. Psalm cxxxiv. closes all by letting us hear the praises of the Lord's servants who still are in His house praising Him day and night.

Psalms cxxxv. and cxxxvi. are a wonderful unfolding of the character of the praise to which we are privileged to listen in psalm cxxxiv. The psalms are similar; that is, they go over the same ground, but with this remark-

able difference, that psalm cxxxvi. has a refrain repeated between each act recounted, "His mercy endureth forever." Thus God's mercy is celebrated both in the deliverance of His people and in His judgment upon their enemies.

The fourth division of this book (psalms cxxxvii.-cxlv.) brings out, with increasing clearness, by reiteration, the utter incapacity of man and the faithfulness and all-sufficiency of God.

Psalm cxxxvii. takes us back to Babylon, where the captive people are unable to sing the Lord's songs, but still look with longing eyes and loving hearts to the beloved city which lies in ruins. Deliverance follows this (psalm cxxxviii.), for God will lift up the lowly out of their need.

Psalm cxxxix. speaks of the omniscience of God searching the secrets of the heart, which does not now shrink from His holy eye.

Psalms cxl.-cxliii. emphasize the helplessness of man, his cry in need to the Lord, and the deliverance which flows from this.

Psalm cxliv. celebrates God's deliverance, and cxlv. is another acrostic, in which we see our Lord leading the praises of His people.

The closing division of the book (psalms cxlvi.-cl.) puts the crown of praise upon the entire collection. The psalms begin and end with hallelujahs. God's might is declared in psalm cxlvi.; His helping hand, which has tenderly ministered to His people's needs (cxlvii.); heaven and earth unite together in His worship (psalm cxlviii.); the nations are called to join in this in psalm cxlix.; while psalm cl. gathers all the instruments of human music and uses them, with the worship of all creation, to praise the name of the Lord. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

2nd Thessalonians is similar to the first epistle, with the exception that the coming of our Lord is dwelt upon more in relation to the wickedness of the world than to the hope of His people. Its three chapters form three divisions.

In chapter i. we have God's righteousness, which will vindicate His suffering people in the execution of judgment upon their enemies. This is in fitting accord with what we have been learning in the book of Psalms.

Chapter ii. shows the progress of that evil which, though now hidden, is going steadily on until it culminates, after the rapture of the Church, in Antichrist, the man of sin, who exalteth himself as God.

Chapter iii. still emphasizes the lessons of holiness for the Lord's people, though pressed by such evil. Any carelessness of walk or indifference to the natural responsibilities of life is guarded against. The disorderly are to be admonished, and, if need be, no company kept with them.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 25.—Please explain Heb. iii. 14: "Partakers of Christ, if," etc.

ANS.—The whole epistle is addressed to those Hebrews who had made a profession of faith in Christ, but some of whom were turning from the Lord back to Judaism. The true believer will continue in the faith. Therefore the apostle says we are made associates of Christ if there is this abiding, saving faith in Him.

QUES. 26.—Do the lost suffer the full penalty for sin—both the root inherited from Adam, and the fruits, the actual sins—just as if Christ had never suffered?

ANS.—The question indicates that the writer had in mind the distinction that is sometimes made, that Christ suffered for the sin of Adam, and men are only under the guilt of their own sins. Scripture never says that men are responsible for Adam's sin, and

therefore they never could be counted guilty for it. On the other hand, Christ is never said to have borne part and not all of the penalty upon man. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." While death is universal, so also is sin. There is no thought of a man being punished for something he never did. In the case of children who die before reaching the years of responsibility, there is no question of their salvation; but death in their case is not punishment for sin on their part—rather is it the result of a fallen nature inherited, just as a disease. Christ's redemption undoubtedly avails for them, as He says, "Of such is the kingdom of God." But there is no such thought in Scripture as the unsaved having been set free from Adam's penalty, and only responsible for their own. The unsaved must drink the unmingled cup of God's wrath (Rev. xiv. 10). "And the dead were judged . . . according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12).

QUES. 27.—Is it unscriptural for a Christian to hold office under government, or to take part in political affairs? Was not Erastus an official, and not rebuked by Paul?

ANS.—In the first place, we must remember that the New Testament does not lay down hard and fast rules. We are "not under law, but under grace," and the constraining motive is not a command so much as "the love of Christ constraineth us." Therefore we will not expect to find direct prohibitions save of things intrinsically immoral. But in the next place, faith is a growing principle in the believer, and, as it grows, leads on to increasing devotedness and separation, according as the light is received. Thus, as a believer enters more and more into the mind of the Spirit for him, he will give up many things which previously he may have gone on with in good conscience. Applying these principles to the question, we gather from God's word that "our citizenship is in heaven," that we are "strangers and pilgrims," and that "here we have no continuing city." We also learn that by the cross of Christ we have been "crucified to the world, and the world to us," and that we are "not of the world, even as" Christ is "not of the world." These and other scriptures, as they are borne in upon the soul by the Spirit, will separate one increasingly from all that is conveyed in the word "citizenship." Besides this, acquaintance with the Lord Jesus will ever lead in walking with Him, which surely will not be in companionship with the world.

As to Erastus and his office, several suggestions may be made first, he was doubtless in the position before his conversion, and should abide there "with God" until led out of the position; the too, he was simply a public servant, not elected to that position but appointed, doubtless, by imperial authority. One may surely serve the government as an employé, if not called on to dishonour God in that service.

WHEN God called the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage to inherit the land of Canaan He gave them a law of His own. In the keeping of it they were to taste joys and blessings which no other nation could have. They were to have no plagues, no diseases, no blights; their corn, their wine, their oil, their cattle and sheep would abound, and no enemy would be able to prevail against them. These are joys that *every man* can appreciate.

But when Christ came to call sinners to repentance to deliver them from the guilt and the power of sin to bring them into communion with His Father, and to make them partakers of the joys of Heaven, men had to become "new bottles" before they could take in the new joys—that "new wine." They must be born anew.

Every man is still ready to drink that "old wine" of earthly blessings, but alas, how few care for the "new wine" of heavenly blessing. Yet is it the one that will never run out.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II. THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter ix.

SAUL AND JONATHAN CONTRASTED.

(1 Sam. xii.-xiv. 23.)

(Continued from page 295.)

SAUL and his company soon learn of the commotion among the Philistines, and of an apparent conflict and victory with which they had had nothing to do. But there does not seem to be any thought with them that God is at work—surely it must be that some of his own little company have gone to fight the enemy. "Number now, and see who has gone from us," seems to indicate that he had some idea that human power had been at work. He finds only Jonathan and his armor-bearer are absent, and this would not be sufficient to explain the commotion.

Have we not more than a hint here that the man of flesh never rises to the thoughts of faith? Could we imagine such noble words coming from Saul as we have heard from Jonathan? The flesh never rises beyond itself, its circumstances. God is left out, for in His presence it cannot exalt itself, and must be eclipsed. Even in the measure in which Saul succeeded, this was the case.

But he is now compelled to ask counsel of God, though with apparent reluctance. It is significant that the ark of God was present, as mentioned here. The camp and field was no place for it. A resting-place had been provided for it at Shiloh, where the

tabernacle had been set up when Joshua brought Israel into Canaan. It had been brought out against these very Philistines in the days of Eli, with what disastrous results we know. God will never link His holy name with an unjudged state of His people. The ark went into captivity, and had never found an abiding-place since. In fact, it never did till David brought it to Zion.

Perhaps Saul was not far at this time from the hiding-place of the ark, and had had it brought as a sort of rallying-centre for his dwindling band, as well as a witness that God was with him. Such expedients are not unknown to the flesh, which will make use of visible forms from which the power has departed, and seek to rally men around the names of what have become mere pretension. Rome's extreme claims are an illustration of this, though by no means the only one.

While Saul is talking with the priest, and apparently while the latter is beginning to ask counsel of God, the rout of the Philistines becomes more manifest, and the king considers this sufficient reason for discontinuing what was not his first impulse. The flesh loves not to ask counsel of God, and gladly withdraws from His presence. It looks merely at what is seen; and if victory is already assured, there is no need for dependence upon God. Alas, how common is this! We turn to God in our times of perplexity, and when all other means have failed; how readily do we dispense with His aid when there seems to be no further occasion for it! The flesh in us is as hopelessly independent of God as was this man who is a type of it. It is ever going to extremes. The man who a while ago said, "I forced

myself," when intruding into what God forbade, now says, "withdraw thy hand," and turns from God, because he thinks he can get on without Him.

And yet how utterly foolish is this! Had the lesson of Ai been utterly forgotten? The feeblest enemy can conquer a people who are relying upon an arm of flesh, though flushed with past victory.

Let us remember that we need God as much in victory as in conflict—perhaps more; for, while the issue is uncertain we involuntarily turn to Him, but our temptation is to forget Him when the battle is won. We must ever return to the camp at Gilgal; but as we have seen, this had no significance for poor Saul.

But God is at work, through Jonathan, and the enemy is thoroughly routed. Indeed, they turn their weapons against one another, as is so often seen in Israel's conflicts. Whenever they were with God, it was scarcely necessary for them to fight. They could "stand still," and see the enemy fighting among themselves. So it was in the days of Gideon before, and at a later day when Jehoshaphat faced a countless host.

Saul and his little band rush up to have a share in the battle, and join in the rout. But victory was already assured. Saul was not needed; indeed, later we find what a hindrance he was.

How good it is to see the results of a work of God like this! Not merely is the enemy overthrown, but the poor scattered sheep of Israel are called back. Many of them were captives, or willing bondsmen, to the Philistines. Many had also hidden themselves in the mountains, fearing to face the enemy. But they know a victory, and rally to the Lord's standard.

Surely it would have been faith to have needed no such recall as this, but the Lord's people are weak, "prone to wander," and easily lose sight of Him. How responsible is every one to see that his example does not encourage defection from the Lord! What a terrible thing it is to be a stumbling-block! May the Lord keep us lowly, in all self-distrust, that we do not by our example, or unbelief, scatter the feeblest of His own from Him.

But if the saints are easily scattered, they quickly rally when the Lord's hand is seen. Even in Asa's time, when a permanent division existed, we read that they fell to him in great numbers out of Ephraim, when they saw that the Lord was with him.

How refreshing it is to think of these two men of faith, alone with God at the beginning, now reinforced by these scattered ones! But were they any stronger? Were not these as liable to drop off again in time of danger? Ah yes; the strength was in the Lord alone, and two with Him are infinitely stronger than the undivided host of Israel without Him. The joy is in the recovery of the wanderers; not for the help afforded by them, but rather for their own sakes, and because of the glory to the Lord's name through His people's recovery.

We must not despise numbers. Pride may lurk in the hearts of a few, as well as among the many. The strength of Jonathan and his armor-bearer was not in themselves. Their faith laid hold upon God. Apart from that they were as feeble as any of these fugitives. And these latter can in their turn be Jonathans if they but lay hold of the same One who wrought on that day.

We long to see recovery and unity among the people of God. Let us not seek to secure it in any other way than Jonathan did. It was not the ark with Saul that effected the victory, but the living faith of Jonathan which *brought God in*. The saints will be united, recovered from wherever they may have wandered, not by fleshly efforts to bring them together, but by turning to Him who still is the God of victory. Let us see to it that we are in all lowliness and self-distrust before Him, and the desire of our hearts for the recovery and unity of His beloved people may yet in some measure be seen.

(To be continued.)

☉ GLORIOUS Sun!
 Shine in this heart of mine,
 Drive all its darkness forth,
 Thou Light Divine!

Let Thy pure rays
 Its secret chambers flood,
 With healing on their wings,
 The balm of God.

Sweet is the light
 At morn to watching eyes,
 And pleasant to behold
 The sun arise.

So, Lord, arise
 Upon my longing sight,
 That I may see in Thee
 God's glory bright.

H. N. D.

(Lines suggested by a ray of sunlight which daily cheered the hours of suffering while lying in a hospital bed.)

THE SECRET PLACE.

THIS is the mainspring of everything. And yet we make excuses, and say we cannot find time.

But the truth is, if we cannot find time for secret prayer, it matters little to the Lord whether we find time for public service or not.

We can find time to talk with our brethren; and the minutes fly past unheeded, until they become hours; and we do not feel it a burden. Yet, when we find we should be getting into our closet to be alone with God for a season, there are ever so many difficulties standing right in the way. "Ten thousand foes arise" to keep us from that hallowed spot, "thy closet." It would seem as if Satan cares not how we are employed, so being we seek not our Father's face; for well the great tempter knows if he can but snap the communications between us and our God he has us at his mercy. Yes, we can find time, it may be, even to preach the gospel and minister to the saints, while our own souls are barren and sapless for lack of secret prayer and communion with God!

When we go into our closet and shut the door, no one sees us, no one hears us, but God. It is not the place to make a fair show. No one is present before whom to make a little display of our devotion. No one is there but God.

Ah, it is a searching spot—alone in the presence of God! It is the lack of spending time there that is the secret of so much of the lifelessness and the carnality that abounds. What we want to see is a great revolution in the praying habits of God's people. We cannot pray by proxy—that is, by another doing

it for us—any more than our bodies can thrive by another taking our food for us. There must be individual closet work.

The prayer meeting will not suffice us, blessed privilege though it be. "Thou, when thou prayest, *enter into thy closet*; and when thou hast shut the door, pray" (Matt. vi. 6). How many there may be who have gradually left off secret prayer until communion with God has been effectively severed!

We do not speak at random. Any one who does a little in coming and going among souls will have discovered this by experience. The terrible downward current of these last days is carrying the many before it—yea, the many even of God's people; and the great enemy of souls could not have hit upon a more deadly device for making merchandise of the saints than by stopping the supplies at a throne of grace. When closet prayer languisheth, the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint.

The lack of secret prayer betrays a lack of heavenly appetite. It implies a positive absence of desire for the presence of God. Those who are strangers to the closet fall an easy prey to temptation. Satan gets an advantage of them at every turn. Nothing comes right; everything happens in an untoward way, for

Thorny is the road
That leads my soul from God.

If a brother is not at the prayer meeting for a time or two, you can speak to him about it, and exhort him. His absence is a thing you can see. But if he is absenting himself from the closet, that is a thing beyond your observation. You only feel, when you come in contact with him, that something is sapping

his spiritual life; and who shall estimate the eternal loss that follows the neglect of secret prayer!

How different it is with those who watch with jealous care that the Lord has always *His* portion, whoever may have to want theirs! Their going out, their coming in, their whole manner of life, declares that they have been where the heavenly dew has been falling. Their Father, who saw them in secret, is rewarding them openly. They carry about with them, although all unconscious of it, the serenity of the secret place, where they have been communing with God.

Let secret prayer be urged on God's people as one of the great essentials of spiritual life, without which our grandest service will be barren and fruitless in the eyes of Him who looketh on the heart. And let each one of us ask himself the question, "Am I delighting in the secret place—to plead with the Lord—to renew my strength—to have power with God and prevail?"—(*Adapted.*)

THE ROOT ERROR OF DOWIEISM.

IT is not our desire to indulge in personal criticism, or needlessly to occupy the saints with movements manifestly not according to God's word. But when fundamental truths are openly denied, we are responsible to warn the beloved people of God against error.

The two prominent doctrines of Mr. Dowie have been, apparently, what is known as divine healing, and the establishment of a restored earthly church, which he calls Zion. These two features of his

movement have been presented in every way to attract the attention of the public; the most common method, apparently, being that of abuse of all who differ from these views. The well-nigh blasphemous assumption of the name Elijah, coupled with a return to the legal system of tithing, an elaborate ritual, and a complete clerical system, show the whole movement to be devoid of those elements of Christian truth known to the simplest babe in Christ who has been at all instructed.

It would be easy to remind the child of God that by this system he is robbed of the precious truth of the priesthood of believers; of the blessed assurance that we are not under law, but under grace; of the knowledge of a heavenly position as united by the Holy Ghost to a glorified Christ, while we wait for His coming again. Practically, for occupation with Christ is substituted occupation with this man.

But we may be assured that Satan has even deeper errors hidden beneath this mass of self-glorification and legalism. His object is ever to attack the person or the work of our blessed Lord; and of this we have evidence in the present case.

The following extract from the official organ of this movement, "Leaves of Healing," is taken from Mr. Dowie's address prior to the visit of himself and several thousand to New York:

"The Christ who went to hell to preach to the antediluvians, who in the days of Noah rejected Him, is still the same Christ; and although men make their bed in hell, even there shall His right hand find them.

"We will tell them that the Good Shepherd will seek them throughout the earth, throughout hell, and throughout eternity, until He finds them and brings them back to Himself, and that

not one shall perish; for He said that if He be lifted up He would draw all unto Himself.

"We believe that the Father hath given Him power and authority over all flesh, to give them eternal life; and if not in this life, in the life to come, the Saviour will seek the sinner until he sins no more.

"We will carry the gospel of everlasting hope to the hopeless, sorrow-stricken hearts of those who are taught the infernal lie that God has sent their dear ones into a hopeless hell, from which they can never come.

"May God help us in presenting the gospel, which bids men to know that His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting; that it is above the heavens and deeper than hell; and that some day, somewhere, the Master, the Shepherd, the Saviour, will bring home the last sinner!

"Oh, I thank God for that gospel! (Amen.)

"The gospel which saves to the uttermost—the gospel which will seek in eternity as well as in time, until the last sinner is saved."

Here we have simple restorationism, the denial of the eternity of punishment for the ungodly—similar to the error propagated by the advocates of "Millennial Dawn." Let our readers then take warning. They have not merely to combat error, abuse and levity in connection with "faith healing," etc., but to turn from this old lie of Satan, "Ye shall not surely die." We need hardly add that the equally deadly error of annihilation is to be guarded against on the other side.

Solemn and awful truth—to bring us on our faces in prayer, and to lead us to plead with men—souls passing out of this world without Christ are hopeless for all eternity. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

CONSIDER THE LILIES.

"He feedeth among the lilies."—Cant. ii. 16.
 "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"—
 Matt. ix. 11.

ALL around Him and beside Him,
 Sinners sat at meat—
 Sinful men and sinful women—
 Bread of heaven they eat.

There, for Him who hath no money,
 Wine and milk He pours
 From the blessed fields of heaven,
 God's exhaustless stores.

So they drank, the weary, thirsty,
 That unfailing tide;
 And forever and forever
 They are satisfied.

He on heavenly food was feeding,
 Meat to them unknown,
 Blessed will of God who sent Him,
 Needing that alone;

Sent to seek the lost and guilty,
 Outcasts and despised,
 Gems the hand of God would gather
 For the crown of Christ.

So He fed amongst His lilies,
 Saw them fair and white,
 In the garden God had planted
 For His own delight.

Only sinful men and women
 Men could see and scorn;
 He beheld them crowned with glory
 Of the heavenly morn—

Saw them with their palms of triumph,
 With their harps of gold;
 Yet the same who sat around Him
 In the days of old.

Mrs. Frances Bevan.

PHILEMON AND ONESIMUS;

OR, THE FATHER'S LOVE RECEIVING A SINNER.

PHILEMON means "loving, kindhearted," and may well speak to us of a loving heavenly Father. The sinner does not know Him as that. "The trembling sinner feareth that God can ne'er forget."

Onesimus means "profitable;" but how unprofitable he had proven! Just as man, who was created by God for His own glory and praise, turns his back on God and goes away from Him and refuses His love, so Onesimus leaves his loving, kindhearted master and goes to Rome. He sinks, as we may gather from the letter of Paul, to the lowest depths, until finally he reaches a Roman prison; and if he were to be known as a runaway slave, his master could demand his punishment by death. The sinner away from God is "condemned already," and only awaiting the day of judgment to have the sentence executed.

But in his extremity Onesimus finds one to help, one who has laid aside his high-sounding, kingly name of Saul, and taken the humble name of Paul, meaning "little,"—one who was a prisoner, and begets a son in his bonds.

How like the blessed Lord Jesus, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself," and who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and through that death begets many sons, and brings them to glory.

Verse 11—"Was unprofitable." A sinner's pic-

ture. "There is none righteous; no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good; no, not one."

Verse 12—"Receive him;" and verse 17 emphasizes this: "receive him as myself." Accepted in the Beloved! accepted in all the fulness of what Christ is to God!—in the person of the Son as near as He, as dear as He! accepted in all the value of the holy, spotless, peerless, undefiled One!

Can we doubt, or tremble, or fear, when such is the case!

Ah, no! there is perfect peace when we know that the measure of our acceptance by God is His Son.

Like David showing kindness to a helpless Mephibosheth for the sake of a beloved Jonathan, so God shows His kindness and love to a guilty, hell-deserving sinner for the sake of His beloved Son.

Verse 15—"Receive him forever." When we are accepted in the Beloved and received by God, we have *everlasting* life—*life lasting forever*. Not a temporal thing, not a transitory possession, but a new life, eternal in the heavens. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." "I give unto them *eternal* life." "Of *all* which the Father hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day." "That *every one* which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have *everlasting* life; and I will raise him up at the last day." God receives the sinner forever, who comes in the name of Jesus Christ, and no

one can pluck us out of the Father's hand. Blessed place! blessed portion!

Verse 16—"Not now as a servant, but above a servant." We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." How much more blessed it is to be a child of God than a servant! We are no more servants, but sons. Not under the bondage of law, but free to serve God in all the gladness and joy of sons. Would not Onesimus serve his master in the Lord with a service far beyond that which he had rendered him in the old days? Will not a child of God who knows his sins forgiven serve, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit? "The love of Christ constraining us" is a far greater incentive to true service than the bondage of "This do, and thou shalt live."

And then—

Verses 17, 18, 19—Paul provides for the payment of all Onesimus' debt. "One full payment cleareth His memory of all debt." "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." He offered one sacrifice for sins and then sat down forever.

All that Satan ever has urged, or can urge, against us has been purged and cleansed—all wiped out—by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which He shed on Calvary, in His infinite sacrifice. My soul, take comfort in this—that thou canst no more be lost, when resting in Christ, than He could be! It is not rashness that gives the soul this confidence; it is simple faith in the word of God.

And when Onesimus is fully established in the household of faith, he has something to look forward to.

Verse 22—"Prepare me a lodging: . . . I shall be given unto you." All may not be sunshine in the place to which the servant is sent. There may be misunderstandings with fellow-servants. There may be disappointment and sorrow, but he has one thing to look forward to—the coming of the One to whom he owes all.

And so have we. In the world we shall have tribulation, but He to whom we owe all is coming for us. "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." May God rest our hearts in this precious promise, for His name's sake!

F. L. F.

PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

(2 Tim. i.)

IT is beautiful to see how triumphant Paul was in every circumstance. The buffetings of life's tempests lift him higher up, into regions nearer to Christ and God than before. The darker the night, the brighter shines his lamp of faith; and "forlorn and shipwrecked brethren," seeing his unfaltering footsteps, may well "take heart again." The whole tone of this letter to Timothy is evidence of this.

He is about to suffer a violent death; but instead of being an apostle according to that death sentence, he is an apostle according to a promise of life. If these words mean anything, they mean that the promise of life characterized all that he did and said. Roman gladiators, when marching to mortal strife in the arena, greeted the emperor with the words "We who are about to die salute thee, Cæsar." Their ac-

tions and their words were characterized by a stoic manliness or a callous indifference. They faced death with a brute-courage bred of fierce passions or cynic despair; and through the mist of centuries veiling the coarser aspects, we may gaze on them with a certain admiration. But oh, how surpassing admirable are the apostle's words and ways! The light of an eternity of life is shedding a calm and steady lustre upon them, and we seem lifted into sublime regions where Christ dwells and death has been annulled. "He that believeth on Me shall never die."

It is very beautiful to see how constantly and unwaveringly the apostle makes use of the greeting "Grace, mercy, and peace." It is not a stereotyped phrase with him. He has given voice to the best wish that can be uttered for experience down here. Try and think of something better. You will be unable to do so. Oh that we all realized in our lives more the grace, mercy and peace which God is ever ready to bestow upon us! What transformed ones ours would be if we did!

"I am thankful to God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." In this and the next verse we see the natural feelings and affections in the mention of Paul's and Timothy's ancestors. The expression is somewhat peculiar. It is not "I serve from my birth, or youngest days," but "from my ancestors." It is taken by some that this means that Paul's ancestors served God, and probably this is correct exegesis, and yet it is *I serve*." It is a trite thing to say that "faith is not inherited," and yet what an inestimable

blessing for one to possess a pious ancestry! How quietly their piety waters, as the dew the grass, the tender faith of those who grow up around them! How unconsciously ways of reverence and godly fear are learned! How imperceptibly there steals into the young heart a germ of faith, which, under God's overruling grace, takes root and springs up a glorious growth to His praise! O parents, and ye who care for children, it is not alone your outward forms and rules, your set Bible-readings and stated periods of prayer that sink into the young life, but rather your inward love for Christ and reverence of His lovely ways—the whole course and trend of your life!

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

Have you noticed that “wherefore”? It refers to the fact that Timothy had *unfeigned* faith. Gift is like a machine without its motive power, if faith be absent. Faith and love are absolutely essential to its exercise. A man may be gifted with the tongue of a Cicero; but unless it is accompanied by faith, his words will fall still-born from his mouth. He may have the mind of an Aristotle; be able to weave a world-system of philosophy; but without faith to put him in touch with *the Master's* heart and mind, his system will be ingenious but not *truth*, beautiful but lifeless. Oh what shall cause these dead bones to live? The living link with the “Resurrection and the Life” alone suffices.

Timothy had *unfeigned* faith. He could on that account be called on to “kindle again” his gift; for thus would it be at the Master's service. There are

many imitations which look like the genuine until tried in the fiery furnace of affliction. There, and there alone, is the touchstone. Will it endure the fire of a furnace heated sevenfold? Reader, you and I may have some little gift, for the Lord never leaves a child without one; but oh let us remember whence it derives its usefulness! If we would "kindle it again," let us warm it with genuine faith and love for our Lord, or it is of no use.

"Precious faith our God hath given—rich in faith is rich indeed;
Fire-tried gold from His own treasury, fully meeting every need;
Channel of His grace abounding, bringing peace and joy and
light;
Purifying, overcoming; linking weakness with His might."

"For God hath not given unto us the spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of wise discretion."

That is what the spirit of faith is—powerful, loving, and wise. The word rendered "fear" in the Authorized Version, and here translated "cowardice," is one which occurs only five times in the New Testament—once in its verb form, once in its noun, and three times in its adjective form; and everywhere it is connected with the thought of absent faith. Twice we have it in the scene on stormy Galilee. "Why are ye so *fearful*? O ye of little faith!" Once more, in that solemn verse, "But the fearful and *unbelieving* shall have their part in the lake which burneth." Who are the fearful there but just the unbelieving? Then the Lord says in the fourteenth of John, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be cowardly." Thus we have exhortation, rebuke and warning as to it. So solemnly emphasized we should indeed ponder it.

Consider for a moment the triple characteristic which faith opposes to it. First, there is the spirit of power. Who so powerful as those linked livingly with the everlasting God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? A son of God Almighty, and a coward? How utterly incongruous are the thoughts! Faith cries in tones of thunder, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and, spreading its pinions of victory, carries us aloft into regions where there is no defeat, no loss, no despair. Greater is He that is for us than *all* else. Oh what a foe to cowardice is this living link with God!

Secondly, there is the spirit of love, manifested by God the Saviour, and returned by us. Love as well as power is an inveterate foe of cowardice. Think of the love of Jesus, and tremble no longer, ye down-hearted, for love will summon power whenever needed, to your assistance. Infinite power in the service of infinite love! *This* dual alliance can never be overcome. That is the Godward side of it; but it has its counterpart in us. The spirit of love for Jesus, begotten by His own for us, overwhelms all coward fears. We see a mother, animated by love for her offspring, rush into the most fearful danger without a tremor. Love renders her oblivious to the peril. Will not love do the same for us in the service of Christ? It is thus that the poet can truthfully say of the Cross,

"It makes the coward spirit brave;"

for it begets deep love in our hearts for the dying Saviour; and love, as we have said, is the foe of cowardice. "Who would not fight for such a city?" exclaimed a Roman citizen, in enthusiasm. Can we

not more truly say, "Who would not endure all peril for such a Saviour?"

Thirdly, we have the spirit of wise discretion, flowing from the Holy Spirit, tempering and guiding the power and love. Though apparently akin to cowardice, it is at infinite variance with it. It is so far from it, it dares resemble it. It is wise discretion *for the cause of Christ*. It is not a selfish estimating of what it will cost us, but of what it will cost Him. Where the first two spirits are, there is no doubt as to that. May the Lord make it true of us in all our ways!

F. C. G.

CHRIST, AND NOT THE LAW,

THE RULE OF LIFE AND DAILY WALK FOR THE
CHRISTIAN.

CHRIST'S *death* upon the cross is the dividing line, the complete separation, between Judaism and Christianity, between the old and the new, between law and grace—the handwriting of ordinances (the obligations) blotted out, taken out of the way, nailed to His cross (Col. ii-14).

John i. 17—"The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Rom. x. 4—Christ is the end of the law for the believer.

Rom. viii. 2-4—What the law could not do, Christ has done by His cross.

2 Cor. v. 17—New creatures (creation).

Rom. vi. 1-14—Not under law, but under grace.

Rom. vii. 1-6—Dead to the law, married to Christ.

Gal. ii. 16-21—"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."

Gal. iii. 10-13—"The just shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith."

The believer in Christ is born again, born of God (1 Peter i. 23; John i. 13), is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things are new (2 Cor. v. 17)—justified by *faith* and at peace with God (Rom. v. 1). This is all of God—God's *grace*; as we read in Rom. iv. 16, it is of *faith*, that it might be by grace. Again, in Eph. ii. 8-10, "For by *grace* are ye saved through *faith*: . . . it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are *His* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." Has the law any place in all this?

As the believer is justified only by faith, and the law is not of faith,—“no man being justified by the law in the sight of God,”—how then can the law be either the rule of life or of daily walk for him who is dead to it, and who is united by faith to the risen, glorified Man at God's right hand? Does not the word of God (which should be final and conclusive for the believer) forever settle the question of the law for him? for it is written in Gal. ii. 21 “for if righteousness come by (or is through) the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (has died for naught). Can the believer go back again to the law, asking God to incline his heart to keep the law—that which is not of faith—that which is the “ministration of death, written and engraven in stones” (2 Cor. iii. 7)?

DAILY WALK.

John i. 12, 13.

Colossians ii. 6, 7, 8.

1 John ii. 6.

1 Peter ii. 21.

The book of Hebrews is the book of “better things,” Christ, our great High Priest, and not the

law, being set before us. In chapter vii. 12 we read, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made a change of the law;" and in verse 19, "The law made nothing perfect." In chapter x. 1 it is written, "The law was a shadow of good things to come;" and in verse 9, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second." Read prayerfully Hebrews, chaps. vii., viii., ix., x.

R. D.

THE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE:

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY S. R., NEW YORK, NOV. 26, 1903.

(Col. iii., first verses.)

WHAT a blessed privilege and dignity it is to be incense-bearers, as we have been hearing—to make manifest the savor of Christ's name! This is surely priestly work, as in Peter a *holy* priesthood, etc. The material of our sweet incense is to be the savor of Christ, who is ever fragrant to God; we offer the sacrifice of praise, confessing His name. It is not to be counting over our mercies merely, but the primary thought is that we are to be offering the praise of Christ to God.

Paul does not ever lose the sense of priesthood and nearness to God; he is a worshiper when led about or in prison, his feet in the stocks, or when cast out and in bitter trial. We all alike are privileged to have in our censers the same blessed perfume that the apostle had.

He realized also how to be a royal priest, to show forth the praises of Him that hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, in kingly dignity. In the presence of God we are a holy priesthood, and

in the presence of the world a royal priesthood to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us.

In Colossians it is not primarily priesthood, but in a sense a deeper truth. They have been taught to look on their own position according to Christ's position; and He has measured it for us by His cross, His death and resurrection. We are "dead with Christ," God having set the seal of His condemnation on what sinful man is; man, as such, having no standing before God. The Christian has learned that God looks for nothing in him as a child of Adam. Oh what blessedness when souls see how God set us aside and condemned us in the person of His blessed Son on the cross, showing us the blessed relief of being done with self entirely, crucified and dead with Christ! This must be in connection with seeing that in the death of Christ God has set us aside. If we would know the sweetness of the things of God, it must be in connection with the cross of Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." We are not to be occupied with a dead self any more than with a sinful self, or with a good self. It is not self at all that we are to be occupied with, but Christ risen and glorified, with Christ where He is; and he shows us that we are in the same atmosphere with our Lord though our feet are still in the sands of the wilderness. It is occupation with that blessed One His person, His love, His sympathy, His riches these are now to occupy us in connection with a glorified Christ, for all these things are above. They do not accord with the things that are about us here.

The savor of Christ is not earthly, but heavenly—a savor of that which is above; and we are pilgrims

here. So far as occupation of mind and real life are concerned, it is hid, not merely from the gaze of the world, but with Christ in God. The world looks on us with pity, scorn, or indifference, and may say, "How is it that a man of such abilities is content to go on with religious things and humble people!" and if the world does understand our life, it's the saddest reproach to us.

I would not take out of this text the *safety* of being hidden—blessedly so. But below the other thought is the principal one, that all our springs are in Him. Does that describe our life practically? It is what God sees. We live in an age of superficiality even in divine things—such a public kind of life; the necessities of toil and business make it difficult to live much in private. The enemy would constantly use the necessary duties of life to shut out from the communion with God. Many do seek it morning and evening. We miss the thought of it if we think God wants a half hour of time; He wants us to lead the hidden life when our hands are in toil.

Declension—how often has it been just this lack of constant abiding in the hidden life, thus bringing the soul into the presence of God in the sanctuary! What more beautiful than to see the child of God growing in spiritual intelligence! The root of all is to be leading practically the hidden life that has Christ in glory so before the heart that the soul feeds on Him. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"—not of God now, nor Scripture, but in such a way that it presents Christ to us; so that, though not speaking explicitly of Christ, it presents Christ to us. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth

out of the mouth of God shall man live." Is that our bread? Then we are living on the bread Christ fed on, entering into the place into which He has introduced us by death and resurrection. The Lord give us in this, not to have service before us, but fellowship with Him!

THE TRUTH.

TO arrive at the absolute involves abstractions beyond the finite mind of man. However, effort of this kind amply repays the searcher after truth if he will only delve in the mountain of truth with the pick and shovel of Scripture, actuated by a spirit of love and reverence for Him who is the Truth. These are prerequisites, and without them the fields of divine truth will be barren indeed.

There is a remarkable passage (1 Tim. ii. 4) where God, having become the Saviour of men, the Saviour-God, "desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

If we could be in the presence of God apart from any connection with the universe, we would be conscious of truth only. Error cannot possibly exist in His presence. It does not exist there because it has been discovered and eliminated, or, being there was purged out, but because it never could exist there.

If now we could bring in the universe as it was at the time of Adam's innocency, we would still be conscious of nothing but truth. This must be so because God pronounced everything "very good," and therefore without error. This is the very nature of truth, it is always consistent with itself, which is the nature of Him who is the Truth. There cannot be any

truth at all apart from God. If He were to cease to exist would truth remain? Certainly not. But allow His existence and the thought of His character immediately follows, which is, He is Truth. Do you want the truth as to love? God is love. Do you want the truth as to light? God is light. And so on.

Now no doubt Adam in his unfallen estate apprehended God in this way and rejoiced in His presence. But something has occurred that prevents man from knowing God direct. More than that, something has occurred that makes man by nature an enemy of God. He has lost all possession * of truth, and must therefore approach God through Another. We have, then, the unspeakably precious truth that God may be perfectly seen through the Lord Jesus Christ, we see God in Christ.

However, as the passage quoted indicates, men must be saved. God's righteousness demands that the matter of sin must be settled to His glory, then it is the untold privilege to again know God, and that in Jesus Christ who is the Truth. Therefore if we desire to know God as to righteousness, it is to behold Jesus; as to holiness it is to behold Jesus; as to light it is to behold Jesus; as to love it is to behold Jesus--and so on. Surely we can now say "in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

I do not think the passage quoted from first Timothy looks at man with reference to his terrible moral

* *ἐπίγνωσις*, "full knowledge," which acknowledges the truth of a thing; but I have said "knowledge," not "full" or "certain knowledge," as more just in English. If I said, in English, "acquainted with the truth," it would imply not possessed; but knowledge is *ἐπίγνωσις*. If we say "full," it is contrasted with "partial;" "certain" with "doubtful." To know the truth suggests possession of it." (J. N. D.)

condition, but rather at the fact that he has lost completely all possession of the truth, which of course is the direct result of sin. What an unspeakable privilege to know God, and that too in Christ the Truth.

F. H. J

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE conclude our readings for this year with the writings of the beloved apostle John—his Gospel and the book of Revelation. While so different in their contents, there is a beautiful harmony, we need not say, which makes them fitting companion pieces.

In the Gospel we see our blessed Lord, the Son of God, made manifest in flesh, who reveals the Father's love in the face of all opposition, and ministers to the feeblest faith of the unworthy that lay hold upon it.

Revelation is the book of judgment, where this same Son of God is seen with eyes as a flame of fire, whose sword must smite those who refuse His grace. Thus mercy and judgment, as we have been so constantly seeing throughout the Psalms, the Prophets, and Epistles, are blended together. Thank God, for the believer, the judgment has been borne by Another, and the mercy flows forth unhindered, though judgment of our ways continues, lest we should exalt ourselves and forget that we are debtors to mercy alone.

The divisions and contents of John's Gospel have been so recently gone into at some length, that it will scarcely be needed to go over them again. Briefly, they are three:

1. (Chaps. i.—ii. 22.) The eternal life seen in the person of Christ Himself.
2. (Chaps. ii. 23—xvii.) Eternal life communicated from Christ to His people, who believe in Him.
3. (Chaps. xviii.—xxi.) Eternal life secured through the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord.

Revelation has two main divisions :

1. The judgment of the Son of God upon His Church, the vessel of testimony left upon this earth (chaps. i.-iii.).

Div. 2. (Chaps. iv.-xxii.) The judgments of the Son of God poured out upon a guilty world which has refused His grace, either in open opposition or empty profession.

After the judgments come the blessings, of the earth during the Millennium, and of that eternal state where sin will not only be repressed but eternally banished from God's fair creation to its prison, and where the new heavens and new earth will be the abode of a holy as well as a redeemed people.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 28.—Does Scripture intimate that there will cease to be a corporate testimony to the truth of Christ and His Church before the Lord comes?

ANS.—We know of no scripture that does, nor does it seem like our gracious God to provide for the utter failure of His people. On the other hand, there is much in Scripture to warn, and to keep us from a spirit of self-complacency. The manifest tendency of everything is away from the first love. The professing Church is drifting toward open apostasy, and the world is ripening fast for judgment. It is surely significant that Laodicea follows Philadelphia. This does not mean that Philadelphia is absolutely succeeded by Laodicea, but it does show the moral condition of things at the last, and the special need for lowliness, self-distrust, and faith. It is only the power of God that keeps us, but that, blessed be His name, is for us. It is as true now as ever that Christ is sufficient for His people. God is unchanged, His Word abides. What need then is there for further failure? Surely we are not straitened in Him, but in ourselves.

Let us then not be downcast, nor elated, but in all lowliness count upon the unsmiling One. We do not believe it to be a healthy spiritual condition to expect failure, as surely it is not to be puffed up.