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The Christian's Library.

The Welsh Revival.

IT has come, that which multitudes of the Lord's people have been crying to Him for, and our lack of faith has been rebuked.

Many times of late have we been asked whether a revival similar to that experienced in 1859 would be witnessed before the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. The growing unbelief of our times, and the wholesale rejection of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures almost made one feel that such a movement was impossible.

But God is on His throne ; and the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. The Spirit of God, too, is as able to move in the midst of unbelieving Christendom as in the streets of guilty Jerusalem in the past (Acts ii.).

The present movement seems to have burst forth spontaneously and suddenly. Man has not been prominent. No well-known and popular preacher has been specially noticeable, though, doubtless, the great Cardiff Mission had been

used of God to awaken His people, as well as in the conversion of large numbers of souls.

One of the most striking features of the present season of revival is the spirit and power of prayer. Prayer meetings and not preaching are prominent. These meetings are continued till four and five o'clock in the morning, the people dispersing to get a little food and returning again to spend hours of the day in singing, praying, and rendering testimony to the power of Christ to save.

Another noticeable feature is the realised presence and power of the Spirit of God. The ministers prepare their sermons but cannot preach them. After speaking a few words one minister announced that the meeting would be "left to the guidance of the Holy Ghost," and then one after another poured forth their hearts in prayer, praise, or testimony.

We feel that the power of the Lord is very present all around just now, and, wherever energy and faith is given to gather people together for prayer of a definite character, great results will follow. Then, again, almost everybody is ready to listen and speak of these matters. The feeling that God is moving throughout the land is becoming very general, even amongst worldly men. The appalling infidelity found amongst the highest classes in worldly society has had the effect of startling many into a feeling that the devil had them

in his grip—and, after all, what is more dismal than unbelief?

One thing that encourages us to believe that this work is of God is the fact that it has begun with prayer on the part of Christians all over the world, and God *does* hear when His people cry to Him.

Brethren, let us continue instant in prayer, remembering that “all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. xxi. 22).

ED.

“Surely I Come Quickly.”

WE feel led to address our fellow-Christians through these pages, and pray God that no offence may be given, but rather that all may be stirred up.

Few sober-minded Christians will question that we are living in serious times. Dark days they have been. Infidelity has been flooding the land for some years past, and the ordained ministry both of Church and dissent have been almost vicing with one another for the foremost place in this soul-destroying work.

Christian men have been tampering with this very evil, instead of standing out in bold decision,

and in loyalty to Christ their Master, denouncing it, and purging themselves from all association with those who fearlessly proclaim their unbelief from pulpit, platform, and press. A falsely called Christian charity has led many to temporise with the heretical teachers of the day, and these have become well-nigh swamped by the rising tide of apostasy. A feeling of horror has no doubt been experienced at the blasphemous utterances which have of late been pouring forth from the pulpit of the City Temple. That a worm of the dust should presume to talk of "the Agnosticism of Jesus," and to speak of the blessed Son of God as "the Great Agnostic," does indeed make one realise that we are in the perilous times spoken of in the Scriptures of truth; but what can one say of a reception being accorded to such a blasphemer by eight hundred ministers at Oxford recently, a well-known speaker at Christian conventions taking a prominent part? We are warned by the Word of God that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, and these times are upon us indeed. It is vain to expect a recovery or a remedy. Things will get darker instead of brighter, and evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Tim. iii. 13).

But the Lord is coming. That bright and blessed hope has been revived in many hearts of late, and the cry is still going forth to wider circles, "Behold the Bridegroom!" In Reve-

lation xxii. 17 we three times find the word "Come." First, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." This is an invitation to the Lord Himself. He had just announced Himself as "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." In this we get the twofold aspect of His coming, as it affects Israel and the earth, and as it affects the Church or the heavenly saints.

The hope of earthly blessing for the Jews and for all the nations is bound up with Christ as the root and offspring of David. Christ is the source from whence all the earthly promises flow; He is also the One in whom and by whom they will all be fulfilled. He is thus "the root and the offspring."

But for the Church higher and better things are in store; and to her, the Bride, Christ is presented as "the bright and morning star." Where do we look to see the morning star? Is it not into the heavens? So for the Christian, Christ's coming is a heavenly hope and not an earthly one. Again, when does the morning star appear? Is it not at the very darkest time of the night, and just before the break of day?

Christian reader, the night is dark indeed! Infidelity is sweeping over Christendom; the Word of God is being given up by thousands of professed Christians; worldliness and godlessness are spreading, but the Lord is at hand. "Surely I come quickly" is His promise.

The Bridegroom is at hand. Does not the Bride long for His return? Listen. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." These words have often been wrongly applied by earnest preachers of the gospel, as though they contained an appeal to the sinner to come to Jesus. But no, it is the language of the Church. It is the desire awakened in the heart of the Bride by the announcement of Jesus Himself, "I come quickly." The ready response from her heart is—Come! In this first "Come" we find the true and proper language of the Church as a whole.

But there are many individual Christians who form a part of that spiritual Bride who have never had their attention called to the blessed hope. They have been looking upon death as a certainty. To these the second "Come" refers: "Let Him that heareth say, Come." This second "Come" is likewise addressed to Christ. It may be that for the first time since some of our readers were brought to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are now reading about the coming of Christ. For the first time do they, perhaps, hear that the coming of the Lord and not death is the proper hope of the Church. Instead of turning away and saying, "These are strange and peculiar views," acknowledge with grateful and overflowing heart that it is the truth of God; join in the Church's cry. The Bride, led by the Spirit of God, cries to her absent but returning Lord, Come! Well then, you, too,

take up the same cry—"Let him that heareth say, Come."

But now we reach the third "Come." This time it is addressed to the sinner. Oh, thirsty souls, ye who are finding out that the world with all its empty pleasures, its fleeting joys, its passing vanities, does not and cannot satisfy you; ye who have drunk at the religious fountains of the world as well as its sinful fountains; ye who have sought in vain from the forms of religion, from its rites and ceremonies, for that peace of conscience, that rest of heart, that assurance of salvation, that certainty of heaven with the present joy of the hope of the glory of God, all which blessings can alone be had through living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and personal acquaintance with that once crucified but now risen and glorified Saviour—come to Him! "Let him that is athirst come." The invitation goes world-wide; it extends to all, rich and poor, high and low, learned and ignorant; none are excluded—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

And is not this last gospel appeal going forth to-day? Side by side with the revival of the hope of Christ's return, a special gospel activity may be seen reaching to all the dark corners of Christendom. Gospel missions in theatres, public halls, and in various ecclesiastical buildings, constantly held in the towns and cities; tent missions, open-air missions, &c., in villages

and country places; and now, as we write, a vast and spreading revival in Wales, setting the whole district in a flame. Are not these signs of the times?

We thank God for the revival in Wales. We believe it is God's answer to the prayers of His people. Unlike all the special missions of recent years, this revival is utterly beyond the control of man. It is a movement amongst the people, independent altogether of ministers and preachers of note. Theological professors and doctors of divinity have been cutting and clipping the Bible with their "higher-critical" scissors. God in His sovereignty is now sweeping masses of men, women, and children into the place of safety before the close of the day of grace.

We hope and pray and believe that this work of revival will spread all over England, Scotland, and Ireland, and what we feel led of God to do now is to urge upon all our Christian readers the importance of constant and earnest and believing prayer, that a right direction may be given to the work. Let every one of us pray earnestly, "Lord, what wilt Thou have **me** to do?"—and then be ready.

Many who read these lines have often dwelt upon the solemn exhortation of 2 Timothy ii. 20, 21. Solemn indeed it is in view of the confusion and increasing worldliness and apostasy of the professing Church. It is true without a doubt

that whoever wants to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, must purge himself from all vessels to dishonour, some of which are enumerated in the chapter we are quoting from. Profane and vain babblings, faith-overthrowing heresies, foolish and unlearned questions, must be shunned and avoided. Every one that nameth the name of the Lord is bidden to depart from iniquity.

But is there not a tendency to rest satisfied with this process of purging oneself from what is evil? What are we here for? What is the duty and privilege of each individual Christian? Is it not to be a vessel meet for the Master's use? Then the Lord Jesus Christ, our divine Master, has work for us each to do, and He wants to use us. Let us each be ready and prepared.

We are writing specially for those who have the truth and know the truth. The gospel in its clearness is familiar to us all. What are we doing with it? To whom are we carrying it? What sacrifices of time, money, or comfort do we make to spread it in the localities where we reside, or in the districts beyond? At any rate, if we are not much mistaken, an awakening of spiritual need is about to burst forth. The Lord is coming quickly. "Surely I come quickly," He testifies, and adds His sure "Amen." Do we want to meet Him with joy? Do we desire in truth to say, "Even so, come, Lord

Jesus"? Then let us not be found sleeping, but watching; and not only watching, but working for Him who is worthy of all we have and are!

A. H. B.

Outlines of the Gospel of John.

9. ONE FLOCK AND ONE SHEPHERD.

(Chap. x.)

LIGHT was the guiding thought connecting the previous two chapters; first in the Person of Christ (chap. viii.), and then operating on the man born blind (chap. ix.). In chapter x., it is life. The allegory of the sheep-fold and the shepherd was possibly occasioned by the arbitrary use of religious authority in the case of the man whose eyes Jesus had opened; but an entirely fresh departure of thought appears.

Again, it is important to note that life and light are quite different subjects, and treated differently. The confounding of them has occasioned much error and a whole system of evil doctrine. As we have seen in chapter ix., light is given according to the measure of

faithfulness to what is already possessed. God is its source, and the Son of God the object and divine vessel of it on earth. (The Father is not mentioned in chapter ix.) But life, eternal life, is the sovereign gift of electing love, according to the grace and power of the Father and the Son (chap. x.).

The idea of sheep in Scripture, used figuratively, is that such are the property of the owner—that is, of God, but liable to stray and needing to be kept. Israel was this nationally as brought out of Egypt. Here, though the fold, no doubt, refers to the Sinaitic covenant, the sheep are not the national company at all, but those who according to the election of the Father are given to the Son. It is not the “Shepherd of Israel” (Ps. lxxx.) and they “the sheep of His pasture” (Ps. c.), but One who enters to call His own sheep by name, forming an individual link through faith, for they hear, each one, His voice, and He leads them out of the Jewish fold. Moreover, there are others who never were in that fold whom equally He must call, establishing with each a personal relationship of faith—quite as really His sheep though found in the corruption of paganism. Together they form one flock.

Apart from the controversy with the Jews, the teaching of this chapter sets forth the new blessing into which Jesus brings His sheep, though still leaving them in a wilderness world.

He is the Shepherd of the sheep, and enters the Jewish fold in the appointed way. Access to souls is given Him, and the sheep hear His voice. He calls His own by name and leads them out. They are thus really detached from Jewish principles and privileges which separated them from others by ordinances in the flesh, and are apparently mingled with the world, but truly separated by faith and attraction of heart to a personal Object. He, when all His own are put forth, goes before them, still guiding them by His voice.

Not understanding this allegory, Jesus sets before them the truth in a more direct form. He is the door of the sheep. The fold is no longer in view ; it is simply a question of the sheep and of Him who owns them. All assuming this claim before He came were thieves and robbers ; but the sheep remained in the fold. Now they leave it to follow Him. He was the door of the sheep, as the divinely authorised way out of the fold ; but He is also the door, or the sole way into the new blessing, where, as its present portion, the soul receives salvation, liberty, and spiritual food.

The fleshly religious guides sought only something for themselves. They were thieves, and were careless of the injury done to souls. Jesus had come to *give* spiritual life, and that abundantly ; but it was necessary also that

He should deliver them from the power of evil. This He does, though His life must be laid down for them.

Remark that here the sheep are supposed outside the fold, and amid the dangers of the wilderness. Consequently the false religious guides are no longer considered as thieves and robbers—their Jewish character—but as serving for wages. To the hireling the sheep do not belong, and he will not adventure his life for wages. The wolf therefore seizes and scatters the sheep. But Jesus is the Good Shepherd; the sheep are His; and He is in the same mutual community of interest with them as there is between the Father and Himself. He loves them and gives His life for them.

Moreover, He had other sheep not of that Jewish fold; these must be brought also and hear His voice. So there should be one flock and one shepherd.

But the wilderness should not last for ever. In laying down His life, He would take it again in a way which for Shepherd and sheep would banish evil for ever. On this account the Father loves Him, for He laid down His life voluntarily. It was with authority also, and thus He took it again, doing all in perfect obedience to His Father.

As in former instances, the evident reference and obedience to the Father in all things deeply touched the conscience of His hearers (*cf.* chap

viii. 29). So much so, that the Jews challenge Him to say openly if He was the Christ. But the time was past for this. It was the Father's name, the giving of eternal life, and His oneness with the Father, which were now presented.

His sheep, given Him by His Father, would receive these communications. He owns them, and they follow Him. He gives them eternal life, and they are secured against every evil power, He and the Father being one in their safe-keeping, as in everything.

This again arouses the murderous anger of the Jews. Jesus answers them, "Many good works have I shown you from My Father ; for which of them do ye stone Me?" They would have stoned Him as a blasphemer, but even the Scriptures had declared those to be gods who stood for God, and acted on His behalf. How much more was He really entitled to be called the Son of God, seeing that the Father had sanctified and sent Him into the world. The works He did were plainly those of His Father—no mere legal or Jewish or even prophetic signs—and were the display for faith of the actual and divine oneness in nature and being of the Father and the Son, distinct indeed as they are in person.

Again their anger breaks forth against Him. The manifestation of the Father in the Son was intolerable to them. But He avoided them, and went away to the parts where the

work of God by John began. In retirement, away from Jerusalem, many came to Him and believed.

The reader will plainly see that the great point of this chapter is to bring out the truth of Christ's sheep in contrast with Israel as Jehovah's flock. Instruction how important! for us now as well as for them. The Father gave them to Jesus. It was not ordinances nor natural birth, but the Father's electing grace which constituted them His sheep. He would therefore call them, and they would come to Him, whether from the Jewish fold out of which He would lead them, or from the outside Gentiles. Coming to Him, the two should form but one company, not a national one, or distinguished by earthly privileges and promises, or relationship in the flesh with God, but one flock formed out of Jew and Gentile alike, by personal faith in the Shepherd and obedience to Him. This supposed the death of Jesus, without which the Gentile could not be called into the one flock.

How precious is this instruction! Supremely necessary for that day as for this, setting forth, as it does, the form on earth which the new Christian blessing would take.

Then Jesus reveals the motive which filled His heart on laying down His life, and its results for the sheep in taking it again. He gives them eternal life, they shall never perish,

and none shall pluck them out of His and His Father's hand.

It will be noticed that all this is of pure grace and electing love, giving life—not light and responsibility, but the one flock—eternal life, and security, and the Father revealed in the Son. It is true the wilderness and its dangers still exist, but, in contrast with the hopeless and lost state under law, the sheep are led, fed, and safeguarded by One who knows, and loves, and keeps them to the end. Christ is presented as the Good Shepherd, and the saints are those who follow Him, aroused in conscience and attracted in heart by the Word which thus reveals Him.

Hints on Ezekiel.

THIRD PROPHETIC VISION.

CHAPS. xx.-xxiii.

THE IDOLS OF EGYPT—Chap. xx. 1-31.

THE portion which now lies before us (chaps. xx.-xxiii.) with its various subdivisions contains much that is morally instructive as well as dispensationally interesting.

In the seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity

“certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and sat before” Ezekiel. This seemed sincerity on their part, but the Lord that searches the heart detected an utter lack of conscience. “As I live, saith the Lord, I will not be inquired of by you” (vers. 3, 31). The Spirit of God has here in view Israel as a nation, and not Judah only, as in chapter viii.

The actual condition of Israel is viewed in the light of their past history, and with special reference to that evil spirit of idolatry which was always their special snare.

Even in Egypt, before the mighty hand of God had interposed on their behalf to bring them from under Pharaoh's iron bondage, they had defiled themselves with their idols: “Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (ver. 7). But in vain: “They rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt.” God then threatened them with judgment in the land of Egypt: “Then said I, I will pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.”

But God wrought for His own name's sake. Israel was His people in spite of all their faithlessness, and what would the heathen say, in

whose sight He had made Himself known in bringing His people forth out of the land of Egypt, if now He cast them off? (vers. 5-10).

So He brought them into the wilderness, and there He gave them His statutes and His judgments: there, too, He gave them the Sabbath to be "a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." But Israel's heart remained as rebellious as ever; they walked not in His statutes, they despised His judgments, and they polluted His Sabbaths. There, too, in the wilderness God was going to pour out His fury upon the guilty people, and consume them. But again He wrought for His name's sake, lest it should be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight He had brought them out (vers. 10-14).

But the *heart* of Israel still turned away from Jehovah: "Their heart went after their idols;" so that God lifted up His hand to them in the wilderness that He would not bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands. "Nevertheless Mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness" (vers. 15-17).

The fathers were incorrigible. God now deals with the children: "I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes, and keep

My judgments, and do them ; and hallow My Sabbaths," &c. But, alas ! the children were no better than the fathers ; the same persistent course of disobedience and idolatry characterised them. Whether in Egypt or the wilderness, whether the fathers or the children, nothing but rebellion and stiff-neckedness on the part of Israel, nothing but patience and long-suffering on the part of the Lord. And is it not the same with us to-day ? And that in spite of higher blessings and greater privileges !

Many a time would God have destroyed the idolatrous people, but He remembered His covenant with Abraham, and wrought for His own glory ; this alone prevented the execution of His just and righteous vengeance. But if He spared, He must chastise ; otherwise it would but prove indifference to the evil : " Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live " (ver. 25). These, it need hardly be said, were not those contained in the law of Moses. That law was " holy, and just, and good," as we are told in Romans vii. The statutes referred to in verse 25 were the idolatrous and degrading practices of the heathen nations described in verse 26, into which the favoured nation had fallen, so low was the pit into which they had sunk (vers. 13-26).

Was their conduct any better in the land of Canaan ? Their captivity in Babylon was the

answer. "Even unto this day" it was the same story; and yet in utter deadness of conscience they came to inquire of the Lord as though all were right between them and Him. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you."

A great moral principle lies here. To enter God's presence in prayer is always good, but we must remember that to be real it is into His presence that we must get, and there our hearts are searched: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24). Had the elders of Israel drawn near to the Lord in this spirit, He would have hearkened to their cry, and wrought a mighty deliverance on their behalf, in spite of their continued and persistent course of disobedience. His arm was not shortened that it could not save.

And is it not so with us to-day? How much prayer seems to go for nothing! Is it not because the Spirit of God is often grieved by our carelessness and worldliness, both individually and collectively? "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 21, 22). Oh for hearts set on keeping His word and pleasing Him!

Brief Notes on the Seven Churches.

SARDIS.

IT is important to observe, that while it is true that the principles set forth in the seven Churches may be found at any particular time, yet, as the coming of Christ is mentioned in one way or other in the last four, it is evident that these states go on concurrently till the end of the Church's history on earth. We have already seen the gross corruption and evil of the Middle Ages rise to its height in Thyatira, but in Sardis we find quite a different state of things. There is a kind of new start; it is no longer gross evil, but formality without life—a name to live, but dead.

The Lord Jesus is before us here as “He that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.” It is not exactly the same as in Ephesus, “He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand,” where all was still in its order before Him: nevertheless, although disorder and gross evil had come into the Church, He has all power and the fulness of the Spirit; there is therefore a complete resource in Him. The dark ages had passed away, though the principles and the system of Romanism which characterised

that period still remained, and will remain till the end; the light of the Reformation had dawned, and a new responsibility attached to the Church as having received from God fresh light and truth. This is a most important point to consider, because God always holds both the Church and the individual responsible up to the light He gives. The Reformation work was truly a work of God, though mixed up with human failure and worldly motives in some cases, yet a work for which we ought to be deeply and everlastingly thankful. The power of the sacramental system, which had conferred such immense authority on the clergy, interposing themselves more and more between God and the soul, was now to a great extent broken. Men were brought once more into direct dealing with God and His Word. Sacerdotal tyranny was shaken off. The value and efficacy of the work of Christ, justification by faith instead of by works, the authority of the Word of God instead of the Church—these and other blessed truths were once more brought to light.

But, as soon as the first energy of the Spirit which produced these great results, and enabled many witnesses to lay down their lives for Christ and the true gospel, had passed away, the Church relapsed into a worldly, formal state. Instead of turning to God and His Word, they fell back on the secular power as a resource in setting right the disorder which had come in.

As time went on Protestantism failed in separation from the world ; indeed it never had been truly separate. It failed also in not going on in the energy of faith in dependence on God. They had got clear of a vast amount of Romish corruption, they had a name to live, but, alas ! there was spiritual death.

We may find an analogy to this in the case of the restored remnant of the Jews brought back from Babylon. ' They had given up idolatry and much of the grosser forms of evil ; but as soon as the first energy, which was manifested in the rebuilding of the temple and the city, had faded away, they relapsed into a dead, formal state, and remained so till the Lord came.

If we consider the perplexed state of the Churches in the present day in view of the advance of Ritualism, Higher Criticism, &c., is it not true that a great part of the efforts to combat these evils are in reality an attempt to meet a carnal system with carnal weapons ? There is not the turning to God in a spirit of true and humble dependence on Him ; hence the powerlessness to meet Satan's artifices effectually. In Sardis even " the things which remain " were " ready to die " ; such was the withering effect of want of spiritual energy and dependence on worldly resources for power. " Remember," He says, " how thou hast received and heard ; and hold fast and repent." They had received much, and God always calls back to the original place

of blessing, to the starting-point from which the Church has declined. Then again, "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." What a solemn way His coming is here presented! It is not as the hope and privilege of the Church calling forth the ready response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"; but it is just the way He will come upon the unbelieving world in judgment, as we read in 1 Thessalonians v., "But ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." A thief is an unwelcome visitor, and he does not give notice of his coming; he comes when least expected. How solemn this is, considering the light and truth they had received; but such is the result of failure to go on in the energy of faith, and of the Church finding its resources in the world and from the world.

Nevertheless there was a remnant—a few in Sardis who had not fallen into the general state of deadness and worldliness which marked the Church as a whole, and the Lord says, "They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." To him that overcomes the reward is that he "shall be clothed in white raiment," which typifies, as we are told elsewhere, the practical righteousness of saints—just the contrast to being defiled by worldly associations; also, "I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life." The "Book of Life" here takes in all

who profess to be Christians ; it is taken from the idea of a general register of names : those who were real and who had witnessed for Him amidst the professing mass, would not be blotted out. This is more negative, but then there is the positive side, too, in the reward to the overcomer who confessed Him down here. Christ Himself would confess his name before His Father and before His Father's angels.



"My Servant, Moses."

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY THE LATE
ROCHFORD HUNT.

"What can full joy and blessing be,
But being where Thou art?"

LET us read Deuteronomy xxxiv., Matthew xvi. 24-28, xvii. 1-8. We may look at the death of Moses in a *dispensational* way. The *lawgiver* could never lead the people into the land. We must all feel that if our blessing depended on our obedience, we should never have the blessing. In going on, the acknowledgment is more and more drawn out from the saint, that the grace which he experiences from the Lord is as great as the grace which saved him at the first. Trials are good for us. One has said, "An untried saint is an unsavoury saint."

“As herbs, though scentless when entire,
Perfume the air when bruised.”

Moses was a tried saint, and precious is the ointment which flows to us from it.

We can also look at the *personal* history of this beloved servant of God. We know the story of his failure, which shut him out from the land. He forgot that “power belongeth unto God.” It is vested in His hands, and bestowed by Him in successive grants on individuals. If we turn to Numbers xvii., we see how God’s grace chose Levi. And who was Levi? In the end of Genesis we find him left under the malediction of the head of the family. And Moses, too, was of Levi, and had been “drawn out” from the waters of death. He was a man who could appreciate and enter into the character of God, and He said of him, “My servant Moses—with him I will speak face to face.”

And was it not much more to him to have that hour on the mount, talking with Jesus, than to lead the people into the land? Man naturally, whatever may be said to the contrary, is made to look up to One above him, to look up to God. We see it even in our human surroundings, how one of character and influence is looked up to. It is a rare thing to find a man in whose character both strength and gentleness are united. One with a strong character may fail in gentleness, or a gracious man may be weak. Some of us have clinging hearts, and God knows that. He

who made the heart knows what it is, and what alone will satisfy it. Our hearts are too large for the world to fill them. In the Lord Jesus we have One who can enter into the feelings of our hearts. If we go to Him, we shall find in Him such tenderness, such delicacy, such refinement of feeling. He alone can satisfy the heart. We cannot be satisfied with the little things around us, though we may take pleasure in them, but *things* will all come to an end, and our hearts can only be satisfied with what will not come to an end. An eternity of *things* could never satisfy the heart, we must have an Object.

May we, as it were, get up on the mount, and lay down "our things," and be satisfied with Him.



Fragments.

IF my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and His acceptance as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work, and a perfect infinite acceptance—"as He is, so are we in this world:" so that "herein is love with us (see margin) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" (1 John iv. 17).

Now what men substitute for this is the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me ; the effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest instead of redemption ; whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despond when I see the flesh working ; and having put the work of the Spirit in the place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all.

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All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished ; the *sure* (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God.

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If it be said, "Yes, but I cannot see it as plain, because of the flesh and unbelief," this does not alter the truth ; and to whatever extent this dimness proceeds, treat it as unbelief and sin—not as the state of a Christian, or as God hiding His face.

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The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting, because it was by reason of this, because you were this, that Christ died, and Christ is risen ; and there is an end of that question.

J. N. D.

Philadelphia.

THERE are two Churches against which no word of reproach is spoken by the Lord—Smyrna, where we find persecution and poverty ; and Philadelphia, which was marked by weakness but faithfulness to Christ.

A state of spiritual death, as we have just seen, characterised Sardis ; and this state, as that of the last four more particularly, goes on till the end. The Lord does not present Himself in so much of a *judicial* character to the Church at Philadelphia as to some of the others, but rather in quite a new way and in a most personal manner. He is the Holy One and the True One. Holiness in His nature, as well as in separation from all the defilements around, ever distinguished our blessed Lord. Then, again, He *was* "the truth" : and all His ways were marked by truth. The Father's word, which was the written or oral expression of the truth ("Thy word is truth") governed His whole life, so that all His ways and actions manifested the truth in this world. The Church should be the reflex of Christ down here ; she should maintain the light and truth of God, not only in doctrine but in practice, in the world. The Lord says, "I know thy works," but adds nothing more about them

except to say that He knows them ; for this Church was not distinguished by any remarkable zeal or energy as some were. Nevertheless it is blessed to realise that He knows and estimates truly all that is really done for and to Himself ; and He can say, " Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." The word " My " occurs eight times in the address to Philadelphia ; it shows how closely Christ Himself is identified with those who are true to Him. It was, in fact, just what was perfectly exemplified in Him ; for He perfectly manifested the Father's word, and He ever faithfully witnessed to the Father's name. If unholiness in practice or unsoundness in doctrine is allowed or sanctioned in any Assembly of Christians, it cannot be said that they keep Christ's word and do not deny His name, for it is altogether incompatible with His title as the Holy and the True.

Speaking historically what answers to the Church state here described, is to be found, doubtless, in the remarkable revival of long-lost truth and light which took place at the early part of the last century. Now, one thing which was then brought out prominently was Christ Himself, what He is in Himself in all the various relationships in which He is seen in the Scripture, whether with Israel or with His Church. It was not so much abstract doctrines or truths, important as these are in their place, but *the*

truth in its connection with Christ Himself. This is most important, because truth can only retain its vital power and freshness in the soul, and service and testimony can only be maintained in the measure in which Christ fills the heart.

It is a sure sign of weakness and failure in an Assembly to get occupied with itself instead of with Christ; and it is ever Satan's aim to divert the eye from Him, either to ourselves or our Church position, or our service, or something else. However, there is much to encourage in what the Lord says to this Church: it is "He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." All power and all authority is in His hands, and He can use it, even on behalf of those who have but "little strength." We need to practically realise this, that when *He* opens, none can shut. This is most encouraging, and, moreover, it casts us entirely on Him. But there is the solemn side also: when *He* shuts, none can open. And so He says, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." It was just what was true of Christ, "to Him the porter openeth"; God, by His Spirit, in His governmental ways, so overruled all that transpired in this world, that His purposes of grace might be worked out in the whole service, both in life and in death, of our blessed Lord. Here, the Lord holds open the door, and no power either of men or devils

can shut it. It is most essential that we should learn wherein the true source of power lies, in an evil day. It is *not* in showy gifts or eloquence or display before the eyes of men; it *is* in that spirit of humble dependence and obedience, that conscious weakness which casts us over entirely upon Him as our resource. It is only as the eye is single, as Christ is the only and undivided object before the soul, as we learn our own weakness and His all-sufficiency in the secret of His presence, that we shall be enabled to keep an even course amidst the shoals and quicksands which the reasonings of the mind of man and Satan's craft have cast along our way.

It is remarkable that we find in the address to this Church, reference is made to the working of the same evil principle of Judaism which we have already noticed in Smyrna. Just about the very same year as the Spirit of God was first bringing out in a most manifest way many precious truths long lost to the Church, Satan had his counter-movement in what is commonly known as Ritualism and the Oxford movement. The roots of this system of subjection to ordinances, sacraments, and the teachings of men must be sought at a very early period in the Church's history. It is spoken of in the message to Smyrna as "the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." It was again revived

concurrently with the state described in Philadelphia, where we read of "them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." These would be forced to acknowledge that the Lord did indeed love those feeble witnesses to whom, in grace, He had confided His truth, and who had kept His word and not denied His name.

Then He says, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience." What is meant by keeping the word of His patience? In chapter i. we find "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," and in 2 Thessalonians iii. "the patience of Christ" (margin). Christ loves His people too much to leave them always here, and so He is coming to take them to Himself. He has not sat upon His own throne yet, but upon His Father's throne; but He waits—waits patiently until that moment when, according to the Father's will, He will arise and shout that quickening word which will transform these bodies of humiliation into the likeness of His body of glory. Now, it is as though He said, "I want you to be participating in *My* patience." We know also that the long-suffering of our God is salvation; He is extending the day of grace to sinners. And in grace the Lord answers to this waiting attitude, for He says, "I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them who dwell on the earth." It is well known

that this latter phrase—dwellers on earth—does not mean merely people who live in this world ; it is often used in the Revelation to designate those whose interests, hopes, &c., are settled and rooted in this world, and who have no portion in heavenly things. For all such there is an hour of trial coming—what shape or form it may take we do not know, but it is coming. This is not the same as the “great tribulation” of which our Lord speaks (Matt. xxiv. 21), which is confined more especially to the land of Judæa ; it is over the “whole habitable world.” Those who kept the word of His patience would be kept from (literally “out of”) this hour of trial—and how? The whole context shows that it is by His taking them to Himself. They are seen as patiently waiting for a heavenly Christ ; their interests and hopes are in heaven, instead of being rooted and settled on earth ; and so He takes them to heaven before the judgment falls on the earth.

“Behold, I come quickly,” He says. Four times in the Revelation we find Him thus presented—it is personal—it is *Christ* who is coming, and that without delay. Meantime there is the solemn word of warning, needed or it would not be there, “hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” No mental power, no knowledge of truth even, or of the letter of Scripture, can enable us to “hold fast” in the face of all the craft and subtlety

of Satan and the deceitfulness of the heart. Nothing but that true humble dependence and obedience, that feeding on the Word of God which characterised our Lord Himself, can preserve the soul in the face of all that is around, so well calculated either to seduce or to turn us aside from the attitude and the hopes proper to the Christian.

The promise to the overcomer here answers to the state of the Church. They had little strength, but they had faithfulness to Christ, and so He says, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God." A pillar is the emblem of stability and strength—it is as much as to say, "If you have stood for Me, however feebly, in the face of opposition down here, I will make you an immovable pillar up there. If they had not denied His name here, He would write upon them "the name of My God." Note here how He identifies His people with Himself; it is "*My* God." If they were surrounded by those of the synagogue of Satan, false judaisers as they were, well, He says, "I will write upon him . . . the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God."

In chapter xxi. we have the description of "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Her origin, her character, and all that distinguishes her is *heavenly*, in contrast with the false, professing worldly

Church, the "synagogue of Satan," which merges into "Babylon" later on. Here the overcomer is identified with that which is adorned with the glory and the presence of God, and which is essentially of a heavenly character. And then the Lord adds the word, "My new name." He has various names linked with His personal and official place, but His title as Redeemer specially belongs to Him as the One who has passed through death into the glory from whence He came. It is this new and heavenly title with which He identifies the overcomer here.

F. G. B.

The Coming of the Lord.

NEARLY two thousand years ago the little band of eleven apostles (for Judas, the traitor, had "gone to his own place") wended their way up the slopes of the Mount of Olives. They walked in the company of the risen Christ.

The mighty work of atonement had just been wrought at Calvary. That stupendous moment in the history of the universe had just taken place—the moment to which all eternity of the past looked forward, and to which the eternity of the future will look back. Christ, the incarnate Son of God, had laid down His life, but He had taken it again, and as the mighty

Conqueror had returned from the battlefield where He had annulled Satan, and had vanquished the powers of darkness, triumphing over them in His cross (Col. ii. 15).

“By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown,
Trode all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down.”

That blessed Christ was both God and Man. He was as truly God as was God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. Never in the history of Christendom was it more necessary than it is to-day to insist upon this fundamental truth of the Christian faith.

A mass of unregenerate men have taken possession of the theological seminaries of the land. They sit in the professor's chair, and attempt to discuss the mysteries of divine revelation after the fashion of teachers of mathematics or chemistry, or other such-like sciences. With their puny finite minds they would grasp the infinite, ignoring altogether the plain statement of the Word of God that “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. ii. 11).

Before any one can be a true minister of Christ he must first of all have passed from death unto life (John v. 24). Before he can “know the things that are freely given to us of God,” he must first of all have received “the Spirit which is of God” (1 Cor. ii. 12). The absence of this

in the present day is, we believe, what produces all the unbelief, the spiritual doubt, the infidelity, we may call it, that is now flooding the land.

Hence we feel called upon to state in no uncertain manner our unchanged and absolute conviction of the truth of the full and essential deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We repeat, He is as truly God as is the Father and the Holy Ghost. One God only, but revealed in three persons—an infinite truth which baffles the understanding of the finite mind of man; but a truth which the Bible asserts, and which every Christian believes. The man who denies it has abandoned the Christian faith, and forfeited his claim to the name of Christian.

But not only was Jesus God, He was as truly man as He was truly God. Hence, in connection with the glorious truth of the resurrection, it is said on the one hand that having laid down His life He had power to take it again: that is, as a divine Person He laid it down, no man took it from Him; and as a divine Person He took it again, for He had power to do so (John x. 17, 18).

On the other hand, as man He was taken by wicked hands, was crucified and slain (Acts ii. 23), and as man He was raised from the dead by the mighty power of God (Eph. i. 19, 20). The rationalist would stumble at this. How can this possibly be? he exclaims. No man took His life from Him, and yet He was slain by men's hands! But the child of God,

born of the Spirit, and indwelt by the Spirit, receives the things of the Spirit of God in simple and unquestioning faith. These things to the unregenerate natural man are foolishness, but to the child of God—the spiritual man—they are amongst the deep things of God, freely given to us that we might know them, enjoy them, walk in the power of them, and have the heart overflowing with adoration and praise because of them (1 Cor. ii. 9-16).

On the memorable occasion to which we have referred (Acts i.), the risen Christ led His disciples outside the walls of Jerusalem and up the slopes of Olivet. There He spoke to them, amongst other things, of the coming of the Holy Ghost. In three ways were they to be affected by this entirely new fact of the Spirit's presence on earth, fruit of the redemption work of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit had wrought before from creation onwards; He had come upon men both saved and unsaved, making them the vehicles for communicating God's mind, as, for example, Balaam, Saul the King of Israel, as well as David and the prophets. But never until redemption had been accomplished did He come here to dwell in person. The Holy Spirit's influences had been felt before, His presence as a divine Person was now to be known when the day of Pentecost had fully come.

In three ways, we repeat, were the disciples to be affected by the presence of this august

Person. First, as "the promise of the Father" (Acts i. 4, and *cf.* John xiv., xv., xvi.), introducing them into the conscious relationship of sons.

Second, as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, introducing them into the unity of the body of Christ (Acts i. 5, and *cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 13).

And thirdly, as the power for service and testimony (Acts i. 8, ii. 1-13).

Every Christian, then, is a son of God, and has the Spirit of adoption in his heart whereby he cries, Abba, Father; every Christian is a member of the body of Christ, and is livingly united by the Spirit to his exalted Head in heaven, as well as to all his fellow-Christians, as members of the body of Christ on earth; and every Christian is a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is endued with the power of the Holy Ghost for that service in whatever direction it may lie, whether amongst the saints of God as pastor and teacher, or toward the world as evangelist, or in any other way.

Having spoken to His disciples these things, and while they beheld, the blessed Lord was taken up. A cloud received Him, and hid Him from their gaze. Seen but a moment before, He was now out of their sight. A cloud had intervened—a cloud, and nothing more.

With steadfast eyes they look toward heaven. Had they not seen Him "as He went up"? Was He not then in heaven? Yes, verily, and

there in heaven He has been ever since that day of all-absorbing memory.

But, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. Angelic messengers were these, who, fresh from heaven's courts, where they had that very moment just witnessed the entrance there of the glorified Redeemer, now impart to His wondering disciples the joyful tidings that "this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

This blessed truth of the coming of the Lord we desire once more to bring before our readers.

A. H. B.

(To be continued.)

Outlines of the Gospel of John.

10. ZION'S KING KNOWN BY THE GLORY;
AND THE WORLD AND ITS PRINCE
JUDGED BY THE CROSS OF THE SON OF
MAN.

(Chap. xii. 12-50.)

THE one flock and the new condition of the saint while passing onward to resurrection, have already been before us. Verses 12-19 now unfold a beautiful picture of Israel's blessing, as the owned and responsible people of Jehovah, realised then for a passing moment in exquisite

perfection, since the divine King of Israel was there in the person of Jesus, according to the prophecy of Scripture. As will be observed, this follows the teaching and incidents which are used to illustrate the purely spiritual blessings found in Christianity.

The report having reached Jerusalem that Jesus, after His withdrawal, was again coming there, a great crowd went out to welcome Him, crying, "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel." But not yet could Jerusalem be called "The Lord our Righteousness." Her gates were not those of righteousness, nor was any but Himself the righteous One to enter them. The stone was yet to be rejected. It is true that He fulfils Zechariah's prophecy, and having found a young ass sits upon it as Zion's King. And in His person the power was there to annihilate the adversary, and the nations in His train opposed to Jehovah's King, the Son of David. It was fitting then that His personal dignity and glory should sway, if only transiently, the unprejudiced minds of those who had witnessed His power of resurrection. These, therefore, accompanied Him, testifying that He had called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from among the dead. Those met Him also who had heard the report of it; and the gathered crowds together welcome Him, as in triumph, to the seat of His rule and government.

But He had come in meekness for salvation, not to break the battle bow ; and the adversary, by raising the hand of violence against Him, could accomplish what subtlety and deceit had utterly failed to do.

Shouts and acclamations rent the air, and waving palms gave demonstration of an irresistible impulse ; but without conscience, if even there were a little faith. So entirely were all thoughtless of the mind of God, that even the disciples knew not these things at the first. It was not until Jesus was glorified that they remembered the Scriptures ; and faith and conscience were aroused to the fact that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

This plainly shows us that, apart from the light which Jesus glorified sheds upon the scene of religious privilege and responsibility, we should have no right understanding of the times, nor any apprehension of the mind of God for the moment, or true appreciation of the path of Jesus, as those responsible to uphold His glory on earth. Without the stability which a Christ in glory gives our souls, if not carried away with a giddy, fickle multitude to cry, "Crucify Him," we might at least be plunged into the depths of doubt and well-nigh despair, as the disciples were when that bright day's fair hopes gave place to the impenetrable gloom of Calvary. Jesus on high in heavenly ministry, and the

Spirit dwelling in and with us here, are needed in order to bear the heavenly testimony of grace. Otherwise it would be law, not faith ; flesh and not the Spirit.

But another scene now unfolds itself ; not a glorified Christ in contrast with His coming under law, but a crucified Son of man, the Deliverer from the scene and power of evil and of darkness.

There were certain Greeks who came up to worship at the feast. These were Gentiles in the flesh, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise. But in spite of this, like the Magi who had seen in the far-off East the star that betokened the birth of the King of Israel, so the glory of the God of Israel had drawn them to Jerusalem. There the fame of Jesus reaches them, and they desire to see Him. Conscious, however, of their inferior position, in which indeed the word of prophecy placed them, they come first to Philip. Conversant with Moses and the prophets, Philip tells Andrew, impressed as the latter was with the glory of Messias. Together they tell Jesus. But for Him it is not the day to take Messiah's place, nor to fulfil the prophecies of Israel's glory. The Son of man shall indeed be glorified, and put in force a wider rule ; but the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, if fruit is to be borne.

Before He crushes the foes of Israel, He will

meet the whole power of evil and destroy it in a far profounder depth. He alone understood and estimated what was needed to bring, not these Greeks alone, but any soul of man into that blessing which was in the Father's heart for them.

To be occupied even now with eternal things, belonging to another world where Christ is gone, and by-and-by to be with Him there honoured by the Father, whose name was glorified in raising Him, it was necessary first that this world should be judged, and the prince of it cast out. But how could this be done? and who was there to do it? Jesus would do it by being lifted up upon the cross.

The cross itself was peculiar to the Son of man, and possible for Him alone. An attractive object for all men and an effectual work, both divine in character, are found there. But the path thither He has distinctly formulated for us to walk in, one spiritually outside of and beyond the power of the evil one. Three great principles mark this pathway. The first is grace. Walking in it life in this world is held at the call of the Master, who says, "Follow Me!" But can we follow Him in this path of surrender, perfect love, and devotedness? Yes; the motive for it, and the needed encouragement, are both sufficient. To be where the Lord Himself is—could any motive more powerful be presented to one who knows and loves His Master? And what greater encouragement could there be than that

the Father would honour him who served His Son?

But grace might seem to open a world-wide scope for service were it not that the obedience of Christ, which is the second principle of the Christian path, narrows it in detail to that which is for the Father's glory. For Him, too, who sought this glory in such a world, there was the grave; though surely resurrection out of it. Illimitable the grace; but its highest expression in obedience here was death, which is not the proper scene nor limit of the Father's glory, except as He raises out of it.

As the hour for glorifying the Father's name in respect of this sinful world came before the Saviour's obedient and devoted soul, He was troubled. And how deep the trouble! How solemn, too, that even He was troubled! But except He deliver, the misery was irremediable, the difficulty insuperable, the adversary invincible. Yet the cost of deliverance how great! But for this very purpose He had come; and while piety and perfect love pressed from His lips the cry, "Father, save Me from this hour"; devotedness and obedience immediately added, "Father, glorify Thy name."

Graciously considerate for the souls of men, drowned in spiritual stupor and fleshliness by the dark power of the prince of this world, the Father, in response to the Son, is heard saying out of heaven, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

This introduces the third essential principle of the Christian path, namely, rejection by and of the world, together with the full detection and final casting out of its prince; as well as a way of acceptance with God and of acceptable approach to Him outside of earth altogether.

Jesus spoke of His death. They thought He was seeking recognition as the Christ. But a *dying* Christ, for so they rightly understood His words, how foreign to their minds! Yet He did not say "the Christ," but "the Son of man" must be lifted up. Who is this Son of man? Thus they question. Sitting in darkness and the shadow of death because they rebelled against His word, they needed light. He was it; and for a little while was among them. They must believe in the light and become sons of light. It was in vain now to expect a Christ according to flesh, or even the wider rule of the Son of man over Jew and Gentile. Their path must be in the light itself, or darkness would seize upon them.

The teaching of this passage is most manifest. Divine purposes respecting the Son of man, as well as the promise concerning the Christ after the flesh, must alike give place to another scene than earth, and to relationship with God according to His nature. In fact it is the Christian blessing and approach to the Father in the unveiled glory as the sons of light.

Israel's opportunity under law of inheriting

the earthly promises was for ever lost. They had not believed, as Isaiah had said ; and the arm of the Lord which would have accomplished those promises had not been revealed. From henceforth the sentence of judicial hardening went out against Israel as a nation. Well indeed we know that in answer to the Saviour's precious intercession on the cross there was over-abounding grace shown to them nationally in the Gospel. But, in spite of the long-suffering of God, the sentence pronounced by Isaiah, and after seven centuries of suspense reiterated by the Lord Jesus Himself (Matt. xiii.), here affirmed at the close of His ministry by the testimony of the Spirit, was finally enforced by Paul in his last word to the people (Acts xxviii. 27). Thenceforward the salvation of God was sent to the nations.

Their ruin was not merely due to the darkness of unbelief, but because many, even of the rulers, who did believe were afraid to confess Him lest they should be excommunicated. Glory from man was more to them than glory from God.

Yet to believe on Jesus, lowly as He seemed, was to believe on God. The light, come into the world in His person, was absolutely divine, and was communicated by His words. These were spoken that the world—any soul of man—might be saved ; if rejected, His word would judge in the last day. His words were spoken

by the Father’s command, and were not only light but also eternal life to all who received them, but were judgment to the rejecters.

The world judged, the prince of it cast out, the earth relinquished, on the one hand ; on the other, the Son of man a sacrifice of propitiation for all, above the earth, for entering the heavenly courts. No longer an undying Christ abiding for ever ; but light come into the world that they might become sons of light, and life eternal revealed in the words of Jesus and received by faith. These form the chief elements of the evil overcome and the blessing introduced, as given in this passage.



“My Father’s House.”



THE Father’s house ! for this we long,
Where peace and joy abide ;
The home of bliss and endless song,
Where death can never hide.

No tears shall there the cheek bedew,
Nor sorrow line the face ;
No thrill of pain the heart imbue
In that bright joyous place.

No partings there His own shall know,
But ever dwell in light ;
There those for whom we mourned below,
Again will greet our sight.

In glory's garb of lustrous ray,
And wearing crowns of gold,
We shall, through God's eternal day,
Our Saviour's face behold.

With harp and voice in anthems sweet
We shall express our joy,
Our theme His grace which made us meet
For bliss without alloy.

His wounds, received on Calv'ry's tree,
The tokens of that love
Which set the groaning captives free,
Will still be seen above !

Ah ! when on Him and these we gaze,
What thoughts our hearts will throng !
What notes of triumph all will raise
In full redemption's song.

The Father's house ! Oh, Saviour come !
And take us to that place.
We long to taste the joys of home,
But more to see Thy face !

U. U.

The Love of God.

NOTES OF ADDRESS ON I JOHN iv. 7-21.

WHAT a place we are in, beloved brethren,
a place into which He has brought us,
at what expense to Him ! As we sometimes
sing, He has "left but the love" for us. It is

a place of divine affections. There are very few affections in us. There are *likings*, but not *lovings*, for with us there must be a cause for love in the object, but His was a causeless love. Even when we love Him, it is "because He first loved us." God only knows the love of God. God only can measure the work of Christ. God only knows what sin is ; we know it in some little measure.

A being of a higher order we cannot understand, unless we have His nature. We have it and love, for "God is love." Every expression, every manifestation of it in us, is of Him. It is an answer to any doubtings on our part, that we live by Him. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Christ is our life. He turns our gaze away from ourselves — "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." We are not to seek for the evidences of it in ourselves. Every evidence of it is outside myself—it is in Christ, or in my brother. I can admire it in him, but I am not to see it in myself. Have you not sought it in yourselves, beloved? And I have too, but we shall never find it. It will be our glory in heaven, that we are the expression of Another. Would it not be a pain to your souls to think of its being otherwise?

"He sent His Son a propitiation for our sins."

The august foundations of this love are found in the cross. The cross and the glory go together. Christ deserved everything. He had great deservings, great merits, and God has acknowledged them. Is it not a righteous thing with Him to reckon those deservings to the vilest sinner who has faith in Him, and to bring him into the same place as His Son?

In the Gospel we are told, "*No man hath seen God at any time* ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him ;" and here it is connected with the development of this love in us, "*No man hath seen God at any time*. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." Communion is not a matter of attainment, or we could have no fellowship one with another. Some are growing a little, and others are but feebly developed, but the weakest may have it. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (ver. 15). Have I known how to put "Jesus" and "Son of God" together? The One who was rejected here, and spat upon, was the Father's delight.

Now we come to the highest point. What is it? "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as He is, so are we in this world." He was the Father's delight—we mustn't take from Scripture—the eternal Son of God. Do I go about my business, my daily life, my talkings,

my eatings and drinkings, my sleepings, in the sense of the Father's delight? I am a son of God, a child, related to God and to Christ. What a wonderful thing it is!

ROCHFORD HUNT.

Correspondence.

New Zealand.—Should the bread be broken and the wine poured out before or after the act of thanksgiving? Is the Lord's table as shown in 1 Corinthians x. 16, 17, the expression of unity?

WHAT I dread in all such discussions is that Satan thereby often succeeds in depriving the people of God of the true remembrance of Christ.

We are exhorted that in the Assembly all things should be done decently and in order (1 Cor. xiv. 40). At the same time, we must beware of making rules and regulations which are not in Scripture, and forcing them upon others.

Now as to the question whether the bread should be broken before or after the act of thanksgiving we are told in Scripture that it was when "He had given thanks, He brake it," &c. (1 Cor. xi. 24). While there is no order given, I think our spiritual judgment would lead us likewise to give thanks before breaking. But

we must beware of attaching any sacrificial thought to our breaking the bread and pouring out the wine. The bread and the cup on the table represent not a living but a dead Christ. We do not pour out His blood, the cup reminds us of blood already poured out. If anybody made it an absolute condition that the wine should not be poured out until after thanksgiving, I should very much fear that some would be led to attach some sacrificial meaning to the act. It might encourage the idea that the bread and the wine before thanksgiving represented a living Christ, and the breaking and the pouring out represented His death. This, I am sure, would be a fatally false thought. But, as I said before, I dread that we lose sight of the blessed and holy remembrance of the precious Saviour's death in theological disputations as to the acts of breaking the bread, and whether or not we should have "glasses or a cup or a jug." Satan thus succeeds in robbing the soul of that precious memorial which should bow the heart in adoration and worship—"This do . . . in remembrance of Me."

I believe that 1 Corinthians x. 16, 17, does express unity, but not the unity of those who may be actually partaking; it is the unity of the whole body of Christ, however scattered it may be, and alas! is in these days. The Lord's table is where every member of the body of Christ has his place, unless excluded by scriptural

discipline for bad doctrine, loose walk, or evil associations. The Lord's table is expressive of Christianity in contrast to Israel's altar of sacrifice, and the heathen's table of demons. It is horrible to speak of the Lord's Supper amongst the various sects as the table of demons. From 1 Corinthians x. 16, 17, I believe that the bread on the table represents Christ's own literal body on the one hand, and His mystical body on the other. His literal body was represented by the broken bread as recalling the fact of His death.

“ His precious blood was shed
His body bruised for sin,
Remembering this we break the bread
And thankful drink the wine.”

His mystical body was represented by the one loaf—“ We being many are one bread, one body.” Twelve loaves on the table of shewbread stood for the twelve tribes of Israel ; the one loaf now expresses the truth that there is but one body. There may be but two or three in one place actually breaking bread together in this day of confusion and ruin, but they express the unity of the whole body of Christ. But while this is true, the chief thing is the precious memorial of Christ Himself in His death—“ As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.”

May the Lord deliver His people from mere questions. “ Foolish and unlearned questions

avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive" (2 Tim. ii. 23, 24). ED.

The Revival in Wales.

"THANKS for your letter and paper with the revival news. It is a wonderful testimony to the grace of God. It carries my mind back to the days of the Judges, when Israel was in a low state, and God used extraordinary means for the deliverance of His people. It tells us how low down we have got that He should use all kinds of instruments, even women, to do His work. We can say with Moses, 'Would God all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.'

"How I should like to see the same blessed work of the Spirit here, and all over this country. We would not say, 'My lord Moses, forbid them.' I am glad that you have had some part of the shower, and I hope it is only the beginning. One thing is clear, **where there is most prayer, there is most blessing.**" P. F. J.

"No doubt you have heard of the work of the Holy Ghost in the adjoining county (Glamorgan). He is also beginning to work in this county. We have for years had prayer for this. I have a conviction that we shall see wonderful things this year." S. O. H.

The Welsh Revival.

TO give some idea of the extraordinary scenes that are taking place daily all over Wales, we subjoin an extract taken from the *South Wales Daily News*, not as approving of all that is said and done, but to place on record an account of the most remarkable movement of our times, which from letters constantly received from all parts of England seems likely to break out all over the country, if not the world.

When we remember that this has gone on without intermission since November of last year, and that similar meetings are taking place every day of the week in many towns and villages, and further that the changed lives of the converts bear witness to the reality of the work, it fills us with awe. Let us pray that wisdom may be given to all who in any measure take a lead in the work.

All the trains arriving at Nantymoel on Thursday were packed with visitors to the mission meetings of Mr Evan Roberts. There were men and women from all parts of the United Kingdom, the broad Doric of Scotland mingling with the rich brogue of Ireland, but the liquid language of Wales, of course, predominated. Other lands also sent seekers after the influence of the Welsh revival, among them being a party of evangelists from France.

Mr Evan Roberts rested in the morning and afternoon, being fatigued after his opening meeting on Wednesday

night, which lasted until half-past eleven. A well-attended meeting was held at Bethel Welsh Congregational Church in the morning, which was wonderfully fervent, many testimonies and confessions being made. There was another meeting in the afternoon at Saron Baptist Church, which was crowded. Mr Evan Roberts was half expected to be present. He did not, however, put in an appearance, but the service did not lack warmth and earnestness. Numerous testimonies were given by Scotch and English visitors. Some of the prayers delivered by the Welsh converts stirred the listeners to the depths of their souls, and the scenes of emotion were at times most remarkable. A pathetic incident was when a little boy walked into the "big pew" and asked for the big Bible in the pulpit. He was given the book, and after reading a passage he knelt, and, with ministers and church leaders grouped around his small figure, he offered an eloquent prayer.

EVENING MEETING.

The doors of Saron Chapel, a spacious building, were opened for the evening meeting at 5.30. So large a crowd was waiting admittance that in a quarter of an hour there were very few vacant seats. By 6.15 every inch of standing room was taken up, and a crowd of people was still trying to push in through the open doorway. The gallery was almost wholly taken up by rows of colliers in their Sunday black. An elderly collier in the gallery prayed that every obstacle should be removed to the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and that the fear of man should be taken away. An English visitor returned thanks to God for these Pentecostal times. . . . Mr Evan Roberts . . . arrived at 7 o'clock, almost unnoticed, as the congregation were singing, seated, "I will believe, I do believe." Mr Roberts had to push his way to the front of the crowded pulpit, and there was barely room for him there. The congregation changed the

singing to "O, anfon Di yr Ysbryd Glan," and then "Dewch heu ac ieuanc, dewch." The missionary sat gazing at the people, letting them sing again and again. Now and then he bowed his head in prayer, and his expression was less troubled, more serene than the previous night. Another Welsh hymn was struck up, and as the missionary sat gazing around at the many faces his eyes glistened with tears and he bowed his head upon his hands. The singing ceased, and while an English prayer was being offered by a collier at the back of the chapel, Mr Roberts rose and turned over the leaves of the Bible, with a smile playing over his expressive features. Again he sat down and buried his head in his hands, and when he rose his face was sad and wet with tears.

A prayer in the Welsh hwyl was offered by a man that the Spirit should come with power on that meeting, and the wail of a woman in anguish of soul rose above the murmured "Amen." The tension was relieved with the singing of "Diolch Iddo." "Turn the faces of those present towards Calvary, O Lord," pleaded a deacon in the big seat. The congregation were again about to burst into a hymn when the missionary rose, and with his hands uplifted, commanded "those who have not received Christ should not sing. God wants to get hold of the voice, and have the singing from the heart."

OVERCOME WITH EMOTION.

He stopped, and struggling with his emotion, bit his lips to suppress the rising tide of agony. He attempted to proceed, broke down, and throwing himself on the reading desk of the pulpit, sobbed, and sobbed in anguish. The sight of the bowed head, shaking with emotion, touched the hearts of many, and sobs broke out in many parts of the chapel. The missionary fell on his knees in the pulpit out of sight of the congregation, sobbing as though his heart were breaking, and prayers for the re-

moval of all indifference and the influence of the Holy Spirit were offered by strong men in voices broken with deep feeling. The missionary presently stood up, apparently with his feelings under control. "You were almost led to the Saviour last night," he said, "but the Spirit told me you could not have the blessing last night, but you will have it to-night. The Spirit has come. Don't be cold. The heart of the Lord is always warm towards you. Christ died for all of us. He died for me." Here the missionary was again seized with a paroxysm of grief, and throwing his arms over the Bible he bowed his head and groaned aloud in anguish. "O Iesu Mawr," he moaned again and again. "O Father, take this burden from off Thy servant," pleaded an old man in the congregation. Soon the missionary became calmer. "You seem to think this is weakness," he said, "but I wish you could prove what I am proving now. How can we be cold when God hath done so much for us? He gave us His only-begotten Son."

Proceeding with a catch in his voice, but now comparatively self-controlled, the missionary dwelt on the duty of complete obedience to the Spirit. As the meeting proceeded, his face was suffused in smiles, and it was now evident that he was happy. "Those who have received Christ, stand up," he commanded. The vast majority stood. "Those who have accepted Christ, raise their hands."

CONVERSIONS.

All those standing raised their hands. "Who will accept Christ?" he asked, looking round. There were soon two responses from the gallery, where the colliers were, and "Diolch Iddo" and "Songs of Praises" were sung. The missionary led the singing with a glad face. Then he bowed his head in prayer, and when he looked up his face was serious. "There are some on the gallery who have refused Christ," he said. At his request the meeting engaged in silent prayer for those who were

“almost persuaded.” A Bristol visitor rose to give testimony. He had scarcely commenced when Mr Evan Roberts announced another conversion, and then another, and it was some time before the Bristolonian could resume his address owing to the conversions and songs of praises. The meeting was far warmer than that of the previous night, and it was evident that the missionary derived much joy from this fact.

Laodicea.

THE last phase of the professing Church on earth is, perhaps, the most solemn of all. It is not marked by that gross corruption which we see in Thyatira, where Jezebel was as a teacher and instructor in evil; nor is it distinguished by lifeless formality as in Sardis: it is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. Indifference to Christ and His claims, and boastfulness of its own prosperity and knowledge, characterise this Church. We have just seen that the state at Philadelphia was marked by a little strength, yet faithfulness to Christ—a keeping His word and not denying His name. Laodicea is a complete contrast; they were lukewarm. This would lead one to think that once things had been different; but they had cooled down—they were not either cold or hot. Nothing is more nauseous to Christ than indifference. There was also an utter lack

of a consciousness of their true state — thou “knowest not” that thou art wretched, &c. We may find a state somewhat similar in the condition of the Jews which preceded the first coming of Christ, as shown in the prophet Malachi. There was departure from God, insensibility as to His love and claims, yet they took the place of being the true people of God, and having all the privileges of that place.

The aspect in which the Lord presents Himself to this Church is very instructive, and it comes in particularly suitably when the professing Assembly had utterly failed as a true testimony for God on the earth. He is the Amen. In Christ all the promises of God are Yea, and in Him Amen (2 Cor. i. 20). The Church had failed as a witness ; yes, all had failed as committed to the first man in responsibility ; but all will be made good and effectuated in the Person of the second Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. If everything connected with man, with the first creation, is found in a state of departure from God ; if the Church, which really belongs to the new creation, has not been true to her position, He is the beginning, the source and origin, as well as the Head of the *new* creation—the creation of God. Along with indifference and lukewarmness there goes pride and self-complacency. Nothing conduces to this state of things more than a great amount of truth or doctrine held in a cold intellectual way, and

which, not being kept connected with Christ Himself in the experience of the soul, has lost its living power and freshness. Truth learnt in the soul, in the heart and conscience, in communion with God, always humbles, because we see in the light of His presence how little we practically enter into it and carry it out in practice—where intellectual knowledge, on the other hand, puffs up and fosters pride and boastfulness. It is a bad sign to see the Church occupied with herself and speaking of herself—“*thou sayest I am rich,*” &c., instead of being occupied with Him, and learning in the presence of the Lord what it is to be a subject of grace and a debtor to Him for everything we possess.

In truth, they lacked everything, for they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”; and yet they knew it not, they felt it not! Is there not much of this in the spirit of indifference to what is due to Christ, linked with pride in spiritual things, as it often is in the present day? It is the spirit which pervades Christendom, and it is on the increase. This Church lacked in everything which was most essential—gold, divine righteousness before God; white raiment, practical righteousness in our walk before men; eye-salve, to discern their own real state as well as what was due to Christ. What a sad condition! Then there is the call to repentance; and if the Lord rebukes and

chastens, it is in love and for their blessing. Even here Christ does not give the Church up till the very last. He is outside, knocking at the door ; but He makes the appeal, and if *any man* hears His voice and opens the door, He is ready in His infinite grace to "sup with him and he with Me." It recalls the grace and forbearance, yea the longings of God's heart after Israel : "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, Israel ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? How shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together" (Hos. xi. 8). His grace still lingered over them, as He does with His unfaithful Church ; and He is ready to come in and to have intimacy and fellowship with any who open the door to Him. To the overcomer—the one who did not succumb to the general state of lukewarmness and indifference—He holds out the reward of sitting with Him on His throne, as He also overcame, and sat down with His Father on His throne. This promise, though it is by no means the highest of the rewards to the overcomer in the Churches, is truly the giving of a place of wonderful privilege, and an expression of the riches of divine grace.

These charges to the seven Churches give us, therefore, in the addresses to seven Assemblies which actually existed in Asia Minor, a complete outline of the history of the Church from the beginning to the end. The whole picture is por-

trayed with the most perfect accuracy, and a perfect knowledge of the true condition of each phase of the history of the professing Church on earth. The instruction given in this portion of Scripture is most important and essential for all true Christians who desire to learn God's mind, and so to be kept in the midst of all the snares and difficulties around, whilst waiting for the Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

F. G. B.

Outlines of the Gospel of John.

II. THE DEAD MAN RAISED, AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER INTO ONE.

(Chaps. xi.-xii. 1-11.)

THE previous chapter presents the aroused and attracted soul undertaken for by Jesus from first to last. This necessitates His death, and therefore resurrection. For contrast, we now see man in his state of death, but the power of Christ, as the resurrection and the life, bringing him out of it into fullest association with Himself.

The history of Lazarus of Bethany sets forth

these truths in the most powerful way. Rejected by the Jews, Jesus goes away beyond Jordan. Meanwhile Lazarus, His friend, falls ill. The sisters Martha and Mary send to let Him know. But Jesus, knowing that the object of the sickness was not death but the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified by it, remains two days where He was. Meanwhile Lazarus dies. Then He proposes to return to Judea. His disciples object the violence of the Jews. But Jesus was in the light of the will and glory of God, and knew that though death in its full power held Lazarus in its grasp, His own love to him was uninterrupted by it, and powerful as ever. For Jesus He was still "Lazarus our friend," and real as his death was, he had but fallen asleep, out of which He would awake him.

Delighting in the wisdom and power of God, which uses the ruin of the creature and the utmost success of evil only the more gloriously to express itself and to call forth and strengthen faith thereby, Jesus says, "Let us go to him." Thomas says to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Though devoted to his Lord, he was entirely under the power of death in his soul, so that the word of Jesus that He would awaken Lazarus passes his ear unheeded or unheard.

Death, wielded by the power of evil, had reached its limit, for Lazarus had been already

four days in the tomb when Jesus arrives, and every heart but His was bowed beneath its sway. The scene around spoke of man's ruin by sin — his heart alienated, God's sentence against him put in force by the subtle spirit of evil, that great opponent and slayer of man. The Man was there indeed, the Redeemer, who could and would do the kinsman's part. But at what a cost ! All that man was in evil, become a child of the devil, must be faced ; the judgment of God against such evil endured to the full ; death as Satan's power passed through ; the promises made to man in the flesh and fulfilled in Christ Himself be all surrendered ; His Messiahship laid down, Himself cut off and to have nothing ; all this, and that which it involved, known alone to Him and to His Father, was the redemption price, so that man might be raised from the dead in abiding blessing.

Yet He alone was superior to that dark power of death, and him that had it, which in varied forms held every other soul in bondage. The Pharisees, with Caiaphas at their head, held resurrection as an orthodox doctrine ; Martha believed and confessed it, as also did Thomas and the other disciples ; Mary felt that death would not have struck its prey if Jesus had been there ; some of the Jews were equally convinced of it ; but one and all were fully agreed that if corruption, which is death's seal, were once imprinted, no power on earth, or perhaps in

heaven, could alter its decree till the day of doom.

The Pharisees, therefore, careless of a resurrection so long deferred, counted upon carrying through their cause by killing Jesus. As to Martha, the very last thought to enter her mind was that then and there Jesus would raise Lazarus from among the dead, though she could say, "But even now I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee." Thomas saw nothing but death for His Master and himself and his fellow-disciples. Mary could but fall at Jesus' feet—hope had faded from her heart. Resurrection was to none a present reality and power. Not one saw in Jesus the resurrection and the life.

Martha was orthodox, and knew and confessed the doctrine of the resurrection at the last day, but she knew not the power of the presence of Jesus. In virtue of what He was, the last day should be anticipated for every one who believed on Him. Whether living or dead, they should be conformed to Him. If dead, they should live; and if living, they should never die. Of this Lazarus was an illustration, in the fact of being called forth from the tomb. But this declaration refers precisely to the time when Jesus, Himself in resurrection, shall bring His own into the same perfection of life in which He is.

What glory, spiritual and divine, comes be-

fore the Saviour in this revelation of Himself as the resurrection and the life! Martha understands nothing of it. For her it meant no more than an orthodoxy, which left untouched both heart and conscience—a Christ come down into the world, and the heart of man still in and of it.

Ill at ease in the presence of Jesus, and feeling perhaps the contrast between her gloomy creed and the Spirit's light and power that breathed in His words, Martha goes away and calls her sister Mary secretly, saying, The teacher is come and calls thee.

Mary had remained in the house. Martha had promptly gone to meet Jesus as soon as she heard He was coming, and her words betray excitement of spirit, if not disappointment. Mary now rises quickly and goes to Jesus, who was still where Martha met Him. She used words similar to those of Martha, but, as come to one in whose love and power she could absolutely confide, she abandons herself to the expression of her mingled grief and confidence in Him, which hitherto had been restrained.

Jesus Himself was deeply moved. Those around Him wept in helpless, hopeless sorrow. And Jesus wept, but not because of inability to help. On the contrary, the glory of the Son of God was His, with power to manifest it by His Word, so as to dispel every trace of evil and its consequences. But He wept because sin, from

whence these consequences come, was there darkening every human heart, and hiding the glory of God in unbelief. This He estimated according to its full true character before God, and the dishonour which it brought upon His name.

Again deeply moved, Jesus comes to the tomb and says, Take away the stone ; for it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. To the thought of Martha this would have been an offensive and unwarrantable exposure of the dead man's condition. For though she had said, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give Thee, she had not credited the Lord with asking that Lazarus might be raised. But He had done so—such was His love—and replies to her, Did I not say to thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God ? Then lifting up His eyes on high He said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me ; but I knew that Thou always hearest Me ; but on account of the crowd who stand around I have said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.

The voice that then called dead Lazarus from the tomb, crying, Lazarus, come forth, speaks to-day in the gospel to souls of whom he was a picture, dead in trespasses and sins and past all hope or help. The Father and the Son, acting in the community of grace, call those who hear not only into life but life from among the dead—into liberty as well, for Jesus says, Loose him

and let him go. The trappings of death and woe, the legacy of our former state, must be removed.

Divine grace and power, calling the dead into life and liberty, is the subject so far. But there is more. Jesus must needs die to accomplish the will and word of God with respect to Israel, as Caiaphas unconsciously prophesied ; but not only so, as the Spirit Himself adds, but that also He should gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Worldly wisdom, regardless of justice, would sacrifice Him to secure the public safety. According to the mind of God, He would die a sacrifice of propitiation in order that the legal system might be ended, and that in its place a divine ground might be laid in righteousness for the gathering into one of God's children out of Jew and Gentile.

From that day the Pharisees took counsel to kill Him. Jesus therefore goes away to a secluded city called Ephraim. But the Passover approaches, and Jesus is to be the Lamb.

Six days before the Passover He comes to Bethany. The once dead but now raised man was there, who was the great pattern and expression of what sovereign grace would do with those whose every link with this world, and even with divine dispensation in it, was severed by death. Gentile without law or promise, and Jew under law and its curse, could alike benefit by

this grace. A supper is made for Him there, fitly symbolising the spiritual repast this grace provided. Martha serves; it was her calling, and she pursues it still, but in the serenity of communion. Lazarus sits at table with Him: what more fitting than that the monument of grace and He who wrought it should be together! Mary, pattern of adoration and of communion with the heart of Jesus, adds that which gives fragrance to the feast. Her devotedness—for she buried her treasure with Him, though it was but three hundred pence—gave expression before all of her faith's appreciation of a pathway in which *all* that was heavenly and blessed before God was expended on behalf of man corrupt and worse than worthless.

These three form a pedestal for the glory of Jesus—Lazarus sitting with Him, a man risen from among the dead; Martha peacefully serving Him; and Mary pouring forth His praise. It represents to us the effect of grace in the day of grace—not yet of glory.

Lazarus is one upon whom the eyes of all turned, and by reason of whom many believed on Jesus. It only provokes the greater hatred of the priests, who take counsel to kill Lazarus also. Such is the character of the world, especially of its religion. The new spiritual condition brought in by grace and faith is thus set forth—the gathering together into one of the children of God, hitherto scattered abroad.

The Free Action of the Spirit.

IT is not our purpose in this paper to bring Scripture proof of the Holy Spirit's presence on earth. This great truth is no doubt more or less familiar to all our readers.

When the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to the right hand of God, having accomplished the work of redemption, He sent forth from the Father (Acts ii. 33) that other Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who was to abide here with the saints for ever (John xiv. 16). We press this point of supreme importance upon the attention of our readers. The abiding character of the Spirit's presence is what distinguishes the present dispensation from all others. When Christ came here He did not come to abide with His people for ever. He came to suffer for their sins; far more, He came to glorify God about them. For this He went to the cross, He was there made sin, He who knew no sin (2 Cor. v. 21). He went into death for His own; yea, He went before them, like the true Ark of the Covenant, descending into the dark waters of death and judgment that His people might walk dry-shod. Peter, impetuous and no doubt sincere, says, "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?" But this was impossible. Atonement Christ alone could accomplish. None could share in re-

demption's toil. At the cross Christ stood alone to meet man's bitter hatred, Satan's power of darkness, and all the waves and billows of God's wrath against sin. But the work is done, eternal praises to His name!

And now Christ risen from the dead has gone into heaven. Often did He announce to His sorrowing disciples that He must leave them; but He also assured them that when the Holy Ghost should come it would be far otherwise. That other Comforter, the Spirit of truth, would not only be **in** them, but He should dwell (or abide) **with** them.

It is not our purpose now to enlarge on the first of these great truths. Every Christian understands more or less clearly that the Holy Ghost dwells *in* him. Indeed this is what constitutes the true Christian position according to John xiv. 20 and Romans viii. 9, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."

But is there not much misconception, ignorance, and unbelief as to the blessed truth that the Holy Spirit abides *with* us. Christ went away, but the Holy Ghost, He promised, "would abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16).

Briefly we feel led to point out from Scripture the free action of the Spirit both in the world and in the Church. It was God's intention that

the glad tidings should be preached in all the world. Since the cross a new phase of God's dealings had come. It was no longer Jerusalem and the Jews that were the objects of His dealings, but "the whole world" and "every creature."

A prayerful study of the opening chapter of the Acts bows the heart in wonder and worship as we see God bringing about this gracious purpose of His love. He is seen behind every circumstance, and controlling every outburst of human wrath, and turning all things to His own glory in the accomplishment of His will.

After the martyrdom of Stephen a violent persecution burst forth against the Church at Jerusalem. Satan's effort no doubt was to crush the work at its beginning, and nip in the bud this new testimony to the One whom wicked hands had crucified and slain. But the wrath of man is made to praise Him. Up till this time the testimony had been confined to Jerusalem, but now they were all scattered abroad, except the apostles. We know from the earlier chapters of the Acts that many thousands had already been added to the Church in that city. Now these became scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts viii. 1).

And did these scattered ones withhold the light of the gospel from the regions where they were dispersed? By no means; the results of their labours, so far as Judea was concerned,

are alluded to in the Epistle to the Galatians, for by the time Paul came upon the scene, some years afterwards, not only were souls saved, but assemblies had been formed* (Gal. i. 22).

Here we find a striking instance of the free action of the Spirit. It has been said that *only an assembly* can receive. But what assembly could possibly have received these converts of the preached word (Acts viii. 4)? We do not in the smallest degree question the responsibilities and the privileges of the assembly, but it would have been an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the Spirit's action for the assembly at Jerusalem to have hindered in Judea and Samaria the gathering together of the saints. Indeed it could not have been done. The same power that had gathered them together at Jerusalem likewise gathered them wherever the gospel bore its fruit in the salvation of souls.

Another remarkable instance of this free and independent action of the Spirit now comes before us in the case of Samaria. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them" (Acts viii. 5). The servant had to do directly with his Master, and God wrought mightily through his means. There was great joy in that city, for "they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," and they made public confession of their faith by baptism.

But in the case of Samaria things were somewhat different from Judea, and hence "when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John" (Acts viii. 14). This was not to raise any opposition to the work which had been so blessedly accomplished, but to prove their hearty fellowship in that which God had wrought. Difficulties might have arisen, and a barrier to fellowship might have been raised owing to the mixed state of Samaria with regard to worship. But God took care that no divided feelings should at this opening stage of the Church's history be allowed to supervene. How blessed would it have been had this state of things continued!

From Acts ix. 31, we learn that the formation of assemblies had been taking place freely throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. It could not be otherwise, for this is what God wished His people to do, namely, to gather together into one place for worship, edification, and prayer, wherever Christ was preached and souls were saved. For Jerusalem to have hindered this would have been to thwart the free and sovereign action of the Spirit of God.

But now came a crucial case, a case calculated to raise every prejudice of the Jewish mind. Up till now the work had been confined to Jews and Jewish proselytes. But God was about to open the door to the Gentiles. The keys of the

kingdom of heaven had been entrusted to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19), and for this reason, even had there been no other, Peter must be the servant chosen for this important part of the work. Philip, who lived at Cæsarea, might be the instrument in the reception of Samaria, but he could not be entrusted with the reception of Cornelius and his household. The keys which at the day of Pentecost Peter had used to open the door to the Jewish believers, he is now called upon by the Lord Himself to use a second time in the admission of Gentiles to the same privileges and blessings as the Jews. For this he was prepared by the remarkable vision of the sheet let down from heaven. Every prejudice of his being both nationally and religiously rose in rebellion at the thought of eating what was common or unclean ; and Gentiles were unclean in the eyes of a Jew. But what God had cleansed was no longer common or unclean. The free and sovereign action of the Spirit of God in connection with the work of the Lord is most marvellously illustrated in this history of Cornelius (Acts x.). God is seen to be working at both ends, preparing Cornelius to receive the message, and preparing Peter to deliver it.

Here Peter has to do directly with his Master and not with his fellow-servants. He receives no commission from man, nor does he seek the permission of Jerusalem in a case where, humanly speaking, this permission might have been

deemed necessary. Had the question of receiving Cornelius been sent up to Jerusalem for consideration, we might well believe that Cornelius never would have been received. Peter acts in obedience to his Master and leaves the results with God. These results, so far as Cornelius and his friends were concerned, were blessed indeed. While the joyful news of peace and forgiveness through a crucified and risen Christ was being proclaimed in their ears, "the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the word" (Acts x. 44).

Now comes the opposition from Jerusalem, and things looked dark indeed. Division was threatened, but blessedly averted. Why should the gracious operation of God's Spirit lead to any such disastrous consequences? And yet there were exercised consciences to be satisfied, and prejudices to be cleared away. And how was this to be done? Surely not by raising a storm of opposition throughout the assemblies of Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee. No, but "Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning and expounded it by order unto them" (Acts xi. 4). The simple and unvarnished account of all that had taken place was enough to convince the apostles and brethren in Judea, as it had already done Peter, that the work was of God. And yet Peter divides the responsibility. It might not have satisfied others to have said, "The Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting," but all difficulty was settled by,

“Moreover these six brethren accompanied me” (Acts xi. 12).

In the mouths then of all these witnesses every word of God's blessed work at Cæsarea was established: “The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said . . . ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?”

It was right that Peter should do all that in his power lay to clear away whatever difficulties lay in the way of a hearty recognition of the work at Cæsarea, but after this rehearsal *of the matter, further hostility on the part of Judea would have been withstanding God.*

Yet another instance in this same chapter must conclude this brief survey of the Spirit's free and independent action in those early days of Christianity. Hitherto none but Peter had admitted Gentile believers, but now those “scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen” extend their labours as far as to Antioch, and there preach to the Grecians (these were Gentiles). “The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord” (Acts xi. 21).

But this does not satisfy Jerusalem—“Then

tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was at Jerusalem." God was working independently of Jerusalem as a centre, teaching the great lesson that in Christ Jesus was neither Jew nor Gentile, but all were one, and that the middle wall of partition was broken down.

Every care was taken by the Lord to preserve the Church from division, and yet nothing must be allowed to hinder the free action of His Spirit.

Barnabas was sent down to Antioch from Jerusalem, but "when he came and had seen the grace of God," he was glad. He immediately falls in line with what God was doing, and he exhorts these young converts to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. *Oh, for more Barnabases!* "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and the result of his visit to Antioch was that "much people was added unto the Lord."

We cannot close this paper without pointing out the blessed evidences of the grace and love of Christ at work in the hearts of the saints both at Jerusalem and Antioch at the end of the chapter (vers. 27-30). The brethren in Judea were in need, for a dearth had visited the land. No resentment is found in the hearts of the disciples at Antioch for the suspicion and coldness of their reception by Jerusalem, for "every man according to his ability determined to send

relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea." No pride prevented the Jewish disciples from accepting help from those Gentile brethren whom they might have been tempted to despise.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

In our next we purpose to continue the subject of the free action of the Spirit in the assembly. May God guide heart and hand aright.

A. H. B.

Jesus Only.

(The loved writer of the following lines "fell asleep in Jesus," 10th January 1905.)

MY Lord ! I look alone to Thee,
In Thee is all my trust ;
I cannot disappointed be
Nor can my *hope* be lost.
Once fixed on Thee through love divine,
There will it firm remain,
The grace which once has made it mine
For ever is the same.

Love wrought with grace when Thou didst call
Me by Thy gracious voice,
And cause my heart to yield Thee all
And make Thy path my choice.
It fell so sweetly on mine ear,
With such entrancing sound—
I only saw one Object dear,
Thyself *alone* I found.

Thou, with a sweet and holy love,
Didst captivate my heart ;
I gazed alone on heaven above,
Where grace gave me a part.
I basked within the golden light
Which shines for ever there,
And often longed that earth's dark night
Was passed—Thy joys to share.

Years now have gone since Thy sweet peace
Filled my once troubled soul,
But love's inscription still I trace
On that which made me whole.
Thy Cross my firm foundation is,
My hope, my rest, alone :
Encircling round it joy and bliss,
Which Thou hast made mine own.

And through those years, whatever way
My homeward footsteps bend ;
In dark or light, by night or day,
Thou still hast been my Friend.
Thy Love—eternal as Thy Name—
Could never change to me ;
Saviour and Lord ! Thou art the same,
I owe *my all* to Thee.

M. B.

Overcoming the World.

RECOLLECTION OF ADDRESS ON 1 JOHN v. 6.

I HAVE just been thinking what a place this is—no other like it. It is our need that brought us to Christ—it is very mean—but the link that binds you to Christ is forged out of the hard metal of your own necessities. Nothing but this can separate us from the world, not the world in its grossness and wickedness that we were in before we were converted, but the best part of the world. The world is nothing to a young convert, how is it that it is not so with us?

Look at the verse that precedes this—"Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" It is a present thing, "believeth;" nothing else will give us the victory over the world. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." It goes right against the current of the world's thoughts. A Messiah that would give riches and glory it would have (and He will make happiness), but He is not going to have you in wealth and riches, beloved, with an unhappy conscience. He came by water and blood, not only by blood. Water is the purifying power of the Word of God.

ROCHFORD HUNT.

Outlines of the Gospel of John.

12. JESUS ON HIGH; BUT CONSCIENCE AND HEART CARED FOR ON EARTH.

(Chap. xiii.)

SUPREME grace bringing light divine and eternal life to the world in the person of the Son revealing the Father has been the subject of the previous chapters. But the Light had been rejected, and Jesus had hid Himself from them. In the five following chapters (xiii.-xvii.), a special character attaching to chapter xvii., the Saviour leaves the world to its darkness and unbelief, and occupies Himself exclusively with His disciples in view of His approaching departure.

The Last Supper was the occasion of these final communications of His love. Rejected here, the time had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father; for otherwise there must be judgment. But His loved ones were still to remain. His love nevertheless delighted uninterruptedly to serve them, and would do so.

It was a moment of imminent importance. The spirit of evil had fully matured his plans, and had found a suitable instrument to use for his purpose. The Father's purpose to put all

things into the hands of Jesus had also ripened to its accomplishment ; and Jesus knew it, as well as the divine character and certainty of His path. The sordid agent of the enemy and the lowly dignity as well as moral grandeur and devotedness of the Man who was Son of the Father and Heir of all things stood strongly contrasted.

Jesus rises from supper and lays aside His garments as one about to serve ; then girding Himself with a towel and pouring water into a basin, He begins to wash His disciples' feet. For though He can no longer be with them, His love devised means to fit them for having part with Him on high in the day of His absence.

He comes to Simon Peter. Unconscious of how entirely he was dependent upon his Master's gracious service, he repels Him. But his strong-willed, independent spirit must submit, as a little child, to that of which he did not and could not know the import until afterwards. The heavenly place of Jesus would shed such a searching light upon the conscience that, except for His unceasing ministry of divine and spiritual things, the defilement incidental to walking in this evil world would quite unfit the soul to enjoy part with Him where He is gone. This Peter did not know ; but not to have part with Jesus was a thought unbearable to him. Not only feet, but hands and head he would have washed.

Ardent in his love, but himself the same head-strong independent man whose self-confidence, ever rushing to extremes, would need breaking down in order to be will-less and trustful in his Master's hands. Washed all over by virtue of the new birth through the Word, only the *cleansing of what comes in contact with this world* is needed. Peter might fully trust his Lord to perfectly perform this service, for He was as unwearied in His love as all-wise in its ministrations.

Meanwhile the disciples could fully understand and appreciate their Lord's lowly grace in stooping to wash their feet as an example for them to imitate. But that He would still be the servant of their needs even in heavenly exaltation was not possible to be understood until He was there. In either case the principle of Christ's service was the same—surrender in the humility of love. But nothing of His pre-eminence and greatness will He surrender if it add importance and effect to His example.

Blessed as well as needed would His service be to every tender conscience and seeking heart ; but among the disciples was one who in spite of grace was wholly outside of it. Few men, of all the myriads of the human race, have been suffered to fill up the sum and possibility of wickedness, as foreshadowed in the Scripture. Judas was one of them. Sordid, and subservient to evil, many had been like him ; but in none

had treachery and ingratitude, calculating craft and selfishness so rankly grown in spite of such confiding grace and tender consideration. None had so counted on divine power to serve selfish ends. He had eaten bread with Him, and had lifted up the heel against Him. But even this, the summit of Satanic ambition and success, should be food for faith; and, so far from extinguishing the divine testimony, should kindle the light of it in a multitude of souls whom Jesus would send.

The thought that such a man should arise from among His loved and called disciples troubled the Saviour's heart. It was as though a link which His love had cherished had been snapped. This was a man whose moral state made void all the activities of grace towards him. Hardened in conscience and in heart, the service and transparency of love only afforded occasion for the perpetration of a baseness without parallel.

One of them should deliver Jesus up. They doubt of whom He speaks. Now at the table there was one of His disciples in the bosom of Jesus—a sweet picture of the soul that, on the contrary, benefits by His service. A tender trusting soul, he had received the feet washing at his Master's hand as an invite to lean upon His breast—such is the boldness that grace gives. It is no longer an exercised conscience and an earnest seeking heart saying, Master, where

dweldest Thou? but a restful conscience and a satisfied heart which has found repose in leaning upon Jesus' breast. John, not Andrew, gives the revelation of light and life and love in the truth of Christ.

Amid the bewilderment of the disciples he alone is near enough to say, Lord, who is it? and to hear that it is he who can receive the highest privilege unmoved. The morsel dipped and given to Judas is but the prelude of Satan's entering into him.

Nothing remains but to reap the results of a plot conceived and consummated with such subtle skill. Every chord of evil in the human heart had been harped upon by a cunning master. Harmonious in evil, if such can be, all worked together to destroy the only perfect Good this world has ever seen. No element was wanting; pride and envy in the priests and Pharisees, love of place and power in Pilate, avarice in Judas, and a crowd wayward and wilful, careless of truth and righteousness. No longer does the Father's hand in providence withhold, and Jesus Himself gives the word, imposing but one condition only: "That thou doest, do quickly."

Special honour or humblest service leave Judas' heart and conscience alike untouched, steeled as they are by Satan's presence in him; and, dismissed by Jesus, he, unfettered for the premeditated evil, immediately goes out, and it

was night. He had eaten the bread of friendship, and received the ministry of truth, but remained unclean in spite of all.

While Judas was still among them the thoughts of Jesus had turned to the needs of His disciples, if they were to have part with Himself. In the loved disciple we see a foreshadowing of the effect of His heavenly ministry on their behalf. Jesus now is free to speak of the Son of man, the Man after God's own heart, of Him in whom the thoughts of God as to the Man of His purposes should have their glorious fulfilment. He has in view the moral glory of the Son of man, in whom all that God Himself is should be glorified. Man glorified and God glorified, at the cross; not so, indeed, that the natural eye must perforce perceive it, but still manifested spiritually and for faith. Obedience, devotedness, perfect confidence and trust even when support was wholly withdrawn, dependent though forsaken; excusing His disciples in their weakness, vindicating God in His holiness, thinking of and providing for the natural claims of others though surrendering everything Himself; claiming not His regal earthly rights, yet confessing His kingship when charged against Him; bearing witness to the truth and its authority before man's judgment-seat become apostate; unflinchingly upholding all that was divine, yet in utter self-abasement pleading for the persecutors in a world whose power was in the hand

of the evil one and the usurper. But feebly can we estimate the moral glories of the Son of man; they were infinite. Love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, but therewith perfect love to the sinner and love to God took Him to the cross. How divinely mingled in Him was every element in man that could be precious to God as answering to His nature!

At the cross, too, God was glorified in all that He is—holiness, righteousness that repels and judges sin even if He who knew it not was made it; indignation and wrath against evil, while in the same act and moment sovereign grace and love to those who had been guilty of it; the curse executed, and at the same time forgiveness for the transgressors; divine majesty and authority that upholds and executes its decrees and the word that pronounced them—a God of truth and without iniquity dealing with all contrary to Himself, but in a sacrifice of propitiation and according to all that He is who is love and light.

But the One at whose cost and in whose person this was done, God shall glorify in Himself straightway, a just and right recognition, as well as proof of the divine excellency of the person and work of Jesus.

Meanwhile He must leave His disciples, nor could they follow Him until the heavenly place was prepared for them by His presence there. But they were to love one another, and thus prove themselves His disciples. Intimacy of

heart with the Master on high, and love to one another below forms the character of a confiding and dependent Christian.

The Free Action of the Spirit.

NO. 2.

IN our last we were dwelling upon the blessed and remarkable work of the Spirit of God at Antioch (Acts xi.). From this point of the narrative the Jewish character of the Assembly ceases ; Jerusalem becomes less prominent.

It was at Antioch, indeed, that the disciples were first called Christians. This name may have been given to them in derision by the world ; but two things are clear—first, the disciples must have had much of Christ about them to have earned the name the world gave them ; and secondly, the Holy Spirit accepts this name, the only name ever given by God to His saints of this dispensation (1 Pet. iv. 16). Never do we find in Scripture such names as Baptist, Congregationalist, Wesleyan, or Calvinist. Why then assume any other name than that which God has given us ?

It has been said, and truly said, that the day of Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. When Christ was on earth the Church had not

yet been formed. The earliest mention of the Church is the well-known passage in Matthew xvi. 18, where the Lord, acknowledging Peter's magnificent testimony to His Person—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—replies, "Upon this rock I will build My Church."

Old Testament saints, then, do not form part of the Church. The Church is the body of Christ (Eph. i. 22, 23), and not until the day of Pentecost was this body formed. During the wonderful interval between the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, the risen Christ announced to His disciples that "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts i. 5). Up till that memorable day, the disciples, though they may have had many interests in common, were nevertheless *units* separate the one from the other, but on and after Pentecost they became *united* to Christ their Head in heaven, and to one another on earth. Let 1 Corinthians xii. be carefully studied, and the importance of this truth will become apparent. It is not, however, our present purpose to enlarge upon the scriptural doctrine of the Church in its various aspects of the Body and the House. It is rather the practical details connected with the gathering together of the saints in the present dispensation that we would seek to bring before our readers.

About seventy years ago God revived many

important truths that had been almost entirely lost by His people in as far as any practical enjoyment thereof was concerned. The thirty-four large volumes, entitled "The Collected Writings of the late J. N. Darby," contain a vast amount of most helpful information on these matters, and go to prove that God was not only restoring to the Church the long-forgotten truths of the coming of the Lord as the true and proper hope of the Church, and also the personality and presence of the Holy Ghost, but they also show that these very truths were resisted and refused by the large bulk of Christians.

Of late years almost every intelligent Christian has come to accept as scriptural the teaching which at first met with such virulent opposition. There is of course room for much further spreading of these truths, and also for much clearer understanding of them; and we cannot forget the solemn words of the Lord Jesus Christ, that "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine," &c. (John vii. 17). God will not give clear light to any of His people who will not act according to the light He gives, "he that hath to him shall be given" (Mark iv. 25). But notwithstanding this, Christians everywhere are beginning to accept the teaching as to the coming of the Lord that met with such hostility seventy years ago. That it might have its practical effect upon them and upon all of us, should be our earnest prayer.

The same may be said as to the truth of the personality and presence of the Holy Ghost. At that time few saw that the Holy Ghost was more than a divine influence for good. Now large numbers of Christians are learning that what was taught seventy years ago with regard to the Spirit, and only accepted by a few, is really the teaching of Scripture. There is still much ignorance, sometimes even much wilfulness, and not a little false doctrine, but that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, and not a mere influence, is becoming largely accepted. For this we can thank God, while we should earnestly seek a walk in accordance with this great and all-important truth.

But while large numbers of earnest Christians are making much of the Spirit as indwelling the individual, and as power for service and testimony of the individual saint, they seem utterly to ignore His presence and action in the Assembly. It is to this side of the truth that we feel led to direct the reader's attention. The present movement in Wales is calling attention to this aspect of the truth, and for this reason we feel it important to examine Scripture upon this point, so that we may be in more complete accord with the revealed mind of God, in more thorough subjection to His Word, and thus be saved from many of the serious dangers which we fear are threatening the unestablished saints of God in that land and elsewhere.

We would now turn to 1 Corinthians xii., and seek help from God as we study this much neglected portion of His Word. At verse 17 of the previous chapter commences the practical instruction connected with the coming together of the people of God in assembly. The prime object of all was to "show the Lord's death till He come." To take the Lord's Supper together is the bounden duty and holy privilege of every Christian. It is a sorrowful consideration that so few ever do so in the way and manner laid down in the Word of God.

The early Christians partook of that holy feast together every first day of the week (Acts xx. 7). They assembled for the purpose without any minister or president over them; they assembled as members of one body, and not as members of different bodies. The Lord's presence at His own table was recognised by them, and the liberty of the Spirit to use whom He would to break the bread or lead the whole Assembly in worship or prayer.

Christians have for long so lost sight of the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost that they think that strange which to the early Christians was the invariable practice. The clerical idea has so taken hold of Christendom that the free action of the Spirit in the Assembly seems a strange and dangerous practice.

We do not make light of the individual responsibility of the servant of the Lord to

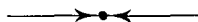
exercise whatever gift he may possess, whether in the gospel to the world or as a teacher in the Assembly. What we plead for is a more simple faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost and His unfettered action in the Assembly of God's people when gathered together.

At the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descended upon the company of the disciples gathered together with one accord in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. Two things followed ; "all the house" where they were sitting was filled with His presence, and each one of them individually was filled with the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit is present in the Assembly as well as indwelling each individual Christian. This is clearly seen in many scenes described in the Acts. Let two instances suffice. When Ananias brought part of the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles, Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" (Acts v. 3). And again: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." God the Holy Ghost was present in the Church, and not only in the individuals composing it. Further, when the Church at Antioch was assembled together, "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). There were several teachers present ; the one man ministry had not then been instituted. Human arrangements and the control of the clergy have their origin in man's

will, whereas what God originally instituted was the guidance of the Holy Ghost and liberty of the Spirit to act by whom He would. Where such liberty is experienced in power, an unbeliever present would fall down and worship God reporting that "God is among (not *in*) you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 25).

(To be continued.)



The Life of Faith.



THOUGHTS ON PHIL. IV.

IN the third chapter we see the spiritual energy which carries the saint onward in the race. This treats more of the power which carries him completely above all the circumstances in which he is; not making him insensible, but able to rejoice in the Lord always.

Nothing more instructive or more humbling than the life of Paul—cut off—shut up in prison at Rome, when he had laboured more abundantly than they all, and the result was "all they in Asia had forsaken him," "all seek their own"; yet Paul can say, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

You will find plenty of trouble, plenty of conflict, for Satan is not bound yet; the more we go on, the more we shall know the opposition. Sorrow in the Church, saints individually

going wrong, ought to press upon our hearts, but we ought to have the power which lifts the heart totally above it; that is, having the secret of faith, walking with Christ; the power, too, to serve others, come what will. Christ, the Man of sorrows, as every one must be in their measure if they follow Him, was the example of this. Who so ready to serve? "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Even Martha, whom He loved, tried to get Mary away from listening to His words. The disciples tried to turn Him aside when He told them of His death. All showed a total misapprehension of what He had come for—"to give His life a ransom for many"—and yet in the midst of it all, He can ask that His disciples may have *His joy* fulfilled in them. If we really have this joy in Christ, we can endure all things for the elect's sake, because we are with Him. He did endure all things for the joy set before Him.

It is not the mere buoyancy of a heart ignorant of the power of evil and of the opposition of Satan—nothing superficial that does not go down into the sorrows. There is a great deal of this superficial joy floating over the surface of things; not that depth which there is, where the power of evil is apprehended . . . but there is real power where the depth of evil and opposition is apprehended, and the power of the Lord is known above it all—a power of good which is paramount to evil where evil still is. Are we

conscious that what is working is the power of good, of God Himself, and that it is paramount to the evil?

True, the evil is flowing on like a mighty stream, which if not stemmed will flow on to the ocean—to judgment, unless the Lord interfere, as He does in goodness and in mercy, or in judgment or a scourge. The character of the world is just this until Satan is bound, that he is its god and its prince; and in the midst of the world where Satan is prince, the power of Christ has come in above it all, and this must be the power applied to us, we ought to feel it and possess it. If my soul is living in the immediate centre of this power, it will feel the pressure of the evil, but it will not be depressed—"not terrified by your adversaries."

The practical daily supplies of strength depend on the heart being with Him who has overcome, and who has all power on earth and in heaven. Then we know the sure resting-place in Himself which nothing can touch,—as it says, "labouring to enter into His rest." The heart with Him who is in rest above all the evil, has a power which nothing can reach, and the first mark of this power when the tide of evil is present is "patience," that which endures, better than a miracle. Verse 3 refers to the graciousness we spoke of on a former occasion, this power keeps the heart free for others. Look at Paul, a man whose heart is occupied with the whole Church,

and yet he can think of every detail of a slave with his master, as if there was but a single individual to think of,—his affections were fresh for each.

“True yoke-fellow,” though all had forsaken him, all sought their own, it did not hinder the outgoing of his heart. Are our hearts living enough with Christ to think of a brother thus? Paul says, “My heart is so with Christ, in the consciousness of what it is to be in the Book of Life, that when I think of a brother, it is as one, whose name is in the Book of Life!” Again, he says, “I stand in doubt of you”; but in the next chapter, “I have confidence in you through the Lord,” bringing in the power which was above the evil—going through the valley of Baca, it was turned into a well.

The history of the apostle is very important in connection with this. Rejoice in the Lord always, certainly it could not be in circumstances, for he was a prisoner chained between two soldiers, cast more than ever upon the Lord. The Lord was very gracious to him, but he learned, come what will, to rejoice not in the prosperity of his work, or in anything else, but in the Lord alway. What holier, deeper, truer feeling is got in these trials, for there the stability, the certainty, the nearness, and the power of Christ are learnt! Just as in Psalm xxxiv.: “I will bless the Lord *at all times*: His praise shall be *continually* in my mouth.” Why?

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles." He had been in trouble, and had been heard when in trouble.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He restoreth my soul, He hath spread a table before me in the midst of mine enemies. My cup runneth over."

If circumstances come between our hearts and God we are powerless. If Christ is nearer, circumstances will not hinder our joy in God. Paul standing before Agrippa says, "I would to God that you were"—Christians? No! but—"such as I am." There is a happy man, so conscious of the joy he had in Christ, so full of the love of Christ that he could wish you were as he was. It was the heart's complete eternal happiness in Christ. The trials—trials even in the Church only carried him to Christ. Are we conscious of this blessedness in Christ, so that we can say to others—I would ye were as I am?

Do you say, only an apostle can say this? It is what every Christian, old and young, is called to. The only difference is that a young Christian rejoices in himself; the fathers more simply in Christ. They have got to know Christ, a personal matured acquaintance with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, they rejoice in intimacy with Him. The young rejoice in the first blush of feeling, and what God has given all good and true; but in the pull going through the world we find

that there is nothing positively to rejoice in but Christ.

The whole thing consists in that nearness to Christ, that when the evil springs up, and the power of Satan is present, we have to do with Him who destroyed him who had the power of death, with Him who hath gotten Him the victory. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He starts us with this testimony, having gone Himself into a place where evil cannot reach, and we have got Him *there*, the immovable source of blessing, and we rejoice in Him there. It is an immovable place! He has not taken us out of the world governed by Satan's power, but He keeps us from the evil—left in this world where evil is, to be kept from it; because we are not of the world, even as He is not of the world.

Speaking of saints running the race, they are to look off unto Jesus, who has begun and run the whole course, met the power of Satan at the beginning and at the end, tempted in all points; but He has overcome and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high—the victory won. We are to enjoy Him now high above and independent of the things we are passing through. He is out of the evil, has gone through the evil, and has overcome the evil, and we are with Him.

Don't let any present circumstances occupy you, don't look away from Him to them, but rejoice, not in yourself in any way, but in Him—Christ always. You must be with Him because

He alone is out of the evil and the centre of good, and what is seen in you down here will be your "moderation." Suppose I am happy in Christ, am I looking for my rights down here in this world? Christ had none! Oh no, my treasure is elsewhere. I am going out of this world, I can wait for my rights until Christ has His. Let us be weaned from things down here, let us pass through the world as weaned children, Christ having passed through it, leaving all to go its own way. In the presence of unrighteousness the spirit is apt to rise; but let us cultivate the subduedness that yields. The Samaritans would not receive Him, and He turns aside into another village. Oh, what a lesson that is. Because He had steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, the half-hearted would not receive Him—because He was doing the very thing that marked His blessedness. And so it will be with you, if you set your face to go to Jerusalem, you won't be received by them that are half-hearted. The religiously half-hearted will not want you, if you set your face steadfastly to go right.

But then the Lord is at hand. He has taught us to wait for Him, to be always as men who wait for their Lord.

"Be careful for nothing;" glory is better than cares. We have cares and sorrows, true, and we should have more if we were living more as servants amid the sorrows of this world, not indifferent; Christ was not that, but there is a

getting away from Christ to my own heart, a tendency to make one anxious even in caring for others. But I must go and tell God, and this carries me so above the cares that I can rejoice in God. And what does God give to the heart that has given all the cares to Him? An answer? No! (though we know He does answer), but His peace: "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

There is no indifference, carelessness, or coldness, but earnest entreaty and with thanksgiving. A man takes up thanksgiving reckoning upon God, goes with prayer and supplication, and the soul having left all with God feels His hand *under* the trouble, and can say it is His affair, not mine. He is a happy man, going through this world in happy fellowship with Christ, raised by the Spirit of God above his inward sorrows and outward circumstances; in the power of the Spirit for inward joy, his affections are free to go out to the brethren—his heart lives in the things in which Christ's heart would have lived if He were here. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true," &c. Hearts free to find the good in people. Jesus could find a bit of grace in a poor soul, His heart ever ready to enjoy it. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "Mary has chosen that good part." "An Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile." There is always this perception when the heart is kept free to enjoy

the fruits of the Spirit—occupied with what is good.

You cannot touch pitch without being defiled, and there is a great deal of pitch in these days. Thinking with the world, talking like the world, the heart gets into the colour of it: it is not Christ.

The heart set free lives in the things Christ's heart delights in. Oh! it makes such a difference, living in the atmosphere where Christ's heart dwells, instead of being dragged after a thousand things.

Now we have the "God of peace." Those things which ye have both heard and seen in me do, and the God of peace shall be with you; not only His peace as in verse 7, but Himself with you. What blessedness in that name God constantly gives Himself. He is never called the God of joy. Joy is an up and down thing that may be disturbed. There may be cause of joy, and trouble may hinder the heart enjoying it. Peace is what nothing can disturb, it is the effect of a full and perfect work. "He has made peace through the blood of His cross." Why? Because He has gone through everything that was contrary to God and borne the wrath (the very opposite of peace) of God. The instant He is risen He comes into their midst and says, "Peace."

Now to us God takes this wondrously blessed name—"God of peace." Have your hearts got that peace? If God rises up with every attri-

bute that He has, can He see a thing to disturb it—to disturb Him? “You hath He reconciled.” Things around are not reconciled, but I can say before God, “I am in the light as God is in the light,” because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin. He sets me in that peace which nothing can disturb. “Your peace shall flow like a river.” Faith is needed to rejoice always. The feet going where God would have them to go, not avoiding evil merely, but always walking where He would lead in every detail of life—in your habits and conversation. Nothing tests the condition of soul more than everyday habits.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” It is a different thing to say, Christ strengthens me, and to say, I can do all things. Paul had learned it. Blessed thing to find Christ was sufficient for him. He had learned to be abased and to abound. The latter more difficult, for abundance has the tendency to draw away the heart from the Lord. He had kept him from that mire. If he had want, he had Christ’s abundance. It was Christ. This is not joy in circumstances, but moral power above circumstances. He had learned it, looking at Christ all through, finding it out all the way along. It was true when he began his course, but Paul did not know it then as he did at the end when he could speak of it to others as that which he had learned. He could not say, “I

can," if he had not found it all the way along. Just as he could say, "My God"—known in all sorts of circumstances.

"My God shall supply all your need." I know Him, and if you ask me according to what measure? It is according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I guarantee all that to you. Paul found that all sought their own; but it only enabled him to say more completely "My God."

What reality in the life of faith that walks in secret with God—poor hands we are at it! It gets that which no world can touch, no Satan can rob of; and the trials that come out in that path, only prove us superior through the power of His grace. The stream only proves that His power is superior to it.

J. N. D.



The Coming of the Lord.

No. 2.



WE are writing specially for those to whom this truth is more or less unknown. For, strange as it may appear, though the Scriptures from one end to the other abound with references thereto, the teachers of Christendom have allowed it to drop out almost entirely from their testimony. So much is this the case that when allusion is made to the subject, the strangest

misconceptions are found to exist as to what is implied by the words "the coming of the Lord."

What it is not.

Some imagine that the words are to be taken as referring to death. Let this thought be banished from our readers' minds. The Scriptures speak in numberless passages of the coming of the Lord, in the various aspects of this great event that will, God willing, pass under our notice in these pages. But in none of these is death the subject.

No, the coming of the Lord and death are two totally different things. True, they may either of them take place at any moment. Before the writer has time to lay down his pen, before the reader has time to turn over the page, death might overtake the one or the other. But besides this, before even death has time to overtake us, the coming of the Lord might take place; if saved, we should then be caught up into heaven without dying (1 Thess. iv.); if unsaved, left behind for the awful judgment that will fall upon the living at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in flaming fire (2 Thess. i.). But these two things, death and the coming of the Lord, are totally distinct, though either might take place at any moment.

Again, there are others who imagine that by the coming of the Lord is meant the end of the

world. This is not so at all. After the Lord has come and taken His people home to glory, the world will continue its course, evil will increase and apostasy become complete. The Lord will then appear to execute judgment; after that will take place the millennial reign of Christ, so that the end of the world as it is now physically constituted cannot take place until more than a thousand years after the coming of the Lord for His people.

Every Christian ought to be waiting for Christ.

Many seem to think that the coming of the Lord is the special doctrine of only a few peculiar Christians. So far from this, we affirm that it is the bounden duty as well as the holy privilege of every Christian to be waiting for Christ. Three things are said about it in the Scriptures.

1. The coming of the Lord is a *comforting* hope to the child of God (1 Thess. iv. 18). In a world where death is constantly at work the Christian's circle is often broken; loved Christian friends are removed. But the sorrow that overwhelms the world when death rudely snaps the bond of human friendship should never take possession of the Christian's heart, for he has the comforting hope that before he has time to lay the precious dust in the grave, the Lord may

come, and in a moment saints whom death has parted for a time shall be reunited in eternal bliss.

2. The coming of the Lord is a *blessed* hope. In a scene where ungodliness and worldly lusts abound, where the Christian himself is called upon to be ever on the watch lest the spirit of that world overtake him and swamp him so far as his happiness, his usefulness, and his testimony are concerned; here where prayerful energy needs always to be in exercise that he might "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," what encouragement is derived from that blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ! Soon the battle will be over, and we shall see Him "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (or a people of His own possession), "zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 11-15).

3. The coming of the Lord is a *purifying* hope. Believers are already the children of God. The world knows them not, for it knew not their Master. He was misunderstood, so are they; He was despised, so are they; He was hated, so oftentimes are they. Very far indeed is our measure of all this from His. But presently we shall be perfectly like Him. When He shall appear in glory we shall be like Him—perfectly like Him—for we shall see Him as He is. Having

this hope then in Him, we purify ourselves, even as He is pure (1 John iii. 1-4).

The coming of the Lord is a comforting hope, a blessed hope, and a purifying hope. Every Christian, then, ought to be waiting for Christ.

Three Estimates of Christ.

1. THE WORLD'S ESTIMATE.

(Ps. lxxix. 12.)

WHEN He, the Lord of glory, came,
Earth's proud ones spake against His name ;
While men of low degree,
In dens of vice where drunkards throng,
Made Him the theme of ribald song
And jest in revelry.

2. THE SAINT'S ESTIMATE.

(Cant. v. 16.)

When He, the Saviour of mankind,
Appears, His poor lost sheep to find,
And claim me for His own ;
His beauty quite transports my gaze,
Words are too mean to tell His praise,
That wholly lovely One !

3. GOD'S ESTIMATE.

(Matt. iii. 17 ; Isa. xlii. 1, li. 13 ; Heb. i. 3.)

What says the Father of the Son ?
" My well-beloved, My only One,
In whom is My delight ;
My servant, Mine elect is He,
Extolled, exalted He shall be,
In glory none so bright."

Mary of Bethany.

THE Lord's ministry had been rejected in this chapter (Matt. xxvi. 1-16). All that wonderful display of grace, and gentleness, and love, and power, had been unappreciated. What a tale it tells of the heart! He was a lonely Saviour, lonely and unappreciated save by this poor woman. Her heart had been drawn to Him before; she had sat at His feet and heard His word—there was much in that. She had known the tenderness of His heart, and His power in the case of her brother, how He could raise the putrid body to life again—resurrection life; and there He was before her in resurrection.

She was not intelligent, but she acted instinctively. Her heart entered into the path the Saviour was going to take. She *gave her all*, and another was prepared *to sell Him*. It is a terrible picture, a gross and shocking picture, of the depravity of the heart. Judas was so near the path, but he never was in it. It is shocking, but, beloved, do we never do the same in less measure when we give up Christ as the object of the soul for some lesser consideration? When a soul is struggling to give up the world the Lord has sympathy with it, but when it is seeking to have more of the world, there is no sympathy.

We often meditate over this scripture, but it

always has something fresh for our souls, because it presents Christ to the heart. We may not be very intelligent, but it is the heart He wants. "Waste!" say the disciples, but He appreciates this. He says, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

ROCHFORD HUNT.

The Free Action of the Spirit.

No. 3.

BUT there was need of instruction in those days on this very subject of "spiritual manifestations" (1 Cor. xii. 1), for the heathen were familiar with displays of excitement through demoniacal possession. There were evil spirits as well as the Spirit of God; so here at the very threshold of our inquiry, we are afforded a conclusive test to which all pretensions to spiritual guidance must be submitted. This test has a double application. In the first place, "no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed" (1 Cor. xii. 3). From this it is evident that the Spirit of God will never lead any one to speak slightingly of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost is here

to glorify Christ (John xvi. 14), and therefore whatever in the smallest degree robs Him of His glory cannot be the prompting or the leading of the Holy Ghost.

But in the second place, wherever there is a true confession of Christ, wherever there is a bowing of heart and conscience to Jesus as Lord, there we are entitled to recognise the action and leading of the Holy Ghost. There may be much ignorance of other things, but "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

The importance of such a verse cannot be overestimated. How needful this crucial test was for the saints in those days will be recognised by the fact that more than thirty years after the apostle John urged it home to the consciences of his fellow-believers (1 John iv. 1-3). It is as needful for us to-day, *never more so*.

But this being recognised: the person of the Lord Jesus being unequivocally owned and acknowledged by the assembly of God's people, room must be left and liberty given to the free and unfettered action of the Holy Ghost. Where this is not the case, where a man is looked to as president or leader, let him be the very best of men, the gathering cannot be recognised as the coming together of the assembly of God in accordance with the revealed Word of God. It may be an assembly of saints, but it lacks the special characteristic of the

assembly of God, namely, an assembly where "God is among you of a truth."

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Men would concentrate all the different gifts in *one man*, and call him the clergyman or the minister, but it is not so revealed in Scripture. "Diversities of gifts"—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers—"but the same Spirit"; "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." Where amidst all the machinery of Christendom is this seen carried out in actual practice?

When God revived the testimony as to the Spirit seventy years ago, bringing to light afresh the long forgotten truth of the Church of God, its *unity* as the body of Christ, its *responsibility* as the house of God, and its true *hope* as the Bride of Christ, many saints were gathered together and experienced the power and the joy of being thus guided in their assemblies for prayer, worship, and edification. They recognised in a practical manner the truth of the words, that "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20), and the leading and liberty of the Spirit in contrast to the dead formality of human arrangement gave immense freshness and power to their meetings.

This does not in the smallest degree lessen the importance of the exercise of any individual gift the Lord may have given to His people.

All are not gifted as preachers of the gospel, or teachers of the saints, and for any to attempt to do what they are not called to by the Lord, or qualified to do by having received a gift, can only result in confusion and failure. We must not confound the *gift* of the Spirit, and the *gifts* of the Spirit. Whereas every Christian has received the gift of the Holy Ghost and is indwelt by the Spirit, some only are gifted by the Spirit. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. . . . Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" &c. (1 Cor. xii. 28-31.

If verses 7 and 11 of this same chapter be quoted as implying that every man in the assembly possesses some gift, we reply that the language there used does not involve any such conclusion. The emphasis in verse 7 should be laid on the word "*profit*." Wherever a gift or manifestation of the Spirit has been given, it is for the profit of the hearers and not for the exaltation of the speaker. This was a most important principle, for at Corinth many were gifted with the gift of tongues, and the danger was that they should use this gift for their own glorification and not for the edification of the Church. This will come before us more fully presently.

In verse 11 the emphasis should be laid on the clause "severally as He will;" that is to say, the one Spirit that indwells every Christian divides His gifts severally or separately in

accordance with His own sovereign will. This strikes at the root of the whole "one man ministry" idea. Evangelists, pastors, teachers are separate gifts; they are not concentrated in one man, but divided separately to different individuals according to God's own will.

While all this is true, there is another side to the question which must not be forgotten, especially in these days of weakness and confusion. "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (I Cor. xii. 31). Again, "Desire spiritual gifts" (I Cor. xiv. 1). And again, "Covet to prophesy" (I Cor. xiv. 39). Let none be disheartened. We would earnestly encourage all our young brethren to diligent prayer that whatever ability may be latent, whatever gift may be possessed, though it may appear small, it may be *stirred up*. Diligence is required; diligence in prayer, diligence in the study of the Word, diligence in communion with the Lord. Avail yourselves of whatever helps God may put in your way; "Having then gifts differing"—notice again the *different* gifts—"according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith"—don't attempt anything beyond your faith, though you may well pray, "Lord, increase our faith"—; "or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching," &c. (Rom. xii. 6-8).

What an exhortation have we here to diligence in the stirring up of the gifts. We be-

lieve that attention to this is greatly called for. Let no young men be above learning from those who have been in the work before them, and let the older ones lay themselves out to help and encourage the younger. Never shall we forget the help and encouragement received from an old evangelist now with the Lord, when first attempting gospel work.

Again let us say to our younger brethren: Begin young; you cannot suddenly develop a gift at thirty, forty, or fifty years of age. In writing this we are, of course, addressing ourselves to those who have been early converted. The grace of God may call a man out of his sins and distance when far advanced in life, and may set him to work at once; but for a young Christian to waste his best days in sloth and worldly pleasure is like wrapping up his talent in a napkin,—it is damaging to himself and dishonouring to the Saviour and Lord to whom he owes everything.

But let us imagine a feeble little company of the Lord's people. They may possess no gifts, yet a more excellent way is before them. In 1 Corinthians xiii. we are shown what never fails. Love never fails. Gifts of power may exist, but without love they are valueless, nothing but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Where a spirit of love exists, though there may be no gifts, sinners will be sought for, saints comforted, gatherings cemented together and increased.

Where gifts exist without love, the conversion of sinners will be neglected, saints will be harassed and distracted, gatherings scattered and broken up.

"Love never faileth." Let us heed the aged apostle John's words: "Beloved, let us love one another." "Beloved, we ought also to love one another." "And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John iv. 7, 11, 21). Brotherly love is not only an exhortation but a command.

(To be continued.)

Outlines of the Gospel of John.

13. THE PLACE IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE, AND PROVISION FOR THE WAY THERE.

(Chap. xiv.)

AT the close of the previous chapter Peter, the pattern of an impulsive, independent spirit, had raised the question, Lord, where goest Thou? and eagerly espousing his Master's cause, with thoughts limited entirely to this world, he insists, Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee. The Lord in reply foretells his fall, but immediately proceeds (chap. xiv.) to guard against a repeti-

tion of it, and to make every provision] for His own in this world between the time of His departure and His return.

The character which the Lord here portrays for His disciples is the converse of Peter's strong self-confidence. It is that of the little child, distressed at losing the fostering care of its protector, feeling and fearing orphanhood. To such the Lord addresses His comforts and instruction, called forth by the gentle, doubting Thomas,* and Philip, versed in Moses and the prophets, but slow to apprehend the Father.

In spite of His absence they were not to be troubled, but to believe on Him unseen, as they did on God. An unseen, heavenly, and exalted Christ should distinguish Christianity. Moreover, there was a place prepared for them in His Father's house by His own presence there in manhood; for they were not to remain always in this world of trial. Nor need they doubt at all of reaching there. He would Himself come again to receive them, so that where He was they might also be—a place and path well known to them.

This calls forth the inquiry of Thomas—Lord, we know not where Thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus was the way, and the truth, and the life, as they should have known.

But in their faith there was a still more serious

* Observe that Thomas speaks of dying "with" Him, Peter of dying "for" Him.

defect. They had not known the Father, because they had not properly known Jesus ; for no one comes to the Father except by Him. Yet they had truly believed on Him ; and, anticipating the gracious enlightenment of the Spirit, Jesus could say they knew the Father henceforth and had seen Him, though not yet at home in the Father's house.

But if Peter's vigour, and the reasoning, inquiring mind of Thomas are alike worthless in the things of Christ, so also is the Jewish materialism of Philip. He says, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. But had they not known Jesus, who had been so long with them, and was one in nature with the Father in the unity of the divine Being, and had in person, as the Son, perfectly declared Him? His words were not from Himself, and His works were done by the Father who dwelt in Him—evidence sufficient in themselves for faith of the oneness in nature and communion of the Father and the Son. Believing thus on Him they would not have need of human will, nor to seek power elsewhere, nor find it in the law ; the name of Jesus would be all sufficient for greater works than even He had done, because He was going to the Father. No longer humbled, man in His person would be in the highest place ; and according to the place of the Son should be the glory of the Father. He would do whatever they asked in His name.

The name of Jesus should be the source of these greater works, not their holiness or piety ; and the Spirit of truth, whom the Father would send in His name, would undertake for them in their desolate condition, and be the divine Source abiding in and with them, of every comfort and support. No longer would their resource be the spirit of man energising the will of the flesh, for this would not be the Spirit of truth, but of error.

But if they loved Him, as no doubt they did, they must show it by obedience. It is the condition in which all this blessing is enjoyed. And Jesus, though no longer able to remain with them on earth, as the Spirit was, would nevertheless come spiritually to them, and shed the sense of His protecting, considerate love abroad in their hearts. He would not leave them orphans, sad and bereaved, which otherwise must have been their state.

Spiritually they should see Him, though gone out of the world ; for He was the supreme Source of their life, which was a derived and dependent one. But living thus in Him, and He in them, they should participate in His relationship and communion with the Father, not merely as here on earth, but also as gone up on high.

Obedience and love were the moral characteristics of this life in them ; and obedience to Jesus is the proof of loving Him. The Father loves, and the Son would also love and manifest Himself to him who obeys. It is the path in

which this blessed intercourse of love is known—not power in man to deserve love, but submission to the control of the One who is loved.

But Judas—not the traitor—has another difficulty. Accustomed to an outward manifestation, blessed and perfect as that was, he had no apprehension of that which was inward, apart from the things of time and sense, proceeding purely from a divine source, and having in view things absolutely divine. He asks, How could He manifest Himself to the disciples and not to the world?

Obedience is still the key which unlocks the difficulty. To obey is the practical effect of love; but here it is the “word,” not merely the “commandments” of Jesus. Love consults the inclinations, thoughts, perhaps unexpressed, anticipates the desires of its object; it pays attention to, and seeks acquaintance with, His mind and will, and thus keeps His word. Such the Father will love, and both Father and Son will dwell with him.

Instead, therefore, of being governed by natural relationships and the thoughts and presence of men, the soul lives in the sense of the Father's love and the Son's. This, graciously and permanently given, forms the character and influences the thoughts. One is governed by the “word” of Jesus, who dwells in the Father and the Father in Him, and whose mind is understood and consulted. This is practically

the presence of the Father and the Son, which the soul spiritually enjoys through the Spirit.

On the other hand, disobedience to Christ proves that there is no love to Him in the soul, and deprives it of all true Christian blessing ; for the word of Jesus was that of the Father who sent Him.

But in His absence the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His name, so that the disciples should not be left to their own memories in testifying to the sayings of Jesus. Thus the power of the world and man as such is entirely set aside in Christian things, and the practical life of the believer proceeds morally from grace received from the Father and the Son, and as energised by the Spirit, whom the world can neither receive, nor know, nor see. To the apostles, as vessels of inspiration, the Spirit would teach all things, and bring to their remembrance what Jesus had said to them.

Though Jesus was going away, He would leave peace with them—the abiding result of His accomplished work and service here below for His Father's glory—an inestimable treasure in a world of sin and trouble, away from God. No uncertainty, no more conflict with flesh and blood, as Peter thought—the believer in Jesus already belongs to another scene, where no sin, nor evil, nor enemy can ever come.

But more, His own peace He gave to them. This sorrowful world He had traversed, feeling

as no other did its state, not occupied with its glory, or seeking to possess it, but ever meeting its woes with mercy and doing good, delivering all that were under the power of the devil. Weeping over its calamities, and the helpless ruin of sin, He groaned, was troubled, sighed, and wept; but never was His peace disturbed. He felt everything as it affected God and man, for He was God and man in one person, but ever unmoved as to His path and purpose, and His powers to accomplish it. Even in view of the cross, where He endured every sorrow that the Son in manhood could sustain, His one thought was, "Father, glorify Thy name." His peace was perfect and unruffled. This He now gives to them.

Providing these for them in the meanwhile, the heart of the Saviour did not rest there. He was indeed going away, but was coming again; and in the intervening time they should rejoice that He at least, who had suffered so much for them and done so much, was gone to the Father. There all was the repose of eternal love, according to the infinite joy and perfection of the relationships of the Deity itself. There He was with the One who was greater than Himself; for never had the Father left the form of essential Deity, whereas the Son had become man. The glory of the eternal counsels shone there—the thoughts that ever filled the bosom of the Father and the Son. It was not like this poor

world, the place of the creature's failure, of the enemy's power, and of the ways and judgment and work of God. The disciples were, however, still left here for a time ; and all He had said was to confirm and give occasion to their faith. The world would remain unchanged ; the ruler of it was coming, but would find in Jesus, the dependent, obedient One, no foot-hold for the exercise of his power, nor response to his wiles. All would furnish opportunity only to manifest the Son's love and obedience to the Father.

The Great Open Meeting of Christianity.

IN order to enjoy and retain spiritual vitality, freshness, fervour, and power, we require to be kept in living contact with Christ Himself, and this can be done only as our minds are freshly nourished by the Holy Ghost with the truths of the Holy Scriptures.

If we study the Word with prayer, faith, and dependence, and get the knowledge of Christ in His person, life, death, Headship, and glory, we shall have the elements of vitality and freshness within our reach ; but in the Lord's Supper we are brought very solemnly in contact with

Christ in His death, and thereby the desires and affections are drawn forth towards Him in a manner and with an intensity of fervour and spiritual enjoyment that will lead to the happy and spontaneous outflow of thanksgiving, adoration, and praise.

If the open meeting of the Apostolic Church, with the Lord's Supper as its centre, were restored, it would be the best means for conserving a revived Christianity, and deepening the fervour and spirituality of the saints. Young Christians would be mightily helped if they found themselves every Lord's Day in the midst of an assembly of believers, where the one object before them was Christ Himself in His dying love.

In order to give those who are young in the divine life an inkling of the worship-meeting of primitive times, we have drawn the following plain principles from the Word of God, and we believe they are such as they will never need to unlearn, for they are things which are undoubtedly according to the Scriptures:—

I. That the coming together of believers every Lord's Day, for partaking of the Lord's Supper, and for praising, thanking, and worshipping God, should hold a prominent place in the assembly. The full, proper worship of the Church of God is found in Scripture connected with remembering the Lord's death (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 17-34; Heb. x 25).

II. That faith in the Lord Jesus forms the only ground for being at the Lord's table ; and while all believers should be there, due precaution should be taken to keep back the unconverted—and even Christians who are not walking in holiness, as Christians ought (1 Cor. v.).

III. That, as the Lord's Supper is a disciples' feast, and not a sacrifice, there is no place for any one acting as priest, either as to offering sacrifice or mediating for others. Christ Himself presided at the institution of the Supper, and there is not a line in Scripture informing us that He has given up that place, or to warrant any one to presume to occupy it. When assembled "*to His name*" as His saints are now, while in *bodily* presence He is absent, faith hears His voice saying, "*There am I in the midst of them ;*" 'take it and divide it amongst yourselves ;' 'I am your Master, all ye are brethren.'" "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26).

IV. That, as we read of the Pentecostal saints, that they (1) continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine ; and (2) fellowship ; and (3) in breaking of bread ; and (4) in prayers (Acts ii. 42)—Christians who are not abiding in all these four elements of Christian profession lay themselves open to the charge of not walking in truth, and hence to the action of brotherly admonition ; and they should be dealt with lovingly

and faithfully, for the glory of Christ and their own good ; and none but believers, and believers assembling regularly at the Lord's table, are fit persons to take any part in the worship of God in the assemblies of His saints.

V. That the gathering at the Lord's table is not an assembling of Christians for the sake of one another, but for the Lord Jesus, to confess Christ, show forth His death, have their hearts filled with Him, and "worship the Father in spirit and in truth." It is to Christ only, and not to Christians, we are gathered, and where He is in the true holiest, and not to any earthly Zion ; and our great aim should be to have Christ uppermost in all our hearts, and not to be thinking of ourselves or of one another ; far less judging whether this one or that one ought to be present at the table. (That should be done and settled beforehand.)

VI. That, although there should be freedom of action for the Holy Ghost using whom He will in doing anything at the Lord's table, yet the table is not a place for confession of sins, supplication for mercies, or for preaching or teaching ; but for worship, thanksgiving, adoration, and praise, and all the teaching that would seem proper on such an occasion, is that which would unfold simply to the eye of faith the person and work of Christ, the graces and glories, the death and dying love of our adorable Lord Jesus. Man should be hidden ; Christ alone appear. We want to be

occupied with Him alone at His table, and not with our own edification ; and all that would lead on our hearts to praise Him more would be in place ; all else, even though precious truth, would generally be found to be an intrusion at the Lord's table. Christ is our exclusive Centre of gathering—Christ our one object when at His table. We come together to meet with Him who says, "Where two or three are gathered together in *My name*, there am I in the midst of them." The worship of God, presented by a "holy priesthood, who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5), is the great thing there, though, as a result, nourishment is granted to the saints for growing up into Christ in all things (Eph. iv. 11-14).

VII. In coming to the Lord's table, and there breaking with others that "*one loaf*," we manifest our membership in "*the body of Christ*," we by no means witness to our own special association (as if the Lord's table were the table of a party with some distinctive name), but to the general truth of the oneness of the body of Christ ; and our association in the breaking of bread is the outward expression of this blessed reality. Meeting thus, saints assemble on ground that admits of all believers, gathered to Christ alone, being there ; and if they are not, they could not then say that any human barriers had been erected to prevent them.

There is no membership but of Christ, for "we

are members of His body" (Eph. v. 30)—"members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15); and the Holy Scriptures speak of no other membership, unless it be that which springs out of this—"members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25); and, therefore, there can be no human membership of anything on earth as a term of communion at the Lord's table; but saints assemble simply on the ground of being constituents of a unity already formed, and existing—"the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. iv. 3)—and all Christ's members are free to come together for the breaking of bread; only they must satisfy the assembly that they are Christ's; for although grace gathers us to Christ, holiness must be preserved; for the Church is an "habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22); and to admit of evil were a denial of Christ in His person and of the whole work accomplished in His death, as well as of the presence of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus is the "Holy One"! and "let him that nameth the name of the *Lord depart from iniquity*" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

It will, therefore, appear clear that the unsaved, however religious, and obviously those who are frequenting theatres, races, circuses, operas, dancings, public-houses, or making companions of the ungodly, or who are living loosely in any way, are excluded by the Holy Ghost in the Holy Scriptures from the fellowship of the Church of God (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

All God's children in any given place, if walk-

ing in holiness, ought to be present together at the Lord's table every Lord's Day, and none but children of God should be at the table, although unsaved persons may be present in the place of meeting as spectators and hearers (1 Cor. xiv. 14-18).

The present object of Christ's death is not fully attained, unless we COME TOGETHER "*on the first day of the week to break bread*" (Acts xx. 7), for He died "that He should gather together in one the children of God" (John xi. 52). *Coming together* for breaking of bread, worship, and mutual edification, is mentioned seven times in 1 Corinthians xi. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34, xiv. 23, 26.

Reading the Bible at home, or hearing a lecture or sermon, as a substitute for the worship of the Church is unscriptural. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. x. 25).

The revival of God's work is carried forward to its proper goal only when it leads us to worship Him in accordance with His own principles (as we have indicated them in the foregoing propositions); for His provisions of grace are surely not intended to terminate with the blessing of the creature, but to lead to the glory of the Creator and the exaltation of the all-glorious name of our Saviour-God. The great awakening at Pentecost resulted in an incorporative unity, for "*all that believed were together,*" "and they

continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42-44); and an awakening that is really of the Lord, and that will continue, will always lead, if not interfered with, to a similar issue.

In the apostles' time the young converts were not sent back either to the heathen temples or the Jewish synagogues, to be exposed to the idolatrous teaching and influence of the priests of heathenism, or to the Judaising teaching and influence of the scribes and rabbis of Judaism; but, as divinely called out saints, they were diligently gathered together in an assembly by themselves as soon as they were converted; and—being all live coals—when collected into one, they made a bright warm fire, which gave spiritual light and heat to one another and to the world around them; and from this holy divine society of the one "Church of the living God," as their centre and home, they went out, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to spread the knowledge of the saving name of Jesus; and they were marvellously blessed in the conversion of souls.

The great open meeting of all believers for true and Spirit-led worship, mutual edification, and the observance of the Lord's Supper, having fallen into desuetude throughout Christendom, we plead for its restoration in the name of our dishonoured Lord, and on behalf of His much-

injured saints. Meetings for evangelists preaching the gospel to the world, and meetings for true and Spirit-taught ministers teaching the saints, are right; but it is wrong to omit the great scriptural meeting of apostolic times, the assembling of the Church, as such, "*on the first day of the week*," for the breaking of bread and the worship of God.

We are happy to find an attempt * being made at present towards having an *open meeting* among believers on all other days save the Lord's Day: but it seems strange to stop it on that day, seeing that *the great open meeting of Christianity*, according to Scripture, is the assembling of the saints "ON THE FIRST DAY of the week" for the breaking of bread and the worship of God; and no human substitute for it will nourish and perpetuate the spiritual vitality of the children of God. Let all believers, renouncing sectarian practices and human expediency, and acting in the spirit of "*love to all saints*," and on the ground of the divine principle of being "*members of Christ*," "come together" for worship on the divine footing of being of the "one body" of Christ, and they will verify His promise—"there am I in the midst of them."

Our meaning will be made plain if you bring our modern (so-called) churches face to face

* This refers to the time of great awakening on the occasion of the late D. L. Moody's first visit to Scotland, about thirty years ago.—ED.

with the First Epistle to the Corinthians, for they will there see an assembling of the saints in the unity and freedom of the *communion* of the Holy Ghost which finds no counterpart within their limits.*

* We refer Christian teachers to Lange's Commentary to see that we are not singular in expressing ourselves thus. In Vol. VI. N.T., on 1 Corinthians, p. 303, we find the following :—" *Primitive Christian Worship*.—Of this, as observed at Corinth, we have a vivid picture afforded us in this chapter xiv. Indeed, it is the only one extant of the kind giving us a clear and instructive glimpse into the nature and working of Church life in those early times. The first thing that strikes us is the absence of all fixed order. No hint is given of the superintendence of any individual or class of persons regulating the services in the Church assemblies—even where the mention of such would most naturally be made—as in the case of the disorders spoken of in verses 26-34. The exercises seem to have gone on spontaneously—very much as is now the case in many social gatherings, where 'the meeting,' as the saying is, 'is thrown open.'"

This is a very striking extract from Lange. . . . And here we are told that in the worship-meeting of the early Church there was—

1. " *The absence of all fixed order.*"
2. " *No hint is given of the superintendence of any individual or class of persons regulating the services in the Church assemblies ;*" and,
3. " *The exercises appear to have gone on spontaneously, very much as is now the case where the meeting is thrown open.*"

But some, who plead for ecclesiastical corruption and man's improvement on the apostolic method of worship, may ask — May we not meet in the name of Jesus,

The testimony in our days is sadly out of proportion to the blessing. Many souls have been converted; but how few are gathered to the name of Jesus outside of everything that He does not own or allow. Every saved soul should be there in proof of his love and faithfulness to Christ. It is not Christianlike to take

and have His presence in our modern churches? No, not if you meet under man's arrangements, for that is upsetting Christ's order; and you cannot expect Him to countenance you by giving His presence in so doing. If it is according to man's rules you are gathered, that precludes meeting in Christ's name; and, in such circumstances, you cannot have Christ's presence in your midst, for though He may give His blessing by His Word and Spirit, He manifests Himself to such as keep His Word and do not deny His name (John xiv. 21).

The Word says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." It would not be decent, nor in order, for the head of a house to be subject to the rules of the children. If you ask, Where, then, am I to worship? Where Christ's presence is—that is, where there is a people gathered to His name (Matt. xviii. 20); where there is the absence of all fixed order; where there is "*no superintendence of any individual or class of persons regulating the services in the Church assemblies*"; and where the worship goes on "*spontaneously*," or rather under the sovereign control of the present Spirit. If you worship on other principles, and according to a system ordered by man, and where the services are regulated and conducted by a special class of men, priests, clergymen, or ministers, it is not worship after the pattern found in the New Testament; and it is a shame for any saved soul to go on with that which cannot be countenanced by Christ's presence, but is a dishonour to His holy name.

His benefits and not think of His glory. "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke xvii. 17). "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David. . . . *Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name*" (Rev. iii. 7, 8).

"Christ is the centre of worship in heaven !

Christ the rejected One here amongst men,

None other name of salvation is given ;

Sound it, believers, again and again !

Christ is the Sacrifice ! Christ is the Altar !

Christ is the mercy-seat sprinkled with blood !

Come, ye desponding ones, fear not nor falter,

Christ is our Peace in the presence of God.

Christ is the victim divinely appointed,

Spotless, accepted, attested by fire ;

Christ our Melchisedec, robed and anointed,

Royal and priestly His seamless attire.

One only Sacrifice, one only Altar,

One only mercy-seat God doth allow ;

Dream not, O man ! His decretal to alter,

Sealed with the blood of the Holiest now.

One only Offering God hath appointed—

Stretching His hand, He withheld not the knife !

One only Priest He hath crown'd and anointed :

Jesus ! the Way, and the Truth, and the Life !

Jesus ! the centre of worship in heaven !

Jesus ! despised and rejected of men !

None other name of salvation is given—

Worthy is Jesus, the Lamb that was slain !"

The late WILLIAM REID.

Correspondence.

21st March 1905.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,—For many years have I taken your magazine, and now hope you will give your readers an opportunity to share with me those scriptures that through our Lord's mercy will heal the breach caused by our departure from the simplicity there is in Christ.

Our consciences being readjusted by the word of God's grace, we shall no longer be straightened in ourselves, but grow in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit as ministered by the two epistles to Corinthians, till we find 2 Cor. xiii. 11 is fulfilled amongst us.—Yours, in Him who is able,

H. T.

P.S.—The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated without partiality and without hypocrisy, and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

In *The Christian* of 16th March there was a letter on the revival of the Lord's Supper.

Our esteemed brother H. T. has enclosed with the above letter an important and valuable paper written by himself and entitled "Some Lessons Learnt in Shiloh." It may be had of our publisher, price 1d. We commend it to the careful and prayerful attention of our brethren. Others may feel led of God to express themselves upon the subject.

We say this not with a view to controversy, but that the many young converts of the present time of awakening may be helped to find the

Lord's path for their feet in this day of difficulty and confusion. Much prayer will be needed if any blessing is to follow ; much patience one with the other. The object should be that Christ may be glorified, and His perplexed people established and guided according to the Word.

Especially should the needs of the young amongst different sections of those who were once happily together, be borne in mind. The third and fourth generations of those who originally came out from human arrangements in the things of God, find themselves confronted by divisions of which they understand nothing. Angry discussions, hard words, and bitter speeches will not help these, nor anybody else. But a return to Scripture, a readiness to acknowledge failure, and a gracious consideration of one another, might remove mountains of difficulty.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with love" (1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14). "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 11).

ED.

The Free Action of the Spirit.

No. 4.

IN 1 Corinthians xii. we are taught the *principle* of gathering ; in 1 Corinthians xiii., the *power* ; and 1 Corinthians xiv., the *practice*. The principle we have seen is this, that the Church is the body of Christ ; that each member has his place appointed by God Himself—"God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (ver. 18) ; that while the body is one, the members are many, and the gifts distributed separately according to the sovereign will of God the Holy Ghost.

It may be asked, Has every member of the assembly a gift? We believe not. The gifts are bestowed upon the few for the benefit of the many—"God hath set some (not *all*) in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps," &c. (ver. 28). These are evidently special gifts bestowed upon *some* in the Church. No doubt "helps" is a very wide term, and yet how much room is there for such a gift!

Besides this *every* member has his place to fill in the well-being of the whole body ; "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee" (ver. 21). How painful is it to see how the flesh so frequently comes in and acts in

diametric opposition to this principle. Excommunication and excision—which should be the last dire extremity—not seldom is resorted to when lesser forms of Church discipline would be adequate. Here, then, it is that chapter xiii. comes in to afford the grand effective power for carrying out the principles of chapter xii. Let each Christian study it carefully and on bended knees! Discipline has its place; chapter v. of this same epistle proves it. But no action of any kind in the assembly of God, whether in ministry or in discipline, can afford to be done apart from adherence to the exhortations of chapter xiii.

The principle of gathering according to chapter xii. being understood, the power according to chapter xiii. being sought, where do we in Scripture find directions for the practical carrying out of these things in assembly? The one and only chapter in the whole Bible that describes how a meeting of the assembly should be conducted is 1 Corinthians xiv. The first thing that strikes one is the absence of a clergyman, minister, or president. How completely Christendom has departed from the simplicity of earlier days may be seen by comparing the different forms of public worship to-day with what we find in this chapter. Every sect in Christendom—Rome, Anglican, or dissenting—makes one man prominent in every congregation. If this one man be present, all is expected to go well. There must be order at any rate; it may be

the order of a spiritual mortuary ; it may be, and alas, often is, that the one man has not one spark of divine life in his soul, and that not a breath from the Spirit of God ever passes over his congregation, but at least there is no confusion. It is the order and control of man. The man may be, and sometimes is, thank God ! truly converted and spiritually minded, but even so, the control of the meeting is that of man.

But in 1 Corinthians xiv. a very different character of meeting is described. There is no visible president, but perfect liberty for each one to take part in whatever way the Spirit of God may lead.

In the first place we read that the whole Church should come together into one place (1 Cor. xiv. 23). This might not always be possible, owing to the large numbers of believers in any one city, but this at any rate in principle should characterise the assembling together of the saints. The local assembly according to Scripture represents the whole Church. This we gather from 1 Corinthians xii. 27, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." This was addressed to the saints at Corinth. *In fact* they only formed a part of the body of Christ, and yet they locally represented the whole body.

It is not forgotten that we are now in days of confusion and division, and in this divided state of things never do we find the whole

assembly together, not even in heart. But for all that we should remember that, according to Scripture, all the saints in any locality are bound to "come together"; if they do not, it is failure and disobedience on their part to the plain Word of God. Seven times over in 1 Corinthians xi. and xiv. do we find the expression "come together." It is the bounden duty as well as the holy privilege of the Lord's people so to do.

The Church is God's assembly, it is not merely an assembly of saints; consequently *all* the saints should in each locality "come together." They should come together not as Roman, Anglican, or Greek—not as Baptists, Independents, Wesleyans, Friends, or even Brethren, but as members of the one body of Christ. This is the scriptural doctrine in accordance with which each saint is responsible to act. Ample direction is given in the Word as to how to act when so gathered together. And if in any one place the whole assembly of God does not or will not so come together, yet is it the privilege of even two or three to do so, counting upon the grace and faithfulness of the Lord who has promised His presence where two or three are gathered together in His name. Only let them take care that they do not, on the one hand, exclude any whom He would admit, nor on the other, admit any whom the discipline of His house would exclude on the ground of false doctrine or evil conduct.

Without going into all the details of the chapter, which should be studied prayerfully by every member of the assembly, both brothers and sisters, young and old, there are two main exhortations around which all seems to turn.

In the first place, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (ver. 26). How important is this to be remembered when the saints come together in assembly. Seven times over in the chapter do we find such words as "edify" or "edification." The assembly was not the place for the display of gift, nor for the mere utterance of things that were true. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (ver. 32). We understand by this that a brother might have the ability to speak, and might even feel prompted to do so, but bearing in mind the great end in view, namely the edification of all assembled, he might find it necessary to hold his gift in check.

In the early days of the Church, when gifts of tongues abounded, this was specially important. Paul himself possessed this gift more than any other, and outside the assembly he no doubt exercised this gift freely, nevertheless *in the assembly* he would rather speak five words with the understanding, than ten thousand with a tongue. Why?—edification was the end in view. This is a point that should not be overlooked. The speakers of five words are not often heard. Some hold back fearing that they

will not be able to speak long enough ; others go on far too long. We are persuaded that many a brother, if feeding on the Word, and living near the Lord, might lift up the hearts of the saints, and be a channel of much blessing in these days of weakness, by just the utterance of a sentence or two.

Let every brother who does speak in the assembly take heed to the clause "words easy to be understood" (ver. 9), for we are convinced that much of the speaking lacks its edifying character from the simple fact that it entirely goes over the heads of the hearers.

Further, every brother should come feeling his responsibility in connection with the assembly. We fear that oftentimes many come as mere onlookers. This should not be. "When ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine," &c. (ver. 26). They were not reproved for this ; it was the normal state of the assembly ; liberty for every one. Yet is it not the case that there are many brothers whose lips never move in audible prayer or praise in the assembly ? This should not be. May the Lord stir up His own to consider this. It does not follow that in every meeting every one should take part. What we feel is that some never take part, and their very silence is oftentimes a burden to the others.

In the early days things seem to have gone to the other extreme, and this had to be corrected.

A limit was put to the number who should speak. Many more might pray or lead in praise, or with hymns, but the *speakers* should be confined to two, or at the most three (vers. 27-32). Why?—that all might learn, be comforted, and edified. For too many to speak at one meeting or to speak too long would not edify, and this was ever to be remembered.

For the same reason, two were not to speak at the same time. Evidently this sometimes took place. But this could not edify, and furthermore, it was confusion.

This brings us to the second great principle of our chapter—"Let all things be done decently and in order" (ver. 40). It is clear that if two or more were to speak or pray at the same time confusion and not order would be the result. But suppose the Spirit of God led a second to speak while the first was still speaking, what then? "Let the first hold his peace" (ver. 30). The principles of the world are diametrically opposed to this rule. In the world the first speaker holds the right to continue, but in the assembly of God there is no such thing as the rights of man. What right have we to anything but judgment? In the assembly it is a question entirely of the Spirit of God.

Doubtless in the early days of the assembly here described, when the whole canon of Scripture was not complete, God revealed what was of importance for the whole assembly, communi-

cating His mind in this special manner. Of course to-day this cannot be. The whole of God's mind has been revealed. No fresh revelation can take place. Now it is the ministry of the Word already possessed.

But the same principle no doubt applies wherever the assembly gathers together. The speaking must be one by one ; and further it is limited to two or at the most three on each occasion of assembling.

Another limitation is now also added, which in these days of insubjection to the Word of God is becoming painfully ignored—"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (ver. 34). No words could be more explicit.

The Spirit of God is here laying down instructions which were to regulate His own action "in all assemblies of the saints." A woman might possess a gift as well as a man, *e.g.*, the four daughters of Philip (Acts xxi. 9), but the mere fact of the possession of a gift did not entitle the possessor thereof to exercise it at all times and under all circumstances. We have already seen that there were occasions where a man was to hold his peace in the assembly ; the woman was not permitted to speak there at all. It is equally clear from 1 Timothy ii. 8-15 that a woman publicly preaching to a mixed audience

of men and women is contrary to the Word of God.

It is vain to plead the fact that such service has been blessed to the conversion of sinners. It is a simple matter of obedience to the Word of God. "What! came the Word of God out from you?" The Church does not teach in spite of what Rome claims. When God speaks, as He does in the Scripture, it is our wisdom, as well as our duty, to obey.

But when God speaks He speaks to all—"came it unto you only?" The instructions here given were not confined to the Corinthian assembly, but were for the guidance of every assembly of the saints at all times. These are the commandments of the Lord. If any pretended to being spiritual, let him prove his claim by submission to God's own voice, and let him acknowledge that these were not merely the opinions of an apostle, but the commandments of the Lord.

Never was there more need than to-day to insist on this principle. Christian men and women are loudly asserting that they are filled with the Holy Ghost; but does the Spirit fill any one to act in disobedience to the Word? To act otherwise than according to what is written is wilful disobedience or culpable ignorance.

In conclusion, we would earnestly commend to all our Christian readers a continued and prayerful study of this chapter. We here find a full and detailed account of that kind of meeting

peculiar to Christianity. When the assembly of God assembles as such, 1 Corinthians xiv. instructs us as to how the service should be conducted.

1. No clergyman, minister, or president.
2. Liberty of the Spirit to use whom He will in worship, prayer, or exhortation and doctrine.
3. Edification of the assembly, and not display of the speaker to be the main object of the ministry.
4. Subjection in all things to the revealed will of God.

How seldom are such meetings held. Never, we may say, are they found amongst the so-called churches of the day; how seldom even amongst those who are seeking to act according to the truth of the Church as found in Scripture. Meetings for preaching the gospel, meetings for lectures to the people of God, and meetings for reading the Scripture abound, all most important and needful in their varied uses. We need them all, and should value them highly, but do not let us lose that kind of meeting which above all others should be found amongst us. In days of confusion and ruin like these, days when the gifts are scattered by reason of our failure and sin, it is still the privilege of the saints to assemble as the chapter we have been considering directs. Even though none of the gifts may be present, God will be there "among you of a truth."

Much more blessing will be experienced in coming together in this way than by setting up one to speak or preach who is not gifted nor called to such work by God.

Let none suppose that we would weaken the sense of the responsibility to preach the Word where the gift exists; but all are not called to preach, whereas the whole Church is called to come together for worship, prayer, and edification. And if in days of ruin like these, the whole Church in any particular locality never does so, yet may the few who desire to be guided by the Word of God do so, taking care not to assume any exclusive claim to being the assembly of God, nor to exclude any saints sound in doctrine and godly in walk.

A. H. B.



Outlines of the Gospel of John.

14. NO COMMUNION—NO FRUIT. CHRIST'S LOVE THE POWER OF OBEDIENCE.

(Chap. xv.)

HAVING ended His discourse at Supper, Jesus says, "Rise up, let us go hence." The following chapter may therefore probably relate to His intercourse with His disciples on the way to the brook Cedron. Chapter xvii.

gives His communion with His Father in their hearing.

The first subject presented in chapter xv. is the principle of fruit-bearing and the true power of obedience in the Christian life on earth. Instead of Israel ruined under law, as in Isaiah v., or restored under the Son of man, as in Psalm lxxx., the Lord Jesus in this passage substitutes Himself. He was the true Vine and His Father was the Husbandman. Fruitless branches are pruned away. Where fruit is borne, the branch is still further purged to bring forth more fruit.

This is a question of practical association in service and likeness to Christ in moral character on earth, not of the operation of His word to produce a new and holy nature in the power of His life.

The word He had spoken to them at the beginning had already cleansed them, and that of which He now spoke was a matter of communion. They were to abide in Him in the sense of entire dependence upon Him ; He then being in them, the result of this dependence would be a practical walk of similar character to His own. It was from Him, however, that all power for this was drawn ; just as the branches drew the nourishment and vigour and ability to bear fruit, in a word, the sap, solely from the vine itself. But not only would they bear fruit, but much fruit, since all power was in Him, none in themselves.

If there was no dependence upon Him, such would be cast out, withered and burned, in spite of the culture and privilege bestowed.

But abiding in Him—being sensibly dependent upon Him, and thus His words in them governing their thoughts—all that they might ask should be granted ; for the Father was glorified in their bearing much fruit, and they would be manifestly disciples of Jesus.

In chapter xiv. 13, 14, it is the Lord Jesus Himself who personally does what is asked in His name, as setting aside all power in man except in Himself. In this chapter (xv.) the answer to their requests is a consequence of communion and a subject spirit—abiding in Him and His words in them—in contrast with the principle of law and a legal obedience. The following chapter (xvi.) shows the disciples in a world of tribulation during the little while of their Master's absence. In their trouble they appeal in His name to the Father, and the Father Himself grants their requests in view of the power of evil and the circumstances of an antagonistic world.

But the thoughts of the Lord now turn to His Father's love which He in manhood here below had delighted ever to enjoy. This love had been the moral power of His walk on earth. For it was in obedience that He had enjoyed uninterruptedly His Father's love. It was similarly true that Jesus' love would be the power for

obedience on the part of His disciples. He had loved them from the first, as His Father had loved Him. They had not to procure or merit it, but to abide in it; and the way of doing so was by keeping His commandments. His well-known love was the power and His commandments the path; not as in the law which imposed a rule of walk upon the flesh, but never gave the life or power to accomplish it.

It had been His joy to keep His Father's commandments and abide in His love. This He said that His joy in obedience might be in them and their joy also be full. Not that His obedience caused the Father's love, but it gave a reason for and occasion of its manifestation. It was His joy to obey unceasingly, because thus the love was enjoyed uninterruptedly. So would it be with them. Their obedience was not preliminary to His love (ver. 9), but was the path in which it was enjoyed—not the cause of it, but the course in which it would be manifested to them.

His commandment, far from being legal in its character and repressing an evil nature, was one that gave liberty and expression in them to what was of Jesus Himself. They were to love one another as He had loved them. But this was to propose to them the highest example of devotedness; for as His friends He would lay down His life for them. Loving one another thus, as He commanded, they would be friends of His. He

had already called them friends, not withholding anything from them as though they were bondmen under law ; but all things which He had heard of His Father He had made known to them. We see here clearly that His grace, not their obedience, originated this precious intimacy ; though in obedience only was it to be practically maintained.

His teaching had been of the purest, fullest grace, and they were now to be the vessels of it. But if they were His disciples it was by His sovereign choice, not by the choice or will of the flesh ; and the fruit of their service would be by His appointment, not the result of their human energy. The Lord carefully repudiates the legal principle or power in man to bear fruit naturally. We have instead, communion, abiding fruit, and every request in the Son's name answered.

In contrast with the hatred of the world, the Lord now repeats His command to love one another. The world had hated Him and would hate them, because they were not of it, but chosen by Him out of it. As He, their Master, had been treated, so would they be. The persecution and trial would be, no doubt, in proportion to their faithfulness ; for God was not yet vindicating His Son in this world or His saints. It was the day of grace and of the manifestation of the Father in the Son, personally when He the Son was here on earth, and also subsequently by testimony when the Comforter was come.

The mysterious, and one might almost say, the unconscious cause of the world's enmity and persecution was its ignorance of grace—of the Father who had sent the Son. Yet He had come and spoken to them, otherwise they would have been guiltless of rejecting Him. But now there was no excuse; for in hating Him the world had hated His Father also.

But not only was His doctrine that of absolute grace; His works also were such as no other had done. It was no question of rebelling against law, evil as that would be, nor of rejecting Moses, who was the mediator of it. In His works the world had seen the Son and the Father, and, fearful sentence! had hated them. This was their sin, of which indeed their own scriptures had prophesied. They had hated Him without a cause.

Rejected finally by the world in its peculiarly religious and responsible form, and gone away out of it, He would from His high and heavenly place send from the Father the Comforter who goes forth from the Father. He is the Spirit of Truth, and would bear witness concerning Jesus, not only as the Son in humbled manhood revealing the Father, but now also as glorified in manhood with the Father on high.

The disciples, too, would have their special part in the testimony, for they had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, and would relate as eye-witnesses, or as personally

cognisant, that which the Spirit gave them to put on record.

This is in strong contrast with a legal or prophetic and Jewish testimony, which was characterised by a veil over the glory, that the end and annulling of it might not be seen ; and which left the prophets themselves ignorant of the meaning of their own inspired utterances. Here the Spirit Himself bears witness, according to His own divine and personal knowledge of Jesus, the eternal Son glorified in manhood. So also the disciples themselves would testify of that with which they were personally acquainted, though under the direct guidance and inspiration of the Spirit.

Marvellous grace that where the beloved Son in His humbled manhood had been cast out and crucified, and His testimony, of the Father revealed in the Son in grace, rejected ; there, in that very world, the Spirit of truth should come from the Father, sent by the Son on high, as the consequence of redemption accomplished, and man glorified in the person of Jesus to bring the testimony of grace once more in its fullest heavenly character.

The general scope of this chapter is grace setting us in association with Christ in His place of service and fruit-bearing on earth, and therefore in the responsibility of discipleship. For this He started His disciples clean at the first, under the care and discipline of the Father ; so

that in bearing much fruit they become practically His disciples and the Father is glorified.

Secondly, He had loved them throughout, in spite of everything, and would prove it to the full. On their part they were to abide in His love by keeping His commandments. Thus His joy would be in them and their joy be full.

Moreover, He had put them in the place of friends, by making known to them all things He had heard of His Father. But it was by obeying His commandments that they would be His friends effectively.

Finally, not as in the law where man was called to choose whom he would serve and the principle on which he would serve Him, and the only fruit brought forth was unto death; Jesus had chosen them, and set them to bear abiding fruit in testimony of grace and blessing, not in the power of the flesh but that of the Spirit of truth.



The Last Days.

WILL the reader open the Bible and glance for a few moments at 2 Timothy iii. 1-5? We are there told in plain unmistakable language the signs or characteristics of the last days. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their

own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Most of the evils enumerated above have always characterised man in his unregenerate state. In Romans i. 18-32, the same things are said of the heathen—the dark, ignorant, idol-worshippers, who are without God and without hope in the world.

The deeply solemn and dreadful fact in these last days is that all these evils are enacted under a form of godliness. Now look around on Christendom to-day, and let me ask you, reader, are we not living in the midst of these very evils set forth so vividly in the verses just quoted? In a religious form people of to-day are

**"Lovers of pleasures more than lovers
of God."**

Concerts, musical services, bazaars, popular lectures, and even theatrical performances in many cases take the place of preaching the Word of God ; and the prayer-meeting is often left out altogether. Many of those who profess Christ, instead of meeting together as believers

did of old to enjoy in sweet fellowship His things, are taken up perhaps with a social gathering, when the order of the day is to sing the world's songs and pass the time in amusement with scarce a thought of the One who suffered the untold agonies of Calvary to save them from the very things they so eagerly seek after.

Reader, if you have not yet come as a poor hell-deserving sinner to Christ, let me warn you to come now ; delay not a moment, for

the Last Days have arrived.

The time is near when the One who now waits in long-suffering mercy, not willing that any should perish, will come to execute "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. lxi. 2).

Yes, God's greatest gift—the giving of His only begotten Son—has been wilfully rejected by this evil world. That precious blood—which is able to cleanse from *all sin* the vilest that comes to Him—is being treated like the One who shed it, despised and rejected, and in its place is substituted doctrines and commandments of men, something that will please the natural depraved taste of people in their sins ; something that will tend to lull into false peace the troubled conscience, or otherwise, the devil's lie of "peace, peace, when there is no peace," for "when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them," for "the Lord Jesus shall be

revealed from heaven

with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power ; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in them that believe," &c. (2 Thess. i. 7-10).

Now perhaps, dear reader, you have believed on the Lord Jesus, and know for certain that your sins are gone for ever, and that you will not come into judgment, but you are distressed and grieved with the things you see and hear in the sect or system to which you belong. The apostle's words to Timothy concerning the above evils hold good to-day, and they are—"from such turn away." The believer is to have no fellowship with these things, but "let every one that nameth the name Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," but, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). If you see, according to the Word of God, that these things are wrong, then the first thing for you to do is to "come out," and His promise to

those who thus separate themselves is, "I will receive you." Yes, dear fellow-believer, the Lord Almighty pledges Himself with all the loving tender care of a father to undertake the keeping and providing of His children in their many trying and needy circumstances while passing through this hostile world—to those who in simple faith stand aloof from its deadly allurements. "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Read Romans viii. 31-39.) Let the god and prince of this world muster his forces and combine all his power against the believer thus standing, and he cannot in any way harm him. So long as it pleases the Father to keep His beloved children here for a testimony to the Lord Jesus, all the power and rage of men or devils cannot remove them.

But oh, my reader, if still unsaved, once more I say, be warned in time, for "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy . . . of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. x. 28).

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). God grant, dear reader, you may be ready. J. S.

The Man at God's Right Hand.

(HEB. x. 12.)

THERE is One in yonder glory I have loved for many
years ;

He has cleared my guilty conscience, He has
banished all my fears.

And I seek to spread His goodness, while I'm waiting
hour by hour,

For His long-expected coming, for the moment of His
power,

With the loins tightly girded on the highway and the
hearth,

With the rays of coming glory shining back upon the
path.

What a poor and empty bubble—what a vain and gilded
toy,

*Seems the world with all its treasures in the view of
future joy ;*

Of the joy of being with Him, who for me in death did
stand,

Whom I ever love to think of as the Man at God's right
hand.

In the daily toil of business—in the hourly trial and fight,
When I wake up in the morning—when I sink to sleep at
night—

There's a deep and earnest longing, there's a yearning of
the heart,

For the bright and blessed moment when we never more
shall part.

And the eye of faith is upward, 'mid the struggle and the
strife,

For the coming hope of glory, for the joy and crown of
life.

The One there crowned with honour has been in this
desert scene—

The suffering Man of Sorrows, the lowly Nazarene—

The Lord of life and glory, the Holy One of God,
Who bore in grace and meekness the mocking scourge
and rod ;

Who conquered death and Satan, and for the sinner died,
And by the Father's glory was raised and glorified :

And from that throne He's coming to call His saints
away

From every taint of evil to share His blissful day.

.

Are you ready, Christian, ready, for the trump and shout
and voice ?

Would His coming make you tremble, or cause you to
rejoice ?

Are you walking, talking with Him, trusting Him with all
your care ?

Do you live so close to heaven that a breath would waft
you there ?

Or is the heart and spirit chained and rooted in the earth,
Instead of on the mansions, the place of heavenly birth ?

Is your heart and walk so loyal that your spirit would
rejoice

Any day or hour or moment to hear His blessed voice ?

Are you watching, waiting for Him, does your heart with
joy expand

At the very thought of seeing the Man from God's right
hand ?

.

He is coming in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ;
No time will be allotted just to utter one " Good-bye " ;
No time to kiss the children or embrace the loving wife,
If they are but united in the bonds of *human* life.

The darkness seems to thicken and the scenes of sin
increase ;

They may move my heart to pity, but they cannot touch
my peace;
For my peace is in the glory, where I shortly hope to be,
To raise my Alleluia unto Him who died for me.
There's a deep and cherished craving as I hasten on my
race,
For the long-expected greeting, for the seeing face to
face ;
For the thrilling trumpet sounding, for the ceasing here
to roam,
For the entering the mansions and the longed-for joys of
home. .
Like an anxious watcher standing with the hand upon the
latch,
In eager expectation the first faint gleam to catch,
I peer up through the midnight and upon the threshold
stand,
With a grateful heart to welcome the Man from God's
right hand.

Correspondence.

New Zealand.—A question as to the opposition of scientists to divine revelation, based on the theory of evolution.

YOU need not apologise for writing, for the subject is of such importance, and I myself having passed through a conflict of doubt and an agony of soul on these very points, it makes me anxious to help any who are passing through the like.

I was assailed with fierce doubts during the

course of my scientific studies, and at the very time that I was actively engaged preaching the gospel.

The young naturally look with reverence upon their college professors, but as one grows older one perceives that there is no class of men more self-confident than so-called scientists, and hence none more untrustworthy as guides on such matters.

The Christian of course takes his stand upon the Word of God. He has learnt to trust that Word, not because of its scientific instruction, but because it has a power over heart and conscience that no other book has. The Bible was not intended to be a scientific handbook, nevertheless being inspired of God, it is and must be perfectly accurate wherever it may touch on such matters—and this, given time for a fuller acquaintance with the facts of science and a clearer understanding of the Scriptures, is invariably found to be the case.

I myself never had much difficulty on the subject of evolution, other things troubled my mind more. For, after all, evolution is but a theory; perhaps I should say only an hypothesis, invented by man to account for certain things that he finds in the world around.

It has often been said that the facts of science are one thing, the conclusions which scientific men have based on these facts are quite another.

The *facts* nobody can deny. "Scalpel and

microscope," to use your friend's words, may elicit the facts of science. Man attempts to account for these facts by theories of his own invention, forgetting that after all he is only finite, and not only *finite*, but *fallen*; his intellectual powers are as much fallen as are his moral faculties.

But the Word of God accounts for these facts too, yet in a very different way from man's theory of evolution. Here there is an antagonism. Your scientists tell you that they are so convinced of the truth of their theory of evolution, that they are content to give up the Bible!

This is the crux of the whole matter. A man who thus argues proves two things; first, his own overweening confidence in himself, and secondly, that he has never felt the beauty and power of the Scriptures.

Man has a conscience which no scientific theories and researches can silence—he has deep soul needs which the "scalpel and microscope" will never satisfy.

Give up the Bible! The noblest intellects have pored over its pages with love and reverence and adoration of its divine Author.

But does it not contain scientific mistakes? Is not Genesis i. and ii. full of them? So says the superficial devotee of science. But in fact no chapters bear more conclusive evidence of divine inspiration than these. Written at a time when science was unknown, they treat briefly

and yet exhaustively the whole subject of the origin of the universe. During the ages of the past man has invented and been obliged to abandon theories. Scripture has spoken once, and has never had to alter, correct, or modify. And none of the facts of science can be shown to militate against the account of creation there given.

Why does man seek to get rid of creation and to substitute evolution? Because if there is such a thing as creation, then there must be a Creator; that is, there must be a God, and man does not like to believe in God, for his conscience makes him feel that he is not fit for His presence. . . . If people would read and study their Bibles more, they would find out moral beauties that would bow their souls in adoration. ED.

Am I not desired to examine myself whether I am in the faith? No. What then says 2 Corinthians xiii. 5—"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith," &c.? Why, that if they sought a proof of Christ speaking in the apostle Paul, they were to examine themselves, and by the certainty of their own Christianity, which they did not doubt, be assured of his apostleship. The apostle's argument was of no value whatever, but on the ground of the sanctioned certainty that they were Christians. J. N. D.

The Judgment and Restoration of the Ten Tribes.

A MOST interesting section now lies before us (Ezek. xx. 32-44). The opening part of the chapter records the sorrowful story of Israel's long-continued sin. Many a time was judgment about to fall, but Jehovah's eye spared His people, and time after time He withdrew the hand that was outstretched to destroy them.

His gifts and calling were without repentance (Rom. xi. 29), that is to say, they were without change of mind on His part; His promises to the fathers He must fulfil for His own name's sake. But what stubborn unbelief is shown in verse 32! A determination had even come into their minds—it was not a mere fall in an unguarded moment, but a positive choice of their wicked hearts, when they said, "We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone."

But Jehovah would not allow it, "As I live, saith the Lord, . . . will I rule over you." This is what God will bring about in the end for His people; but His ways in government must take their course.

In this passage we have specially to do with the judgment in the last days of the ten tribes in contrast with Judah. As may be seen by the

dates in the margin of our Bibles, about 150 years before Ezekiel's prophecy the ten tribes had been carried away by the King of Assyria (2 Kings xvii.); this judgment upon them was in fulfilment of God's solemn warning through Moses (see Lev. xxvi., Deut. xxxii.) 750 years before that again: "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and had feared other gods" (2 Kings xvii. 7). The heinousness of their sin was seen in the light of the great deliverance God had wrought on their behalf. "The children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God;" they set them up idols, and burned incense before them, as the heathen had done whom God had driven out before them. Would God tolerate in His people wickedness for which He had already judged the heathen? Surely not. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2).

But in the passage we are now considering, God is seen coming in and dealing for the ultimate and permanent blessing of His people in a day yet to come, though possibly not far distant.

As we have said, the future restoration of the ten tribes is here in question, and not the special dealings with Judah. It was a remnant of Judah

and Benjamin, along with the priests and the Levites (Ezra i. 5), that responded to the proclamation of Cyrus inviting them to return to Jerusalem, and there build the house of the Lord. It was to this remnant that the Messiah was presented; and at their door lay the terrible guilt of betraying Him, and putting Him to death. On them, therefore, a special judgment must fall, and from various prophetic portions of the Word of God it is clear that they will pass through this time of terrible tribulation in the land of Palestine (see Zech. xiii. 8, 9).

But in the case of the ten tribes, sometimes called Ephraim in contrast to Judah, the case is different. Through all the centuries of their dispersion, lost to the eye of their brethren of Judah, and scattered amongst the nations of the earth, they are nevertheless watched over by Jehovah, and kept separate in spite of themselves. When all God's plans for the glory of Christ are ripe, He who scattered them will gather them "with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out" (ver. 34).

He will bring them, not into the land, but "into the wilderness of the people." The history of His early dealings with them when brought out of Egypt will be repeated: "Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God" (ver. 36).

Nothing can be plainer than what is here stated in reference to those ten tribes: "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE LAND OF ISRAEL: and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (vers. 37-39). Judah's future judgment will take place *in the land*—that of the ten tribes, *on the way to the land*.

It would appear that verse 39 refers to Israel's past history of idolatry. In their rebelliousness they said, "We will be as the heathen . . . to serve wood and stone" (ver. 32). Jehovah then takes them at their word, and says to them, "Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto Me: but pollute ye My holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols" (ver. 39). In other words, the Lord would no longer tolerate this unholy mingling of idolatry with the worship that was due to Himself alone. As He had said through Elijah before, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings xviii. 21).

Though the special subject of this prophecy is that which will befall the ten tribes in the latter day, both in the way of judgment and

blessing, yet without doubt Judah is included in verse 40. "For in Mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve Me." Has this ever yet been accomplished? Since the days of the Babylonian captivity, at which date Ezekiel was uttering this prediction, never has the whole house of Israel, ALL OF THEM, been in their land. Only a remnant of Judah and Benjamin* went back in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra i. 5), but in the days that are yet to come, the whole nation, no longer divided into the two separate portions of the ten tribes and the two, will be found there. And when restored to their land what a change will come over their whole position. "I will accept you with your sweet savour," says Jehovah; "I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel . . . and there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings . . . and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for My name's sake, not according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

* Some doubtless from other tribes joined these, but not in their *tribal* character. Only Judah, Benjamin, and Levi are mentioned as tribes, the others may have returned as families (see Ezra ii.).

Elsewhere in the prophetic Word do we find allusions to the restoration of Israel nationally. We cannot do more here than refer the reader to such passages as Isaiah xliii. 1-7, xlix. 5-24 ; Jer. xxxi. 1-14.

A few words may be added with reference to the passage in Isaiah xlix., a passage of transcendent interest. It was the responsibility of Israel to be the testimony for God on the earth amidst the nations, "Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (ver. 3). But Israel turned to idolatry and utterly failed. Then Christ, the Messiah, comes into the world, and has to say in reference to His earthly people, "I have laboured in vain," &c. (ver. 5), for He came to His own, and His own received Him not. But now Christ Himself takes the place of guilty Israel. Jehovah's answer to the lament of verse 4 is found in the verses that follow. Christ Himself should be glorious as Jehovah's servant, thus taking the place of Israel as the true servant, Israel having failed. He should raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel, that is the remnant of the people ; and not only this, He should be a light to the Gentiles, and salvation to the ends of the earth.

Through the gospel this is now receiving a partial fulfilment, but the true interpretation of the passage carries us on to the future millennial day, when He who was despised of man, and abhorred of the nation (Israel), will yet be wor-

shipped and adored by earthly rulers, princes and kings.

Connected with that day will be the restoration of Israel to their own land. The scattered people, hidden as prisoners in darkness amongst the nations, will hear the words, "Go forth and show yourselves." Then a mighty movement will take place. "I will make all My mountains a way, and My highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim (China?)."

Then earth and heaven are called to rejoice, and to break forth into singing, for the Lord hath comforted His afflicted people. Here, we believe, the tribulation of the two tribes in the land is in view. Zion, well-nigh overwhelmed with sorrows, says, "The Lord hath forsaken me," &c. Most touchingly Jehovah replies that He could no more forget Jerusalem than could a woman forget her sucking child. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands: thy walls are continually before Me" (vers. 13-17). Deliverance is at hand, Jerusalem's destroyers, and those that made her waste, shall go forth of her.

Now follows (vers. 18-24) the description of the return of the ten tribes, *after* Zion's tribulation and deliverance. "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee." And again,

"The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other (that is, after the cutting off the two parts in the land, Zech. xiii. 8, 9), shall say again in thine ears, The place is too straight for me: give place to me that I may dwell."

The whole passage is of the deepest interest; the wonder with which Zion will behold the return of her long-lost children is most vividly described. "As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all. But "where had they been?" Zion will exclaim. And until Jehovah's time has come for their restoration, vain is it for man to attempt to say. When His time comes the whole world will be set in motion to accomplish His counsels on their behalf.



Why should Christians expect the Coming of the Lord?

DISPENSATIONALLY there are three classes of people in the world—the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. Spiritually there are but two—believers who are saved by faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and unbelievers who reject that only way of salvation.

Spiritually, then, there are but two classes—saved or lost. Dispensationally there are three—Jews, Gentiles, and Christians (1 Cor. x. 32).

Now the coming of the Lord affects each of these, and hence the immense importance of the subject to every soul of man the wide world over. But why should Christians expect the coming of the Lord?

1. Christians should expect the coming of the Lord because the Lord Jesus Himself constantly foretold His return while here below. In that most striking prophetic outline given to us by the Lord Himself in His discourse to His disciples in Matthew xxiv. and xxv., He unfolded to them the bearing of this weighty truth with reference to the three classes of people we have mentioned above.

The Coming of the Lord with Reference to the Jew.

Three times in the Gospel of Matthew do we find the blessed Lord presented to the Jewish people as their Messiah in fulfilment of three different lines of prophetic testimony.

First, He was presented to them at His birth in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. i. 23; Isa. viii. 14). But Israel would not have Him.

Secondly, He was presented to them as their Messiah during His life of active service in ful-

fulfilment likewise of Isaiah's prophecy, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 17; Isa. liii. 4). But still Israel would not have Him.

Once again, and for the third time, was Jesus presented to the stiff-necked people in fulfilment of the words of the prophet Zechariah. For the last time before the cross the blessed Lord drew near to Jerusalem, the city of solemnities. The prophet's words must be fulfilled, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matt. xxi. 5; Zech. ix. 9; Isa. lxii. 11). But again they reject Him, for "when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased" (Matt. xxi. 15).

All through His life, doubtless, He had been presented to the guilty nation; not a word nor an act that had not been a witness had they had ears to hear and eyes to see, or, better still, hearts to believe. But these were the three special lines of testimony; at His birth, during His ministry, and at the very close just before He died—not for that nation only, but for a world of sinners; and that to fulfil, not only prophecies of earthly blessing for Israel, but purposes of eternal blessing, even the "better things" provided for the Church, not merely for a thousand years of

earthly blessing under Christ's reign, but "throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. iii. 21). The promises made unto the Jewish fathers will be fulfilled during the millennium, and then will cease, whereas the Church's portion as united to Christ will endure to all eternity; this latter is God's "eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 11).

Jesus entered the temple (Matt. xxi. 12). He found it, instead of a house of prayer, a place of merchandise. Woe upon woe did He pronounce upon the scribes and Pharisees—the religious leaders of the people—and then uttered the solemn sentence that has written desolation upon the whole Jewish system of religion from that day to this, and on until the day when repentant and believing they will say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 34-39).

For the last time His feet had trodden those courts, "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple" (Matt. xxiv. 1). The Jewish system of earthly worship was judged, and with it the whole fabric fell to the ground. For a little while it continued in outward form until the Romans carried away the golden vessels, and destroyed the temple.

The disciples, occupied with Jewish hopes, and unable as yet to grasp the full import of the sentence, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," point with pride to the magnificent

buildings of the temple. With unmistakable precision Jesus this time announces the complete ruin of it all, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. xxiv. 2).

These were serious words that drew from the disciples the anxious question, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" But a further question still is asked by them, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?"—for *age* it should be, and not "world."

"Thy coming"—then Christ was indeed to return, though He had not yet departed; He was to return, too, in connection with the Jewish nation.

It will be noticed that in this Gospel a two-fold question of the disciples is recorded, whereas in the Gospel of Luke one only is mentioned (Luke xxi. 7). This is of importance to observe, for while what is written in Luke has special reference to what has been already accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, that which we find in Matthew points forward to what is yet future, and to what will immediately precede the coming of the Son of man and the end of the age.

The End of the Age.

It is imperative that we should have some clear understanding of the meaning of this expression. The phrase in our Authorised Version,

excellent as that version is in most respects, namely, "the end of the world," is most misleading. People gather from that that the Lord alluded to the close of the world's history and the final judgment, but this is not the case.

Four times in this chapter do we find the expression, "the end"; and though to us Christians the force of these two words may not at first sight be evident, yet to the disciples who were on Jewish ground as to their calling and hopes, they had a very precise meaning. Repeatedly do they occur in the prophecies of Daniel. If chapters viii., ix., xi., and xii. of that book be carefully read, we cannot fail to be struck with the oft-recurring sentence, "the time of the end." It has to do with the closing incidents of Israel's history just before the appearing of the Son of man in glory; those closing days for them will be days of terrible tribulation. What happened in the past at the time of the siege of Jerusalem, awful, unspeakably awful as that was, is nothing to what will be experienced by them in the future.

Some of these trials and sorrows are described in our chapter (Matt. xxiv.), but so terrible will they be that unless "those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (ver. 22). How different will that day of Jewish tribulation be from this day of gospel blessing! Then God will shorten the days of Jewish tribulation and persecution for His elect people's sake,

that is, the elect of that dispensation ; whereas now He lengthens out the day of grace in His long-suffering mercy towards a sinful world (2 Pet. iii. 15). This explains a passage which is often much misunderstood, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (ver. 13). It is often thought that this refers to the salvation of the soul, but this is not so. The word "saved" in this verse has the same meaning as in verse 22 ; it refers to the terrible persecutions that will overtake the Jewish remnant at the close of their history. Many will meet a martyr's death and be rewarded with the martyr's crown ; these will be found in the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 4). But those that endure to the end of that great tribulation will be saved to take part in the earthly kingdom of Messiah.

Further, these persecuted Jewish disciples will be the heralds of the gospel of the kingdom ; they and not Christians of this dispensation will preach that gospel unto all the heathen nations (ver. 14).

It is important to notice that in this portion of Matthew xxiv. the scene and the subject are exclusively Jewish. The whole Christian dispensation is passed over in silence. The testimony to Israel instituted by the Lord Himself in Matthew x. when He sent out His twelve disciples has been interrupted for the moment. The calling out of the Church and the special testimony of this dispensation has taken its place for the time ; but when this parenthetic period has

ceased at the coming of the Lord for the Church, and her rapture to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv.), then the testimony to Israel will be resumed amidst fiery persecution—"when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matt. x. 23). From this passage it is evident that there will be a resumption of this particular testimony to Israel, carried on by Jewish disciples.

But their testimony at the close will extend farther than to the cities of Israel—"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). This, we repeat, is not the subject of Christian testimony to the world to-day. People have gathered from this verse that the Lord cannot come for the Church until all the heathen nations have been evangelised; and as this has not yet taken place, they conclude that it is a mistake to imagine that the Lord might come at any moment. But this is a misinterpretation of the passage.

All here is Jewish. The reference to Daniel's prophecy (ver. 15) makes this perfectly plain. The allusion to Judea (ver. 16) confirms it. Then, too, the prayer that their flight should not be on the Sabbath day (ver. 20), all goes to prove that a people under the obligation to keep the law are in view.

"Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (ver. 21). To no other people than the Jews could this verse be applied. It is clearly the same period as that spoken of by Daniel (Dan. xii. 1), who adds that "at that time thy people shall be delivered." Thy people—that is, Daniel's people; not Christians, but Jews. Immediately after this time of awful tribulation, the sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven, all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

This is the coming of the Lord as it will affect the Jewish people. He will come as Redeemer to Zion, unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob (Isa. lix. 20); but to the ungodly amongst them that day shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble (Mal. iv. 1). In this aspect of His coming, He comes to the earth, "to Zion," as it is said, and not merely into the air, as from 1 Thessalonians iv., we know He will come for the Church.

Things are moving rapidly towards this great event, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the course of this present inquiry into the Scriptures, we shall see that **at any moment** the Lord may come for His saints, both for those that "sleep in Jesus" and for us which are "alive

and remain," but His return, so far as it will affect the Jews, cannot take place until their restoration to Palestine. His descent into the air for the heavenly saints must precede His coming to Zion for the deliverance of His earthly saints.

We are far from desiring to fix any date for the coming of the Lord. All those who at any time have attempted to do so have exposed their own folly, and have ignored the plain statement of the Word of God that of that day and that hour knoweth no man (Mark xiii. 32); nevertheless we are more and more persuaded that we are drawing very near to that glorious moment. A passage that has lately come before us with amazing power and interest in this connection we would briefly bring before the reader's notice. In Hosea v. 15, we learn what is God's present attitude towards Israel, "I will go and return to My place." In other words, God has withdrawn Himself from all active interference in their affairs.

The Jews exist scattered in all nations, according to the word of the Lord by Moses, in Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii.; their own sin has brought this judgment upon them. This silence on God's part will continue "till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face." Their great offence has been, not merely a broken law, but a crucified Messiah. Presently in their affliction they will seek Him. Then they will

say, "Come, let us return unto the Lord" (Hos. vi. 1). At present they are talking of returning to Palestine, and this they will do in unbelief, but after a while the Spirit of the Lord will work in their midst, a remnant from amongst them will turn to God in true repentance and contrition.

"After two days will He revive us," says the prophet; "in the third day He will raise us up" (Hos. vi. 2). Evidently these days must be taken in a figurative sense; they are not literal days of twenty-four hours. What do they mean? "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" we are told in 2 Peter iii. 8. Now it is close upon two thousand years since Israel's rejection of Christ, their Messiah.

Their two days of scattering for this their crowning act of wickedness is rapidly approaching an end. What will be the third day of their raising up? May it not be the thousand years of millennial joy under the reign of "great David's greater Son"? At any rate, without fixing the date of Christ's return for us in the air, which might take place to-day, the present Zionistic movement amongst the Jews coinciding so remarkably with the near completion of the two thousand years of their wandering and scattering is, to say the least, most suggestive.

"Lift up, lift up thy voice with singing,
Dear land, with strength lift up thy voice!
The kingdoms of the earth are bringing,
Their treasures to thy gates—Rejoice!

Arise and shine in youth immortal,
Thy light is come, thy King appears !
Beyond the century's swinging portal
Breaks a new dawn—the thousand years.”

Outlines of the Gospel of John.

15. THE WORLD CONVICTED; ITS RULER
JUDGED; FULL JOY IN THE KNOW-
LEDGE OF THE FATHER AND HIS LOVE.
(Chap. xvi.)
-

WE must now consider the provision Jesus makes for His servants while in the midst of an opposed and antagonistic world. Precious as would be the grace of the Father and the Son in sending the Spirit of truth to bring the testimony of Christ glorified, even as the apostles would bear witness to His humiliation, the world nevertheless would remain unchanged. Perverted and subjected, especially in its religious and Jewish form, to a dark and evil influence, no outrage would be too great to express its enmity to grace. It would be considered a service to God to put the servants of Jesus out of the religious world, and for every one to kill them. But Jesus told them these things beforehand so that they might not be taken by surprise nor offended.

This is His first care, not minimising the dangers, but forewarning of them, so that the persecutions even would be a verification of His word, and thus assurance to their faith and of their hearts in the trial. While He was with them it had been unnecessary to speak of the difficulties and of the evil power opposed to them, for Jesus Himself sovereignly governed their circumstances, and personally interposed between them and every difficulty and danger. But now He was going away, and His disciples would have themselves to face these troubles.

Nevertheless the Lord would have them free from self-occupation and sorrow. They were to think of Him and His concerns, for they had not even asked where He was going. Besides it was profitable for them that He should go away, for then He would send the Comforter to them.

In these two divine facts of supreme importance would the souls of the disciples find rest amid the tumultuous waves of an ungodly world and the storms of spiritual evil. Jesus gone and glorified on high, and their hearts rejoicing in His joy, and, on the other hand, the presence of the Comforter here, proof to the world of its sin in rejecting Jesus, of righteousness in His person only as gone away to the Father, and of judgment, since the principle of the world, with him who rules it, is thus declared to be opposed to the Son and to the Father.

There is thus divine competency in the Comforter to sustain the disciples in their testimony to the world for their absent Lord and Master, according to the heavenly and glorious place with the Father into which He has entered in manhood. Prominence is therefore given here to what is special and peculiar to Christian testimony, namely, to a glorified Christ. In chapter xiv. the Comforter comes rather to substitute an absent one, and to carry on in divine power a testimony already given (ver. 26). Chapter xv. extends this, and includes His own particular witness concerning Jesus on high (ver. 26). Now (xvi. 7-14) this latter is the especial purport of His witness (as we have it, no doubt, in the epistles). The Spirit of truth would guide the apostles into all the truth. He would not speak from Himself, but in serving the glory of the exalted Man according to that which He should hear. It would not be merely a bringing to memory of what Jesus was and had taught in humiliation on earth, but He would announce the coming things of the glory of Jesus (vers. 13, 14), who was indeed the Son of the Father. The things pertaining to the Son would be those of the Father also, since all that the Father has are the Son's.

But again the Saviour's thoughts turn to the needs of His beloved disciples during the time of His absence. As we have seen, its particular character would be that of the fiercest persecu-

tion. He now speaks of its duration. It should be but a little while, for He was going away to the Father. Had they been in spirit free to receive His words, how graciously were they designed to comfort them! The time so short, the reason so important and full of blessed consequences for them!

Full of questionings and sad of heart, the poor self-occupied disciples were unable to take the comfort His words conveyed. The Saviour spoke according as His own heart surveyed the circumstances. To Him the time was short, and He would see that the sorrow of it should be but short, however sharp. His love did not think it long or weary to wait on high for His loved ones, nor hard to serve them meanwhile. For faith, too, the time has ever been but short, a constant and momentary expectation, and suffering for His sake would but hasten on the time of His return.

But His thoughts were not theirs, and fear, not faith, was filling their hearts. They could not understand the "little while" of which He spoke. Impatient of display and worldly glory, even a short delay and Christ unseen were irksome.

In grace He anticipates their question and comforts them, not by hiding or belittling the sorrows of His absence, but by gathering their joys, their thoughts, their interests, around Himself. They would indeed weep and lament at

His departure, for this world and its prince would see with joy the successful issue of their guilty and crafty schemes.

Miserable and short-lived joy ! Whereas Jesus would see the disciples again, and their grief should be turned to joy unfading—a joy which none should take from them. The birth-pangs of a new-creation state should give place to the heartfelt and unceasing joy of man in resurrection.

Thus had the Lord unfolded to His disciples the circumstances as well as the duration of His absence, together with its moral character or the way their hearts would feel it. It would be a time of persecution, though for a little while only—a time of sorrow which should be turned to abiding joy.

Of one more source of comfort will He speak—one supreme in blessedness, namely, their relationship and intercourse with the Father. And how deeply would they need it, for in that day the familiar converse with Himself which they had hitherto enjoyed, however lacking in intelligence on their part, would then cease. Instead of this their requests would be addressed to the Father in His name, and would be answered according to the love of the Father towards those who loved His Son. So near the place, so spontaneous and free the affection that there was no room or need for His mediation ; for they should ask the Father themselves,

personally and directly, and thus receive all their petitions.

Constantly had the Lord spoken to them of the Father, and presented Himself to them as the personal revelation of the Father in the Son, humbled in manhood ; and implicitly had they received and believed His word, but without in the least apprehending the Father. His words to them were allegories. But the hour was coming when His testimony concerning the Father would openly convey the reality to their souls, for in Jesus glorified they would see a man in all the plenitude and perfection of the Son with the Father, and be brought by Him to enjoy in the same relationship, as Man glorified, the Father's presence as well as His thoughts and communications. He had come out from the Father into the world ; this they had seen though without intelligence. But He was leaving the world to go to the Father, and this change of place would change everything for their souls.

How sluggish are our minds, even where faith is, when eternal things and divine relationships are in question ! The disciples had believed that Jesus came out from God. This their faith could connect with Israel, and its national and earthly relationship in this world with Jehovah. But, as we have seen, He had come out from the *Father*. Their faith had never apprehended this. It was the new revelation, and a relation-

ship in which earthly things had no place; nor could the world ever know it, for He was now leaving the world to go to the Father.

To see Him in resurrection, that new and infinitely blessed place for man, glorious and eternal, nay more, to know Him in His heavenly place would be joy to them as of a woman when her child is born. Sorrow past, a man brought forth—an allegory which He now interprets plainly, as His disciples indeed perceive. Yet in spite of this their minds at once revert to, or rather never leave, the beaten track of earthly hopes and Jewish aspirations, in which their faith had always moved. Unable to look beyond the things which are seen, they say, By this we believe that Thou art come from God.

True He had come from God; their faith was orthodox, but powerless to keep their souls from being scattered by the power of evil. Governed by their own things, perhaps religious things, and personal considerations, they would leave the Son alone, and yet not alone, for the Father was with Him.

Everything for eternal life and blessing should abide unalterable and secure in the revelation of the Father in the Son. Everything of the creature failed, evil succeeded, and that little gathered company, tended and taught with so much love and care, was scattered.

Thus should they have peace in view of the success of evil, the failure of faith, and the

wickedness of an antagonistic world where only tribulation was to be expected. In spite of all they were to be of good courage, for Jesus had overcome the world. He had proved it, judged it, passed out of it by the cross that they might enjoy with Him another world—fruit of the eternal thoughts and counsels of love of the Father and the Son. Full joy meanwhile should be theirs (ver. 24), as they depended on the Father, and derived from Him everything in the name of Jesus in answer to their requests.

Correspondence.

[The following extract has been sent to us. May it stir us up to prayer! The labourers are indeed few.—ED.]

“. . . WHEN writing to — by the Frisco mail, I inquired if he had any *simple* and *short* papers showing the errors of Mormonism, and asked him to send a few if so. These people have been in N.Z. a long time, and have made converts among the Maoris. About six months ago two of them went to the Chatham Islands (a tiny group off the east coast of this island), and there they have been going about from house to house seeking to spread their evil teaching. A Mrs P——, whom I know, writes saying no Christian evangelist has visited the Chathams, and now these people are there.

There is no minister on the islands—a clergyman goes about once a year for a month or two, but he may not be a converted man. The population is about four hundred, half being Maoris. The people live far apart mostly, and communication is difficult, but the Mormons have tramped, wet or dry, and help in whatever work is going on, whether it be mustering the sheep, or shearing, &c. &c., Mrs P—— tells me. Through her I have become acquainted with an old Christian woman living at one of the two townships on the islands, and receive letters from her. Mrs D——’s great desire is that others should know the Lord. Though she is poor and old (eighty-five), she sent me money to pay for some Maori Testaments she wanted to give, and procures many tracts and books for her neighbours and grandchildren. She has mentioned a Mr C——, a Christian gentleman owning a sheep-run, who, with another, reads the service in the little church, and does what he can in visiting the Maoris; but he has a family, and must attend to his sheep, so has little spare time. There are day schools, but the Bible is not read in them. Mrs D—— says, Is it not terrible to think of the Mormons going there? They are pleasant, well-mannered young men, and have won their way into houses all over the island, and obtained the use of the only hall, Mrs P—— has heard. . . .”

[Hearing of needy places such as this makes

one wish there were young evangelists to visit them, men fitted by the Lord to carry the good news of salvation. There are places in Australia, too, where many months pass without any service being held, the people being careless and indifferent.—W. J. L.]



Fragments.

SOME say, "I fully believe that Christ is the very true Son of God, one with the Father, and all His work and grace, but I do not know whether I have an interest in Him." This is the subtlety of Satan, and bad teaching, which would still throw you back off Christ.

God, for our comfort, has identified the two things, by stating that "by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). In a word, to say, "I believe, but I do not know whether I have an interest," is a delusion of the devil; for God says it is those who believe who have the interest—that is His way of dealing.

I have no more right to believe that I am a sinner, in myself, as God views it, than that I am righteous in Christ. The same testimony declares that none are righteous, and that all believers are justified.

J. N. D.

The Coming of the Lord with Reference to Christendom.

AS we have before remarked, these two chapters in Matthew (chaps. xxiv., xxv.) treat of the coming of the Lord in connection with the Jew, the Gentile, and the Christian. Down to the end of chapter xxiv. 31 the Jews are particularly in view.

The three parables that follow refer, we believe, to Christendom. In the first of these (xxiv. 42-51), we find a solemn picture of Christendom's unfaithfulness. Her responsibility was to watch during the absence of her Lord for His return. In the parallel passage in Mark xiii. 32-39, the servant is bidden to watch, and pray, and work. Specially is he told to watch, for the return of his Lord might take place at any moment, "at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning." How unlike was this to the Jewish aspect, where we are distinctly told that Christ could not come until the gospel of the kingdom had been preached unto all the nations (Matt. xxiv. 14), nor until the great tribulation had come to an end (ver. 29).

These verses may present some difficulty to our reader's mind. It is often argued from the former that it is quite a mistake for Christians to be looking for Christ's return as an immediate

or proximate hope ; for, it is said, the heathen are not yet fully evangelised. But this gospel of the kingdom has nothing to do with the gospel now being preached. The gospel of the kingdom will be announced by the Jewish remnant after the removal of the Church, and "the end" here spoken of is not the end of the Christian period, but "the end" of the Jewish dispensation of law which just precedes "the age to come," or that of Messiah's presence with His earthly people. We get these two "ages" spoken of in Matthew xii. 32 : "But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age (world), neither in the age to come."

In these opening verses of Matthew xxiv., the Jewish dispensation is looked at as running on without interruption from the time the Lord was addressing His disciples until His return. From other scriptures we know that there has been a parenthetical interruption of God's dealings with Israel. This parenthesis is occupied with the Church ; it began at the day of Pentecost, it will terminate at the rapture as described in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18. During this parenthesis the gospel of the grace of God is being preached ; the present glad tidings (or gospel) is also called "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4). In this gospel, testimony is borne to the blessed facts that Christ came nineteen hundred years ago, that He died, was raised,

and ascended to glory ; and that through faith in Him as dead, risen, and glorified, sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are saved and justified before God from all their sins ; that they are united together into "one body" by the Spirit which indwells them (1 Cor. xii. 13).

But after the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the air, the "gospel of the kingdom" will be preached. In this gospel, testimony will be borne to the fact that **Christ is coming** as King to reign, and all nations—that is, the heathen nations—will be called upon to believe in Him as the coming King, and to submit themselves to Him. This is spoken of prophetically in Psalm ii., "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little" (ver. 12).

Many prophecies of the Scriptures will be fulfilled during the interval between the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv.) and the time spoken of in Matthew xxiv. 29, 30 : "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

To return to the parable at the close of Matthew xxiv. Christendom here is likened to a servant that was held responsible to watch during the absence of her lord. In this she has utterly failed. She has not been the faithful and wise servant. Instead of this she has been like an evil servant that says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming." In other words, that invigorating and sanctifying hope of the coming of the Lord was speedily forgotten, and along with that, the professing Church abandoned itself to a course of worldliness. The judgment of Christendom is coming, and it will be terrible. Other scriptures speak of it, and these may pass before us in due course, but in this passage we get the moral reason of it all, namely, the lost hope of the return of her Lord. Not that that hope was entirely denied, but it was put off to a far distant and indefinite future, and then lost all its operative power upon the conscience. The revival of that hope in the power of the Spirit invariably produces separation from the spirit and principles and ways of the world.

But, it may be said, individual Christians are waiting for the Lord. Yes, thank God! they are, and in ever increasing numbers. But the parable of the evil servant represents Christendom *as a whole*. She has been found lacking in her responsibility, and in the end is destined to be spued out of Christ's mouth (Rev. iii. 14-22). No true Christians will be spued out

of His mouth, but Christendom is made up of true Christians and mere professors. This solemn aspect of the case is brought before us in the well-known parable of the ten virgins.



The Father's Name made Known— Then and Now.

JOHN xvii.



JESUS now turns His regard heavenwards. The world, and even His disciples, as being yet among them, disappear from His view. His gaze is fixed alone upon His Father, and exclusively to Him His words were spoken, though in the hearing of His disciples.

The hour was come to present man in heavenly glory as the beloved Son with the Father. This He had already been in manhood on the earth, but to be with the Father, both in presence as well as place, He must needs be glorified on high. Moreover, this was necessary if the Father was to be glorified in respect of those whom He had given to the Son, and to whom the Son would give eternal life.

For this purpose the Father had given Him authority over all flesh, not confined to His humbled and rejected state on earth, or to the earthly promises and the narrow limits of

Judaism, but to be exercised especially on high. For He would exercise this authority in grace by giving eternal life ; and the form which this must take would be the knowing the only true God as the Father and Jesus Christ the Sent One as the Son.

This was a relationship quite foreign to the Jew, and, of course, more so to the Gentile, who was without God in the world. It was the deity known according to its own essential relationships, a revelation which the first man, innocent or guilty, never had until the Sent One came, and then only to reject it ; or, as in the disciples' case, fail to perceive it. Yet, as to these last, grace dealt with them, as the passage shows (vers. 6-8), according to its own thoughts, and not according to their perceptions.

But Jesus must now be glorified in order that this blessing might be extended to all those given Him by the Father. For eternal life was not especially for Jews, even though believing, nor in this form was it peculiar to earth, nor were earthly distinctions recognised in it. Dispensations were a thing apart. It was essentially heavenly and that which was with the Father.

The legal system, therefore, must be disowned ; the earthly promises and Messiah's rights passed by, merged in that which was ever His proper and divine relationship as the eternal Son, though now in manhood, with the Father.

If as Son of the Father He desires the place

of heavenly glory, it is that He may glorify the Father in accomplishing the counsels of His grace. As in humiliation on the earth, He had already glorified the Father personally in all His character and nature, so that in seeing Him the Father had been seen. Moreover, He had finished the work which the Father had given Him to do on earth. As divinely as the Father who dwelt in Him had given the words and works, so perfectly had He in obedience uttered them from first to last. It is not here, God glorified and in consequence the Son of man glorified straightway according to His counsels concerning man; but the Father glorified, and the Son gone back in manhood into His own proper personal glory and place which He had in the presence of the Father before the world was.

Thus far (ver. 5) Jesus had spoken solely of Himself, and in dependence asks for that glory which was eternal and essentially divine at His Father's hand, on account of what He personally was to the Father—His Son; and of what He had done for the Father in completing the work given Him to do. His thoughts now turn towards His disciples—the men whom the Father had given Him out of the world. Up to verse 19 the apostolic company is specially in question; first as a pattern of Christian oneness kept in relationship with the Father—one as the Father and the Son; secondly, as in testimony before

the world. After this the Saviour (ver. 20) provides also for those believing on Him through the word of the apostles. Here it is not so much a pattern company in which divine oneness and relationship with the Father are displayed, but rather a perfect oneness among themselves of nature and communion, deriving its character from the Father and the Son, in testimony before the world; so that it should believe that Jesus was the Sent One of the Father.

But another scene opens to the eyes of Jesus, not an opposing, ruined world, and a testimony in the midst of it to what heavenly grace can do. It is now the glory given Him that shines before His heart, precious as His Father's gift. This He bestows upon His loved ones, in order that a divine oneness might be realised as to them in glory. It is not nature and communion that is here the special point, as previously; nor a realisation, in a pattern company, of the special Christian and divine relationship with the Father and the Son, as in the case of the apostles. It is not position on high in the life and relationship of the exalted Son, true as that is. He says not, "I in My Father and ye in Me and I in you"; but, "I in them and Thou in Me." The believers are viewed here on high indeed, but before a world, not believing, it may be, but astonished and convinced that the rejected Christ was the Father's Sent One; while those who through

grace received Him were loved as He was loved. The glory in which each was personally perfected was the public proof that Christ was in them and the Father in Him. It is not the heavenly position known only to faith by the Spirit, but the unmistakable, because glorious, display of this, which every eye must needs take cognisance of; for the saints are individually perfected into one manifested company.

One more desire fills up the Saviour's requests; viz., that where He is they also whom the Father has given Him may be with Him, so as to behold His glory—a glory which has been given Him doubtless as in manhood, but not connected with this world, for it is the manifestation of a love which existed before its foundation and was eternal.

A Call to Young Believers.

“Here am I, send me.”—ISA. vi. 8.

“And Moses said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord.”—EXOD. xxxii. 29.

THE Lord is coming. We affectionately draw the young Christian's attention to this; not simply as a doctrine, for it has been proclaimed throughout Christendom for many years, but as an urgent declaration from His own blessed lips on the very eve of its fulfilment (Rev. xxii. 20); and we may each ask ourselves, How does this solemn yet blessed declaration affect me?

He left this world appointing to each of His servants their respective work for Him as their Lord, saying, "Occupy till I come" (Luke xix. 13). Can the long interval of time that has elapsed lessen the importance of those words to our hearts now? May He graciously stir us up to increased vigilance and devotedness in these closing days!

We have been much rejoiced of late at seeing so many young people coming to the front and confessing themselves on the Lord's side. This is, no doubt, largely the result of the awakening going on around us, and we adore the grace that has called them thus to respond to the gospel trumpet's call, but this inspires us to make a special appeal to such, that they may not receive *the grace of God in vain*, but, like the young converts in Thessalonica, sound forth the message to all around; and, in the words of the young man in Acts ix., inquire, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

You have been brought to the Lord not only to receive a blessing, but to be His witnesses to the grace that has saved you, and we enjoin upon you, especially as the time is short, to get before the Lord, and learn from Him, as that new convert did, what active part He would have you take in the testimony of His grace.

Many things in these days are calculated to act as a check to devotedness in the Lord's matters. We suppose there never was a day

when so much strain was being put forth on all hands for prosperity and pleasure as that in which we live, and even Christians are in danger of being drawn into the vortex. There is, too, another thing we do well to take note of, namely, that a similar moral condition of things is found among the professing people of God as was apparent in the days when God called the prophet quoted above. Scripture does not indicate for a moment that we are to expect a better state of things generally, rather the contrary ; but we can look and pray earnestly that the Lord will call out and send forth devoted labourers into His harvest, inspired with a holy zeal for Him ; and who are better adapted for this than those converted in their youth, and this is the way *He is pleased to carry on and perfect His work.*

There are three things we would draw attention to in connection with the call of Isaiah which may be instructive to any who may have a special desire to be used of the Lord. The first is the wonderful vision the Lord gave of Himself and His glory. This, too, corresponds very much with the special case of the young man we have referred to in Acts ix. Each received his call though under different dispensations from the same Lord. What was the effect of this ? They saw His glory and spake of Him (compare John xii. 41 ; Acts ix. 20). Different, indeed, the character of their testimony, but He Himself

was the object. Now what was the effect of this vision on the prophet? It gave him the sense of his own nothingness, it withered up all that was of the flesh in him, and this must be if we would be of any real service to the Lord.

But along with this comes the grace that fits the vessel, and this brings us to our second point. Conscious of his own unfitness, and likewise the condition of the people to whom the Lord was sending him, he is found prostrate before Him in true contrition. It is then that one of the seraphim flew unto him, "having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and touched his lips and said, Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Conscious now that his own iniquity was gone and his sin purged, he could go forth to others; he had a certainty in the Lord's secret dealing with him that would give him definiteness in his testimony (compare for us 2 Cor. iv.). Note here it is not purging by blood, this fits us for God and for heaven, but by what is a symbol of judgment, God's holy judgment of all we have done and all we are in self-judgment, too, if you please, fitting for testimony in the midst of a sinful people. Now this is grace, but of a character suited to its purpose. Grace in service can only shine, as we learn, by the cross, the utter condemnation of the flesh. The live coal is a proof that judgment has done its work, but on the victim on our behalf, our consciences accept this

in self-judgment before God. We learn the worthlessness of the flesh in anything that can be of service to God, but His grace deigns to take up the vessel worthless as it is, now sanctified through the cross for Him.

Now our third point is of equal value as flowing from the first two. The prophet now hears the voice of the Lord, but what does that voice say? "**Who will go for us?**" This is not a command, it is a call, according to the grace that fits the vessel. Who will go for us? What an appeal from the Lord of hosts. Can any dare to respond? Yes, the man who has heard the voice of the Lord, and learned of Him after the example of the prophet, "Here am I, send me."

Young believers, to whom we specially appeal, hearken to that voice, hearken, too, to the response so fitted to the appeal. Say not, I am unworthy. He knows it, yet He calls. Never can the writer forget when that voice reached him, when the lips were sealed in His presence, not capable of uttering a word even in prayer, when by an irresistible power they were unsealed, first to speak to Him, then for Him. After forty years and more he writes, and though perhaps in a deeper way, more conscious of unfitness, yet conscious, too, of the grace that started and still deigns to use in a humble way. He now makes bold to appeal to his younger brethren to respond to the call, "Who will go for us?" and in

the words of the prophet to say, "Here am I, send me."

Again we say, The Lord is coming; let your lives be dedicated to Him. "Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord."

H. L.

The Love of Jesus.

*Extracts from a Lecture by C. H. M., given at
Kennington, 22nd Feb. 1868.*

(John xxi. 1-19).

THE secret of all true power is found in the occupation of the heart with the Person of Christ. The Lord has given much truth to brethren, and we should have a just sense and value of the same. What I want to press is the practical consequences of the truth communicated. Is there any measure of adequate response? Has it had its weight in all the circumstances of our lives? Is it carried out?

My own thorough deep conviction of the state of things amongst us is (and I believe that every upright mind and earnest heart will admit it), that there is not the practical result there should be, and if you ask, Why? I answer, Because our hearts have got away from the Person of Christ, and from those personal manifestations mentioned in John xiv. 21, 23.

Now that is something peculiar, something especial. Allow me to ask, Do you understand and habitually enjoy these manifestations?

Some may object and say, "You are going to preach experience," but I say no, you cannot get on without these manifestations. Abstract truth will not feed the soul nor the heart. Unquestionably I would not put abstract truth against devotional, nor devotional against abstract—neither would I put didactic truth against what is experimental, nor what is experimental against what is didactic, but I would have your souls hold all truth in connection with the Person of Christ Himself. I want you to feel that there is something about *acquaintance* with the Person of Christ without which you *cannot* get on. Why do we find some all correctness in views, doctrines, and knowledge of Church position, and yet with no *savour* of Christ when you meet them? In John xxi. we see the effect of the realised presence of Christ, and the absence of it. Why were the disciples gone back to their fishing again? Because they had lost the sense of the presence of Jesus! Here also, as with the disciples at Emmaus, the moment their hearts get back again, they go and say to the others, We have seen the Lord!

I would press two things upon any soul present, that knows what backsliding in heart is—though by grace preserved from outward fall—viz., *restoration* and *consecration*. We have

shown us in Peter's case two kinds of restoration, that of the conscience and that of the heart. The moment Peter hears from his more spiritual brother, "It is the Lord," he goes beyond him in energetic action. In John we see the calm spirit, the discerning heart, the practised eye. Alas, how often He speaks and we don't understand, He is near and we don't perceive! In Peter we find not only energy and boldness, but unshaken confidence in the heart of Christ. "He girt his fisher's coat about him," &c. Surely his conscience was purged, or he would have said to John, "You had better go first." Not a trace of that: he would be the first, just as if he had said, "Not one has failed as I have, so I must be the first to get to the feet of my risen Lord." He reckoned on the love and confided in the heart of Christ.

The more deeply I prize the presence of Christ, the more keenly I feel His absence, the more miserable I shall be under it. Who would understand so well the parent's averted face as the child that has walked in the sunshine of the parent's smile. I do not know anything more deplorable than to be satisfied with the mercies of His hand without a sense of His presence. . . . A soul cannot be fresh or happy away from Jesus. Ostensible position is one thing, our practical position is another. It is a personal question, how far we are daily realising communion with the Lord Himself.

The confidence of Peter's heart was grateful to the heart of Jesus ; no matter how backsliding the disciple, His heart is still the same. Oh the restoring grace of Jesus !

“ Still sweet 'tis to discover
If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, Eternal Lover,
Towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright.”

Wherever you are who have slidden away, get back to Him, don't let Satan shake your confidence in Jesus, or succeed in making you question His love, or tempt you to keep longer away ; get to His feet, and you will find not a single cloud on His brow.

And when “they were come to land,” what found they there? (ver. 9). The Lord had been thinking of them, looking after their wants, making Himself the servant of their necessities, as much as to say, Could you not trust Me for a dinner? There is not a single thought or care that the heart of Jesus is not interested in for us. Not a scrap of food you have, but you may take it from the hand that was nailed to the cross. What a heaven on earth we might know did we realise that Jesus has thus done *all* for us, spread our table, made our bed, &c. Was there ever such a dinner party? Jesus the host and a restored conscience feeding in the presence of Infinite, Everlasting Love ! In that presence “none durst ask,” &c. Each heart there as well as John's knew “it was the Lord.”

Where do you see moral glory as in Jesus? Wiping the tear off the widow's cheek, stooping to spread and prepare a table. In all the tender touches of His life down here you see a moral glory; *come and trust it*. Oh, there's a charm about the heart that's formed by such thoughts of Jesus—it must be devotional, while the heart that's formed merely by doctrinal statements will remain an icicle.

“When they had dined,” and not till then, He draws Peter apart. He had a question to settle with Peter's heart. He will apply the knife to the roots; it is not enough to have the soil removed from the conscience, the heart must be reached, the root must be touched. Take off the tops of the weeds in your fields, and they will sprout again. Partial restorations will not suffice; from such we have those awkward and defective restorations, as in conversions we have awkward and defective conversions, work so shallow and defective as to leave no permanent result in life. A soil on the conscience is the effect of what is working in the heart. What was working in Peter's heart? Self-confidence. “Though all forsake Thee,” &c. (John xiii. 36).

Self-knowledge is the death-blow to self-confidence. If you know yourself, you will never trust yourself. The more you know Christ the more you will *trust in Him*. We are apt to sigh for “first love”; why should not the love tried and proved be deeper and sweeter?

“Lovest thou Me?” In this question the Lord uses the deepest and strongest form language is capable of. Peter’s answer is in a much lower form: “I have affection for Thee.” The Lord uses the same term as at first, the second time. The third time He takes up Peter’s word, “Hast thou affection for Me?” Then the roots were reached, Peter’s heart was now broken, and he says, “Because Thou knowest *all* things I can say to Thee, I have affection for Thee.” Christ then gives the most touching expression of His confidence, “Feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep.” (*Feed* has two meanings, one to supply food, the other to give pastoral care.) “Follow Me.” The Lord Jesus Christ presents in these words the high and holy privilege of following Him down His martyr path. Christ was a victim under the hand of God, a martyr under the hand of man. The first suffering we cannot know. *He* bore it all that we might never. The second suffering we must know if we follow in separation a rejected Christ. Can you say, I long to have fellowship with Jesus in the martyr path? I would urge upon you the following with undivided love and firm attachment a martyred Jesus, not with easy-going profession, but a living conformable to His death. What was the first injunction to Israel on entering Canaan? Make you sharp knives—roll away the reproach, &c. May none of us traffic in *unfelt truth*.

The Work of Christ, and its Consequences.

NO. I.—LUKE XV.

WE are all very familiar with the three beautiful stories in the 15th of Luke. But the Word of God is not like other books. It is so simple that simple people can understand it, but it is as deep as the heart of God, so deep that wise people cannot understand it.

If you are one of the wise people you may say in your heart, "I am sure there is nothing in the 15th of Luke that I don't understand perfectly." But there are two things in it that with all your wisdom you know nothing about; you don't know what it is to be *lost*, and you don't know what it is to be *found*, and if you don't exchange your wisdom for the heart of a little child you will end up, like the miserable elder son in this chapter, *outside* the joy of the Father's house *for ever*. But if you do know what it is to be lost, and better still what it is to be found, the 15th of Luke will always thrill your heart with joy. Eternity will never exhaust the depths that are unfolded in it by Him who came down to make the love of God known to you.

First of all this chapter comes in where we should least expect it. It comes after the rejection of the blessed Lord by His own earthly

people, the Jews. In the 13th chapter He utters those deeply touching words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

With a heart wrung by grief that we cannot enter into, He pronounces sentence against those whom He had so deeply loved, "I *would*" "but ye *would not*."

Then in the 14th chapter He goes on to show that if those who were first invited to the Supper which God's love had made ready would not come, nevertheless He would have His house filled. God in His own wonderful way turns the very rejection of the Lord Jesus by His own people into wider blessing. In Romans xi. 11, the apostle Paul tells us that "through their (the Jews) fall *salvation is come unto the Gentiles*." Instead of the blessing being shut up in the heart of God by the heartless rejection of the Lord Jesus, it was only like a great river dammed up by some fall of rock. Seeming for a moment to be checked, it rises, and, gathering strength, bursts through the barrier and floods the country far and wide. So the love of God in Jesus burst

every barrier at the cross, overflowed all ancient limits, and reached us poor, hopeless Gentiles who had no claims, no promises at all.

That is why the Lord Jesus before beginning the parables in the 15th of Luke says, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." It is for anybody who has ears to hear it. To have an ear means to take an interest in a thing. If you know nothing about money matters and were to pay a visit one day to the Stock Exchange, you would see hundreds of men, with notebook in hand, intent on the announcements rapidly made of the prices of various stocks. These announcements would have no meaning for you whatever, but to the eager men with their busy pencils they would mean gain or loss of thousands of pounds. Now the people who had an ear, that is, who took a personal interest in what Jesus was saying, were bad people, publicans and sinners. If one of the scribes around had stood up to read the law, these bad people who pressed round Jesus with such eagerness to hear Him would have hurried away out of hearing as far as they could. Why? Because the law could only tell them what sinners they were, and what they deserved, it could do nothing to meet their need.

But the words that fell from the lips of the Saviour so sweetly upon the opened ear of the sinner were not *law* but *grace*. What is the difference? It is very simple. Law is God dealing with me *according to what I am*. Grace

is God dealing with me *according to what He is*. The law of God tells me **what I must do for God**. The grace of God tells me **what God has done for me**. (See Rom. iv. 4, 5, x. 5; Eph. ii. 8, 9, and many other passages.) But the very fact of God's stepping in to do the work for me proves that I cannot do it myself. This is the starting-point of these three parables.

Next, it is very easy to see that the first two parables are not at all like the third in their details. In the first two the whole subject is what the shepherd *did*, and what the woman *did*. The only two things that the Spirit of God tells us about the sheep and the piece of money are that they were both **lost**, and both **found**. There is not a word about the feelings, thinkings, or doings of the sheep or the piece of money.

But in the third parable, while it is the father himself who tells us that the prodigal was *lost* and is *found*, we get the whole story of how the prodigal got away, what he did, what he felt, what he thought, and what he said, from the time he left the father's house until the moment when the father met him. This contrast is easy to see. In brief it is the difference between the blessed work that the Lord Jesus did *on the cross* for God's glory and our salvation, and the work that must be done *in our souls* that we may learn our need and God's way of meeting it. We learn the consequences of the work that was done entirely outside of us, and so get *established in*

grace. The work on the cross was *perfect*, and God desires that the work in our souls should answer to it ; but that is not done in a moment, so the third parable is much longer than the others, but *they must come first.*

This is why many do not get settled peace, because they do not begin with the Good Shepherd's work, and so learn its infinite perfection, completeness, and eternal consequences. They begin with their own experiences and go on with them. This is putting the work that is done *in* us in the place of the work that has been done *outside* of us, but it is not God's order.

Have you got settled peace with God? If you have not, ask yourself whether you have not been putting your experience in the place of the perfect work of Christ. How did the lost sheep get on the shoulders of the shepherd?

Ezekiel's Sighs.

(CHAPTER XXI.)

THE last five verses of chapter xx., as marked in the Authorised Version, properly belong to chapter xxi. Three separate communications are made to Ezekiel (chap. xx. 45, xxi. 1 and 8) to show that the judgment of Jehovah was without question about to fall upon Jerusalem. "Son of man, set thy face toward the south . . . and

prophesy against the forest of the south field"—the fire of judgment was about to sweep through the whole land from south to north, and none should be exempt; the green tree and the dry tree alike should suffer, and all flesh should become aware that "I the Lord have kindled it," and moreover, "it shall not be quenched." This seems explicit enough, and yet the guilty nation fail to realise the gravity of the announcement. They pitied the poor prophet, who kept faithfully sounding in their ears the solemn warning from the Lord: "Doth he not speak parables?" Is there nothing like this to be seen in Christendom to-day? Do not professing Christians—ah, and even some who seem really to be the children of God—close their ears at every mention of judgment about to fall on the professing Church? And yet, how clearly does the New Testament foretell it!

But now (chap. xxi. 1, 8) all figurative language is dropped—"Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem . . . and prophesy against the land of Israel, and say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth My sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked." Nothing could be more explicit than this. Jehovah's sword would be unsheathed against His own land. Not a mere temporary chastisement of evildoers amongst the people, but a national judgment

wherein the righteous as well as the wicked should be the sufferers.

This it was that awakened Ezekiel's sighs. To be a prophet of overwhelming judgment was no light matter, and Ezekiel was called to feel deeply the bitterness of it all. To see the prophet's anguish of heart might awaken some to ask, "Wherefore sighest thou?" But the judgment could not now be stayed, for the people's sin had gone too far; long delayed it had been, but now the painful tidings had gone forth—"Behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord God."

In passing, we would seek to learn and apply the instruction of this passage to ourselves and our own times. The professing Church is in ruins, and on the high road to judgment—"Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. iii. 16). Recovery is impossible, evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse. True, there may be gracious times of revival and refreshing here and there, but this must not deceive us—the apostasy is rapidly developing.

But what effect has the knowledge of these things upon our consciences? "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Nothing should ever hinder us from rejoicing in the Lord, personal failure alone excepted. To be walking in known sin and disobedience and

yet to maintain an air of joy is nothing but insincerity; it is making mirth (ver. 10) when there should be sorrow and confession.

But there is nothing inconsistent between a deep sense of the ruin and failure of the professing Church, and fulness of joy in personal communion with the Lord.

Again the word of the Lord comes to Ezekiel (vers. 18-28), this time making known who He would use as His sword. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, was His sword to execute His judgment upon His guilty people. This was to be the commencement of "the times of the Gentiles," when the throne of Jehovah should be removed from the earth; these times are still running their course, but they began about this very time, when Zedekiah, the profane, wicked prince of Israel, "stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13). He was called profane for despising the oath which he had sworn, and for breaking the covenant he had made with the King of Babylon in the name of Jehovah.

Verses 26 and 27 are of exceeding interest. In the government of Jehovah the diadem and crown have been removed from the land of Israel. Zedekiah was the last king to sit on the throne of David. Since then, through the centuries until Christ, the true Messiah and King of Israel, was born, there has been nothing

but anarchy and usurpation—"exalt the low and abase the high." Everything that man has endeavoured to do for the restoration of that scattered people has come to nothing—"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it." God will not suffer anything to succeed "until He come, whose right it is."

But He has come, and the Jewish nation would not have Him. It is "an indisputable fact, that the Lord Jesus of Nazareth is the last in Jewish history whose descent from the royal line of David can now be established by sufficiently authentic proof" (Barron). The right to sit on David's throne was His; but other counsels had to be fulfilled, even that "eternal purpose" of God, which was to set the Church, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles, in heavenly glory with Christ; and for this He had to die. But nevertheless He came, whose right it was, and on that throne He yet will sit—"I will give it Him."



"Making Melody in your Heart to the Lord."

THOUGH hymns of praise in purest notes abound,
If only on the lips, these are but sound
Which melts away in air :

But when the heart to melody is moved,
Constrained by love divine, so richly proved,
As incense this to God's own throne ascends,
Nor loses fragrance as it heavenward wends,
And finds a welcome there.

The Work of Christ, and its Consequences.

NO. II.—LUKE XV.

TO return then for a moment to the beginning. First of all we get what is always important to see in all the parables, the circumstances which bring them out of the heart of Jesus, the wellspring of God's love to sinners.

The Lord is in the midst; close round Him, in answer to His call—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"—have gathered a ring of publicans and sinners to hear Him; while at a distance there is another circle of murmuring scribes and Pharisees, whose words betray the secret of this world's hatred of Jesus, "This man receiveth sinners." It must have brought before the heart of the blessed Lord the scene that lay before Him at the end of His pathway, when He should again be in the midst, with a sinner on either hand, and the same circle around Him again rendering unwitting testimony to the purpose that had brought Him to that place of shame, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Thus, at the thought of the cross, the Lord Jesus unfolds in this parable of the lost sheep, all the need that brought Him into the world to save sinners, and all the full and blessed results of the work that He was to accomplish at that cross.

The first thing is the sheep is *lost*, that is enough to claim the heart of the shepherd. There is no need to give an account of how the sheep got lost. Every one knows that a sheep does that very easily. The object of this parable is to show what the shepherd did. There are seven things :—

1. *He leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness.*—The Lord Jesus came to save sinners, lost sinners, and no one else has any personal interest in Him as a Saviour at all. If you belong to the ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, you will be left alone while the Shepherd goes after the *lost*, but you will meet Him again, *not* as a Saviour, but as a Judge.

2. *He goes after that which is lost.*—We shall never fully know where He went to find us. We must learn something of what it is to be *lost* in order to know the joy of what it is to be *found*, as we shall find in the third parable. But it is the cross that tells out the love of Jesus. That love went so deep, deeper far than our need, that the result of the blessed work on Calvary brings us, not back to the ninety and nine in the wilderness, but into the very glory of God (Rom. v. 2). He had to go where the lost sheep was in order to find it. He had to take our place in order to save us, but far more was done at the cross than meeting our need. *God was glorified* (John xiii. 31, 32). If the work that He did had only been measured by our need, it would have been

wonderful indeed, but it would have left us—where many Christians are in their souls to-day—in doubt as to the future. But *the full extent* of the work is shown by its *consequences*. First, however, comes the finding.

3. *He finds it.*—On that we need not dwell. The joy that fills our hearts when we discover that Jesus has died for *our* sins, and by faith lay hold of His work for our own need, is but the faint reflection of a deep and mighty joy that fills the Saviour's heart, and fills all heaven too. Still as this parable is wholly a question of His work, and as our joy does nothing either to save us or to keep us saved, we have nothing about it here. There is not a word about the sheep's feelings, we only know that nothing stayed the course of the Saviour's love until the lost sheep was found. "*Until He find it.*"

4. *He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing.*—To judge by the thoughts of many Christians, this rejoicing was very premature. Surely the Shepherd must have forgotten that the sheep was not home yet, and might easily get lost on the way. What wretched thoughts of Him, of His love, of His power, and of the value of His blessed work, do we harbour when we think that the feeblest sheep that rests upon His shoulders can ever be lost. We might as well say out plainly that the Shepherd may never get home, for *the sheep's getting home depends entirely on the Shepherd's getting there.* But the very next words are:

5. *When He cometh home.*—Jesus is *not* on the way to the glory, *He is there now*. The everlasting doors have opened to receive the Lord of glory, the songs of heaven have welcomed Him, and the Father's throne, the highest place in glory, is now His seat. The One who took your place on the cross secures your place in the glory, for He is there *now*, and so perfect is the result of His work that God's Word speaks of you as *already glorified* (Rom. viii. 30). There can be no settled peace until you see this. It all depends upon His work, He does it all. That work is not measured by your need but by God's glory, and the proof is that He is in God's glory now. If you limit the consequences of that work, you are touching God's glory, for it is God's glory that you should be in the glory too. For the Shepherd to get home without the sheep would be a confession that He had failed, that God had not been glorified. But blessed be God it is not so, and this little parable, so deep and full in its meaning, shows us the Shepherd entering that glory with the sheep on His shoulders. Does it not shame your doubting heart? As to *how* He keeps you we need not here speak. It is enough for you to know that from the moment He finds you until eternity ends you are on His shoulders. Then, too, it is *home* that He brings you—His home. You cannot know what it means to be at home while you are in doubt as to the final result of His work on the cross. Hence

the need of having your soul established in the grace that comes out in the first parable. This parable is the source of everything. It must come first.

6. *He calls together His friends and neighbours.*—There was a great gathering of the sons of God long ago when the same blessed Person who carries home His sheep in triumph laid the foundations of the world, which was to be the scene of His lonely path of love, and of His cross with all its shame. Then they shouted for joy (Job xxxviii. 7). But there is a greater gathering yet to come, summoned by the One who found His sheep. The heavenly hosts sang glory to God when the Saviour was born in the manger at Bethlehem. They watched the hour of conflict when the lowly Man of Sorrows met the devil alone in the wilderness. They ministered with adoring heart to the dependent One who had met and defeated all the tempter's wiles. They watched that darker hour of agony when the prince of this world returned with the power of death and came upon the Saviour in Gethsemane. They hovered in wonder, legions of angels, while their Lord was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yielding Himself up to man's hatred. They sat in His empty tomb and told of His resurrection, and they announced His coming again to the disciples gazing heavenward. Now they minister to the heirs of salvation. But when the moment comes for the full display of redemption glory,

there will be a gathering such as heaven has never known, a rejoicing beyond all joy that ever filled the courts of light.

In Revelation v. we find the blessed Lord again *in the midst*, but it is in the midst of the throne set in heaven ; again we find two circles around Him, again the inner circle is composed of sinners, but they are sinners saved by grace, who cast their crowns before the Lamb and own Him as the only worthy One. And the second circle is not composed of those who mock and jeer. Now it is the heavenly hosts who have watched adoringly the wondrous plan of redemption being carried out on earth to its final completion in glory ; they echo the refrain that will fill heaven for ever, " Worthy is the Lamb " ; with cheerful and ungrudging joy they rejoice in redemption, and the tide flows out to all creation. But why this joy ? That is the last thing and the best, and none but the Shepherd can tell us why He calls this mighty gathering, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, to share His joy.

7. *Rejoice with Me, for I have found MY sheep which was lost.*—He strikes the keynote of the song. He is the chief musician. It is *His* joy that fills heaven. But what is *His* joy ? To have the sense of this in my soul is to have all fear cast out, for it is perfect love that breathes in the utterance of those words, so simple and yet with all the depth of Calvary in them. "*I*

have *found* MY sheep which was *lost*." That one word "*My*" tells us all that can be told. Thus we get the Shepherd's work and its eternal consequences. How much does the sheep do in all this? Think of it a little, if you are full of your own thoughts and fears, and let your heart pass from point to point of the Shepherd's triumphant journey, from the manger to the cross, from the cross to the glory, and see yourself borne in upon His shoulders, and begin now to praise Him for what He *has done*.

S. H. H.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

THE Church is the Bride of Christ according to Revelation xxi., but in the passage now before us (Matt. xxv. 1-14), though the coming of Christ is likened to the coming of a bridegroom, yet Christendom is viewed as made up of individuals, some of whom are true believers, and others mere professors; hence these are spoken of as ten virgins, five of whom are wise, and five foolish. The Bride represents the Church in its entirety, and composed of nothing but true believers.

In this parable we get a brief but vivid picture of the whole history of the professing Church from start to finish.

I. The Attitude of the early Christians with reference to the Coming of Christ.

The early Christians all were expecting the return of the Lord Jesus. The coming of the Lord was no peculiar doctrine in those days; it was the universal expectation. "They all went out to meet the bridegroom." A careful study of the New Testament will convince anybody of the truth of this. It would be impossible to enumerate all the passages which speak of it, but we would suggest to the Christian reader that he should read through the New Testament, and prayerfully note all the different allusions to this subject. We believe he will come to no other conclusion than this, that all the early Christians were waiting for Christ, and not only so, but that they were taught so to do by the Lord Himself and the apostles.

We shall briefly refer to one passage, and that perhaps the most easily understood. The two epistles to the Thessalonians are full of the subject, they allude to it in every chapter. Let us take the first epistle.

Converted to Wait.—The blessed gospel had reached these Thessalonians when sunk in all the darkness and degradation of heathenism. Some amongst them no doubt were Jews, but whether Jews or Gentiles, the same gospel met them both, and brought them into the enjoyment of the same blessings.

The gospel treats all men as being alike

guilty and lost. It matters not whether Jew or Gentile, whether rich or poor, whether high-born or low-born, whether learned or ignorant, all are sinners in the sight of God, and all are lost. The gospel establishes the great principle that there is no difference, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23); this is the "no difference" of man's utter ruin. But, thank God! there is also in that same gospel the "no difference" of God's free and sovereign grace—"for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 10, 11).

This blessed truth Paul announced at Thessalonica (Acts xvii.), when he opened and alleged from the Scriptures "that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead." Here was the secret of the apostle's success. He appealed to the Scriptures, and allowed the Word of God to act upon the souls of his hearers. Oh for more of this kind of work to-day! It is easy to work upon the feelings by music and fine singing, but the application of the Word of God to the conscience is fast dying out of the preaching of the day. The preachers that emanate from theological colleges come forth primed and poisoned with the infidelity gendered by "higher criticism," Evolution, and other oppositions of science falsely so-called.

Except with rare and bright exceptions, less and less soul-saving work is done by the ordained ministers of whatever denomination, whether of church or dissent. Whatever time is not taken up in the study, preparing sermons based upon the destructive criticism of these rationalistic days, is largely devoted to getting up worldly bazaars and organising entertainments to keep worldly people together by worldly means.

It is supposed that the old gospel has lost its power. **It has not**; and wherever preached in the power of God's Spirit the same blessed results follow as were seen at Thessalonica. They "turned to God from idols" (1 Thess. i. 9); this was true conversion, it was a complete change of life. For the first time their hearts, their consciences were brought into contact with the living and the true God. Mere religiousness was done with; the dead routine of rites and ceremonies and religious observances became a thing of the past; they were brought to God—to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him.

But more than this, they were converted "to wait for His Son from heaven." The apostle Paul had brought this blessed hope so powerfully before them, that from the moment of their conversion, and until false teachers began their dismal work amongst them (2 Thess. ii.), they were expecting Christ to come, and were waiting for Him, not knowing but what He might come during their very lifetime.

But the days and weeks, and months passed by, and yet the Lord did not return. In the ordinary course of human life in this world, some of their number sickened and died. Their brethren left alive now were stricken with an excessive sorrow on their behalf. Doubtless they feared that those who had fallen asleep would in some way be losers of the joy and glory they were expecting at the coming of the Lord. This was the occasion the Holy Ghost took to make the further and fuller revelation, not only for them but for us as well, of how and where the joyful meeting would take place between the returning Lord and His saints, whether sleeping or living.

Others which have no Hope.—First the difference between the Christian and the man of the world with reference to death is clearly made known. There is nothing more terrible to the worldly man than death. When the grave closes over the body of one who has lived and died without Christ, all hope is at an end. The man or woman who dies unsaved can never be saved at all. The pearly gates will never open beyond the grave for those who depart this life without saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “**No hope**”—awful words! This describes the dismal future of the one who dies unpardoned and unreconciled. But it is not so with the Christian, “Ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Thess. iv. 13).

“ There'll be songs of greeting
When Jesus comes,
And a joyful meeting
When Jesus comes
To gather His loved ones home.”

The apostle now recalls their hearts to the gospel that had brought them peace and deliverance at the beginning. He had preached to them, and they had believed “that Jesus died and rose again”; they were waiting, too, for God's Son from heaven. Just as certainly as He had died and risen, and was coming back, so with the same absolute certainty would God bring back with Him those that had fallen asleep.

An entirely fresh revelation follows. Mark the emphatic manner in which the apostle declares that what he is now communicating comes with all the authority of “**the word of the Lord.**”

It is not Paul's opinion, it is the revealed and inspired word of the Lord. “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.” This word “prevent” is an old English word which means “go before,” or “get in front of.”

Notice, too, how Paul puts himself amongst the number of those who might be alive when the Lord did come back, for he says, “**We** which *are* alive and remain,” not “they.”

The living saints, then, will not get in front

of the sleeping ones at the coming of the Lord. While it is ever our privilege to be looking for and expecting our Lord to come from day to day, yet if we are called away *before* He comes, we shall not be losers *when* He comes. So far from this the sleeping ones will be first thought of.

Caught up in the Clouds.—The apostle had said that the sleeping saints would come back with Jesus when He comes (ver. 14). He was coming back to reign, for He was a King, and this the apostle had already declared to them (Acts xvii. 7). His kingdom will extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. The sleeping saints will not be absent from that glorious scene. But how can they possibly come back with Him when He comes to reign? The Lord is in heaven and they are in their graves, how can they come with Him? True, their spirits are with Him now; the moment the saint dies his spirit goes to be with Christ: this the Scripture most clearly declares (see Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. v. 6, 8; Phil. i. 23). But nevertheless the body is in the grave, how then can they come with Him when He comes?

The answer is given in the following verse (1 Thess. iv. 16). Those that are in their graves shall hear His voice, even so had the Lord Himself declared when here on earth (John v. 28, 29). The voice of the Son of God

will be heard by all who are in their graves, both saved and unsaved, both believers and unbelievers. Not at the same time, for a thousand years will separate the resurrection of the saint from that of the wicked (Rev. xx. 5).

But in the passage immediately before us there is something altogether special in the language used. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." How precious are these words, "The Lord Himself!" He will not depute to another the performance of this loving service. He will not merely send an archangel nor a host of heavenly messengers to fetch us home, but He will come Himself! He will descend from heaven "with a shout."

There is something peculiar in this word "shout"; it is the shout of a general marshalling his troops; a shout heard in the ranks of the general's own army, and not in those of the opposing force. This "shout" is to be heard by the saints and not by the world.

The courts of heaven will be all astir to welcome the saints to their eternal home in glory. The time of their pilgrimage had lengthened out, many had been gently put to sleep by Jesus, but now the long-expected moment arrives, when with a shout of command, the Lord Himself descends from heaven to assemble together the scattered units of His heavenly army. More quickly than it takes to write or read these lines will the archangel's voice carry

the great Captain's orders along the ranks of the redeemed host, and the trump of God shall sound out loud and clear. The figure here used is the awakening and calling together of a camp at its general's command.

The Dead in Christ shall rise First.—Our great Captain's army, we may say, is divided into two regiments, the "dead" and the "living." Each of these is noticed. The Thessalonians had feared on behalf of the dead that they might be forgotten, but no, they will be first thought of—"the dead in Christ shall rise first." It is not here a question of the first resurrection, when, as we know, the saints will rise a thousand years before the wicked. In this passage the word "first" is used with reference to the dead and living saints.

The living saints will not "go before" the sleeping saints; both are to be caught up together from the earth. Hence the first thing that takes place is the resurrection of the sleeping saints. "Raised in glory" (1 Cor. xv. 43) they will be, and standing side by side with the living who will be changed in a moment, together they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. No more parting, no more weeping, but **for ever with the Lord.**

Thus then the difficulty was solved. The Thessalonians need not sorrow as those that had no hope, for when Jesus returns in His glory, the sleeping saints, no less than the living, will God

bring with Him (ver. 14). The Lord Himself will come *for* them, both dead and living, before they return *with* Him.

Brief Remarks on the Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit as presented in the Scriptures.

NO. I.

MANY earnest Christians at the present day are looking for a further outpouring of the Holy Spirit—a kind of return of pentecostal times. They long, and very rightly so, for more power and revival blessing. It is well, therefore, that we should prayerfully consider what Scripture teaches us concerning the Holy Spirit, and the results which flow from His presence on earth; counting on God that we may be enlightened and taught His mind.

When we open the Bible we find on the very first page of the inspired book that the Spirit of God was active. When the earth had not yet been shaped and formed as it is now, as a habitation for man; when it was still waste and empty, the Spirit of God was brooding over the face of the waters. Throughout the entire Old Testament we read much about the Holy Spirit, but there is a marked difference between His actings then and now. *Then* He came upon

men whom He was pleased to use in various ways, and He enabled them to act for God ; but He did not **dwell in** the saints of old. And this marks the great distinction, so far as the presence and operation of the Spirit is concerned, between the Old and New Testament times. It was not till Christ came, till He died, rose, and went on high, that the blessed Spirit of God came to dwell.

“ Know ye not,” says the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, “ that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which we have of God ? ”—this is an immense and weighty truth, which could not be said in Old Testament times. *Then* the Spirit of God “ **came upon** ” men and spake or acted through them : *now* He **dwells in** every believer.

This at once accounts for the fact that even the disciples themselves knew and understood the Lord much better when He was gone from them to heaven, than they did when He was present with them on earth—it was because **the Spirit had come** . And He says when leaving them that they were to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49), they were to wait for the promise of the Father, and they were to receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them (Acts i. 4, 8). The fulfilment of this took place **at Pentecost** , when Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, “ shed

forth" the Spirit, His presence and power being manifested in the remarkable signs of which we read in the early part of the Acts.

We have many allusions to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the typical teaching of the Old Testament. For example, in the feasts of the Lord, given us in Leviticus xxiii., we find first the passover and unleavened bread—type of the death of Christ. Then we have the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest waved before the Lord—Christ in resurrection; then they were to number, after they brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, fifty days, that is seven sabbaths. This brings us to Pentecost; and after Pentecost came the Feast of Tabernacles. We have a reference to this in John vii.—the Feast of Tabernacles was being celebrated at Jerusalem, but Jesus would not go openly to the feast, because His time was not yet. Before the fulfilment of this typical feast, which prefigured the bringing in of millennial blessing, He, the true grain of wheat, must fall into the ground and die—the Feast of Passover and Pentecost must have their fulfilment—Christ must die, and, having ascended, send down the Spirit; and so we read, "The Holy Ghost was **not yet given**; because that Jesus was **not yet glorified**."

The great distinctive truths of the present dispensation or period of time are the absence of Christ, and the presence of the Holy Ghost—Christ, as man, seated at the right hand of God,

and the Holy Ghost dwelling on earth. The Lord comforted His disciples in view of His departure, with the blessed fact that the Holy Spirit would abide with them for ever. He speaks of a time then future, and He says, "*At that day* ye shall know," &c. What day? Clearly the day or period marked and distinguished by the presence of the Holy Ghost. When He would be absent the Spirit would be present, as the "other Comforter," who would **abide with them for ever.**



The Father's Name made Known— Then and Now.

JOHN xvii.



RESUMING from verse 6, the thread of the precious Saviour's heavenly intercession, He declares that He had manifested the Father's name to the men He had given to Him out of the world. He credits them with keeping the word that revealed the Father, and knowing that the Father was the divine Source of all things given to the Son in manhood here below, He judges of them according to the perfect communications which He had made to them rather than the measure in which they had apprehended those communications, in which indeed they were entirely defective. He presents them

to the Father's heart as fully recognising that what had attracted them to the Son was the manifestation of the Father from whom He had come—He, the Son in manhood, obedient, dependent, and devoted, the Object of their faith.

In this blessed relationship and privilege the world could never share, nor does the Saviour demand it, but only concerning those who were given Him and are the Father's. For they were the mutual objects of a love which found its source in the heart of the Father and of the Son who was glorified in them. They were left in the world for this purpose, but He was going out of it to the Father.

Observe that in manhood He could not remain in the world and go to the Father at the same time. The Father's presence is outside of this time scene; in heaven itself.

But meanwhile, the Holy Father was to keep them in that relationship in which His own beloved Son had stood as Man on earth; so as to be in this world the one pattern family of men who are sons of the Father; while with them, the Son Himself had maintained them in the perfect blessedness of this relationship by virtue of His person. If Judas had been lost there were two reasons for it—his character corresponded with his fate; and the written Word of God was thereby fulfilled.

Hitherto the disciples had been kept in this divine relationship with the Father, but as babes

unexercised and unintelligent ; but now that Jesus was going to the Father, He made known these things in the world, so that the love of the Father intelligently perceived might fill their hearts with joy as it had filled His.

In chapter xv. 11, His joy in them and their full joy is connected with the obedience of love. In chapter xvi. 24, it is the full joy of dependence—asking and receiving. In chapter xvii. 13, as we have seen, it is His joy in the love and relationship of the Father fulfilled in them. There only remains to add the full joy of communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John i. 4).

The Word of God revealing the Father, given them in testimony, would bring the world's hatred upon them ; but in spite of this the world was to be the scene of testimony, and it was necessary that the witnesses should be kept from its evil. As Christ Himself, they were not of the world, but would need the power of the truth, revealing the Father, to separate them practically to Him.

Jesus sent them into the world to be living witnesses for Him, as He had testified of the Father. But in order that they might be sanctified in truth for this, He must set Himself apart on high for them, as the Object of their faith, and the heavenly pattern of their place and walk.

This passage (vers. 6-19), while its principles

have a measure of application to all believers in the day of Christ's rejection, has the eleven especially in view. But now Jesus expressly asks on behalf of believers in the apostolic testimony—first that there might be perfect fellowship together, and oneness in their place of testimony before the world, so as to produce the moral conviction that the Father had sent the Son; secondly, that they all might share the glory given Him, and thus be perfected into one, so that, each being glorified, the Christ-rejecting world might be compelled to recognise that the Father had sent His beloved Son, and had loved those who received Him as He had loved Jesus Himself. Their display in glory on high was the convincing proof that the rejected One whom they confessed was the Sent One of the Father of whom He testified, and that they, being with Him there, were loved as He was. They were the gift of the Father's love to the Son, a gift which, because it was the Father's, the Son desired to have ever near Himself and with Him where He was, so that they might behold His glory, the eternal glory of the Son, become now the heavenly display to these chosen ones of that eternal love of the Father to the Son, which otherwise could not be known.

The world had not known the Father, though Jesus had declared Him perfectly. On the other hand, Jesus, whom the world rejected, had

known Him. Thus the break with the world was decisive and complete, and now its only possible relationship with the Father was as the Righteous and in judgment.

The disciples, feeble as they were, had known Jesus to be sent by the Father. This was the root of the matter, and the first principle necessary to the knowledge of the Father. In so far, therefore, and fully as regards Himself personally, Jesus had made known to them the Father's name. But more, He would make it known to them from His heavenly place in a glorified Man, so that being in them, not now with them on the earth, the same love with which the Father had loved Him should be in them, for the character of the beloved Son would be in them to call it forth and respond to it.

This closes the revelation of the Father; then, personally, in Jesus; afterwards, in testimony by the Spirit to the exalted and glorified Son in manhood. All that remained was for the world to consummate its iniquity, and the disciples to be established in their new position by a risen Christ.

Jesus now leaves Jerusalem. It was night; but the place to which He went was well known to Him. The city was given up to its fate; and He was going outside the gate to suffer.

W. T. W.

The Weakness of Human, and the Strength of Divine Love.

THE first part of the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Mark may be considered as the attitude of the Lord Jesus with reference to natural relationships.

He first touches the marriage tie, tracing the institution to its source, and places it in the position it held in God's thoughts "from the beginning" (vers. 1-12).

Next, children having been brought to Him, He urges that no hindrance should be placed in the way of their coming to Him, rebuking even the disciples; and He adds that, unless the kingdom of God were received with the simple trust of a little child, none could enter it (vers. 13-16).

Thirdly, in the interview that the blessed Saviour has with the rich man, we find human affection and devotedness tested and found wanting (vers. 17-22); the Lord thereupon showing that following Himself involved the placing of natural relationships and possessions in a subsidiary position (vers. 23-30). It is upon my heart to show briefly from the latter division of this part of the chapter, that where nature fails, even in its best estate, divine love has triumphed, and has proved more than equal to the test.

It is a solemn thing to have to do with Christ individually, though such a dealing is indispensable if the soul is to find peace and lasting blessing. It is solemn because we have to do with One who knows us through and through. "He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (John ii. 25). And in order that we may be convicted before Him, and may value the blessing He bestows, as an *undeserved* favour, it is His way to place His finger at once upon the dark spot in our history, or on the side of our nature upon which we are prone to fail, in order that He may develop within us the sense of *need*. The ruler of Israel and the Samaritan woman both prove this latent power in the Person of Christ, in the two chapters following the scripture above quoted (John iii. 4), and many other instances in the Gospels tell the same story.

Our chapter is no exception. Rich, and of an unblemished reputation, this man answers (doubtless uprightly) that he had kept God's law, as he understood it, from his youth. Jesus finds in him that which drew out His esteem and regard, "beholding him" He "loved him" (ver. 21). Nevertheless as his opening question betrayed either a condemning conscience or an unsatisfied heart, Jesus in love to his soul must unmask what lurked within—selfishness and a preference for his possessions before Christ.

The test was a rude one, we may say, but

for a man who maintained his adherence to the law, and built his righteousness upon it, it was not transparent to neglect the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18). So when Jesus dealt with this conscience in the "one thing" that he "lacked," He laid bare the springs of the nature. Spite of his devotedness to the law, and of the allegiance he felt and professed to Christ (he kneeled to Him, ver. 17), he valued his riches more than either. "*Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor*" says Christ, not in order to become poor, but to "have treasure in heaven."

One can imagine the struggle in that heart, of which perhaps the most moved spectator was Christ Himself. By one so amiable, so above reproach in the world's eyes, God's law, and more especially Christ Himself, are deliberately weighed in the balance with the possessions—that he could at most hold but few years, and not guarantee the enjoyment for an hour—and rejected. If "he was sad," what was Jesus? But it proved conclusively that in the person of one who was outwardly amiable and religious, human devotedness fails, and, though he does it "sadly," he none the less turns the back on Christ.

But where human love has failed, divine love has triumphed. Another has had (as it were) proposed to Him the condition of "the poor" and the bestowing of "eternal life." It involves

“the cross” for Him, as propounded to this poor, rich man (if such an expression be permissible, for with all his riches he was poor without Christ). Does He “fail”? Or is He “discouraged”? Thank God He is not, and, strikingly enough, when He tells out His heart’s thoughts upon this subject to His disciples in the house in Matthew xiii., He uses identically the same words as those already quoted, as regards both the “treasure” and the “pearl.” He “*sold all (or whatsoever) he had.*”

So much did He desire to have you and me, poor wretched rebels, as His own, that He will not hesitate to pay the full price. Not one thing does He hold back, and it is a love that has stripped itself of everything, beloved reader, that appeals to you, heart and mind. Has it till now appealed in vain? Then let us tell the whole truth. This love has descended to still deeper depths. The same chapter in Mark (x. 45) shows it. He gave “*His life* a ransom for many.” “All that a man hath will he give for his life,” but this blessed One, in undying love to our souls, and consuming zeal for God’s glory, devoted all that He had (and it was much, whether viewed as the Father’s delight from eternity, or His proper hopes as Messiah), and gave His life also.

This is a love that would stop at nothing, as it is this that the apostle Paul presented to the Galatians and gloried in himself: He “gave

Himself for our sins," He "loved me and gave Himself for me" are the words of recall (Gal. i. 4, ii. 20). "Christ hath loved us and given Himself for us," he repeats to the Ephesians (v. 2), for indeed it was a truth that had bowed his soul.

What practical effect has it produced upon us? Is it much for us to loosen our grip upon present things, that we may find "treasure in heaven," when we have learnt not only the mystery that Christ found in us a "treasure," but the purchase price He has paid to possess it?

F. L.

The late Charles Simeon wrote:—"The longer I live the more I feel the importance of adhering to the following rules:—

- "1. To hear as little as possible what is to the prejudice of others.
- "2. To believe nothing of the kind until I am absolutely forced to it.
- "3. Never to drink in the spirit of one who circulates an ill-report.
- "4. Always to moderate, as far as I can, the unkindness which is expressed towards others.
- "5. Always to believe that if the other side were heard, a very different account would be given of the matter."

Waiting for His Son.

IT is clear that the coming of the Lord for His saints is the proper hope of the Church. When about to leave this earth and return to His Father, our blessed Lord said to His disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John xiv. 3).

Turned to God. — This waiting attitude characterised the young Thessalonian converts from the very start of their Christian career. Their conversion was a deep reality, they were "turned to God from idols," and this we may say is descriptive of all real conversion, wherever and whenever found.

Conversion does not consist in the mere holding of views, or assenting to certain truths; it is a complete and radical change brought about by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost in the soul of the one who believes the testimony God renders to His Son in the gospel. That gospel declares that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16); it declares that Jesus, our Lord, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25); it declares that the guilty sinner who believes this testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is justified by faith, and so has

peace with God, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God (Rom. v. 1, 2); it declares that Christ has "once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

Believing this gospel, then, the soul is not only saved, justified, and forgiven, but **brought to God**. Thus it was with the Thessalonians, they "turned to God from idols." It does not say that they turned *from idols to God*, but "to God from idols." The difference to some may appear small, but in fact the whole principle of the gospel is involved.

There are many who imagine that salvation can only be obtained by a life of self-abnegation; this is the principle of the law, and on that principle "shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20). The gospel is on the principle of free and sovereign grace; it comes to us because we are not only guilty but lost; it proclaims to us present and eternal forgiveness, present and eternal salvation; it bridges the awful distance that separates the sinner from a thrice holy God, and brings us into His presence at peace with Him; it enables us not only to rejoice in the sure and certain hope of coming glory, but also to joy in God Himself, here and now (Rom. v. 11).

The Thessalonians, then, were turned to God as *worshippers*. Before "the joyful news of free salvation came" to them they had bowed down

to idols, but now "the living and true God" had displaced all else in their heart's affection. Readers in professedly Christian lands may find it difficult to apply such words to themselves, but there need be no such difficulty. All that the hearts of the unconverted men, women, and children are set on that shuts God out are their idols.

To Serve the Living and True God.—But not only were they worshippers, they were *workers*. They were not only turned to God, but all their ransomed powers were laid at His feet in service—"to serve the living and true God." The word here translated "serve" has the force of serving as a slave. Paul himself was such a slave (Rom. i. 1), a "captive in the chains of love"; James was another (James i. 1); Peter and Jude, and others, too, shared this honourable bondage. All these, no doubt, were servants of a very special character, but every truly converted soul is "saved to serve."

Let none suppose that because they do not possess the gift of evangelist in any striking degree, that therefore they need not do the work of an evangelist. We firmly believe that *every truly converted soul is responsible to lead others to the Saviour*. If one may speak for others, we confess to a lamentable lack of energy, and to a culpable neglect of precious opportunities in bringing the gospel before those with whom we meet day by day. True, wisdom and dis-

cretion are most needful, but let us not shield ourselves under the poor excuses so often heard—"It is not my gift," or "It is not our testimony."

There is a disposition amongst some to speak disparagingly of the gospel as though it were some inferior thing in comparison with "the testimony of the Lord." We believe this to be a fatal mistake, which leads to a narrowness of spirit utterly opposed to the true grace of God wherein we stand. We believe that 2 Timothy i. 8 clearly establishes that "the testimony of our Lord," so far from being something different from, is identical with "the gospel," whose afflictions Timothy was exhorted to partake of according to the power of God.

Let us not lower the gospel in our attempts to exalt some special part thereof, but let us carefully and prayerfully study the Scriptures to learn what the gospel is in all its blessed fulness. We would suggest to our young readers to study the epistles of Paul, and to carefully note every allusion therein made to the gospel, and then seek grace from God to have "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil. i. 5), to walk "as it becometh the gospel" (i. 27), and to strive "together for the faith of the gospel,"—*but never to disparage the gospel.*

It is our high and holy privilege to worship, to work, and to wait; and to be in spiritual health we cannot afford to minimise any of the three. Some there are who are full of work, and

yet never know the privilege of assembling with the people of God for worship ; others assemble most regularly for worship who seem never, if ever, to do anything for the furtherance of the work of the Lord. True worship and divine service will both be strengthened and increased by waiting with intelligence and affection for God's Son from heaven—"even Jesus, our Deliverer from the wrath to come."

Christian reader, are you a **worshipper**? Are you a **worker**? Are you **waiting** for His Son from heaven?

A. H. B.



The Work of Christ and its Consequences.

LUKE XV.



III.

IN the first parable the great fact is brought out by the Lord Jesus that you are **lost**, and that everything depends on **Him**, the Shepherd. Your share of the work is simply getting lost, that is all you can do. The Shepherd does all the rest. He finds you, at a cost to Himself that you can never know, puts you on His shoulders and gets home to glory with you, and then calls all heaven to rejoice with Him at the finding of a poor miserable thing like you. In that parable there is no place found for those fears, doubts, and feelings which have hitherto

taken up so much of your attention. Feelings and fears are not **peace**. In order that you may have **peace**, the Lord Jesus presents Himself to you as the One who has done everything, first for God's glory, and then for your need. If His work is enough for God, it must be enough for you. But the fact that Jesus is in the glory of God now, is the proof that God has accepted His work. *Can you not accept then for your need what God has accepted for His glory?* The moment you do, peace will take the place of fears.

But, as we have already seen, God desires that the work of grace in your heart should answer perfectly to the work of the blessed Lord Jesus on the cross, so that nothing should be able to shake your confidence any more than it can shake the Rock itself upon which you rest. This is what the Word of God calls being **established in grace**, and remember that from beginning to end grace is God's work.

Now the third parable takes up this question of the work of God in the soul, and, in contrast to the first two parables where we have nothing about the fears, hopes, and feelings of the sheep or the piece of silver, gives us the fullest picture possible of the exercises of a soul away from God, and what passes in that soul on the way back, until the full place of acceptance is known.

But the second parable forms a very important link between the first and third.

In order that the ground of peace might be laid, that God might be glorified where sin reigned, and that the work of the cross might be done, only one thing was needed—**the death of Christ.**

But in order that you might be brought into full enjoyment of the consequences of that perfect work something else was needed—**the coming of the Holy Ghost.** This was the immediate result of the glorifying of Jesus. When Jesus was down here the world rejected Him, but that only led to the carrying out of God's plan of redemption, and Jesus did the whole work of redemption **on the cross**, entered into the glory, and sat down for ever (Heb. x. 12). The result was **that** the Holy Ghost came down, not to do a fresh work, nor to add to the work done on the cross, but to bear witness to the fulness of that work, and all its blessed consequences, and so to bring your heart into the full enjoyment of it. This is not the place to go into all the aspects of the work of the Holy Ghost, a full and blessed subject. But let us have these two points clear and distinct before us, because the confounding of the two is the chief cause of the uncertainty as to salvation, and all the consequent want of peace and liberty in the experience of thousands of dear Christians to-day.

The Lord Jesus is the One who has completely and for ever finished the work on the cross for God's glory and your eternal salvation.

The Holy Ghost is the One who now carries on in your heart the work needed to bring you into full enjoyment of the finished work on the cross.

This is why in the second parable the scene is changed. Instead of **the Shepherd** going after a sheep in the **wilderness**, we get a **woman** at work in a **house**. Both have the same object, to find what is lost, but the scene is changed.

First it is a woman, in order to show the way in which the Holy Ghost is present, not publicly seen of all, as the Lord Jesus was, but unseen and unknown (John xiv. 17) to the world. The Holy Ghost is acting for Christ where He has been cast out. Hence the Lord shows us a woman at work. Then the place where she works is a house. While the Lord Jesus was on earth He had no dwelling-place, and in the first parable He takes His found sheep **home**. But, as the consequence of redemption, God has a house on earth and the Holy Ghost inhabits it and works there (Eph. ii. 22).

Perhaps you may say, "I don't see what this has to do with my troubles and exercises." Don't be impatient. God's order is, not you first, but

Christ first, doing the work that carries Him and you from the cross to the glory. Then,

The Holy Ghost, come down here to dwell in God's house, unseen and unknown to the

world, and to carry on the blessed consequence of Christ's work. Lastly,

Your experience and the blessed result of the work of the Holy Ghost in you, bringing you to rest in the Father's love made known to your heart fully.

That is God's order, mark it well. It is better than man's.

The woman's work, then, is different from the shepherd's, although the result is the same. She lights a candle, sweeps the house, and seeks diligently. The light shows where things are and what their state is, the sweeping stirs up a lot of dust. Neither of these operations are pleasant, but they are very necessary. The work of the Holy Ghost is to bring in the light of the Word of God upon our place and state as sinners to convict us of sin. Further, when this has been accepted and forgiveness is learnt, the Holy Ghost continues to work, producing exercises of heart and discovering more fully what sin is, not only in the fruit but in the root, until God's work *in us* is accomplished. Hence, if we put this parable first, or in other words, when the work of the cross is not known, these necessary exercises lead us to doubt salvation, whereas they are the blessed proofs of **God's work in us**, leading us to fuller apprehension of **Christ's work for us**. The very fact that the Holy Ghost is here to carry on this work is God's own witness that Christ is glorified. Hence the Holy

Ghost can only witness of the absolute perfection of the finished work of Christ. Do not let the dust of the sweeping hide this from your heart.

S. H. H.

What is Conversion?

DOUBTLESS every decade brings with it a fresh batch of youthful, and thanks be to God, of aged inquirers too. Yea, also of persons in every stage of existence, be they young or old, rich or poor, all of whom are interested in this solemn question. Within each and every one who is born into this world there is this deep need of *Conversion*. What, therefore, can it be which is of such paramount importance to every soul of man? What is Conversion?

The best answer that can be given to this solemn inquiry is found in 1 Thess. i. 9, 10, "How ye **turned to God** from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." Yes, indeed, conversion is a real "turning to God." The dictionary, under the heading of conversion, says it is a "*change from one thing or state to another.*" The whole being, body and soul, is affected by it. Body and soul are both turned to God. That soul, which was once turned away

from Him, and which was under the influence and control of Satan, is by conversion brought to acknowledge Him. It is brought to confess that He is God. It is brought to own Him as a **Just God** and a **Saviour**. Moreover, that soul has seen itself in the light of **His** presence. Such an one has, like Job of old, seen **Him**. Job declares, "But now mine eye seeth Thee, *wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*" Marvellous effects these upon Job,—seeing God produced in him self-abhorrence.

Yes, *God is Light* (John i. 1-10). "In Him is *no darkness at all*" (1 John i. 5). Man *is* darkness as Paul shows by Ephesians v. 8. Naturally Job was darkness; He was by nature and in practice a sinner, but he was justified and pardoned by God. It was the light which **God** was that revealed all the darkness of Job's character to Job himself. Hence his self-abhorrence. But mere self-abhorrence was not all,—"*and repent in dust and ashes,*" says Job. Here, then, we have these two very necessary things brought forward—*self-abhorrence* when the light of God's presence is known and felt; and *repentance* in its most lowly form—"in *dust and ashes.*"

Conversion is in point of fact so complete a turning round, that the face that was once toward Satan is now turned to God. The one who was once bound for hell is now bound for heaven. And why? Simply because that one has heard the gospel—the glad tidings that Jesus the Lord

was crucified and died in his room and stead upon the cross. He who hung there was there for me. Truly He suffered instead of me. **He died for me** (Gal. i. 4; Gal. ii. 20). It was indeed a vicarious death, that death of God's Son upon the cross. But that death was more than vicarious, for it also satisfied all the claims which a holy God had upon me, and beyond meeting and satisfying these claims, it glorified God abundantly, so much so that Christ was raised the third day from among the dead by the glory of the Father.

Now, dear reader, do you believe that Jesus died, and died for you? Do you believe that He was raised from the dead? Do you believe that for you He ascended up to heaven? To know this, to believe this, is to have a Saviour—a Saviour, too, at God's right hand, and one who is personally coming for you,—“to receive you unto Myself,” as He said. J. R.



The Lame take the Prey.

ISAIAH xxxiii. 23; I SAMUEL xxx.

GOD has principles of His own upon which He acts, so also has the world, although of a different sort. In *its* sphere it is the strong, the powerful, and not infrequently the unscrupulous who carry off the prizes. There

the spoils are for the victors, while the weak go to the wall—for such are the maxims of the world. But in the divine region we breathe in another kind of moral atmosphere.

A striking instance of what may be regarded as a divine principle is found in 1 Samuel xxx.

After the disaster at Ziklag, King David pursues the Amalekites with six hundred men. Two hundred of them become faint on the march, and abide at the brook Besor. The remainder overtake and defeat the enemy, recovering all the persons and the property. To cite the narrative, "David recovered all . . . and took all the flocks and the herds which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil."

On returning to the brook Besor, where the two hundred men had been directed to remain, we hear the announcement of worldly principles, "Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away and depart." To a certain extent there was a show of justice in this, but it lacked a spirit of generosity. Now let us listen to what David, the man after God's own heart, has to say to this: "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came out against us into our hand." David looks at the spoil, not as that which was

theirs by force of arms, but as that which was theirs by gift from God. But further he says—"For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff; *they shall share alike.*" The king laid down a new maxim, and thereby established a precedent which, in point of fact, became henceforth a law in Israel. "And it was so, from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day." David's decision was governed by royal grace—and so the lame took the prey.

But I would ask, Was the narrative merely written as history? Far be the thought. The incident is surely included in the "things that happened for ensamples, and were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." What are we therefore to draw from the narrative? David may be viewed as the figure of the true David, the Lord Jesus Christ, who went down to the battle against all our foes, and fought the fight alone. As the great Captain of Salvation He bore the whole brunt of the battle—accomplishing redemption by dying the death of the cross. And having won the victory, and having come forth from the tomb, He straightway enters the company of His disciples, and dispenses the Holy Spirit to them. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This was impart-

ing to them His own risen life, and this He had not, could not have done before the cross. The reception of the Holy Spirit, as here referred to, may be connected with the doctrinal statement in Romans viii., "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." It is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It is true the disciples had life when the Lord was with them on the earth. Then He had said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And in resurrection, when He breathed on His disciples, He was giving them this more abundant life.

And the source of this gift of life is the grace of God, as it is written, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Believers once were, morally, like the men who were faint and disabled at the brook Besor; or, to use the words of the apostle, they were, before conversion, "without strength." Nor was it their lot to go down to the battle, yet do they share the spoil with Him who did; for the "law" which now prevails is "the *law* of the Spirit of life." And so the lame take the prey.

Although it is not within the scope of this paper to speak of other spoils which Christ has won, and dispenses to His people, it is difficult

to refrain from mentioning some of them, such as forgiveness of sins, justification, peace, sonship, acceptance in the Beloved, and a place hereafter with Christ in glory.

It was grace, as we have seen, that governed David in his ruling at Besor. And seasonable this was, seeing that he himself was a striking example of the same principle, for God had lifted him up from obscurity, and placed him on the throne: and so David, in his turn, becomes actuated by the same Spirit of grace.

A great secret in the Book of God, as another has said, is **grace**. If we are strangers to that, then are we strangers to God Himself. But to know Him in grace is the only way in which to know Him truly and rightly. Such is the way He wishes the children of men to know Him. He has given His only begotten Son, and He it is who went down to the battle, and shares the fruits of His victory with those who, aforetime, were "without strength," but now are His believing, blood-bought people.

One more word. Is it enough to know we have eternal life, and shall escape eternal judgment? Many there are who seem to think so. Why rest satisfied with one of the fruits of redemption while there are so many more to be enjoyed. Some Christians there are who have the idea that, in some fantastic way, these fruits will fall at their feet. It is not so. These fruits are to be found, but found by searching the

Scriptures. There they lie in rich profusion waiting to be gathered. The diligent will find them, for "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." The one whose decision was "they shall share alike," is the same one who has said, "I rejoice at Thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." May it be ours to be of a kindred spirit!

W. J. M.

Man, and Son of the Father amid an Apostate People.

JOHN xviii.

IT was a garden beyond the torrent Cedron into which Jesus went, He and His disciples. Often had He, and they with Him, resorted thither. Judas therefore knew the place, and conversant with this habit of his Master's, used his knowledge to betray Him into the hands of the chief priests and Pharisees. Having got from them a band of officers with lanterns, torches, and weapons, he comes there. Far from avoiding them, Jesus goes forth to meet them, saying, Whom seek ye. - Well He knew whom they sought, and all that was coming upon Him; but divine Son as He was, it was not possible for all to be fulfilled except at His will and word, and as His own act in obedience to His Father.

To these Jews he was but Jesus the Nazarean,

and thus they reply ; but Deity was His in all its fulness, and at His word that declared "I am (He)," they recoil and fall to the ground, Judas, His betrayer, being also with them. Twice He repeats the question ; twice they reply in the same way, but to His second declaration He adds, If ye seek Me, let these go their way. He asserts His divine will and prerogative solely for the deliverance of His disciples. He had said, Of those whom Thou hast given Me have I lost none. That word must be fulfilled, but he alone could fulfil it.

Not for the first time in Israel's history had that name "*I Am*" been revealed in deliverance of the people of God. *I Am* had announced to Moses that this was His name for ever, and His memorial unto all generations. In this name He brought them out of the afflictions of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. iii. 14-17). It was the same Person now, but the deliverance was a far greater, and an eternal one.

To His Father He had said, Of those whom Thou hast given Me I have not lost one. In no respect were they to be separated from His protection by the power of evil. Up to the cross He preserved them from evil in this world. After the cross He secured them for the other in spite of evil. Even Peter's impetuous but aimless violence brings no retribution upon him ; although the victim of it was well known as well

as the precise injury done. His Master's protection was sufficient, though there is no mention here of the miracle of healing; for Peter's safety was due not to this, but to his divine Master's will and word.

How blessedly is the true and personal humanity of Jesus presented in this passage! not indeed without the full declaration of His deity. His habit of frequenting that garden, of which also the power of evil could take advantage, was formed in the practical reality of His manhood. His knowing all things that were coming upon Him was a consequence of His true deity, and especially the announcement of His name, I Am, together with the fact that what He said must be fulfilled as the Word of God.

Apostasy on every side—Judas betraying, Peter hindering and then denying his Master. The priests accusing the Sinless; the judicial power delivering up the Just One to His persecutors, and the people choosing a robber rather than their King. Jesus alone is the obedient and devoted Man, ready to drink the cup which the Father had given Him. This is the point in this Gospel, His voluntary subjection to His Father's will, not His agony as Son of man in the garden, and the traitorous kiss of Judas, nor His rebuke of man in league with the power of darkness. This is Luke's point of view. Nor is it, as in Matthew, the treachery of His friend, and all done in order that the Scriptures might

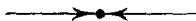
be fulfilled. But in John it is His own word that must be fulfilled, both as regards the security of His disciples (ver. 9) as well as the manner of His death (ver. 32). We have therefore no word to Judas, neither is Peter warned of the governmental consequences of using the sword. All relates here, and has reference only, to the glory of His person and His devotedness to His Father in accomplishing the work given Him to do.

It would appear that a Roman military officer accompanied the Jewish band of men and officers who bind Jesus and lead Him to Annas first. Nothing is said of what took place there, and the scene quickly changes to the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas. It was he in whose mouth the word of prophecy was put, that it was better one man should perish for the people. He, therefore, it is before whom the spotlessness of the atoning Victim must be established.

Silent when questioned concerning His disciples, Jesus replies as to His doctrine that He had spoken openly to the world, and always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, and had spoken nothing in secret. If, therefore, they desired testimony as to His teaching, it must be obtained from those who had heard Him. This surely would be an unbiased and reliable witness, and enable them to arrive at a just decision.

A blow is the only answer to this wise and righteous principle. On the contrary, they would

force the Accused to incriminate Himself. Of having spoken evil they could bring no evidence. He had spoken well, and their silence bore witness to it, at the same time convicting of evil the accusers themselves. W. T. W.



* **Brief Remarks on the Presence and Work
of the Holy Spirit as presented in
the Scriptures.**

No. 3.



IN the book of the Acts, we read of disciples and servants of God who were "filled with the Spirit," and "full of the Holy Ghost"; and it is well to clearly understand what is meant by these expressions. The apostle exhorts the Ephesians, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." If this was his desire for them, it should be ours also; but what is it to be "filled with the Spirit"? Is it not that the whole heart and will—the whole moral man—should be subject to the control and guidance of the Spirit? To talk of being filled with the Spirit while we are really doing our own will, is only to deceive ourselves. *Our* wills must be broken, our eye must be single, our object must be Christ and Christ only, if we are to be filled with the Spirit. Our blessed Lord

Himself is the perfect example, for He never swerved from the path of perfect obedience to the Father's will, and all His works were done in the power of the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit makes nothing of self; at the same time it does not lead to sadness or depression, but to joy in the Lord; and so the apostle adds in Ephesians v., "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." Of this we see a practical illustration in the Acts, "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost"; and again, we have Paul and Silas in the prison praying and singing praises to God.

The book of the Acts gives us many instances of the leading of the Spirit in service. The Spirit it was who directed Philip to meet the eunuch; the Spirit bade Peter to go to Cornelius; the Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"; the Spirit guided the apostles to go to certain places and forbade their going to others.

It may be asked, Are we to look for the same direct guidance of the Spirit now as in the early days of the Church's history? The answer of faith to this question is undoubtedly, Yes, we are. It is true that, now that the Church of God is divided up into many sects and bodies, there is not the same outward manifestation of power now as there was then; but the Holy Spirit is

here, and will abide here as long as the Church abides, and He is to be counted on as truly now as ever. Faith recognises the ruin of the Church in the midst of which we find ourselves, but it counts on the God who is above the ruin, and the abiding presence of the Spirit. Why, then, it may be said, do we not experience more of the guidance and power of the Spirit? Here we have to humble ourselves and confess our failure; but we may learn a lesson from those who were so remarkably used in these early days. They were earnest, devoted men; gifted men, of course, but they were more than gifted, they were men governed by one object and one purpose in their life and service. Not that they necessarily gave up all other employment and became preachers. Paul, as we know, made tents; yet he could say, "I laboured more abundantly than they all."

We have a striking illustration of the manifest guidance of the Spirit in Acts xiii.—"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. . . . So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." Here devoted men were ministering to the Lord and fasting; and, when the Holy Ghost directed the two servants of the Lord so manifestly, the others fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them. There was devoted service, separation from the world and what is of nature in fasting, and dependence on God in prayer—the

result was the true leading of the Spirit. May we ponder the principles set forth here and seek to learn a lesson from them !

Scripture teaches us that the Holy Spirit dwells in each individual believer, and He dwells also in the Church or assembly of Christians. So we read in 1 Cor. vi. 19, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you"; and in chapter iii. 16, referring to the collective or corporate thing, He says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." These are both weighty truths, and should be a great incentive to individual holiness, as well as to a due sense of collective responsibility. Then in chapter xii. of the same Epistle, we find the manifestation of the Spirit, who gives to each sovereignly as He wills. This is a proof that the Holy Spirit is God, equally with the Father and the Son ; in fact we have in verses 4, 5, and 6 the words "the same Spirit," "the same Lord," and "the same God." It was *one* Spirit who baptised all believers into one body, and each has their distinct place, as He is pleased to give. In chapter xiv. the apostle insists on the importance of each member of the assembly being individually guided in any part he might take in the public assembly of Christians—whether it be in speaking, that it should be intelligible to the hearers, and "unto edification"; or in praying, or even in singing, that it should be "with the spirit and

with the understanding." There was full liberty for the exercise of the gifts given to each as the Spirit might lead ; but all was to be done with a view to the edification and blessing of even the weakest member of the assembly ; and God was not the author of confusion but of peace, and therefore in His assembly everything was to be done with order.

When we compare the scriptural teaching with what we find around us at the present day, have we not to acknowledge that to a great extent the distinctive truth of this dispensation, that is, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each individual believer, and His presence and manifestation in the assemblies of Christians, is overlooked and ignored ? Is it in accordance with the truths we have been considering, to constitute one man as the channel through whom the Spirit of God would act in the assembly ? It is, of course, quite true that God gives gifts, such as evangelists, pastors, teachers, &c., and each of these should exercise his gift in direct responsibility to the Lord. The work of the evangelist, for example, is outside, with the unconverted ; that of the pastor is amongst Christians individually in their homes, &c. ; that of the teacher, unfolding God's Word to His people: each has his own place and work to do, and to suppose that any one man embodies all the gifts is a mistake. But when Christians are met together as an assembly, for worship or for mutual edification in dependence

on the Lord, full liberty should be left for the Spirit to guide and use whom He would. We need to take heed to the exhortation, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19). If we refuse whatever is truly the ministry of the Spirit, through even the most simple or the most humble, we are quenching the Spirit. At the same time we have the added word, "Prove all things," for we are not to receive anything as of the Spirit, unless it agrees with the written Word.

Then, again, we have the exhortation not to "grieve" the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. iv. 30). This is more individual—each believer is sealed unto the day of redemption, and he is not to allow things in his walk or conduct which are contrary to God. When we grieve the Spirit, He becomes within us a reprover, instead of being free and unhindered, and so able to lead us into a deeper knowledge of the things of God. Then we get the word, "Walk in the Spirit," in contrast with fulfilling the lusts of the flesh : and we are to be "led" by the Spirit, instead of being under the bondage of the law.

The Holy Ghost is thus presented to us in many ways in Scripture. He is the Comforter, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of truth, &c. ; it is ever His blessed office to glorify the Lord Jesus, to teach, to lead and guide us into all truth. And when we come together as assemblies of Christians, it is He who leads and guides in prayer, in worship, &c. But in order

that this may be so, there must be freedom from human organisations which restrict the action of the Spirit, and there must be true dependence on God, and a right state of soul. We cannot expect the unction and power of the Spirit if we come together in a cold or formal way; there must be exercise of heart, prayer, dependence upon God, and the heart and mind occupied with Christ, so that the Holy Spirit will find a ready response to His touch, if we may so express it. God grant that there may be more meetings characterised by these things! Coming with the basket of first-fruits—fruits of that good land with which God has blessed us—not half-empty, but *full*; a cup, not half-empty, but *running over*! If this were so, the meetings of the Lord's people would be really a foretaste of heaven on earth.. And what power there would be for testimony too, if, like the Thessalonians, we were serving the living and true God and waiting for His Son from heaven, even Jesus!

We know well that all real blessing amongst the unsaved must be the work of the Spirit; using whom He will, it is true; acting in His own sovereignty, as the wind bloweth where it listeth—but it is *His* work. We have already referred to the features which marked the work of God in the Acts. Christ was exalted at the right hand of God; the Holy Ghost was down here to save and to bless in the work of the Lord, to fill the disciples with joy and enable them

to go through the persecutions and trials of the way.

The apostles gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word ; it was not a cold and formal ministry—there was prayer first, then the ministry of the Word ; and the scattered disciples went everywhere evangelising. The application of these principles to our own time is most important, for God is the same, His Word is the same, and His Spirit is still here.

We need to take courage, to give ourselves more to prayer—real, earnest, believing prayer—that there may be a revival, first in the hearts of the Lord's people, and then overflowing in blessing to the unsaved.

F. G. B.

BY looking to the work of Christ the standard of holiness is exalted ; because, instead of looking into the muddled image of Christ in my soul, I view Him by the Spirit, in the perfectness of that glory into the fellowship of which I am called ; and therefore, to walk worthy of God, who hath called me to His own kingdom and glory. I forget the things behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ; and my self-examination becomes, not an unhappy inquiry whether or not I am in the faith, but whether my walk is worthy of one who is called into His kingdom and glory.

J. N. D.

Man, and Son of the Father amid an Apostate People.

(*Continued.*)

MEANWHILE Peter had followed Jesus. The other disciple who accompanied him went into the palace of the high priest, being known to him, but Peter stood at the door without. Being brought in by that other disciple, he is questioned by the portress at once whether he was not a disciple of Jesus, and answers, "I am not." Emboldened by his denial, he draws near to the fire and warms himself with the crowd; while, unimpeachable amid indignity and reproach, his Master stands unmoved—the Faithful and the True.

It was cold, and as the night wore on Peter still warmed himself with the rest. Attention being drawn to him they ask, "Art thou also of His disciples?" Again he denies, saying, "I am not." He stands upon the brink of a precipice of moral ruin, and one push more will, speaking after the manner of men, decide his fate. Neither will he be allowed breathing space. Quickly the question comes a third time, but now from an eye-witness and a kinsman of him whom Peter had so rashly assailed. "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" is the crushing rejoinder. Again he denies, and immediately the cock crew.

Peter had fallen ; the enemy had triumphed. The trap laid with consummate skill had not failed ; and, if Peter were the prey, what had become of his Master's boasted power to keep ? Yes, the denial was threefold, deliberate and positive ; yet in the moment of its culmination the cock crew—proof of a power and grace which, when evil had done its worst, could turn all to account for good, and could use the simplest means, such as were of the commonest occurrence for the purpose. The more ordinary and feeble the means the greater must be the power that uses them effectually. God confounds the mighty by the weak things of the world.

Observe the object here is merely to state Peter's failure, not to give the details, nor to point its moral. Consequently neither the circumstances that aggravated his denial so painfully nor his bitter grief are mentioned.

Now in the early morn they lead the Holy Sufferer from Caiaphas to the prætorium, remaining themselves outside of it—these scrupulous Pharisees and priests—lest they should be defiled. They would eat the Passover, but little scrupled to deliver the Holy One and the Just into the hands of lawless men, and to death.

Acceding to their punctiliousness, Pilate goes out to them and asks, "What accusation bring ye against this Man ?" Eager in their hatred and murderous intent they had not yet formulated one ; but to justify their disorderly as well as

untimely concourse, they denounce Him as an evildoer. If this were all, why not deal with Him as a common offender? Nay, they were thirsting for His blood, and but for the word of Jesus, signifying what death He should die, would have shed it doubtless in some less formal way, except that perhaps they wished to shirk the guilt of it, and lay the responsibility upon some one else. In any case they were unconsciously fulfilling the word of Jesus. He was to be "lifted up"—an Object outside of earth and its dispensational and governmental distinctions—an Object for faith, for Jew or Gentile alike, not on earth, not in heaven, but to be the place of approach to the heavenly courts, as the altar stood at the door of the tabernacle, where God could meet any soul drawing near with acceptance because of the sacrifice.

The cross was the Roman, not Jewish, mode of execution, and contrary to their interests, their pride, and their inclination, they demand that the Roman governor shall be both judge and executioner. But on what ground? Pilate's fears and suspicions furnish one which the Jews immediately adopt, though they would scarcely have suggested it. Entering the prætorium again, Pilate says to Jesus, "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" This, if coupled with conspiracy, would be a capital crime, and come under the cognisance of the civil authority.

To Jesus it was of much moment whether

this charge arose from Pilate's suspicions or the confession of a disciple and Jewish thoughts. If the former, it could be positively denied, for in Pilate's thoughts it would be a kingdom of this world. But Jesus' kingdom is not of this world, else would His servants have fought that He might not be delivered up to the Jews. On the contrary, He had expressly ordered Peter to sheath his sword, for His kingdom was not from hence.

Yet He was a king, and of a wider kingdom than that of the Jews. It was a kingdom in which the truth held sway, to bear witness of which, for it was not here, He had been born and had come into the world. Truth was not merely a moral rule or kingdom, as men speak, though there was this; but it was a moral rule in a universal and eternal scene—the New Creation.

He was here to bear witness of the truth, and by His voice to separate for that eternal world those who were of the truth. Hearing His voice distinguished those who were of the truth. This Pilate was not. For him truth had no existence as a moral reality. As a judge he could possibly discern as to truth of testimony to a particular fact; but truth He knew not as a moral reality in which everything is in its place with God and with one another. To Jesus, who Himself was the truth, he says, "What is truth?"

Still conscience was here; and going out to the Jews he says, "I find no fault whatever in

Him." Who so worthy to be released as He? Especially at the Passover, when one must needs be set free. If king of the Jews He is nevertheless guiltless. But no! they cry again all saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

W. T. W.

Despising God's Word.

IT is commonly said that history repeats itself. The treatment of the Word of God by Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and his friends, with that accorded to it by some of the leaders of Christendom to-day is very similar.

Israel had "committed two evils; they had forsaken Jehovah—the fountain of living water—and had hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water" (Jer. ii. 12, 13). Through disobedience they had forfeited all blessing; they had broken their part of the covenant, and consequently all the curses of a broken law were theirs by right, as Moses had said (Deut. xxx. 15-18). The Lord is, however, "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," and, therefore, even unto the end, "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending;

because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and **despised His word**, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of God arose against His people, and there was no remedy" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16).

Wonderful forbearance and long-suffering did Jehovah show to Judah in the days of Jeremiah the prophet. "Take thee a roll of a book," were His gracious words almost at the close, "and write . . . It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin" (Jer. xxxvi. 1-3).

Well might the "heavens be astonished, and horribly afraid and desolate," in view of the way in which the king and those with him treated such grace, for, as it was read, "Jehudi cut it with his penknife, and cast it into the fire . . . until all the roll was consumed. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants, that heard all these words" (Jer. xxxvi. 23, 24). Did, however, the burning of the word hinder the judgments? Not at all; it only added to their severity, and Judah, like Israel, was carried away captive (2 Chron. xxxvi. 14-23).

God's Word at the present day speaks of the certainty and nearness of approaching judgments. It calls upon "all men everywhere to repent, for

God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 30, 31).

God has thus in His Word unveiled the future to men, not to terrify them (because He wills not the death of any sinner, and judgment is His strange work), but that they may turn from their evil way, and that He may "forgive their iniquity and their sins." He can do it too in perfect righteousness, for "that Man"—Christ Jesus, the Lord—has died, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." His precious blood, which cleanseth from all sin, has been shed, and in virtue of this, He is able to save from the coming wrath all who, in hearty confession of all their ruin and guilt, come to God through Him. And again we would press the deeply solemn truth—

There is no other way of salvation,

for "there is no other name" (Jesus) "under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

On all sides, however, at the present day, the Bible is assailed by men whose profession and calling cause others to look to them as leaders and guides. The only Book which reveals God's wondrous grace, and the precious unfathomable love that led Jesus to die, is being cut to pieces like Jeremiah's roll of old. To the simple be-

liever the reason is plain, and causes no surprise. To use the words of one now with the Lord :—
“The grand object of the devil, in all the sceptical, rationalistic, and infidel theories that have ever been propounded in this world, is to shut out completely the Word of God, the Christ of God, and God Himself. We solemnly call upon our readers, especially our young friends, to ponder this. It is our thorough and deep conviction that the harbouring of a single infidel suggestion is the first step on that inclined plane which leads straight down to the dark and terrible abyss of atheism, down to the blackness of darkness for ever” (from “*The Great Commission*,” by the late C. H. M.).

Under the name of “higher critics” these men, having “a form of godliness,” yet denying the power thereof, have deliberately sat in judgment on the Word of God, and, so far as they are concerned, have left us little or none of that blessed Book to rely upon. They have cut out book after book of the Old Testament, and are now seeking to treat the New Testament in the same way. Educated, yet unregenerate, they make their own puny finite minds the standard of all good, and apparently there is neither God nor truth but what exists in their own imaginations. According to Job, “no doubt but they are the people, and wisdom shall die with them,” and far from being afraid, they make their boast in their “criticism” as they call it.

Consequently they love to bring in new and strange doctrines of their own, to fill their fine buildings with vast congregations who cannot endure the

Sound Doctrine of the Word,

but who listen with delight and applause to the fables and vain imagination of their self-appointed popular leaders. If not actual scoffers like those mentioned in 2 Peter iii., they are really worse, answering—many of them—with startling similitude to those spoken of by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians xi. 13-15, as Satan's ministers posing as "ministers of righteousness."

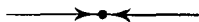
Oh, reader, beware of men who set themselves up as ministers of Christ, and yet in direct opposition to the positive declaration of that blessed Person tell us that the light-giving revelations of the Bible are mere myths and superstitious traditions. Let the inspired Word of God be your only guide in these matters. Walk in its light, it will prove indeed a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path, amid the thick darkness of the night of this world, and utterly reject all teaching which dares to touch the integrity of the Bible.

If the wrath of God arose against His people in the days of old until there was no remedy, how will it fare with those who take His blessed name upon their unworthy lips, and profess to serve Him, and yet practically deny Him and

make Him a liar. Strong words you may say, but, reader, they are solemnly true, for they are the words of Scripture—"He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, **because he believeth not the record** that God gave of His Son" (1 John v. 10-12; see also John v. 46-47).

May God, according to His infinite grace, long-suffering, and abundant mercy, open the eyes of these blind leaders of the blind, before the One whom they have slighted come forth in flaming fire, with the angels of His power, to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. There will then be no remedy, but judgment poured out to the full; an eternity of woe and unutterable anguish in the lake of fire, with the devil and his angels—deceiver and deceived all involved in one eternal doom.

J. S.



The Work of Christ and its Consequences.

LUKE xv.

IV.

THERE is, however, another beautiful thing in this second parable. The blessed Lord Jesus who knew the thoughts of every heart has answered every form of doubt perfectly by the grace that is in Himself.

In the first parable the Lord closes by pointing out the difference between heaven's joy and earth's. On earth the ninety-nine just persons

may attract much attention, but in heaven where the thoughts of Jesus fill every heart, there is joy over the fruit of the Saviour's work, "over one sinner that repenteth, *more* than over ninety-and-nine just persons which need no repentance."

And just notice in passing, that if your trouble is that you cannot apply that lovely parable to yourself, if you are saying, "How am I to know that I am *that* sheep," the Lord has answered Himself by applying the parable to you. It is not "if He lose *two* of them;" if so, He might have left one and found the other, and you might be the one left. No! it is "if He lose *one* of them." There was only *one* lost sheep, and if you have found out that you are lost, then the Saviour Himself has applied the parable to you, for He says, "I have found *My sheep which was lost*," and you have already seen what became of *that* sheep.

But in the second parable, the Lord closes by simply saying, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," there is no comparison added.

This brings out the second answer that He has made to your doubts.

In the first parable the Lord brings out *His perfect love* in such a way as to win your confidence. In the second, He brings out *your value to Him* in such a simple way as to assure you that He does not intend to lose what is of infinite value to Him.

Now you cannot give any value you may please to a piece of money. It has the royal stamp, and has its value fixed by royal authority. So in taking up a piece of money as the second picture of what is lost, the Lord brings out a wonderful result of the work already told out in the first parable, the work of redemption accomplished on Calvary's cross. Silver is a type of redemption constantly used in Scripture. Here the Lord Jesus shows by it that your value to Him is *the infinite value of redemption*. He paid His precious blood for you because He loved you, and such was your need that no less a price could have redeemed you. But *now that is your value to Him*. So we find the woman has ten pieces of silver. The Holy Ghost has come down as the witness of full redemption; His very presence here is the proof that the work is finished. He is not here to do the work again, but because it has been done.

Moreover, the Lord does not show us the woman loving the piece of silver, as He shows us the Shepherd's love to the lost sheep. But He shows us the woman with ten pieces of silver, knowing their full value, and determined *that none shall be lost*. If she loses one she does not say, "I have nine left, and I shall not miss the other." No! she must have *all* the pieces, and she does the quiet silent work within the house—lighting, sweeping, seeking *diligently*, until she find it. Then she rejoices, but not *more* over

the lost piece ; there is no comparison, for each piece has its value fixed, and each goes to make up the full sum, without which she cannot rejoice. Now notice, she does not say "*my* piece," as the Shepherd could say "*My* sheep." For those *ten* silver pieces tell of the full result of redemption, when the One who paid the infinite price shall receive the travail of His soul and *shall be satisfied*. They are *His*, and the Holy Ghost is here to see that He shall have *all that is His* in that day. Do you think He could be satisfied with *one missing*? and do you think He so lightly values what has cost Him such an infinite price, that He will let you slip out of His hands after all?

No! that is why the Holy Ghost is here with divine knowledge, working in divine energy, not for Himself, but for Christ, to secure by divine power and grace the full results of redemption work *for Christ*. That is why every believer is *sealed for the day of redemption* (Eph. iv. 30). That sealing brings wonderful results as well for your heart, as we shall see in the third parable ; but here the Lord is showing you in His own perfect way, that if you doubt, you are wronging, first, *His infinite love*, next, *His infinite work*, and lastly, *the infinite value*, He has set upon you in paying such a price for you. He shows you first, that the work on the cross is finished, so that He is in the glory, and has made your place in the glory as secure as though you

were already there. He is there *for you* (Heb. ix. 24). Then He shows you that the Holy Ghost is here as the result of this perfect work, and here to secure that He shall have the full result in glory at the day of redemption.

Thus the work of Christ on the cross, and the present work of the Holy Ghost down here, are both brought out in order that you may be perfectly assured that the whole work of salvation, from the cross to the glory, is entirely independent of you, and anything you may think or feel about it. After all this has been brought out, then the Lord, who does not despise your feelings and fears, in His gracious way brings out, in the third parable, the blessed result of His work on the cross, and of the work of the Holy Ghost in you.

S. H. H.

An All-pervading Hope.

SO far from the coming of the Lord being a peculiar view held by a few, which may or may not be true, it is a living and powerful hope which pervades the whole Christian course from start to finish, and connects itself with every detail of the Christian's life.

We have seen that it held a most prominent place in the conversion of the Thessalonian saints. Will any suppose that the apostle

Paul was wrong in bringing this truth so specially before them? Will any assert that the Holy Spirit was mistaken in recording this marked feature of the work of grace in their midst? Far from it. On the contrary we believe that where this truth is ignored, or given a secondary place, there is a lamentable defect in the preaching of the gospel. We go further, and affirm that a full gospel cannot be proclaimed without a clear testimony as to the coming of the Lord. For what does the gospel call us to? Is it not "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"? (2 Thess. ii. 14). To have one's sins forgiven is indeed a priceless blessing to one whose conscience has felt the burden of them; to be rescued from hell is indeed an untold mercy to one who has even in anticipation felt its terrors; to be delivered from the judgment to come may well be a source of comfort to one who has trembled at the thought of meeting a holy, righteous, and sin-hating God. All these and many more unspeakable benefits flow to the believer through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. But above and beyond all this, the gospel is God's call to guilty rebel sinners who deserve nothing but everlasting banishment from His presence, to share Christ's glory. When heaven, earth, and hell shall bow the knee and confess Jesus to be Lord, then shall every one who has fled for refuge to the Saviour in the day of grace, see Him in His

glory, share His glory, and be made perfectly like Him for eternity.

And when will this triumphant change take place? When will this glorious result be consummated? Not at death, but at the coming of the Lord. Hence we repeat no full gospel can be preached which leaves out this essential part of the counsel of God. The Thessalonians were

converted to wait for His Son.

In every chapter of this short epistle is the blessed hope introduced. It not only energises the young convert at the start (chap. i.), but it encourages the veteran soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ amidst the trials and hardships of his warfare. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (chap. ii. 19, 20). The service of the Lord was no bed of roses for Paul. The rank of a peer of the realm he never enjoyed, a bishop's palace he never owned, a magnificent stipend he never possessed. Was there ever such a minister of Christ? Let others boast of their ecclesiastical dignities, Paul gloried more than they all, not in earthly show, but in the things he suffered for the sake of His blessed Master, who suffered more than tongue could tell for him.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in

stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. . . . In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," &c. (2 Cor. xi. 23-33).

But was it always to be so? Was there no bright prospect before him? Was there nothing for him but the sufferings and afflictions of the gospel? Was there no reward? Would his Master never recompense him with a crown of approval? Oh, yes! He would be fully rewarded when he beheld these beloved Thessalonian converts by-and-by in the presence of the Lord. But when would this be? **At His coming.**

There will be a glory which all believers will share alike, even as our blessed Lord has said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them" (John xvii. 22). This glory will be ours as the fruit of God's sovereign grace, and Christ's atoning death. But there will also be a glory which will be special, and peculiar to the individual saint as a reward for faithful and devoted service—"Ye (Thessalonians) are our (Paul's) glory and joy."

Christian reader, have you ever had the joy of leading other souls to Christ? Can you look

forward to receiving such a crown of rejoicing at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?

At the close of chapter iii. the daily walk of the believer is linked with the coming of the Lord. The believer possesses the divine nature, and his walk practically should partake of the character of God. "God is love," and "God is light," and he who possesses the divine nature should walk consistently with these things. Love in activity towards the saints, and holiness in exercise before God should manifest themselves in the daily life, even as they will be displayed in their perfection in the coming day of glory, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. How powerfully, then, does the living expectation of the coming of the Lord influence the daily practical life of the child of God—"Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3).

We have already dwelt upon the comfort that this hope pours into the grief-stricken heart when death has removed a fellow-believer. The saints were comforted not by the thought of soon dying and rejoining their loved ones beyond the grave, but with the blessed hope of resurrection and the coming of the Lord (chap. iv.).

But for the world how different! For it, the coming of the Lord means "sudden destruction" (chap. v. 3). We cannot now enlarge upon "the times and the seasons"; these interesting

prophetic periods will, God willing, come before us in due course. The solemn truth here brought before us is the suddenness with which the judgment of God will bring to an end the whole course of things in the world, social and political. *Not at the same moment* that the heavenly saints will be removed, for an interval of time, elsewhere specified, will separate the rapture of the saints from their appearance with Christ in glory, when He will come with them in flaming fire to execute judgment.

"Peace and safety," will be the self-satisfied cry. Peace conferences, courts of arbitration, ever-changing alliances may for a time stave off war from the nations of the earth; but Jehovah's decree has long since gone forth, "to gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle," and "then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. xiv. 1-6).

Round about Jerusalem, and not in Manchuria and the Far East will witness the final and awful overthrow of the nations that throw over the fear of God and the faith of the gospel. All the events of recent times point to a speedy accomplishment of these things.

Meanwhile the true Christian belongs to the day and not to the night, and amidst the increasing spiritual darkness of the hour his walk should be in growing accord with the

light, for "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake (*i.e.*, be alive when Jesus comes) or sleep (*i.e.*, have died before He comes), we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. v. 1-10).

To the wicked there is "no peace," but for the believer there is peace of conscience through the work of Christ, peace of heart in communion with Christ, and the God of peace he knows. The apostle prays that these young converts may prove the sanctifying power of these things, and that their whole being—spirit and soul and body—should be preserved blameless, not merely till the day of their death, but "**unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

This precious truth is associated with every detail of the Christian's life from start to finish.

A. H. B.

Missionary Notes.

UNDER this heading we purpose giving month by month, as God may provide, brief extracts relating to the work of the Lord both at home and abroad.

We trust that by this means the interests of all our readers, and especially that of young Christians, may be quickened, and a spirit of

prayer and earnest supplication for souls be promoted.

Never has there been such world-wide intercession for a time of spiritual awakening. Answers have already been given in many parts of the world. Let us keep on praying both in our closets and in public.

Welsh Revival. We have frequently been asked whether the work in Wales has not altogether subsided? A Christian friend wrote recently :—"When in Wales for my holidays I heard and saw much to make me thankful to the Lord for His saving power. The coming winter will see blessing in Wales quite as great as last winter, I believe. The people expect this themselves, and there is much prayer going up everywhere." Praise God!

Indian Revival. The marvellous awakening is spreading in every direction. In *Poona* it began by two girls in the Zenana Training Home holding a little prayer meeting every night. After a short while the Holy Spirit wrought, and many in the Home were found praying and crying throughout the whole day in agony of soul, confessing their sins to God, and asking forgiveness one of another, crying aloud for mercy, &c.

The meetings are now being continued every night until a late hour.

One writes:—"Our hearts are on fire. . . . We have *seen* God's power manifested by faithfully proclaiming the Word of God, with no attempt to excuse the people in their sins, and by earnest intercession."

A missionary from another part writes:—"As far as I can see things stand thus: Most of the nominal Christians are wakened up. Some are genuinely converted. *Believers* are mightily quickened. In some there is *burning fire* for the salvation of others."

The spirit of prayer seems to be characteristic of the movement everywhere.

Brethren, do we pray enough? Are we definite enough in prayer? Do we come together for prayer with hearts exercised to present special requests to God? Do we believe that God *is*? Do we believe He hears? And do we believe He is able and willing to grant requests that are according to His mind and Word? Is there not often much formality and deadness in our prayer meetings?

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

**Work amongst
London Mes-
senger Boys.**

It was a great pleasure to be present at the last meeting of a brief Mission held for the purpose of reaching these lads. The bright faces of many amongst them gave evidence that they had taken the right side. We spoke to quite a number, asking if, and for how long, they had known the Lord as their Saviour? "I was saved last year, sir"—or "Just two months"—or, "Only last week." Many stood up to confess Christ in public, and quite a number requested to be prayed for.

There is plenty of work to be done amongst all classes. Let each truly saved soul pray the new convert's prayer, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

ED.

The Last Words of David.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ADDRESS ON 2 SAM.
xxiii. 1-7.

By the late **ROCHFORD HUNT.**

THE previous chapter, which speaks of God's deliverances for David, is to be remarked for its length, but this song, which speaks of David himself, is very short. And it is so with us. We shall have to say through eternity, "What hath God wrought for us!" but we

shall have very little to say about ourselves. As we go on we find, "He must increase"—a blessed thing—"but I must decrease."

David says, "David the son of Jesse." He delights to recall the time when he was little in his own eyes. "The man who was raised up on high"—the man whom God exalted to the throne—"The anointed of the God of Jacob"—that recalls the time when Samuel anointed him, passing by the man head and shoulders taller than any of the people, and choosing the smallest of all. "The sweet psalmist of Israel"—he thinks of the praises to God from his harp, and the action of the Spirit of God. For in whatever state we are we can always praise. We always have something to praise Him for—something do I say? We have an *eternity* to praise Him for.

David looks at his history, but he sees it all blotted and stained. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God"—"My house is not so with God." He would gladly have it effaced. And we, as we think each of our little blotted and stained histories, would gladly have them effaced. He does not speak of what he had done, though there had been faithful times in his life—he left all that to God. It is a relief to him to turn to the Messiah—"He shall be as the light of the morning." His eye rests on the covenant of God, steadfast and sure.

Let us turn to one place of many in the New Testament where we can find perfection. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life unto as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." There was one Man—"over all, God blessed for ever," but let us remember that He was a Man—who could justly point to Himself as a sample of human perfection. "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." These be the words of Jesus, what a contrast to the last words of the son of Jesse!

Correspondence.

"At the Heart of the Revival."—It is distressing to think of the darkness and ignorance of the simplest gospel truths displayed by earnest, sincere, and devoted Christian men, as

the following extract from a pamphlet bearing this title recently sent to us reveals.

"A lady attending one of Mr Evan Roberts' meetings gives a translation of what he was saying, supplied by a young girl sitting at her side:—

" 'He says that if we would have Jesus save us, we must save ourselves first. He says that we must leave off the drink and all that is bad ; he says we must pray, and we must work, we must work hard. He says if Jesus Christ is to save us we must work along with Him, side by side, or, he says, the saving will never be done.' "

How this fits in with the teaching of Scripture it would be hard to say. God's Word says, "By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast " (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

It is deplorable to think of the utter ignorance of God's way of salvation displayed in teaching of this nature. But what can be expected when we remember the state of unbelief reigning in the theological colleges of our land ? Professors of divinity have their time so fully taken up with rationalistic criticism of the Bible, that they have no time to search into its precious mines of spiritual wealth. In many cases the teachers of the young ministers are themselves unconverted men, selected for their responsible posts upon the ground of classical knowledge, and quite regardless of whether they are saved men or not.

And yet God in His sovereign mercy is saving souls by the thousand in Wales, in spite of all the darkness and ignorance. Will not some who know the gospel well be moved of God to go and preach it? It is a solemn thought that God is using zealous, though unintelligent, Christians, whilst many who rejoice in the light of clear gospel teaching, and believe it to the salvation of their own souls are nevertheless standing "all the day idle." It is a day of glad tidings—let us not hold our peace. ED.

DEAR MR EDITOR,—After reading so much about the Welsh Revival, it has occurred to me that some of your readers might appreciate a translation of the hymns which are so much used of God in moving the people. Your readers will overlook much of the rough phrasing which is met with, as this is unavoidable in any attempt to retain the idiom of the original. The first one is called the love song of the Revival. W. R.

Tune—CALVARY (NEW); OR, ELWY.

I.

"Here is love like seas abounding,
Pity flowing in full flood.
See the Prince of Life there dying,
Paying for our life in blood.
Who can help such love to cherish?
Who can fail its praises sound?
Here is love, far past forgetting
While the orbs o'erhead go round.

“Bursting open there at Calv’ry,
Groundless depths are fountains seen ;
Heaven’s floodgates all are breaking,
Which till then intact had been.
Grace and love now like a deluge,
Pouring forth e’en here their bliss ;
Justice, peace with them united,
Join a guilty world to kiss.”

Tune—EWING ; OR, BABEL.

II.

- “A means of cleansing evil,
A place to hide the head,
Is found in Jesus’ wound prints,
Which on the tree once bled.
Exhaustless His compassion,
Untold His sufferings were
While dying for the sinner,
’Neath nails, ill-treated there.
- “There’s come to us salvation
Through Jesus’ blood and cross ;
We’re in the land of plenty,
Because He suffered loss.
The holy law was broken,
Atonement now is laid,
And perfect satisfaction,
In death—the price He paid.
- “Once and for aye ’twas ample
The crown of thorns to wear ;
Once and for aye ’twas ample
The quiv’ring spear to bear.
One Offering, great and willing,
Hushed all the wrath of God ;
One Jesus, dead and risen,
Spreads healing all abroad.”

Notes and Comments.

Hindrances to the Gospel. One of the greatest of these is the divisions amongst Christians. In a day's walk in a country district recently we came across five different small groups within a few miles of one another, unable for some reason or another to have any fellowship the one with the other. However such a lamentable state of things has come about, it certainly is not "standing fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. i. 27).

Helps to the Gospel. We have often experienced what a help it is in carrying the glad tidings amongst the country villages to find one or two of the Lord's people who are earnestly seeking the blessing of those by whom they are surrounded. Many a time have we had to go single-handed into the villages, hire a room, sweep it out, dust it over, trim the lamps, open the door, receive the people, preach to them, dismiss them, lock up the room, and go away. The joy of serving the Lord is well worth it all; then, too, "he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal" (John iv. 36). But a "Macedonian cry" from some local brother or sister, burdened with the desire to see souls awakened and saved—"Come over

and help us"—is a cheer which only those who have laboured single-handed can understand.

"Give him a cheer." A fire was raging, and at the top story was a poor child crying for help. The brave fireman was straining every nerve to reach it, but was blinded and almost suffocated with the smoke. The crowd below began commenting, "He can't do it. He'll never reach her." The poor fireman's energies seemed slackening, when suddenly one of the crowd called out, "Give him a cheer!" The crowd below began cheering instead of criticising, and with one supreme effort the child was saved.

There are many in the arena fighting the powers of sin and Satan, and seeking to "rescue the perishing," don't let us chill them with criticism, but strengthen their hands by prayer and help them with counsel and sympathy.

Praise and Prayer. A correspondent writes:—"My dear brother has recently, I believe, been saved, and taken to be with the Lord. This after long years of opposition to the truth. I mention it as a cause for praise, also an encouragement to go on praying for the living but still unsaved ones."

Let us remember the promise, and let us, acting on its conditions, claim its fulfilment—

"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22).

***Revival in the
Eastern
Counties.***

Much prayer has gone up to God for East Anglia in connection with the season of awakening in Wales and elsewhere. Droppings have already fallen in many places. One writes from the borders of Essex and Suffolk: "The fever is all around us here."

Some places are still enwrapped in callous indifference; let us pray earnestly and continuously that they, too, may be aroused.

***The Children
of the Rich.***

A serious sign of the times is the utter godlessness and absence of all religious feeling amongst the upper classes. The Bishop of London, commenting upon the statement made by the master of one of our great public schools, that "out of a hundred boys who came to the school, seventy-seven had received no religious instruction at all," remarked, "The ignorance of definite religious truth among the well-to-do classes has become a national danger. . . . Men and women who spend every Sunday on the golf links, or on the river, do it because they have no strong convictions to make them wish to do anything else; they do not go to church because they do not care about the things of which they will hear in

church ; they do not care, because when they were young and impressionable they were never taught them, or never taught them in such a way as to make a living and lasting impression upon their lives and characters for ever."

Has not the state of the so-called churches had somewhat to do with this indifference to all serious thought as to the future? Is not the long-continued scepticism, that has poured from the pulpit, at the root of much of the unbelief of the present time? When earnest men, saturated with honest conviction and unquestioning faith in that sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, preached it in the power of the Spirit, things were very different; witness the Wesleys, George Whitfield, and Charles Finney, in former times. What has given such power in the preaching of Dr Torrey? Is it not his absolute conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the power of the Spirit, and the reality of prayer. Where these things are found to-day conversions will follow. Oh, for a return to the faithful preaching of the pure Word of God!

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word, . . . for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2).

The Work of Christ and its Consequences.

LUKE XV.

—
No. V.

IN this, the third of these wonderful parables, the Lord Jesus takes up the way in which your fears, doubts, and feelings are met by the grace so simply and blessedly brought out in the first two parables.

It is clear enough that the Lord did not intend to put these feelings into the foreground in either the first or the second parable, because a piece of money has no feelings, and a sheep could not be supposed to have such a variety of doubts and fears and anxious calculations as to its safety on the Shepherd's shoulders as you have nursed, perhaps for many years, in your heart.

Now in this last touching picture of the fulness of divine grace, we get the *cause* of these feelings brought out by the One who understands perfectly every movement of our hearts, and in passing from "*he began to be in want*" to "*they began to be merry*" we pass from a misery and wretchedness of heart so deep and unsatisfied that it can only be expressed by "*began to be in want,*" to a fulness of joy so deep that after an eternity has been spent in it it will only have *begun*.

There is no need to enter in detail into the downward path of the wanderer. The steps are

rapidly told that bring him to the beginning of an experience that is the natural result of his place. The heart cannot be happy without God. He made us for Himself, nor can we ever be happy *away from Him*. A saint of ancient times, whose path in sin had been such as the Lord describes here, wrote from his heart, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

Thus we get the other side of the first parable, there the Shepherd could not rest without His sheep. How deep are these cords of love, these bands of a man! Here is a poor miserable heart, away from God, tasting the fruits of sin in misery and emptiness of soul, and the sense of this emptiness and need is the *first sign* of that work of the Holy Ghost which is not complete until the empty heart is brought to rejoice in the fulness of the Father's love in the place where His love can rest.

But the first effort of the heart feeling the need, but far from desiring to get back to God, is to seek to satisfy this need in the far country. The lesson is soon learned that the world does not *give*, it takes longer to learn that the world cannot *satisfy*. Swine's food will not minister to a heart that God meant to be satisfied with *Christ*. Lastly the wretched man comes to himself and learns his real state. There is bread in the father's house. Who told him so? This is the second sign of the work of the Holy Ghost; the

One who awakens the sense of need, reveals the place where the need may be met.

"I will arise and go to my father." It is here that exercise of soul really begins, a distinct thing from the sense of misery and unrest of heart experienced by one who is away from God and knows it. As soon as he thinks of his father, and of going back to him, he finds out that it is not only a question of bread, but of *sin*. With his back to the father he can say, "*I perish with hunger*," but the moment he turns his face to the father, it is, "*I have sinned*."

Here it is that the blessed Lord brings out the root and source of all the doubts and fears that accompany these exercises of heart about sin. It lies in this, *we have lost the knowledge of God*. It comes out at once in our feelings and in our thoughts of the way in which He will act toward us.

The Lord brings this out very simply, but in such a wonderful way that I cannot look into this mirror, held up by Him, without exclaiming, "*That's me!*"

This is how He does it. The son makes up his mind what he will say to his father when he gets back. He has two things in his mind, *first*, and as yet the deepest, is *his need of bread*, of which the very servants have such abundance, *second*, though he knows it ought to come first, is *his sense that he has sinned*. So he resolves to say, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and

before thee ; and am no more worthy to be called thy son, *make me as one of thy hired servants.*"

He rightly put his confession of sin first, but what do you think of the second part? Very humble and becoming, do you say? No doubt that is what the son thought too, when he set off, with this ready in his heart. But it shows two simple things :—

He did not know his father.

He did not know himself.

He thought that the father was one who would receive him on terms of his own making, that the father would come down to be the minister of his needs in return for service rendered, that he would pass over his sin and put him in the servant's place to hold it on servants' conditions—good behaviour. That shows how much he knew of the father.

Then he thought that though he had certainly been too bad to be a son, yet he was at least *good enough to be a servant*. How wonderfully it brings out what our thoughts are naturally, even when the Spirit of God has wrought in us.

This is at the bottom of the doubts and fears as to our place of acceptance and eternal salvation, it is *self*. The son thought there was some goodness left in him, so do we as long as we want to make God's grace *to us* depend on something *in us*.

Now mark what the son *actually said after* the father had bridged "the great way off," had thrown his arms around him and kissed him.

Listen!—"Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Where is the rest? Gone, and gone for ever. His conditions have disappeared. He has learnt, in the deep silent love of that welcome, *what the father's heart is*. In one moment he has learnt that he is infinitely too vile to be a servant, and that the father's love is infinitely too great to give him any place but a son's. How poor, and mean, and contemptible now appear those words which seemed so humble and becoming before he met his father.

We have yet to see how the father, having set this poor heart at rest as to its reception, perfects his own work, until "they began to be merry." Here Jesus shows the Father *receiving the sinner as a son*. What do you say to that?

S. H. H.

God's King, and the Apostasy of the Gentile Judgment Seat.

JOHN xix. 1-24.

THE previous chapter plainly presents the Jews and their religious leaders intent upon destroying Jesus. They were legal, and pledged to uphold the legal system from which they derived their authority and subsistence.

He was full of grace and truth ; it came by Him ; and He derived His authority from, and lived by, His Father. Theirs was religious flesh ; His was piety in the power of the Spirit. Their boast was in earthly religious privilege—the temple, city, and people of God ; He brought souls to the Father, gave eternal life and a place in the Father's house. The display of this grace in Him attracted the fickle multitude, and produced true conscience work and faith in those who were given Him of the Father ; but the bitterest antagonism in those who had imposed themselves and their authority upon a nation in the flesh.

Blinded thus, and by self-interest, they sought His blood. They were the instruments of Satanic mischief made ready to his hand.

It was different with Judas and Pilate. Hitherto with Judas, self-interest had enlisted him on the side of Jesus ; nor was he troubled by religious scruples or conscience. Never do we find him smarting under the reproofs of Christ or stumbled by His teaching. He saw and profited by power superior to anything that he or any one else had ever seen before. This was enough to assure him that whatever difficulties were in the path, all must ultimately turn out for the profit of those who followed Jesus. That it meant ruin in this world, as the world counts ruin, only with difficulty forced itself upon his mind, and indeed not fully until the last. Then

it was utter despair. He had striven to get at least something in the meanwhile out of the priests, yet counting craftily upon that irresistible power which he well knew was centred in his Master. But now with convicted conscience he sees Him about to be crucified—thought of insupportable misery!

How clearly we see in all this a dark and subtle power enticing the man, by playing on his greed, until he becomes the traitorous but unwitting tool of Satan's plans!

With Pilate, too, it was no question of religion or conscience. What there was of either, as there is, even though seared, something of both in all men, arrayed him on the side of Christ as against His persecutors (xviii. 38, xix. 4, 6, 8-12). Of Moses' law or grace he knew nothing; religious privilege from God he had not; he did not oppose what was spiritual, for to him there was no such thing (xviii. 38). It was a mere idea, with which he had no quarrel (vers. 36-38). But step by step he is insensibly led on in spite of himself, and of that justice in which Rome so vainly boasted, to the act in which culminated the apostasy of man's judgment-seat. No longer is imperial Cæsar seated there, but Satan, this world's prince.

As the first step in this abysmal apostasy Pilate scourges Jesus, at the same time repeating his previous declaration, "I find in Him no fault whatever." Meanwhile in heartless mockery the

Roman soldiery had clothed Him with simulated imperial attire, saluting Him King of the Jews, and striking Him on the face. Thus clad, Jesus went forth from the judgment hall, and Pilate says, "Behold the Man!" He probably thought that the sight of the indignity and cruel punishment which the Blessed One had suffered would appease their rage and excite compassion.

Seeing Him, these Jewish priests and officers, as wolves thirsting for His blood, cry, Crucify! Crucify! But Pilate is not yet prepared for such an unrighteous act. Let them do so if they chose, but he repeats his sentence for the third time, "I find no fault in Him."

This marks another step in the downward course. Pilate is willing that the guiltless should be crucified, provided the Jews do it and bear the responsibility. But for many reasons this they will not do. Moreover, little do their reasons signify; the word of Jesus had already fixed the mode of death by which He was to die. His must be the Roman cross.

The Jews, having now decided among themselves as to the charge to be brought against Him, say, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." But will the Roman magistrate take cognisance of an infraction of Jewish law? Moreover, the claim to be Son of God confirms, while it arouses still more, Pilate's fears.

The finger of God upon his conscience pro-

duced those fears. To shed Jewish blood, innocent or guilty, was a slight matter to Pilate ; but before this prisoner the judge felt ill at ease. And though his wife's message is not mentioned here, it is certain that were it a question only of Pilate's will and the will of the Jews, he would have released Jesus. But a far more serious controversy is in question. Shall Satan or God in moral government control man's judgment-seat?

Again Pilate goes into the *Prætorium* and says to Jesus, "Whence art Thou?" Jesus answered not. Of His acts and teaching He would speak, but His divine origin and nature came not within the scope of creature judgment. Amazed at His silence, Pilate asserts in pride his irresponsible authority. Then Jesus answers, resting authority upon its true basis, and insisting on the responsibility to God of those who exercise it. Pilate had no authority if it were not given to him from above. And those who in the false assumption of it had delivered up their King had the greater sin. Had not the Jews put the law in motion, Gentile authority would never have taken cognisance of the case. Scope being given them to do their will, nothing short of His death in the most ignominious form—that of a Roman criminal—will satisfy their rage. Their hatred was more culpable than Pilate's injustice.

Authority might indeed be with Pilate, but

divine discernment and ability to judge were with Him who stood before his tribunal, and apportioned to each his share of guilt.

From this time Pilate sought to release Him ; for the facts, his own personal conviction, and conscience alike convinced him of the guiltlessness of Jesus. Why not then give immediate effect to the promptings of justice ? Ah, here the fatal opportunity was given. He who knoweth to do right, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. In most things he who hesitates when the right is known is lost.

Quick to perceive and take advantage of this weakness, the Jews cry out, If thou releasest this Man thou art not Cæsar's friend ; every one making himself a king speaks against Cæsar. This decided him. Pride of place, love of authority, and of the emoluments pertaining to it, held by the slight tenure of the most jealous tyrant's will, all combined to weight the scales of justice against the claims of righteousness and truth. For the first time Pilate's self-interest was opposed to Christ. In Matthew, he, as a crafty, far-sighted ruler, surrenders the innocent One to His murderers to avoid a tumult. In Mark, he does so out of pure indifference, in order to content the people. In Luke, he is overborne by their violence, and gives Him up from fear. But here, from mere self-interest, most despicable of all, he plunges the judgment-seat into apostasy.

It is now early morning, and, having heard these words, he leads Jesus out and formally assumes the seat of judgment at a place called the Pavement, outside of the Prætorium. Clear-headed and with conscience enough to see that these Jews had forced him to an act which revolted his judicial instincts, as well as every moral feeling—an act which shattered every principle of right, and the foundation of government itself, yet forced to it by a determination to seek his own interests at all costs, he is at least determined that they also shall be made to sacrifice all that nationally was sacred to them.

He says to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests, speaking in the name of the whole people, answer, "We have no king but Cæsar." Then he delivered Him up to them to be crucified. "And they took Jesus and led Him away."

Everything divine that God had ever committed to the responsibility of men; every promise confirmed and established by the holy sanction of the law; His gracious intervention on His people's behalf held in bondage by an evil power mightier than they; His mercy which in spite of reiterated transgression fulfilled His word, all was surrendered. On the other hand, His ordinance of governmental authority, committed though it now was to the Gentile, still God's minister for good, or an avenger for

wrath to him that does evil, all given up for cruel spite or personal interests. Never in all time's history could there be another moment of equal importance for judgment to be administered in righteousness, and spite and selfishness abhorred. But instead, at that tribunal, spite and selfishness presided, and unrighteousness decreed.

Jesus bears His cross to the place of a skull, and there they crucify Him, together with two others, one on either side, and Jesus in the midst. Pilate puts upon the cross a title, signifying who He was, Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews. For this the Jews desire to substitute, *He said*, I am King of the Jews. But Pilate holds them to their bargain. They had denied their King and accepted Cæsar. He the while confesses the claims of Jesus while nailing Him to the cross. Who shall estimate the turpitude of such a decree? At the same time he gratifies his cynical contempt of priests and people by putting Jesus' true title in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin on the tree. What he had written, he had written.

To Jesus this much at least was left. Of all else He was despoiled. But prompt as the soldiers were to wound and pierce His body, they refrained from rending the coat, for this was seamless, woven from the top throughout, and to rend would be to ruin it. So they cast lots for it instead. Thus the Scripture was

fulfilled which says, They parted My garments among them, and on My vesture they did cast lots.

The contrast how terrible! Jesus surrendering everything for man, man seizing everything from Jesus!

W. T. W.

A Waning Hope.

IT is sad and humbling to think how quickly the first freshness of the work of God in the soul may pass away. There is no failure in God, but man is full of shortcoming, and invariably fails in maintaining the testimony that may have been committed to his keeping. This principle runs through the whole of Scripture from the garden of Eden right on to the millennium.

In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle had spoken of their "work of faith," their "labour of love," and their "patience of hope." In the Second, while he thanks God for their growing "faith," and their abounding "love," he remains silent as to their "hope" (chap. i. 3). The fact was, that the heavenly side of the hope had become dimmed, and error had been allowed to come in with reference thereto.

Ignorance of the truth is one thing, but error concerning the truth is quite another, and a far more serious matter.

The First Epistle, especially in its fourth chapter, was written to reveal an aspect of the truth of the Lord's coming as to which till then they were in ignorance. They knew that Christ was coming, but they seem to have been more occupied with the earthly manifestation of His kingdom, than with the heavenly hope characteristic of Christianity.

But in the Second Epistle error had crept in through false teaching, and this the Spirit of God had to correct. Some, from not sufficiently weighing the Scripture, have imagined that the apostle in his Second Epistle was endeavouring to correct a wrong interpretation of the first. But this is not so. The error that had come in amongst them was the supposing that the day of the Lord had *actually come*, for this is how the verse really reads, "That ye be not soon shaken in mind . . . as that the day of the Lord *is present*" (chap. ii. 2).

The day of the Lord, they well knew, was a day of judgment, earthly judgment. The reader can satisfy himself on this point by referring to all the passages where that day is mentioned in the Old Testament (see, *e.g.*, Isaiah xiii., Joel ii., Zech. xiv., &c.). There was no ignorance on their part with reference to the character of that day (see I Thess. v. 1, 2). They had been ignorant as to the heavenly hope of the Church until this had been made clear to them by the apostle (see I Thess. iv. 13-18), but as to the Day

of the Lord, with all its attendant judgments and terrors, they had full knowledge.

It is of all importance that we, too, in our time should clearly apprehend the difference. That Christ will come to execute judgment every Christian believes, but that He will come to remove His own from the earth before the judgments fall, is not as clearly seen ; though, thank God ! the truth is now making its way amongst Christians far and near.

But errors abound to-day no less than in the early days of the Church's history ; how important, therefore, to be well grounded in the plain teaching of the Word of God. This will deliver souls from the multiplicity of false views with reference to "the blessed hope."

Though these dear young converts were seriously troubled in mind by unprincipled men who had crept in amongst them, yet their walk was good, and for this the apostle thanks God (ver. 3). Their faith was growing, and this was not mere head knowledge, for their love was in active exercise one toward another. There is no greater lack in the present day than this "brotherly love."

The apostle not only thanked God on their behalf, but he gloried in them amongst the assemblies of God, rejoicing in their patience and faith amidst violent persecutions.

The enemy tried to use these tribulations and persecutions to turn them aside from the truth,

but before the apostle deals with the erroneous teaching, he builds them up in truth they already possessed. He cheers their drooping spirits by the thought that their very sufferings were God's public seal that they were worthy of His coming kingdom. Who so worthy to reign with Christ when He reigns, as those who suffer for Him before He reigns? (ver. 5).

Furthermore, it will not only be a righteous thing for God to recompense His persecuted people by-and-by, He will also requite the persecutors (ver. 6).

During the absence of Christ the saints are troubled by the world. The nearer they are to Him, the closer they walk with Him; and the more faithful they are, the more will they suffer at the hands of the world. But when the Lord returns to reign in power and majesty, the troublers will themselves be troubled, and the troubled saints will share the well-earned rest of all that blessed army of prophets and apostles who had been persecuted and martyred before them.

The Lord Jesus will then be revealed from heaven with "the angels of his power," and with "flames of fire." How different is this from the comforting hope of the First Epistle! There He comes into the air to remove His loved ones from the earth where they had suffered; here He comes to the earth to execute judgment, and this will be His day, "the day of the Lord." The

persecutions of an ungodly world will then be impossible, and when He comes to take vengeance it will not be upon His own, but upon those who, in spite of the testimony that God had given of Himself, had persisted in their ignorance of Him.

"Them that know not God" is an expression which, in a general sense, stands for all in every age who have refused the testimony that God has given of Himself, for He has never left Himself without witness. But here, no doubt, it specially refers to the Gentiles, who will be found alive when Christ is revealed from heaven (1 Thess. iv. 5; compare also Ps. lxxix. 6, Jer. x. 25).

But God has in these last days given a special testimony in the gospel of His grace, and to this all who hear it are called to bow in the obedience of faith. Man will not, it humbles his pride, he does not like to own himself lost, he loves sin, hates God, and despises Christ. The time is coming when all this will be changed, and the opposers and rejecters of the gospel testimony, whether Jewish or professedly Christian, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

In this passage we have to do with the judgment of the living, and not the dead. Those who have died in their unbelief and sin will be judged at the great white throne, when the reign of Christ shall end; these will be banished from

His glorious presence, when with all His saints He will come to set up His kingdom.

On "that day" His despised and persecuted saints will be seen shining in His likeness and resplendent with His glory. Each one will fill his appointed place in the kingdom. Christ will come "to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in *all them that believe.*"

The apostle prayed that God would still count them worthy of this calling (compare verses 5, 11), and carry on with power the work of faith in their souls, so that the name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified in them. Nevertheless "the blessed hope" had begun to wane and was in danger, through false teaching, of losing its power amongst them, and to the correction of this he now directs himself.

A. H. B.

Is it Possible for a True Child of God to be Lost?

THIS question is often asked, and its importance demands the serious attention of every believer. Some preachers say "yes," and others say "no," and the young believer is often left in uncertainty and wonders which is right.

Let us turn from both for a moment and see what God says about the matter. The BIBLE is God's Word, and we must bow to its authority

and accept what it says as decisive. If it teaches that no one can be sure until the end, it is nothing less than presumption on our part to say we are sure. But if it teaches that we **may** be sure now, let us at once believe it, for "he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar" (1 John v. 10).

The Bible is one complete whole and cannot contradict itself, because God caused it to be written. It is very important to see this. Some have found what at first appeared to be a contradiction, but after careful and attentive reading they discovered the confusion was in their own mind and not in the Bible.

There are passages which may appear to teach that a child of God may be lost, but when examined with the context we find they teach just the opposite. There is no need to dwell on these now, for they have often been taken up and their true meaning given,* and there are others so simple, clear, and conclusive, that even a child can understand them.

The Gospel of John is a favourite with many, and perhaps read more often than any other part of Scripture; but did you ever notice why it was written? Turn with me to chapter xx. 30, 31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that

* See "Falling away; or, Can a Real Believer ever be Lost?" by A. H. B. James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C. Price 1d.

ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through His name." These twenty-one chapters present the Lord Jesus as the Son of God—the sent-one from the Father — His divine and human glories shine out in every page, and who-soever believes in Him thus is born of God and has eternal life. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me **hath** everlasting life " (John vi. 47). The whole gospel then was written that we might have the life.

But John was also guided by the Holy Ghost to write three epistles. The first contains five chapters, and in chapter v. 13, we are told why these were written.

Open your Bible and read carefully 1 John v. 9-13, and you will notice that three of these verses end with the same two words—**His Son**. That is, when God speaks about our blessing He speaks about **His Son**, for we are blessed in Him.

" If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of **His Son**.

" He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar : because he believeth not the record that God gave of **His Son**.

" And this is the record that God **hath given** to us eternal life, and this life is in **His Son**."

The life is in **His Son**, and the way we get it

is, "He that hath the Son (that is, believeth on Him) hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

Do you remember we saw in John xx. 31, that the gospel was written that we might believe and have the life? "Yes," you say, "I do really believe on His precious name, but dare I say I have eternal life?" Read 1 John v. 13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that **ye may know** that **ye have** eternal life." That is, the gospel was written that you might believe and have the life, and the epistle was written that you may know that you have it.

If you say, "It seems too good to be true, I do not merit it," I reply, "Is it too good for God to give, and does not **His Son** merit it?"

But how long will it last, and shall I ever lose it?

The following interesting conversation with a young local preacher may make this clear:—A short time ago some gospel addresses were given in a small country town. Numbers came together night after night, and God blessed His Word to many. Amongst others, a bright, earnest, intelligent young local preacher came regularly at first, and was delighted and refreshed by drinking in the precious truths of the Lord's death, resurrection, ascension, and return, and the present blessings brought to us in virtue of these. Suddenly he was missed from the meetings, but,

a few days before leaving the town, we met in the street, when he said he had been away. He was so sorry to have missed the meetings that he asked me to meet him at his house to read the Scriptures together.

During one of the visits the question of the eternal security of the believer was raised, to which he objected, saying, "I can't go with you there, for I hold the old Methodist doctrine on that point." At first I could not believe it possible that one who knew and enjoyed so much truth **could** be in ignorance of this important matter; but to put it plainly, I asked, "Do you mean to tell me, that you, a believer in Christ, and a possessor of eternal life, can be lost after all and perish eternally in the lake of fire?"

"Yes, I do," was his reply.

Being assured that it was not wilfulness on his part, but that he was honest and sincere, I said, "What Scripture have you for such a thought?"

"I have no New Testament Scripture." Then said I: "Turn with me to one simple verse, John x. 28, and tell me what that means. What does the word '**any**' mean? 'Neither shall **any** pluck them out of my hand.'"

"I know that means men or angels, or devils, or anything else."

"Exactly, that's what it does mean; but now, tell me, does what you hold contradict what Christ says in that verse?"

"It is different to what you say."

"It is not a question now of what I say, or think, but entirely between you and Christ. Does what you hold contradict what Christ says in this verse?"

Seeing him turn to 2 Peter ii. 22, I said: "Stop! You need not look to see if a washed sow becomes a sheep, for it does not."

"How do you know what I am looking for?"

"Never mind, come back to this verse."

"May I not turn anywhere else?"

"Not until you have given a plain 'yes' or 'no' to the question."

After a few moments' pause, he said, "I have argued this point many times, but have never been put in a corner like this before?"

"Well, it is very simple; only a plain 'yes' or 'no' is required."

A deep struggle was silently going on within. He had been cradled and nursed in this doctrine which makes much of man and his doings, but little of Christ and His finished work, and it was hard to root out what had taken such a hold upon him for so long.

But as I have said, he was **honest**, and, seeing his position was untenable, he at last said, "Yes, and I'm wrong."

Whilst the truth had made him free and brought fuller and deeper joy to his heart, a fresh difficulty came before him, which he expressed by saying, "But must I preach this?"

"You know what the apostle Paul said,

‘Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed’ (Gal. i. 6).”

“Did he really say that?”

We turned to the verse, and after reading it, he said, “**Then I must preach it.**”

The Word of God had done its work. He saw that whatever thought he had, if ONE verse contradicted it, his thought must be given up and the Scripture believed.

“And I give unto them eternal life, and
they shall never perish.”

Let these precious words sink deep into your heart, dear reader, and remember that whilst you and others may change, these will abide continually. They come direct to your heart from the Saviour, who said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away.”

A short time after, a letter came from this young man, telling of the joy and blessing he had received, and that the Bible had become a new book to him with ever-increasing preciousness, and he can now truly say with the apostle Paul: “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. viii. 38, 39).