

THE
NORTHERN WITNESS.

EDITED BY
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JAMES E. HAWKINS,
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and 36 Baker Street, W.

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The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. G.

Chap. i. 1-4.

HAD not the epistle to the Romans come before the epistle to the Corinthians how very incomplete it would have been! For it is God's way first to bring the conscience and heart into harmony with Himself, into rest in His presence, before He begins to speak to us either as to our individual walk or our collective relationships.

The epistle to the Romans deals at the outset with the state of every man by nature, and shows us how the grace of God, through the propitiatory death of Jesus, the shedding of His blood, has come in and met every need of every individual sinner. It reveals God's provision whereby His righteousness is maintained, at the same time that the guilty sinner is justified and pardoned.

Then follows in chap. iv. that it is not of works, but by faith; so that all boasting is excluded.

In chap. v. we see how God's grace *abounds* toward us. It is here we get so often that expression, "much more," and we are led on to that climax where it is said, "and we also JOY IN GOD." Nothing can surpass that. Throughout eternity we shall never rise higher than that, to find our joy in God Himself.

What a contrast! Instead of groaning afar off under the intolerable burden of a guilty conscience, we are brought to find in that very God against whom we had so grievously sinned, our rest and joy.

In chap. vi. we are shown our deliverance from our old corrupt Adam—self; and in chap. vii. from the old Husband—the law.

Then in chap. viii. we find "no condemnation" to those who are in Christ Jesus, and "no separation" from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the 12th chapter we come to practical exhortations as to individual walk and behaviour; but here there is also a very pointed reference to the gathered capacity of the saints (see verses 4, 5, 6).

This passage, I say, speaks to us not merely as *individuals* having peace with God and finding our joy in Him, accepted in the Beloved and having the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. It speaks to us also as members of a body, as having corporate relationships, and responsibilities to discharge one towards another as members of the same body.

So whilst the line of truth in Corinthians mainly concerns the gathered or corporate capacity of the saints—the order of the house of God, and that in Romans mainly bears upon the individual heart and conscience, nevertheless this assembly character of the saints is distinctly referred to in Romans, even as Corinthians is not without its instructions for the individual.

Indeed, the Epistles to the Corinthians are full of precious principles which have a practical bearing upon every department of our life.

I have thought it well to take up this portion of God's Word (namely, first epistle to Corinthians), and go straight through it, believing that in so doing we shall escape the snare of dwelling exclusively on favourite subjects, better maintain the proportion of many sided truth, and so receive such a variety of instruction that we shall not fail to get profit.

Amongst the many courses of lectures and sermons

upon the Word of God which I have heard of, I do not at present remember ever having heard of a course of expositions of this epistle. I believe there is a reason for this. I do not think it possible, so long as Sectarianism is maintained, to face the truth that is found in Corinthians.

In order to get blessing to our souls there must be the letting go of all our own opinions, and a simple child-like desire to hear the voice of God and to learn His will. Are we learners? Have we come to this meeting as learners? Or have we come to pick up a few nice thoughts to afford gratification to our minds? Are we going to take our place at the Master's feet? He is our Lord, and we are His slaves. We are His, spirit, soul, and body; His redeemed, His purchased slaves. As individuals we are called to be subject to Him, to own Him Lord in all things.

And as gathered ones forming together a little assembly, family, household, who is over it? Who has authority there? "Christ, the Son over His own house." Christ is the One whose right it is to speak and to be heard, and who alone has authority to order everything in His own house.

The writer of the epistle begins with his own name, Paul. He speaks with authority. One might occupy a whole afternoon without going beyond this first word. We might ask, "Paul, who are you? What right have you thus to introduce the subject with your own name?"

But Paul was not speaking of or from himself. He was merely a servant, an instrument through whom the Lord was speaking. Thus all the Scriptures, whoever the writer may be, lay claim to our attention as being the very voice of God.

This is specially shown in this Epistle (chap. xiv., ver. 37). "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Thus God brings in a test of true spirituality. He tests our thoughts of ourselves. Some think themselves "perfect," when no one else does. Paul, then, is merely a servant, but he was chosen by the will of God. In this church there were some who questioned his apostleship, and consequently the authority of his instructions to the saints (see 2 Cor. xi.). Therefore he asserts strongly at the outset that he is not an apostle by the will of man, he was not chosen by man, nor through the casting of lots like Matthias, but he

was chosen and set apart for the apostleship by the Lord Himself in a very special way. The signs of an apostle were manifest in him "in all patience and signs and wonders and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. xii. 12), and his character, sufferings, and labours all bore witness to the fact that he was chosen by God.

In this epistle, then, from the hand of Paul, we have the divine pattern of the house of God. Had I lived at the time of the making of the tabernacle, I might have said to the busy workers, "What pattern are you working after?" They might have answered me, "It is a divine pattern." "But where did you get it?" "We got it from Moses." "And where did Moses get it?" "He got it from Jehovah in the Mount, during the forty days he was there alone with God."

Who would dare to interfere with that divine pattern? If God said that around the skirt of the High Priest's garment there were to be alternately a golden bell and a pomegranate, who would dare to say there ought to be two golden bells and two pomegranates?

The spirit of lawlessness might say, "What about it? it is a non-essential; it is only an ornament." But God had spoken, and Israel obeyed; the work was finished "as the Lord commanded Moses" (see Ex. xi. 16-33), and the glory of the Lord immediately filled the place.

Again God has spoken. Not by Moses, but by one equally chosen to convey His mind to His people, by "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God." Before us in this epistle lies open the divine pattern and ordering of God's spiritual house, and to alter it, to infringe upon it, is sacrilege, and to depart from it is apostasy.

We are dealing with solemn subjects. Nowadays men fancy they may hold what opinions they please; and being their own opinions, they can waive them at pleasure, and care not to suffer for them.

But faith knows nothing of mere opinions. Faith has laid hold upon the word of the Lord, not on mere human opinions. Faith bows to the will of the Lord, and not to self-will. That which we have received from God is worth holding firmly and suffering for.

Sosthenes is also here mentioned. He was not the writer of the epistle. But Paul loves with truest courtesy to identify with himself this faithful brother, who was his companion and fellow-helper, and who had suffered for the name of the Lord.

"Unto the church of God." In speaking to the

Ephesian elders he uses the same expression, "feed the church of God." Again, Peter says, "feed the flock of God" (1 Pet. v. 2). It is not feed "your own congregation," but God's assembly. Great as was the apostle's authority and fatherly care for the saints, he never called any church "his church;" never was he heard saying of any company of saints "my people." The word translated church (ecclesia) literally signifies "the called out." The word is applied to the congregation in the wilderness. They were called out of Egypt, and gathered around Jehovah in the wilderness. So the church is God's "called out" company. Called out from the world, and called unto Himself.

"To them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus." Every one of them was sanctified. If there was an exception we do not read of such. Paul regarded them as, and believed them to be, an assembly of sanctified ones. That is God's ideal of a church.

The church of God, moreover, embraced every sanctified one in Corinth. Never let any one of us presume to call the little gathering where we meet "the church of God;" we will be making a great mistake if we do. The church of God is a term that embraces all God's children. It is broken up, scattered, mixed up with the world. As God's corporate witness upon earth it has utterly failed.

We may say that we are "a church;" for there are "the churches of God" (1 Cor. xi. 16), and "the churches of the saints" (1 Cor. xiv. 33). We may form one or more assemblies gathered unto the name of the Lord; but never let us assume to be what we are not. It is not our business to attempt the reconstruction of the church of God. God is going to reconstruct it. By and bye He is going to call out from earth and from the grave every member of the body of Christ. All will be "gathered together unto Him" in the heavens. Jesus will be "in the midst"—the Centre of the gathering, the Head of the body, the Lord of all. Then shall the world know that the Father sent the Son, when they see those who witnessed for Him on earth reigning with Him in heaven.

But meantime our course is plain. However others may be bound by the traditions of men, our business is subjection to the Lord. We have the divine pattern before us in the Word, and we dare not gather after any other model.

"With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

How strong this is! Jesus was Lord of Paul and Lord of every believer at Corinth. The Jewish saints at Jerusalem would not eat with the Gentile saints at Antioch, but Jesus was Lord of both. He was their Lord, and He is our Lord.

Faithfulness to the Lord may lead us into a very separate path, but nevertheless we are to embrace in our hearts every child of God, and seek to be made a blessing to all however dark, however ignorant, however wilful.

A beloved brother once remarked, we should always bear in mind that however great the differences amongst the children of God in spirituality, in attainment, in obedience, yet all these distinctions are small compared to the difference between the *living* and the *dead*.

"Grace unto you, and peace, &c." The apostle begins and ends his epistle with "grace." The way of the apostle in writing to this church is very beautiful. He deals with them severely, yet it is in manifest love. God would have us to be faithful one toward another. He would not have us suffer sin upon our brother without rebuking it. But if we do not in our dealings one with another make it felt that they are the outcome of *love*, we shall utterly fail in attaining our object. See how the apostle seeks to assure them of his love. He says he wrote to them with "many tears." Again he says, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you all, though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." He breathes out his very rebukes in accents of love, and with tears of love trickling down his face.

We would do more good among saints if we dealt with them like this.

And notice that Paul thanks God for them. He was going to deal severely with their sins and errors, yet first he acknowledges the grace of God which he saw in them.

If we would be helpful to fellow-saints, it is in this spirit we must act. First, discerning and acknowledging the grace that is in one another, instead of seeking for and dwelling upon one another's faults.

THE very commandment of God, "Repent," shows a dispensation above the law, and supposes a fountain of grace in the heart of God. Were there not forgiveness with God, there could have been no commandment to repent.

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN these last days the Word of God is being specially assailed not only as a whole, but in its parts. To suggest that the Bible is not inspired, is at once to alarm, and by attempting too much, to accomplish nothing with the majority of professing Christians. This Satan perceives, and therefore, whilst the Bible is spoken of as inspired, nothing more being meant than an inspiration which applies equally to Shakspeare or Milton, certain books are specially selected for direct and continuous assault. Thus, as to the New Testament; the Gospels of Mathew, Mark, and Luke are comparatively passed over, and the last one; that of John, which presents Jesus of Nazareth as the Divine Son of God, is continually assaulted by the rationalistic writers of the day; and it is not difficult to detect the animus that guides their pen. And as the Gospel by John in the New Testament, so with the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. The last Gospel is that which completes the presentation of Christ to our souls, in all His divine fulness as the Eternal Son of God, in that wondrous genealogy, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" John i. 1., Matthew traces Him back to Abraham; Luke to Adam; but John takes us further back, before the one or the other, even beyond time, and before Creation, shewing that then He who stooped so low, but who, even as He did so, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6), was in the bosom of the Father, eternally One.

The last book of Moses is that from which the Lord Jesus, as the dependent one, in the place of subjection selected those three passages with which to meet Satan's temptations.

Do we not see then why he who hates the whole of the Scripture specially hates these two Books. There are three opposing forces—the world, the flesh, and the devil, and these are opposed respectively to the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. Thus, whilst Satan is working in the world and acting upon the flesh, he, himself, is in direct antagonism to the Son of God. How he must hate therefore that Gospel of John which so especially presents the Lord to us as the Son of God! And how too he must hate that Book of Deuteronomy from which those words were taken

by which the Lord bound the strong man armed, then to spoil him of his goods.

And not only has this book such a peculiar interest to us because of this, but as we read, we cannot fail to be struck with the constant reference to the word of God, and this is only in accordance with the object of the book itself. Why did Israel wander in the wilderness for forty years, and those who had come up out of Egypt die there? Because man's word had more weight with them than the Lord's. He had said "Go up" and they should have gone into the Promised Land within a very short time, but unbelief came in. Therefore it was that this book with its solemn heart-searching instructions was given to them. Had their fathers wandered thirty-eight years in the wilderness because of sin? Then they are to "remember" it, and are warned of that which would befall them if they departed from Jehovah and acted in similar unbelief.

This needs to be seen that we may understand the character of the book, and the reason for its being given. That it was not a needless repetition. That reading in Exodus, the instructions contained there as well as in Deuteronomy, would not suffice; for in the latter book they are interwoven with the most solemn warnings and surrounded with declarations of judgments that would certainly come upon them if they failed to take heed to them. It was to be a solemn reminder in all time. And yet how quickly they departed from the living God and corrupted themselves with idols. We need but to turn to the 2nd chapter of Judges and see how *soon* after, and to what an awful extent they went.

And when we remember that the book was written by Moses then a painful interest attaches to it. The one who had failed himself, who had struck the rock when he should only have spoken to it, and who had acted apart from God and contrary to His word in that matter, is chosen to warn the people at this stage against disobedience. Not Caleb nor Joshua who had shone out so brightly in the midst of unbelief, but Moses. Restored, yet having to bear the punishment of his sin, he could speak with solemn utterance of what an evil and intolerable thing it is to set aside the word of God. Allowed to view the whole land yet shut out from entering it, he must die in the wilderness and not have the honour of leading the people in because of that one act of disobedience. And how fitting all this is! With what deep feeling would he

speaks: broken heartedness, whilst owning God just, would betray itself in his speech, as by all the truth God gave him for that people he was forcibly reminded of his own sin. How wonderful the ways of the Lord in all this, "His way is perfect" and ever the same, and so when we turn to the New Testament, we find again the one chosen to write solemn warning to the Saints is Peter. For "remember" seems to be the keynote of his 2nd Epistle; the word itself occurs four times, but throughout he is reminding them; the one who had so fallen and denied his Lord, restored to loving confidence, is the one above all who warns others. Did Satan get an advantage over him using that boastful, forward spirit which had before so often manifested itself in a lesser degree? Then restored and trustful in the Lord he exhorted fellow saints to add to their faith "courage", as the word translated "virtue" means. Not boastful fleshly confidence, but heavenly courage: and how he seems to refer to his own fall when he says, "if ye do these things YE shall never FALL" 2 Peter i. 10. He had fallen just as he had made that noble confession of Jesus being the Son of God. Satan sought to use him against the one he loved, "this be far from thee," he would have the Lord to turn aside from the suffering; and when that One soon after stood in the presence of mocking enemies, in His unflinching purpose to endure all, Satan, frustrated by the Son of God succeeded with Peter, who to avoid the shame and suffering denied his Lord, and thus escaped it from the hand of man, but only to know a deeper bitterness and an intenser sorrow, as he remembered to the close of his life that shameful denial. How fitting, one would say again, for such an one to write to fellow-saints of "suffering," and to say to them, "But, and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, HAPPY are ye" (1 Peter iii. 14).

Ere we look shortly at the Book in its several chapters, it will be well to notice that "remember" and "forget not" preface the exhortations of Moses.

Genesis shows the need of Redemption, for ruin had come in. Man had fallen; the word of the Lord had been given to Adam; by it he should have silenced Satan and stood; but he went into the transgression. Not so with the Lord. He had no one word given to Him, and the temptations with which Satan assailed Him were varied; nevertheless He stood, as He alone could, and silenced Satan by three words out of this book of the law.

Exodus presents Redemption to us in many ways. Leviticus then unfolds the order of Sacrifice and Worship for a redeemed people. The book of Numbers shows us the testing of the people in the wilderness. Then Deuteronomy follows, linking on with each one by its expressive way of reminding. It seems to say, Remember the promises to Abraham (Gen. xii., xiii. and xv.) and take possession; Remember the Redemption of Exodus and keep the Sabbath, &c. Remember the Sacrifices of Leviticus and offer according to God's Word. Also, the one "place the Lord your God shall choose;" as the tabernacle was *the* place, and the only one, in which priests could worship, or in connection with which sacrifice could be offered in the wilderness; so in the land, it was to be in the place the Lord should choose, and so important is this, that it is named twenty-one different times throughout the book. And lastly, remember the testing of Numbers, the unbelief manifested, the lacking nothing, resulting from God's unflinching grace; how Sihon was delivered into your hands because God was fighting for you; how your obedience was oftentimes in lip and not in heart; in short, let memory, under the influence of the Spirit, work till it subdues and humbles, till it produces a trembling at the word of the Lord.

Having thus for a little dwelt upon the book as a whole, the Lord help us in going into its details; yet, ere we do so, notice how the Lord sets, as it were, special honour upon this book. The king was to have a copy of it in particular for himself, and read therein all the days of his life (chap. xvii. 18, 19). The people when they passed over Jordan were to set up great stones and plaster them with plaster, and write "the words of this law" very plainly upon them (chap. xxvii. 2, 3); and it was to be read publicly every seventh year at the feast of tabernacles in the audience of all the people (chap. xxxi. 9).

R. T. H.

If man *could* have wrought any work by which he might be just before God, God would never have permitted such a sacrifice as the death of His Son.

ANXIOUS one, let faith look out upon the object God gives you—JESUS; for you are not told to believe in your beliefs, or to trust in your trust, or to have faith in your faith; but you are told to believe in *Jesus*, to trust in *Jesus*, to have faith in *Jesus*. And as the beauty of seeing is never to think of the eye, so the beauty of faith is never to think of itself.

THE ENQUIRY.

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

Luke xvii. 17.

THE question asked in this passage of Scripture, and the connection in which it stands, are instructive, and therefore interesting.

One of ten men fell at the feet of Jesus, worshipping Him, and the Lord Jesus enquires, "Where are the nine?"

The above sentence has not unfrequently been used, I think, as a text for a gospel address, and a hymn has been written on it, and is often sung.

Doubtless the physical condition of the ten men aptly illustrates the spiritual condition of every natural man, whether religious or profane; their feelings and conduct also, up to a certain point, find their answer in the awakened sinner's experience, and, in measure, his conduct answers to theirs.

A diseased man, a leper, by his uncleanness separated from the temple of Jehovah and from the company of the clean, outside the city associating with lepers like himself, strikingly pictures to us the unconverted man; while the conduct of Jesus towards them speaks of the superabounding grace of God, and the power of the blood of the Lamb, Jesus the Son of God.

Again, those ten men, all conscious of their unclean condition, "stood afar off;" and what can the sinner do, when conscious of his state, yet ignorant of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ—what but tremble at the very thought of approach to God? But although afar off, those men cried to Jesus, and He heard them. Even so now every one, even the vilest, who, under the pressure of sin, raises his voice to Jesus the Son of God for mercy, will be heard and saved, as it is written, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" he will get peace to his soul, and that too in the same way those men obtained their cure, by taking Christ at His word.

My object, however, in this brief paper is not to present the gospel, but to draw attention to the conduct of the one man whose presence and action gave rise to the question, the enquiry, "Where are the nine?" But first I would say somewhat more of the disease of which the man was a subject.

It was a remarkable and serious disease; the consequences of it were so serious to its subject and those dear to him, that the utmost carefulness was enjoined on the priests of old (and they alone could treat with

it) in determining between it and another something like it, but not it, namely, "a scab." Whether it was a man, his garment, or even his house, the same minute directions were to be observed; nothing was to be done doubtfully.

A profitable lesson to us how to act on behalf of God, whether as to ourselves personally, towards one another, or if need be, towards assemblies of Christians (see Lev. xiii. xv). Jehovah describes and enumerates the marks which were to guide even the priest, and instituted laws both for its treatment and for testimony as to cleansing; and surely we are fully furnished for judgment, discernment, and action by the indwelling Spirit of God and the Word of God. Let us heed it, beloved.

The remarkable cases of leprosy mentioned in the Old Testament were nearly all judicial—evidences of Jehovah's displeasure at some line of conduct pursued by its subject. Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses, for upbraiding Moses respecting his marriage, was smitten with leprosy; Gehazi, for his covetousness and lies: and when King Uzziah in pride sought to unite in himself two offices, or glories, which no mere man, save one, was ever allowed to do, namely, regal and priestly glory, he also was smitten with leprosy, and died a leper. Melchizedek, for the purpose of foreshadowing the Messiah, who in and to Israel shall, in millennial days, be a priest upon His throne, king and priest to the nation of which Abraham was the father, was allowed to be both; but if Uzziah attempt to do it, he must pay the penalty, and die a leper.

With respect to the man in whose case we are interested, we know nothing prior to the facts recorded in the Gospel; neither how long he had been leprous, or how long in the then present company, nor of the reason for his disease, except as we view it from that standpoint from which the Blessed Master viewed the case of the man born blind, "That the works of God should be made manifest in him" (faith's safe view of everything), by His performing an unprecedented cure.

We are only told by the Evangelist that ten men who were lepers stood afar off, and cried to Jesus to have mercy on them, or rather to pity them; that Jesus heard, and when He saw them, bade them go show themselves to the priest: further, that they all obeyed, leaving the spot lepers, and on the way were all cleansed. All those men must have had confidence in the power

of Christ, or they would not have left *unclean* to present themselves to the priest with the offering of the *cleansed* one.

As all had been conscious of disease, so now all were certain that they were cleansed, and fit to appear before the priest as such; but the one man, on "perceiving that he was cleansed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God; and he was a Samaritan." Where were the nine? They, we suppose, had gone on to the priest nearest at hand, as bidden, to present themselves, and to offer their sacrifice ere they returned to their homes.

As a Samaritan, the tenth man could not, would not go with them, for his fathers worshipped in Mount Gerizim; but he did not go there to perform ceremonies, if any were required, but turned back with grateful heart to Him who had cleansed him, fell at His feet, worshipping Him, and giving Him thanks, which drew from the Saviour commendation and blessing.

The special instruction here, I judge, and that which stamps the man's action with value, was his acknowledgment of Jesus, to the glory of God, even the Father; so that if the nine did well, the tenth did the better thing.

The temple at Jerusalem had been defiled, and the glory had departed from the nation; the priesthood had been corrupted, the kingdom divided; the nation was blinded, and under bondage to the Romans; John the Baptist had finished his testimony and passed away, and Jesus was out in testimony for God, and was God's centre on the earth; therefore the acknowledgment of Him was to the glory of God, and to believe on Him was to do the work of God; this the cleansed Samaritan did, pleased God, and was commended by Jesus.

Jesus had before this taught the woman of Samaria that it was no longer a question of place of worship, but of the state of heart and character of worship. Once it was a question of place, even "the place which Jehovah chose to put His name there," but now it is a person, His Son the Lord Jesus Christ; in Him and in His name alone can worship be acceptable, being the fruit of the indwelling Spirit of God.

That blessed One to whom the Samaritan bowed is now the only God-sanctioned centre of assemblies of believers, and His name the only approved Name to which Christians can gather; and if to assemble around Him only, as Centre, Lord, and Head, and gather as

Christians, believers, brethren without another name or title to that name alone, involves the necessity for separation, and brings shame and sorrow—let all who so gather look up and take courage, seeking so to walk, in lowliness and love, as to commend the truth and attract others to their fellowship. H. H.

ON STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES.

TO read the Scriptures is good; to search the Scriptures is better; but to *meditate on*, and *study* the Scriptures, so as to know the thoughts of God, is best. In order to this, along with prayerful dependence on God, we usually follow some method of study. Let us look at some of those in general use by the children of God.

First, we will look at the most general way of studying the Scriptures, *viz.*: the "Textual method," as when reading some portion of the Word, we pick out what is most beautiful, most profitable, or most useful, for the condition of our souls at the time, irrespective of the exact teaching of the passage, and often disjointed from its connection. No doubt the children of God in all ages have received much good by this method; but there is an evil in continuing satisfied with this *alone*. We do not thus become acquainted with the truth in all its fulness; or the purposes of God in the past, present or future.

In studying nature the mere microscopist has but a one-sided view of the wonderful works of God; but let him look through the telescope as well, and he then has an expansive and many-sided view of the wisdom and greatness of God. As we get, so will we give; and so, the great majority of preachers and expounders of Scripture have adopted the "textual method of preaching," as they follow the "textual method of studying the Scriptures." What can be said for and against the one, can be said for and against the other.

A second method of studying the Scriptures is called the "Topical method," as when reading a portion of the Word, to choose the subject or topic of the particular portion, and then search out the same topic to be found in all other portions of the Word; and thus seek to get a general and many-sided view of the subject. This method has the merit of acting as a safeguard against the tendency of the "textual method," to cause us to have *one-sided* views of truth, and is

valuable both to individuals and assemblies in this way. For example, it will enable a reader of the epistle to the Hebrews to notice that salvation is mentioned seven times (reckoning xi. 7); also how many mysteries are mentioned in the New Testament; also the seven Jehovahs of the Old Testament (Jehovah Elroi, Gen. xvi. 13 included); also the seven utterances of our Lord on the cross; also the seven things Jesus has done for the believer in Heb. ii. 9-18; also seven things we can do to and for "one another" (1 Thess. iv. 9; iv. 18; v. 11; Heb. x. 24; Gal. v. 13; James v. 16); and seven things God is said to be a God of, the first occurring in Acts vii. 2. Thus it will give us the varied and full aspect of any subject we may come across in our study, or which may be impressed on our mind. Of late, believers have had this method brought prominently before them by Mr. Moody's addresses on "Blood," "Heaven," "Hell," &c.; and whilst much more profitable than the textual system, still it cannot in itself be called a perfect method, as it lacks continuity, and is liable when used exclusively to get the mind wholly occupied with a single topic, instead of the truth as a whole.

The "Mystic method" is the third we would mention. It is that method which, whilst acknowledging the literal sense of Scripture, sees that the same Scripture has a hidden or mystic meaning. This is a very important but much abused method. Important, as without it we lose much of the mind of God; but which, with a believer of a loose and fervid imagination, may sink into the merest fancies or unmeaning mysticisms. But let not the abuse of this method make us ignore the fact, that Scripture has a mystic sense (see Mark iv. 11; Gal. iv. 25; compare Psalm xix. 4, with Rom. x. 18; also Isa. xlix. 8, 9, with 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2; also Hosea xi. 1, with Matt. ii. 24). The writings of the early Fathers, Madam Guyon in the Church of Rome, and Andrew Jukes are examples of both the use and abuse of this method. Madam Guyon in her "Mystical Sense of the Sacred Scriptures," 1713, says; "The Holy Scriptures possess an infinite depth and many different senses. The great men of learning have clung to the *literal* and other senses; but no one has undertaken, that I know of, to explain the *mystic sense*, at least entirely." Jukes' work on "The Mystery of the Kingdom" is one of the most profitable and best examples of the mystic teaching of Scripture.

Each of the three methods mentioned has advantages of its own; but when used exclusively, each, *so used*, has serious drawbacks to a complete view of the truth.

So we would now mention a fourth method used by many believers, which combining the other methods, has all their several advantages without their drawbacks. This we would call the "Fourfold method," although there are really seven things included in it.

The Fourfold method is studying Scripture, looking at the portion in a fourfold aspect.

(1). In its textual and historical aspect.

(2). In its topical, typical (1 Cor. x. 11, margin), and mystical aspect.

(3). In its prophetic aspect, or its relation to past, present and future.

(4). In its moral or practical aspect.

Where there is the ability to study Scripture thus, it will open the way to get a complete view of the truth, in its minuteness and in its fulness; in its microscopic aspect, where a single word will give profitable employment; and in its telescopic aspect, where the breadth and extent of a subject will repay richly the examination thereof; in its all round aspect, in its outward and inward meanings, in its relation to past, present or future; and in its moral teaching, and practical bearing on our every day lives. For example, take many portions of the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Psalms and Prophets, the Sermon on the Mount, and the first three chapters of Revelation and study them thus, then difficulties disappear, and the truth in its fulness is seen; for whilst ever giving attention to the exegetical or textual aspect, we do not rest there but go on to the topical, typical and mystical aspect, which may unfold blessed views and precious teaching not seen in the mere letter or outward interpretation; then the understanding of the prophetic aspect, or relation to past, or present, or future, will give us the key to solve many difficulties, and transform into a revelation what was before only a mystification. If this third aspect had been rightly understood by these zealous devoted faithful Covenanters, Puritans and other Christians, it would have saved them fighting with the sword, seeking to govern nations, whilst Jesus was rejected, or burning witches in God's name. And even in our own day, how much effort energy and zeal are put forth by many believers in building what will only prove, wood, hay, stubble, from confounding past present and future together;

and had some devoted, true hearted children of God seen the scripture relationship of "Jew, Gentile and Church of God," it would have saved them from emigrating to a far-off land, to be as they thought outside the scriptural Roman Empire in the days of the tribulation.

Then last of all comes the moral or practical aspect, and this the whole Word of God is full of, whether it be some simple narrative, or some mighty catastrophe on the earth, or great battle fought and won, or some simple incident in the life of some obscure individual, or in Proverbs, Psalms, and Prophecy; this aspect is profitable, and never to be neglected; only do not put it first, but let grace first unfold its treasures, and then teach us to deny and live, as in Titus ii. 11, 12.

In conclusion, let not the simple minded believer worry himself over the Word, seeking to find in every portion these four aspects; but rather let him keep himself from getting into the groove of *one* method, and keeping his mind free to the reception of others, naturally, as he waits on God, meditating on the truth, what has been useful, profitable, and blessed to others, will come to be so in his experience. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm cxix. 18).

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF GOD.

Acts vii. 20-36.

ONE great principle in all true service, is the consciousness of being upheld therein by God. It was thus with the perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." The grand feature in His service was, that He never acted of Himself. "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." The moment a servant acts independently, he acts from himself, and out of character.

There is a great danger of mistaking the busy activity around us, at the present day, for true service

to God. I believe that God intends to mark very distinctly what man's natural understanding and power can effect, and what the power and wisdom of the Holy Ghost can effect. Our endowment as Christians is, "the Spirit of the Lord—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—to make of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

WHENEVER WE ARE LIVING BEFORE MEN, INSTEAD OF BEFORE GOD, there will be restlessness and disquiet. There may be the desire to do many things that are written in the Word, but they will not be done in quiet and peaceful joy. We are never really preserved from hypocrisy, unless we are living BEFORE God. It is the very best possible cure for the overweening conceit we have, all of us, naturally, of ourselves.

But let us seek to gather a little instruction from the history of "Moses, the servant of God." Moses was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus. And I would just notice, in passing, that they are the only two persons mentioned in Scripture, whose course we are able to trace from their birth on to the glory. It is worthy of remark, that the life of Moses is divided into three distinct periods of forty years. The first forty he spent in Egypt, as the "son of Pharaoh's daughter"—the next forty in the wilderness, tending the flock of his father-in-law. There, at the mount of God, he had a vision of glory, such as could never have been revealed to him in Egypt. In the last forty, we have the account of the sorrowful and trying course he had to run, as the servant of God, and of His people Israel, in bearing the burden of that people.

The first portion of his life was spent in Egypt. Stephen speaks of Moses as being "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts vii. 22). But this wisdom of Egypt was not anything that God could own. Doubtless, Moses knew that God was about to use him as the "deliverer" of His people; but that which had been acquired in Egypt, could not deliver the Lord's people from Egypt. Moses' parents could not but recognise the remarkableness of their child (see Heb. xi. 23). And Moses himself, "by faith, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach

of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Heb. xi. 24-26). "When he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel" (Acts vii. 23). Whatever ease and comfort Moses might have enjoyed in Pharaoh's house, its luxury and its refinements, "the treasures in Egypt," were all his—his heart yearned over his brethren. He went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens. "And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian," (Acts vii. 24). "Mighty in deeds," on behalf, too, of the people of God, but acting in the energy of the flesh, not as sent of God, hence what followed. Moses was thinking how Moses was to deliver the people. "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them" (Acts vii. 25). But no! "they understood not." Moses had another lesson to learn. God had to teach him that He would only be served by the power and strength that come from Himself, not by the strength or wisdom of Egypt. There cannot be two things more different than a person acting in the energy of the flesh, and one acting in the power of the Spirit. In the first case, there is always disappointment and surprise at the failure of our efforts.

When Moses had spent forty years in the wilderness, doing as it were nothing, we find him (Exod. iii.) answering God's message, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee," &c., thus, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" When he comes to be sent of God, there is the deep sense of the responsibility of it laid upon him, and he shrinks from it. Before, when going forth in the energy of the flesh, he was bitterly disappointed at the failure he met with—now, he has learned his own insignificance, and he says, "Who am I?" And it is ever thus. When a saint feels that he is sent of God on any mission, there is always the deepest prostration of spirit. This may be brought about by painful discipline of soul, but the end of God's training is, to break down self-confidence, so that, when at last the person goes forth in service, it is with the feeling, "Who am I?" One great characteristic of the flesh we have acquired by being so long in "Egypt," is the dislike to say, "Who am I?" But God must produce this frame of mind before He uses us. The most cultivated understanding, human

wisdom, and research will not stand in any stead in the service of God.

"And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?" He only gets misunderstood by those whom he seeks to serve. When he would be the man of peace, his reward is the taunt, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?"

Mark this, beloved! I am speaking of Moses as one quickened, one knowing, in a sense, what communion with God was, but who had not learned as yet to throw off Egypt's strength and wisdom. We must fail when we go a warfare at our own charges.

Many a saint runs on for a while (just after his conversion, perhaps) in the eagerness and zeal of the flesh, doing *right* things, but not in the spirit of dependence on God; by and by his energy flags, and he feels as though he were entirely useless, as though God could never again employ him in His service. Now, this is a profitable lesson, though a deeply humbling one. The Lord often trains an individual thus, for much after usefulness in the church. Just so was it with Moses. "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian" (Acts vii. 29). These first forty years of Moses' life are passed over very slightly by God. No doubt, had man written the history of them, we should have had given to us a wonderful account of all that Moses did and said in this land of wisdom. The Spirit of God is silent. And why, beloved? Because the wisdom of "Egypt" is foolishness with God, and the strength of "Egypt," weakness with God.

During the next forty years, Moses is lost to Egypt and to Israel. But then he is alone with God. In solitude (Exod. iii.) the Lord meets him at Horeb—"the mount of God." And I doubt not that Horeb is thus named because it was a place where Moses had enjoyed communion with God, and where he had learned a lesson which he never could have learned when in Egypt—dependence on God. In secret he is being prepared for all those mighty achievements he was soon to be called on to perform before Pharaoh, and Egypt, and Israel. It is in solitude that God chiefly teaches His people. The blessed Jesus sought

refreshment on this earth in being alone with God. And this is the place where the saint learns his own weakness, and God's strength. He enters into the depths of his own evil, but also into the depths of God's grace. He learns to deny self—to subdue imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. He proves the necessity of the cross.

RESURRECTION.

GOD'S secret, I judge to have been resurrection, and, consequently, the setting aside of flesh and blood from the beginning. That which He graciously calls "My Covenant" was established on that principle. It shows itself in God's dealings with Adam. It was intimated by the very first promise of the woman's Seed: for that was something above nature—above flesh and blood. It was, as the prophet calls it, "a new thing in the earth," and though the Son of God became the woman's seed by incarnation, yet in the mighty results of that, and the character of the bruiser of the serpent's head—indeed in all that we now enjoy, either in His person or His work, it is in *Resurrection* we know Him, as the apostle says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." And, accordingly, it is evident that we are, even now, in this first promise about the woman's Seed bruising the serpent, to have respect to Christ in resurrection.

Afterwards, resurrection is connected with God's secret or covenant, in His dealings with Noah. "The end of all flesh is come before me: make thee an ark of gopher wood." Thus it plainly shows itself that resurrection was God's relief or resource when He took cognizance of the utter corruption of all flesh in His sight, for the ark was the Christ of God's salvation, conducting Noah out of the old into the new creation. It was a symbol of death and resurrection. "Everything in the earth shall die," says the Lord to Noah, "but with thee will I establish My Covenant;" thus revealing the secret that His covenant—His purpose touching this creation—was to establish it in a new condition, after death had ruined it, or on the ground of resurrection.

So in His dealings with Abraham. Abraham was to have a son and an inheritance on the same principle. He and Sarah were without children, and without so

much ground as to set his foot upon. But he was to have a seed as numerous as the stars, and an inheritance that was to stretch northward and southward, and eastward and westward. And this was all called God's covenant with him. God establishing His covenant with him, plainly telling us that God's purpose, or secret, or covenant, rested on resurrection—rested on the setting aside the flesh, in its strength and resources, in doing something beyond and above nature, which is the same as resurrection, or the quickening of the dead strengthless body of Sarah: and, accordingly, Isaac is born out of the dead bodies of Abraham and Sarah: and with Isaac is God's covenant. Ishmael may be blessed, as he is, but with Isaac, and with Isaac alone, is the covenant, plainly telling us again that God has taken *Resurrection* as the principle of His action—the ground of His counsels. Man may receive blessing in *nature*, it is true, and in the Divine overflowing goodness such *Ishmael* promises are enjoyed every day; but the covenant is with Isaac, the *real* and abiding and sure blessing is all in resurrection.

And the inheritance is in the way of resurrection also, as well as this *seed* or *heir*. It lay under the bondage of corruption, for a time—it was in the hand of the Amorite, while he was filling up the measure of his sin, but then it is rescued out of such a pit of corruption: it passes through a process of sanctification—like the leprous house cleansed by the dead and living birds; and being thus, as in resurrection, it is fit for the people who were in covenant with God. A risen inheritance becomes a risen people, and Canaan was thus a sample of the whole creation, which is now as dead, in corruption, but to be raised in glory (Rom. viii.) The dispensation of the law takes its course; but it was man's covenant, because it took flesh and blood for its principle. It was flesh and blood, or the strength of the natural man, that it addressed or operated on, and it was man's conviction, proving that man could get no blessing by it.

God is then manifest in the flesh. The Son of God becomes incarnate: in His own person He stands untainted. He renders to God a beautiful offering of perfect human fruit. Flesh and blood, in His person, was the loveliest piece of creation God ever looked on—it was, indeed, a meat-offering, an unleavened sheaf out of the earth; but it must be set

aside, ere the head of the serpent can be bruised by this promised and gracious Seed of the woman; not, however, set aside like flesh and blood in all besides *worthless*, but set aside by a *meritorious death*, that, by death this woman's Seed might destroy him that had the power of death, the old serpent who had brought death in. And such is the death of flesh and blood even in the Son of God Himself, and, therefore, *in it* we are not to know Him any more. We are to know even Christ Himself now as dead and risen (2 Cor. v.), the Lord of a new creation, up to which He has won His way by fully meeting all the penalty which the old creation has incurred: and, in which new creation, we (by faith in the atonement and victory for sinners accomplished by His death and resurrection) stand with Him a dead and risen people: the true circumcision, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

I cannot close without alluding to a blessed instance of the Lord returning to thoughts of resurrection, as His relief, when He looked on the end of flesh and blood. I mean His visit to Jerusalem (Mark xi.) He looked on man then as of old He had looked on him in the days of Noah. But all was evil, and He said of it, as represented in the barren fig-tree—"No fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever;" and having pronounced this doom on flesh and blood, even in Jerusalem, the most favoured nursery of it, He went to Bethany, which place was the witness of resurrection to Him, for there Lazarus was, who had actually been raised, and there Mary was, who had the faith of the resurrection. So that Bethany was the same relief to the thoughts of Jesus now as the ark of gopher wood had been to His thoughts in the days of Noah. And touching all this, faith is our duty, for faith takes us into God's counsels about the covenant. Faith says, as God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me." And resurrection, the ark of gopher wood, becomes the believer's object or resource, as it is God's. It is the thing which he looks for, as it is the thing which the blessed God has purposed and promised. Thus faith takes us into God and His secret. *Precious faith!* we may well call it, which thus takes us up in spirit to that light in which the mind of God dwells—which enables us also to look in confidence to that work which God has accomplished. And *precious hope!* which carries us beyond the present Ishmael blessings of nature, and gives us desire for the inheritance in

resurrection, according to God—for resurrection is God's purpose, as we here see; creation is but the avenue or the ante-room. Without faith in the resurrection, "the power of God" is not known (Matt. xxii. 29), "the knowledge of God" is not attained (1 Cor. xv. 34). For creation did not show God fully, either in *love* or *power*: but redemption, leading to resurrection, shows both. J. G. B.

SIN AND RECONCILIATION.

SIN incapacitates to stand before the Divine presence. "All have sinned and *come short* of the glory of God;" that is, a sinner cannot stand *before*, much less *in*, the glory, or the intense purity and power of the moral glory of God.

This by reason of what he is, and what he has done against God's glory. If I have wronged or injured any one, I instinctively avoid his presence. I am uneasy in it.

Now, if he came to me of his own accord, before I had even confessed my grievous fault, and willingly, cheerfully, and ungrudgingly presented me with a pardon, and proposed a reconciliation, I might in some sort be moved to relent of my hostility, and acknowledged my trespass.

But with what readiness should I run into his arms, and put my whole trust and confidence in him, if he pressed *his love* upon me with all the skill and diligence in his power; on the ground that all the wrong I had done him had been infinitely repaired, and recompensed over and over again, and that in this ability to love me, and bless me, he had gotten for himself a name, a reputation, a glory, far exceeding what he had before. Would not this be the means, not only of restoring confidence—nay more, of producing a love and confidence towards him, which I never could have had before?

Thus it is that God is the Reconciler.

THE hypocrite is the picture of a saint; but his paint shall yet be washed off, and he shall appear in his own colours.

"WITHOUT GOD."—Atheism is a characteristic of our day. On the sentiments, manners, pursuits, amusements, and dealings of the great body of mankind, there is written in broad characters—"Without God in the world!"

HUMILITY OF MIND.

“With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.”—(Eph. iv. 2).

SURELY there was great need that the prisoner of the Lord should put these qualities first, before those whom he besought “to walk worthy” of their vocation, and to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Can any say it is a distinguishing feature amongst us now? Are we to whom the *third* verse is so precious ignoring the force of the *second*? Is there not a quiet self-assertion, a tone of superiority often shown in speaking to other Christians, that only betrays to them, and to our Lord, how far we are in heart from the spirit of the apostle. We find that his ministry (who was gifted and honoured above all others), was marked by “*humility of mind*” (Acts xx. 19). Is ours?

We find the Lord was “*lowly in heart.*” Are we? He “*humbled Himself.*” Is “*this mind*” in us?

Have we put on “as the elect of God, humbleness of mind”?

Are we all of us “clothed with humility”?

It is greatly to be feared that such a spirit, such a state, is becoming rare amongst us. Time was, when the ruin of all was so felt, that our only position was in the dust. But the truth of the oneness in Christ accepted in the head instead of searching the conscience, has “puffed up” instead of humbling those who thus hold it. How painful must it be to Christ, who loves and yearns over His whole Church, that those whom, in His grace, He has called around Himself to feel and own its utter ruin on earth, should carry a high head, a self-satisfied air, and be “exalted” by the very greatness of His love. Is not this indeed in principle the *Laodicean brand*?

May God give us to shun and dread spiritual pride (that subtle vice) in every shape and form, and enable us to show true brokenness of spirit, that His dear children around may see that there is a little company in their midst whose hearts deeply feel the ruin of all dear to Christ in this scene.

Surely, beloved brethren, He is allowing things to take such a course, even in our midst, that we have nothing left but shame and confusion of face, our only relief being to look upon His glory, that which nothing shall ever dim or mar.

The more Thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie;
Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high.

LIFE IN CHRIST'S DEATH.

LORD, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” This is the faith and utterance of that elect remnant, who, coming out of Egypt, live by faith on the Son of God,—but only in the Son of God as *crucified*; for our life lies in His death, and through the faith which feeds on that death. No acceptance of Christ but as *crucified* avails for life.

It is not His virtues, His instructions, His example, or the like, but His death (His flesh and blood), that must be fed upon. His death accomplished, singly and alone, what altogether and beside never did and never could.

The blessed Lord died; gave up the ghost, or surrendered the life which He had, and which none had title to take from Him. But the moment that was done, results broke forth which all His previous life had never produced. It was then, but not till then, that the veil of the temple was rent, the rocks were riven, the graves were opened. Heaven, earth, and hell felt a power they had never owned before.

The life of Jesus, His charities to man, His subjection to God, the savour of His spotless human nature, the holiness of that which had been born of the Virgin, none of these, nor all of them together, nor everything in Him and about Him, by Him or through Him, short of the surrender of life, would ever have rent the veil or broken up the graves. God would still have been at a distance, hell been still unconquered, and he that has the power of death still undestroyed. The blood of the dear Son has done what all beside never did, never could do. And over Him thus preached and set forth, it is still to be said, “He that hath the Son hath life.”

If you die whilst you are young, unconverted, you will have lived long enough to be lost.

NO HUMILITY IN DOUBTING—It is thought by some that to be always doubting one's pardon and acceptance is the evidence of a lowly spirit. It is, allow us to say, the mark of the very opposite of a lowly and humbled mind. That is true humility that credits the testimony of God—that believes because He has spoken it—that rests in the blood of Jesus—because He has declared that, “Whoever believeth in Him shall be saved.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. XLIII.

Is prayer a gift, or can it be attained by method, and should all believers pray in public?

REPLY.

We do not know of any Scripture which teaches that prayer is a special gift bestowed on some believers and not upon others.

True prayer is simply desire begotten in the heart by the Holy Spirit, breathed or spoken into the ear of God (Rom. viii. 26, 27). Thus, to pray is the privilege of every child of God, in all places, and at all times. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. v. 17).

“Be careful for nothing: but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. iv. 6).

But to pray in public, or rather to lead an assembly in prayer, is quite a different matter. Such public prayer is to be made by *the men*—(1 Tim. ii 8)—where the contrast is “women” in ver. 9. Moreover, it must be to edification See (1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15, 17, 26). Consequently it must be in such language as all may understand, so that all may intelligently say “amen.”

One who cannot speak loud enough to be heard by the whole assembly ought not to attempt to lead in prayer.

One who has not the confidence of the assembly may indeed pray aloud, but the assembly cannot be led by such, and therefore is not edified. Hence the men are to lift up “*holy hands* ;” indicating that those who take this prominent public place ought themselves to be blameless.

QUESTION No. XLIV.

Is it right for a believer to gather a subscription for another believer who has been out of employment through ill health, in a public work, where subscriptions are customary?

REPLY.

Under some circumstances the outflow of merely natural affection or benevolence on the part of the unsaved may be freely accepted by the believer.

For example, where natural relationship warrants it, as for instance, an unsaved parent providing for Christian sons or daughters, or an unsaved son providing for a widowed Christian mother; and many such relationships.

Again, such may be accepted in cases of special disaster, such as Paul’s shipwreck, where it is said, “the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness” (Acts xxviii. 2).

It was the Lord’s way thus to supply their urgent need, and not to interfere in their behalf by miracle.

But usually—and we should judge in such a case as that to which this question refers—to ask unbelievers for help is as much as to say that love has failed among the members of the body of Christ.

It is the responsibility of Christians to care for and supply the need of the Lord’s poor ones, and not only a responsibility, but also a precious privilege. To make known such a case to the assembly, or to others of the Lord’s people, is surely the Scriptural order.

QUESTION No. XLV.

How long should a new-born soul be kept from remembering the Lord’s death in the breaking of bread, if they desire to do so, and also to have fellowship with the assembly?

REPLY.

As far as the assembly is concerned, reception “to the breaking of bread” carries with it reception to all that is included in the idea of fellowship. It is therefore necessary that before a new-born one be received, the assembly be satisfied that conversion to God has really taken place. This may occupy time, in order that those who have a care as to who comes in may have opportunity first to satisfy themselves, and then to convey their judgment to the assembly, to satisfy all.

Without this, the reception could only be partial, instead of being united and hearty.

But unnecessarily to defer the reception of a young convert who desires it, without good reasons for doing so, we should think uncalled for, and likely to discourage.

We say “without good reason for doing so,” for in these days so many cases arise of evidently spurious conversion, that we cannot wonder at experienced and careful brethren having doubts as to the reality of a professed conversion, when they discern levity, worldliness, disobedience, and an unbroken spirit.

QUESTION No. XLVI.

Is it right to apply the title of "the Brethren" to those who are seeking to maintain Scriptural action in Church matters, thus distinguishing them from others of the Lord's people who do not see eye to eye with them?

REPLY.

Children of one father are "brethren" in virtue of their relationship to the same parent. To degrade this noblest of titles, given by the Lord of glory to the sons of God (Heb. ii. 11) to a mere sectarian distinction, is most unscriptural, and a serious evil.

QUESTION No. XLVII.

If the use of such a title is schismatic, what action should be taken towards those who habitually or occasionally use it?

REPLY.

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 2). "Warn them that are unruly . . . Be patient toward all (1 Thess. v. 14). "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept: line upon line, line upon line: here a little and there a little" (Isa. xxviii. 10). "For in many things we offend all: if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man" (James iii. 2).

QUESTION No. XLVIII.

Is it Scriptural to speak of the Triune God, or of three distinct persons in the Godhead?

REPLY.

Man's attempts to invent terms that may express what is inexpressible have always tended to darken God's counsel.

We do not care even to make use of the word "Trinity," and yet that which it was invented to express is certainly found abundantly in Scripture.

Light is one. The sunbeam is one colourless ray, and we call it light. But each ray of light may be resolved into three distinct colours: viz., red, blue, yellow. All other colours are but the varied combinations of these three.

We believe this to be a faint illustration of the great mystery of the unity, and yet the distinctness of the three persons in the Godhead. It is remarkable that in very many Old Testament Scriptures the name of God is not in the singular, nor yet in the dual form peculiar to Hebrew, but in the plural, implying three persons. See for example, (Gen. i. 26): "And God [plural] said, let us make man in OUR image."

But in the Old Testament throughout, unity is the prominent thought, whereas in the New the three persons are clearly distinguished. For examples of this see the following Scriptures: Heb. ix. 14; Rev. i. 4, 5; Eph. ii. 18; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 6,

NOTICES.

CAMBUSLANG.—Believers meet to remember the Lord in the Breaking of Bread on the First-day of the week, in Lilybank Buildings, at 11 A.M. BIBLE SEARCHING MEETING on Tuesdays, at 8 P.M. PRAYER MEETING on Fridays, at 8 P.M.

NORTH SHIELDS.—The Christians formerly meeting in Waterloo Vale, South Shields, have removed to Forester's Hall, 4 Saville Street, West, North Shields, where they continue Breaking Bread every Lord's-day, at 10.30 A.M.

HAWICK.—Believers in the Lord Jesus meet on the First-day of the week to remember Him, in the New Temperance Small Hall, up stairs, at 11 o'clock A.M.

COWLAIRS, SPRINGBURN.—Believers meet every Lord's-day, to remember the Lord's Death in the Breaking of Bread, in 30 Millerbank Street, at 11 Forenoon.

BROXBURN.—Christians in Broxburn, Linlithgowshire, meet in the Mission Hall every Lord's-day at 11 o'clock, to break bread.

LEVEN, FIFESHIRE.—Believers meet for Breaking of Bread in the Free Gardeners' Hall, on Lord's-day, at 11.30. This small assembly requests prayer for its upbuilding and guidance in the way of truth.

A CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS will (D.V.) be held in the Gospel Hall, Galashiels, on 1st January, 1881. Hours of Meetings—10.30 and 11.15 a.m.; 2.30, 4, and 6 p.m.

A CONFERENCE FOR BELIEVERS will (D.V.) be held in the Gospel Hall, St. Paul Street, Aberdeen, on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, 1st, 3rd, and 4th January, 1881. A PRAYER MEETING will be held on Friday evening, 31st Dec., at 7 o'clock, for God's blessing on these meetings. Brethren from all parts are cordially invited.

HAMILTON, CANADA.—A CONFERENCE of Christians will be held (D.V.) in this city, on 13th to 16th Jan., 1881. Communications addressed, "Conference," Box 219, Hamilton, will receive immediate attention.

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THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER I. opens by showing us where it was that Moses spoke to the children of Israel. It was on the eastern side of the Jordan, in the plain over against Suph (see margin), for "sea" is in italics, that is supplied; and the Red Sea is evidently not meant, for they were quite away from it. Then comes (in verse 2) the fact that they were only eleven days from Horeb, and yet (verse 3) forty years had been spent in the wilderness. They might have gone in in eleven days, but they took forty years! Why was this? As we shall see, UNBELIEF. Alas! how often this is the case with us. Blessings that might be entered upon at once, we shut ourselves out from by unbelief. How sadly we punish ourselves by our lack of faith in God. And thus, oftentimes instead of going right on, we are found retracing our steps. Yet in all this, grace waits upon us, that we may learn and be humbled. Thus it was with the children of Israel. The manna never failed them, the cloud waited ever to guide them; yet did they shamelessly dance round the golden calf, and even murmur at the manna—God's wondrous provision for their daily need. Nevertheless His loving-kindness departed not from them; and Moses then shows what happened. The Lord said, "Turn you, and take your journey and go to the mount of the Amorites" (ver. 7). "Behold I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them" (ver. 8). Having then told how he was

unable to bear the burden of them alone, and that wise men had been taken out from their tribes and appointed rulers over them, he adds, "When we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us, and we came to Kadesh-Barnea. And I said unto you, ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee, fear not, neither be ye discouraged" (ver. 19-21). Now this was very plain. There was to be no delay. "Go up," the Lord said, "fear not." If walking in the sight of their own eyes, they would fear; but the exhortation is, "Be not discouraged." Then he shows out the secret springs of unbelief that led to the spies being sent up at all. If we read Numbers xiii., without comparing with this chapter, we might conclude that the going up of the spies originated with the Lord; but putting the two together, we see that it was not so; nor was it the desire of Moses. The *fact* that they went is detailed in Numbers, and the result; but here, the *unbelief* that led to it is revealed. "Ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, we will send men before us and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come" (ver. 22). Unbelief increases as it goes on. The spies were to be the ones to choose out the *way* for them, and thus the Lord was set aside; for had He not gone before them all the wilderness journey to search out a way for them? (ver. 33). "The

saying pleased me well" (ver. 23). Moses might, or might not have understood the unbelief that was working at the moment, but the Lord knew all; and as afterwards He allowed them to have a king in their self-will, so now, if unbelief is there, He will allow them to send their spies. But was it not to the shutting out of the generation who sent them? If twelve men could go up, why not all? But God was not looked to. The spies went up; and those in whom the same spirit of fear and unbelief was working, reported accordingly. It was a good land—true, but what had they *seen*? What? Everything but God! Eyes to take in giants, chariots of iron, hills; but no eye to look up, or heart to trust in God. *They—we—is* ever the language of unbelief. *THEY—GOD—alone* comes of faith. So the beautiful expression of Caleb, "I brought him word again as it was in mine heart" (Joshua xiv. 7); God was filling his heart, so his heart was set upon the land; and if his eye took in anything, it was the place most difficult to take, and in that moment he fixed upon that for himself. Not some rich valley that he could easily possess, well watered and fruitful, but Hebron; inaccessible as it appeared to unbelief, "great and fenced," with its "Anakims." And for forty years the faithful one in his heart resolved to take it.

If Joshua and Caleb had gone up blindfolded, they would have come back with the same message. Why? Because it was in their *heart*. God had spoken. God was true. Splendid triumph of faith in the midst of universal unbelief. And faith's *triumphs* are ever followed by faith's *rewards*. Did Abram triumph over the kings who had taken Lot captive? Then Melchizedec awaits him with bread and wine to cheer, from the Most High God (Gen. xiv). Did he further triumph over self, as the king of Sodom offered him of the spoil. Then Jehovah Himself speaks: "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Or again, did the "great woman of Shunem" triumph over death, as, taking the dead body of her only child up, she laid him on the prophet's bed, that she might go forth at once to meet the prophet of Jehovah, in whose hands are the issues of life and death. Then soon she knew faith's reward as, called in, she gazed upon that son restored to life. Caleb was no exception to this. Faith had carried him through the land, with eyes to see the Lord first, and the enemy as His enemy, and with ears to hear His word, and a heart to believe it; and that same faith

sustained him in all their wanderings. As one and another fell by his side, he knew that he must possess the land. And faith's reward was no exception in his case. When they had crossed the Jordan and entered the land, he went to Joshua, and reminding him of how he had gone up to spy the land for God, and spoken as it was in his heart, he added, "Give me this mountain," &c. "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb" (Josh. xiv. 12, 14).

And thus is it still. Faith in this day knows its trials—trials as severe as ever—but as it triumphs, its rewards are known in the secret of the soul.

But to follow on. If unbelief thus suggested, unbelief fostered, was still ready to act, and their hearts were willing to melt, and whilst Caleb and Joshua sought to still them and urge on to immediate obedience in going forth, the unbelieving ten had more influence, for they were prepared, by unbelief, for further acts of rebellion.

And thus we read, "Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord" (ver. 26). Has not all this its voice for us? Let there be an "evil heart of unbelief;" and at once there will be a departing from the living God. But unbelief encouraged, or allowed, will go on, and work further mischief. "Ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt" (ver. 27). Thus do we see that when unbelief creeps in, it will soon reign—it will shut out the remembrance of all God's ways of love and faithfulness, and change our thoughts towards Him. How solemn, "hated"—brought out to "destroy!" How low can man fall! And thus all Moses' pleadings with them failed (ver. 29-31). In those words, God was gracious; He was giving opportunity for repentance. Unbelief, murmuring, evil-speaking against Him, would have all been forgiven; but no, they *would* not go up. They did "not believe the Lord" (ver. 32). Then the judgment came. They should eat the fruit of their own doings, and be filled with their own ways; and all of full age should leave their carcasses in the wilderness. "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land" (ver. 34-35).

Only Caleb and Joshua were to enter, and the little ones whom they had said should be a prey to the

enemy. Thus God vindicates His own name and honour. "But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea" (ver. 40). When they heard this, they said, "We have sinned." Truly they had, and well might they have confessed it; but whilst the words of confession were there, the heart was utterly wanting. Like Saul, in another day, when tested of the Lord in the matter of the Amalekites, he spared Agag and the best of the flock, he said to Samuel, "I have sinned" (1 Samuel xv. 30); yet added, "honour ME now, I pray, before the elders of my people," thus proving the heartlessness of his words. Conscience hardened—so he could *say*, "I have sinned," and, at the same time, seek his own honour. How different the heart-broken confession of a mourning David—"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned;" and if he sought for anything, it was for the restored joy of God's salvation. But Israel here was unhumiliated, as the words immediately following only too well declare. "We WILL go up" (ver. 41). When the Lord bid them go, they would not, for they had not one bit of confidence in Him; but now they WILL. What made the difference? Was it not that they discovered they would have to reap what they had sown, and that in the wilderness they would have to bear the result of their own unbelief? But the Lord was not with them when they went—they went alone. It was rebellion before, not going; and now it was equally rebellion when they sought to go. The Ammonites chased them, and destroyed them. What other result could have followed? They returned, and wept; but was the weeping any more real than the confession? The Lord heard not. Can we not gather, then, it was not such as He could accept? David, when he "kept silence" (Ps. 32)—that is, as to real confession—was *roaring* all the day long. There may be the weeping of a proud heart, because it cannot have its own way; and such weeping is very contrary to the weeping of Peter, who went out, and wept bitterly—result of that look of tender love that fell upon him in that moment.

Dear child of God, have we sinned, as Israel? Oh! let us beware of seeking to escape the fruit of it. If there has been whole-hearted confession, and a bowing of the will in the presence of the Lord, we shall be content to bear, willingly, though sorrowingly, that which results from our own failures, and seek, in all humility to learn the lessons He would teach.

R. T. H.

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. i. 1-9.

LAST Lord's-day our attention was directed to the difference between the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistles to the Corinthians. In Romans man's ruin and God's grace are fully brought out; in Corinthians the leading thought is the order of the House of God. The Epistle to the Romans mainly deals with the individual heart and conscience; Corinthians mainly deals with the collective or gathered capacity of God's people.

We also saw how beautiful is the order in which they stand—Romans coming *before* Corinthians, for, until first the heart and conscience are established in the grace of God, it is impossible to carry out His will concerning the gathering of His people together.

We further noticed the authority by which the Apostle wrote, and how he contends that the instructions he gave them were nothing less than "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37).

Another feature of this epistle is the frequency with which we find the lordship of Christ asserted. For example, in these few first verses, notice how often these words occur, "the Lord Jesus Christ," and "Jesus Christ our Lord."

I believe there is deep significance in this; for all the disorder that had crept into the Corinthian Church had arisen through failure to recognise Jesus Christ as Lord among His gathered saints; and all the terrible confusion and apostacy of what is called Christendom comes from the same cause—viz., not giving to Christ His own rightful place as Lord in His own house.

In verse 2 we see that this epistle is written "to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

There is no *narrowness* in God's thoughts; and the Apostle, in the spirit of his Master, embraces every redeemed soul. However narrow the path into which faithfulness to the Lord may lead our feet, let us take care that we keep our hearts broad enough to embrace every child of God.

Faithfulness to God and His word may lead us into a very narrow path, as it did Paul when he had to say, "All they which be in Asia are turned away from me;" but that did not keep Paul from loving them. He could still pray and weep for them all; as a dear

brother once aptly put it, "It is ours to walk with the *large* heart in the *narrow* path."

Observe that note of thanksgiving in verse 4: "The grace of God which is given you in Jesus Christ." All the grace which is at our disposal is treasured for us "in Christ Jesus." It is not our place to limit by our unbelief what God's grace can do *in us*, or *for us*, or by us. His grace is at all times, and in all circumstances, "sufficient for us." It is called manifold grace, "meeting us at every turn, supplying our every need." He saw evidence of that grace in the Corinthian saints, and therefore he thanks God on their behalf. Whatever there may be in any child of God to condemn or reprove, let us ever seek to see first in such what the grace of God has wrought in them. Some are naturally gentle and refined in their disposition; others are rough, coarse, bad tempered, in their nature as well as by their upbringing; but when we meet with such, and find them not all that they ought to be, let us consider how much worse they were before they knew the Lord, and would still have been had it not been for His grace. It is in such a gracious and considerate spirit that we must needs go if we would be helpful to such an one. The beam that is in our own eye must be dealt with before we can effectually deal with the mote that is in our brother's eye. There is all the difference in the world between sitting in judgment on another and stooping down to wash his feet. If my object is to help and cleanse a brother, then I must first, in God's presence, have considered myself lest I should be tempted. (Gal. vi. 1). Then there will be something of the gentleness and holiness of Christ, instead of the pride and severity of nature. Paul wrote to them "with many tears" (2 Cor. ii. 4). As we read this epistle, let us think amid all its faithfulness and seeming severity of the tears of the man of God dropping on the parchment as he wrote. This shows the spirit of Christ in him. How different this from the way we often set about putting things right. Is it any wonder that we make things worse instead of better?

Verse 5. "That in everything ye are enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge." Mark it! "ENRICHED BY HIM." Not enriched by this world's endowments, or by the learning of the schools. All the wisdom of Athens and Corinth could not enrich the Church. They were enriched by the Man at

God's right hand. Enriched as the members of the body from the Head. Paul had laboured among them and instructed them, but he does not say they were enriched by him; it was all from Christ the Head. Whatever we have of grace, knowledge or utterance in the things of God it has been got from Christ. There is such a thing as natural ability, and God can make use of it; but the power and grace to use it must come from the Head, otherwise it will only do damage. We are very prone to look too much to man, and to put man out of his true place. The most talented, gifted, or spiritual who ministers in our midst is nothing more than the channel through which blessing flows to us from Christ.

If we give that place to the servant which alone belongs to the Lord, then the Lord will have to lay aside the earthen vessel in some way or other, for our God is a jealous God, and will have us know that blessing comes alone from Himself.

In the epistle to the Colossians much is taught us concerning the riches that are in Christ the Head for us the members.

Col. i. 19: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."

ii. 3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

ii. 9: "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him."

ii: 19. "The Head, from whom all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

Thus are our hearts directed to the fulness that is in Christ for us; but notice, that just as it has pleased God to use the lips of redeemed sinners to tell out the gospel of His grace to the salvation of the lost, so it has pleased the same God to use the lips of redeemed ones to minister the treasures that are in Christ to the members of His body. It is through the mutual ministry of each member to the whole—of that which each one has received from Christ, that the body is to be edified and knit together.

Satan has his eye upon this truth. He knows that the body—the Church—can only be effectually edified as it receives through the ministry of every member, and the effectual working of every part that which is supplied for its nourishment from the Head. Therefore the suggestion, so universally adopted in Christendom, of putting all ministry into the hands of one

person, and he, it may be, not at all a channel for the communication of the treasures that are in Christ, perhaps not even a child of God, not even a member of the body at all. Thus the body is starved. Satan will not object to the Church being rich and increased with goods, or with human learning and influence, if only he can deprive the members of the body of Christ of their appropriate nourishment.

But even where this human system of ministry is renounced, and liberty exists for the Holy Spirit to minister the things of Christ in the assembly as it pleases Him, how often are the supplies of the treasures that are in Christ hindered and cut off through worldliness, carnality, and pride. It is only as each one is walking in fellowship with God that the whole can be duly edified.

Verse 6. "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."

That is to say, the testimony of Christ which came to them in the gospel and through the ministry of the apostle was confirmed in their own experience. The apostle might go away and leave them, but there was "the testimony of Christ" still. It was not dependent for its continuance on the servants of God through whom they had received it, but was maintained and borne witness to by themselves.

There are some places where the saints are so dependent upon some "leading brother," that if he left them they would probably break up as an assembly and go, I know not where, perhaps join in with the various sects. There can be no higher testimony to the labours of any servant of God than that if he is taken away *he can be done without*. His ministry was of such a nature that it cast the saints upon the living Christ and upon the written Word.

Verse 7. "So that ye come behind in no gift."

Why should we come behind in any gift? Why should there not be a sufficiency of pastoral and teaching gift in our midst? I do not mean man-made pastors and teachers, but God-given shepherds, with hearts to feed the flock in wisdom and in grace.

If we do not look for them from the Head in heaven, how can we expect such?

When the lack is felt all sorts of proposals come readily from the carnal mind. "Invite some gifted brother to come and reside among us." "Ordain one or two in every assembly." As though God had committed the ordaining power to any of us!

But what are God's thoughts in the matter? "He gave some apostles," &c., &c. (Eph. iv. 11). "Enriched BY HIM in all utterance, so that ye come behind in no gift."

I do not now look for miraculous gifts, but I do look for the Lord to supply the need of His people. We ought to look to Him to bestow shepherd hearts to care for the flock, and men able to minister the word of God, and to edify the Church. But He will be enquired of for these things. How often do we hear these gifts prayed for at our prayer meetings? We should be making these things subjects of constant prayer, in the deep consciousness that from no other source but the Lord Himself can they be supplied.

Verse 7. "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such was the attitude of the Church then; is it that now? Is it like the Thessalonian saints, waiting for the Son of God from heaven? Waiting for the revelation of the hidden One? Waiting to behold that Head who ministered His riches to us in the wilderness? Such was the position God put the Church into at the first, to wait as a stranger pilgrim company between the Cross and the glory; between the sufferings of Christ and His coming again to reign; separated by the blood of Christ from the world that is hastening on to judgment.

For centuries the Church had almost, if not entirely, lost sight of this blessed hope, but in these latter years the Lord has been stirring up the hearts of His people to a renewed interest in the hope of His coming.

Men have attempted to fix dates for His coming. They fixed 1866, but that year passed away without the fulfilment of the promise, and scoffers said again, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Now men are talking of 1881 being the year in which He is to come. I know not whether it is to be so or not. I am not told to fix dates, but to watch and to wait with a prepared and expectant heart. Some say there are so many prophecies yet to be fulfilled before He comes that He cannot possibly come for a very long time yet, and that we are certain all to die. But I do not so read the Scriptures. We know not the day nor the hour. He *may* come to-night. It is ours to be ready with girded loins and burning lights, like unto men that wait for their lord.

I fear the subject of the coming of the Lord is finding latterly a very secondary place amongst us.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” If we are to judge from what the mouth has spoken amongst us during the past year, our hearts have not been much occupied with the hope of His coming.

Verse 8. “Blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ;” that is the day when we shall stand before His judgment seat to give an account of our stewardship. Shall we indeed be blameless? Shall we be able to look in His blessed face and say, “Lord, Thou knowest I have sought to please Thee?” Will it be said to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant?” Or shall we witness the burning up of our works as so much “wood, hay, and stubble?” Not our success, not popularity, not standing well with fellow-Christians should be our object, but rather to be “A workman approved unto God.”

Verse 9. “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There is not a grander thought than this in all the Bible! Who could ever have imagined such a thing? None, unless God had revealed it to us.

Has the Lord of Glory taken us into partnership with Himself? Yes, this is the very meaning of fellowship. We are called to be sharers with Him in His rejection by the world, His sorrows and sufferings upon earth, and also hereafter in the glories of His coming kingdom. Do we understand this aright? Fellowship with Christ is the foundation of all Church truth. The Church may be likened to a firm with many partners, and Christ is the head, who is to direct, and control, and supply the means, and then at last the profits are to be shared by all! All the unsearchable riches of Christ are thus ours, made ours by His work accomplished for us on the Cross.

Shall we say, “I want the fellowship of His glory,” and shrink from the fellowship of His Cross? Such was the spirit that was creeping into the Corinthian Church. They were seeking to reign as kings before their time (chap. iv. 8).

The First Epistle of Peter is rich in instruction concerning this fellowship with Christ in His sufferings now and His glory hereafter (see 1 Peter i. 11; ii. 21; iv. 12, 13; v. 10).

“God is faithful.” Well it is we have a faithful God to depend upon. So in Peter also iv. 19, “Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit

the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator.” Fellowship with Christ is sure to bring us into suffering here; into trials which are like a fiery furnace. The closer we seek to walk by the Word the more will we find our need of a “faithful God.” Faithful to hold us up every step of the way, and faithful to recompense us at the journey’s end. Yes, the same faithful God who called us out from darkness and the power of Satan, out from our death in sin, into life, and light, and fellowship with His Son, is the God whose grace is pledged to uphold us all the way.

Such is the blessed preface to the First Epistle to the Corinthians. You may have read many a preface to human books, but you never before read a preface like that! How deep and precious are the things of God! How much the world is missing by not having its eyes opened to behold His grace. Can we meditate upon these things, which are our blessed and eternal portion, without thinking of those who are in darkness and death, without God, and without hope. They pass through many of the like sufferings that God’s people undergo; they suffer sickness, and pain, and loss, and carry loved ones to the grave, and have not one ray of hope or drop of comfort. Oh! may the thought stir up our hearts to live for Christ. Alas! that a word from our lips, a look, a step should ever be a hindrance to that glorious Gospel that cost our God the blood of His own dear Son.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—It was not the suffering life of the Man of Sorrows that Jehovah constituted an offering for sin, but the pouring forth of His blood upon the cross; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul (Levit. xvii. 11).

The mercy-seat was constituted a wondrous exhibition of this great truth, for there we beheld the law of God deposited in the ark and the mercy-seat, the cover to this sacred chest. And the blood sprinkled once on the mercy-seat, that when the eye of God looked down upon His law, to regard the breaches therein made by His people, it might rest upon the blood once sprinkled upon that golden propitiatory—once, but effecting eternal reconciliation; for “by one offering He hath perfected for ever those that are sanctified” (Heb. x. 14). This one offering, then, is not the offering of the life, but of the death of Jesus; for it is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. x. 10).—*Extract.*

THE LIGHT OF EARTH, AND THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN.

(Read Gen. i. 1-5, 14-19; Jno. i. 1-5; ix. 5; xii. 35-36; Matt. v. 14; Rev. xxi. 23-25.)

1. **H**OW strikingly this book of Genesis opens. It has been well said that here (chap. i.) "we find God bent upon the display of HIMSELF to man." God alone is the mighty Worker throughout.

In strikingly bold, yet marvellously simple language, He is described as calling this creation into existence, portion by portion, day after day, until all is completed, and pronounced to be "very good."

Mark, throughout this division of the book (i. 1 to ii. 4), the reiteration of the several phrases, "God said," "God created," "God made," "God called," "God saw," "God blessed." Verily, His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen.

God works, and then God rests: typical of a later work, and another rest; a work that shall never be marred, and a rest that shall never be broken.

2. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." What a scene God beheld as He looked out from His eternal dwelling-place upon that dark, death-like waste of waters. A scene where only He could work, and into which He, and He alone, could bring light and life, order and beauty, joy and blessing.

What a picture of man by nature. He is described as "sitting in darkness," and as being "dead in trespasses and sins." Sin, as a monarch, reigns and rules over the whole scene; revelling, as it were, in the complete destruction he has wrought (Rom. v. 21). But more than this: as in all cases, so here, the anti-type exceeds the type—on the side of evil, as well as on the side of God. In the *earth* all was darkness, confusion, and death; but *men*, while in darkness and death as to all things spiritual, are daringly and defiantly alive in their hatred of God, and in their rebellion against him.

Here again is a scene for God to work in; and surely *only God* can work. As in the chapter before us, He manifests His eternal power, His Godhead, and His goodness; so here again He comes in to open to us His very heart of love, and to make known "the exceeding riches of His grace." Yea, the first creation, with all the terrible results brought in by the disobedience of the first Adam, shall only be the platform whereon this wondrous and surpassing revel-

ation of Himself, in the Person and work of the last Adam, shall be made known.

3. God works. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light." The word was with power, and light flooded the whole scene. It came from God; it came at His bidding; it manifested itself; and it exposed the ruin on every side.

Again God comes in upon the still more awful scene, saying, "Let there be light:" and the light shined in the darkness. Yes, into this place of darkness and of death—of enmity and rebellion against God Christ came. He, too, came from God; came at God's bidding; manifested Himself as the Light; and revealed the surrounding ruin.

But, again, the anti-type goes beyond the type. The dark waters of the old creation did not, in whole or in part, give out the light from itself: the light shone upon it and illumined it. But the Son of God became incarnate; He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;" and, *as a man amongst men, was Himself the Light*. Where all was against God, He came to witness for God, and be in earth—what Adam failed to be—the very image of His Person without the possibility of fault." In Him all that was pure, and perfect, and lovely, and beautiful, was seen. No need to say to Him, "Physician heal thyself," for all His sublime teachings He perfectly and fully manifested in His life and walk. He who preached the "sermon on the mount," preached it over and over again in all His ways and actions, during every hour and moment of His sojourn here below.

But this brings out another point of contrast. *The old creation did not refuse, or reject, or rebel the light* when God brought it in upon it, *but man did*. "The Light shined in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." They (His own) who above all others should have received Him, "received Him not." Yea, more, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." But if *men* rejected Him,

4. "God saw the Light that it was good; and God divided the Light from the darkness." All was dark indeed until the long-promised Messiah appeared, for "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth

good, no not one" (Psa. liii. 2, 3). But now, as He looks down, He beholds One who, though despised and rejected by the darkness around, is "the Light of the world." "And God saw the Light that it was good." What an inexpressible delight to the heart of the Father as He now looks down and beholds that holy, fragrant, walk and work of His dear Son. He, as it were, cannot contain Himself, for thrice are the heavens opened, and a voice from the excellent glory proclaims—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus did He receive "from God the Father, honour and glory."

5. But that first day's work came to a close—"The evening and the morning were the first day." And so likewise did this work-day of the Lord Jesus draw to its close. Again, did the shades of night fall upon the world? Jesus is not the Light of the world *now*. He said, "*As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world*" (John ix. 5). And again, "*Yet a little while is the Light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest the darkness come upon you,*" &c. (see John xii. 23, 36). But all His warnings were unheeded; and all His appeals disregarded and spurned. They chose the darkness; they rejected the Light; His love drew forth their bitterest hate; they cried "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him;" and they made good their cries. That death was this world's crisis. "*Now,*" says Christ, "*Now is the judgment of this world.*" By that act, every claim the world had on God was severed; every tie was broken.

But Oh! mystery of mysteries! this very act it is that opens to us the deep, deep love of the heart of God, and makes known to us "the exceeding riches of His grace." On that cross another question was for ever settled between God and Christ. In that holy, fragrant life and death, Jesus was fulfilling, and God was accomplishing His wondrous purposes of grace: "He bore the sin of many," He "made intercession for the transgressors." And now the mighty, mighty love of God can flow forth without let or hindrance to this guilty world; to the murderers of His dear Son, the message is—"WHOSOEVER believeth in Him—the crucified One—shall not perish—shall not share this world's awful doom—but have everlasting life." While the rejector is "condemned already," he that believeth "shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

6. Passing over the second day, we come to the third—the resurrection day—and so, here in type we find it. The dry land, at God's bidding appears above the dark waters (figure of death). Then we come to the fourth day, and what do we find?—"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven." Three times are we told of God setting these lights "*in the firmament of the heaven.*" Beautiful type of the ascension of the Lord, following, as it does, the third day's work—type of His resurrection. When men did their worst, God, so to speak, did His best. (And this is the way our God always works). He who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, is declared to be the Son of God, in power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Note, too, that beautiful word "*set*"—"God *set* them in the firmament of the heaven." So when God raised His Christ in mighty power from the dead, it was to "*set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,*" &c. (Eph. i. 19-23). Jesus is the exalted one there. The despised and rejected Light of earth is now the Light and glory of heaven. "We see Jesus, who was made a little while inferior to the angels for the suffering of death, *crowned with glory and honour*" (Heb. ii. 9). "The LAMB is the LIGHT thereof" (Rev. xxi. 23). But more—

7. "God *set them* in the firmament of the heaven." Mark, not *it*, but *them*. Not merely the sun, but the moon and stars also. Then, *we are there too!* Yes, dear fellow-believers, that is the truth I want to bring out. If Christ Jesus (His proper title as the risen and glorified One) is exalted and set there for ever, blessed be God so are we. We saw from Eph. i. 20 that God "raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." Now, look at the next chap. (Eph. ii. 4-6), God, in the riches of His mercy, and in the greatness of His love, "hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" In the Person of Christ our Head we are exalted, and set before the face of our God for ever.

"Lord Jesus, are we *one with Thee*?
O height, O depth of love!
Once slain for us upon the tree,
We're *one with Thee* above.

“ Soon, soon shall come that glorious day,
When seated on Thy throne,
Thou wilt to wond’ring worlds display,
That *Thou with us art one.*”

8. Meanwhile, to us, dear children of God, the Master speaks. Look at the chapter again—“ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. . . . And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.” The sun, the great centre of our system, is the fountain of light. Round him all the other orbs revolve; from him they derive their light. He rules the day, flooding the earth with his glory and splendour. When darkness covers the scene, then it is the lesser light shines: but the placid light she gives is not her own; the sun shines upon her, and her business is—to reflect the light of the great centre of the system to which she belongs.

So is it in spiritual things. If the sun is a striking symbol of Christ Himself; so the moon would represent His Church. In the *day*, while He was here, how fully and perfectly did He glorify the Father, telling out His great heart of love, and His own love, in all His words, and ways, and acts. His was a light that could not be hid; but the world could not bear it; could not endure it; so they cast Him out. Then the darkness set in again, and now it “is far spent.” We are in it, dear brethren; though not of it, yet in it—

“ He has sent us here to tell
That His love is changeless still.”

The world does not see Him; the world cannot know Him. But we know Him (John xvii. 1); we see Him, see Him by faith in the glory, shining as the mighty sun (Heb. ii. 9). Are we reflecting His glory? Are we shining for Jesus? He says of His Church, “Ye are the light of the world.” What an honour! and yet what a responsibility. She has not to set herself before the world (she has no light of her own), but to set *Him before it*. To speak of Him; to testify for Him; to follow His example; to walk as He walked; to bear His light through the darkness; in fine, reflecting Himself in all her ways, and words, and works.

“ Are you shining for Jesus, dear ones,
Shining just everywhere,
Not only in easy places,
Not only just here or there?”

“ Shining in happy gatherings,
Where all are loved and known?
Shining where all are strangers—
Shining when quite alone?”

“ Shining at home, and making
True sunshine all around?
Shining at school, and faithful—
Perhaps among faithless—found?”

But remember, dear fellow-saints, the moon shineth not when the earth comes between her and the sun; neither can we shine if aught of earth comes between us and our sun. Our eyes and our affections are to be set on things above, and on Him who dwells there. Looking *above* our path we shall have the power to walk *in it*. One has well said—“The eyes upward on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which, consequently, will glorify Him and make Him known in the world.” The Christian, who has the glory ever before Him, and the Glorious Saviour dwelling there as the object of his affections, will walk well on the earth. Thus believing, living, walking, and working, we shall receive His “well done,” who “saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

The following lines of dear Mr. Chapman’s are so much to the point that I cannot refrain from giving them:—

“ When late I saw the moon at dead of night
In perfect beauty of her fulness rise,
I watched her steps, and, as she climb’d the skies,
Ponder’d the glory of her placid light.

“ Musing, I said: A fountain out of sight,
Ever the same, yon silver orb supplies
With all her peaceful beams, that cheer mine eyes,
Until the sun display his power and might.

“ Then pour’d I forth my prayer: So may Thy bride,
Blest Lamb of God, till Thy appearing shine;
And in this world of unbelief and pride
Let her, who is by threefold title Thine,
Walk in the Spirit, in Thy love abide,
For Thee, her Lord, a witness and a sign.”

9. “And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.” But it was followed by the evening and morning of the fifth, and that day by the sixth, and so on. But when Jesus comes, it will be to take us to realms of infinite delight, and regions of unbounded glories, and

"There no alternate night is known,
Nor sun's imperfect ray,
But glory, from the sacred throne,
Spreads everlasting day."

"There shall be no night there," for "the Lamb is the Light thereof." He who filled the cross for us, at the close of earth's little day, will fill the throne, and be the glory, throughout the long long eternal day of heaven.

R. B.

LETTER.

"CHICAGO, 27th Oct., 1880.

The Christians in Chicago, meeting solely in the name of the Lord: after some consideration have resolved to meet in convention for conference, &c., &c., and hereby extend a most cordial invitation to other Christians who are interested in the Lord's work, and who "go in for a whole Bible," to meet with them. Mal. iii. 15-16, "They that work iniquity are set up, yea, they that tempt God are delivered." "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another," &c.

COPIES of the above circular have been forwarded not only to all the gatherings on this side the Atlantic known, or remembered, but also to many isolated Christians scattered abroad. Alas! many Christians look first and foremost after the farm, and last, after "The place of the altar."

Many Christians and meetings were doubtless greatly exercised before the Lord on behalf of the first conference by believers who meet solely in the name of the Lord at Chicago, Ill., U.S., and that any of them who thus have been exercised, may with us praise the Lord for His own gracious presence and great blessing vouchsafed, these lines are penned.

The four days meetings, as in circular, began on Thursday, the American National Thanksgiving Day, and were carried on to the end with very little deviation from proposals.

It was intensely interesting to see Americans, Canadians, Swedes, Norwegians, Swiss, German, Dutch, Italian, English, Irish and Scotch, all made one by the one Spirit. A manifested oneness, such as I never before saw exemplified.

In Canada there are many gatherings, but in this great North-west there are as yet but few. There are certain railway routes on which a person may travel 1000 miles and not come on one meeting gathered simply unto the name of the Lord, and scarcely any one to preach, excepting hirelings, who in most cases count their success by the number of dollars, and not by the number of converts. The Lord send "labourers."

At the meetings there were present believers from

St. Louis, Mo., Sparta, Ill., St. Charles, Minn., Braidwood, Ill., Crownpoint, Ind., Valparaiso, Ind., Oakpark, Ill., Austin, Ill., Princeton, Ill., besides the Chicago Christians. There were also three baptisms on Lord's-day afternoon.

There were present also of the Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, John Smith, of Aberdeen, Alexander Marshall, Glasgow, Wm. P. Charles Byfield, Massachusetts, Judge Gullett, Valparaiso, Indiana, D. M'Leod, of St. Louis, Mo., besides the Chicago preachers.

The first two days were specially a breaking-down time before the Lord, and the last two, feeding and building up. On the whole, it must be owned that it was truly a time of immense blessing. To God be the glory. In the midst of much weakness and helplessness, the God of all grace met our need.

A number of the strangers slept in the Hall on cots—in fact, a number of the believers lived in the Hall, ate, slept, &c., in it. Thus, in addition to the regular meetings, there were several Bible readings. Nothing to do but attend the outer and inner man.

One thing here (on account of the immense distances) that is highly appreciated far more than in Britain, is the fellowship of meetings together. And in this country, where there are so many nationalities, there is not the cohesion found in old-established countries. But this "born again" make us of all countries "a peculiar nation"—*one*.

In July, 1879, the first tent was pitched in this city, and on the second Lord's-day four of us broke bread in it. This has gone on increasing since. This last summer we had the same tent pitched on same site.

We also had another second-hand tent presented to us by a brother in the Lord for the south-side of the city. It was pitched on July 9th. The meetings, beginning in a Glasgow Presbyterian Christian's house on Tuesday, April 13th, were transferred to it, and on July 11th five of us broke bread in the tent, and on the 18th, ten of us. This has been increasing, and still is. A. Marshall and Wm. P. Charles gave much help to it, while your humble servant went to New York tent in order to relieve A. Marshall for Chicago. In these meetings there is constant preaching of the Gospel and blessing.

Now our two tents are quite done up, and will never be pitched again for preaching. We are looking

to heaven, and expecting from the Lord another tent for the breaking up of fresh ground in this city, which is the starting-point of 33 railways, and has also a shipping interest larger than Leith. It contains upwards of 500,000 inhabitants, and the population growing at the rate of 40,000 a-year. Will any of the Lord's people join us in prayer for this, that the Word of God may have free course and be glorified? I am, yours, by free grace,

DONALD ROSS.

543 W. Madison Street,
Chicago, Ill., U.S.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

COLOSIANS ii. 13 describes our state before conversion—"We were dead in sins," but God "quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us *all trespasses*."

Verses 11 and 12 give us our complete standing in Christ; "we died with Him, we were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ."

Then "we were buried with Him in baptism," and are raised and seated in the heavenlies in Christ.

Thus our whole standing as *sinners* before God is a thing of the past, God having forgiven us *all trespasses*, and our sins and iniquities He remembers no more. Acts xiii. 37, 38, and x. 40, show the way we received this blessing—namely, by *faith in Christ*.

Thus we are forgiven *sinners*, once and for all.

But the same sacrifice which met our need as *sinners* makes us *saints*, for "we are *sanctified* by the offering of the body of Jesus *once*" (Heb. x. 10), and are now the *children* of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians iii. 26); *sons* of God (1 John iii. 2).

Having thus come, by Jesus the way, to the *Father* (John xiv. 6), God now deals with us, not as *sinners*, but as *sons* (Heb. xii. 7); and since we call on the Father, He would have us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, *knowing* we are redeemed from our former ways (1 Peter i. 17, 18, and iv. 1-4).

Our Father has no favourites; "He judgeth without respect of persons;" and forgiveness to a son means, *that our Father sees no necessity for further correction in the thing forgiven*,* while forgiveness to a *sinner* implies escape from the *judgment after death*.

* The bitter result of the sin may, nevertheless, be experienced long after (see II. Sam. xii. 13-14).

The one is a final and complete forgiveness; the other, a *continuous* course of forgiveness from a loving Father—as often as required—and as discerned by us (1 John i. 9); while for much—oh, how much—we fail to discern, there is ample provision in the Advocate *with the Father*, who ever is the propitiation for our sins as children (1 John ii. 1, 2).

In 1 Cor. xi. 30-32 we read, "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep; *for*, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are *chastened* of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

In Heb. xii. we read (verse 9), "we have had fathers of our flesh who *corrected* (chastened, same word) us, shall we not rather be *in subjection* to the Father of Spirits, and live?"

Then in Psalm cxix. 67, "Before I was afflicted I *went astray*, but now have I kept Thy word."

These passages clearly show the object of all chastening from our Father—viz., to correct us in our ways and get us back to *obedience*.

This may be accomplished, either by the Word breaking the will—"for all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction (chastening) in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect" (2 Tim. iii. 16)—or the end of the Lord may be accomplished through circumstances working to that end.

Thus, Peter was chastened by a look from His Lord (Luke xxii. 61, 62; Heb. iv. 12, 13); likewise Josiah (2 Kings xxii. 11); David, in 2 Sam. xii. 13, and Psalm li.

Job, on the other hand, was chastened through circumstances; but the *end* reached is the same in all. Peter at home and happy with his Lord (John xxi.), the first to reach Him. Josiah executes the Lord's judgment, and kept the passover (2 Chron. xxxv. 17, 18) as it had not been kept since the days of Samuel, thus showing that "he kept the word, after having been afflicted thereby" (Ps. cxix. 67).

How important, then, to discern the distinction between our forgiveness as *sinners* (which is once and for ever, never needing to be repeated), and our forgiveness as *sons*, which we need every day (1 John i. 7 to end).

How different does Matt. vi. 14 read in this light—"For *if* ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you." "But *if* ye forgive not

men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours."

Keeping in view it is a *father* and *child*, not *God the judge* and a *sinner*, in these verses, they simply mean, if one trespass against another, and he refuse to forgive him, our Father will not forgive that unforgiving one who refuses to bow to, and act out Matt. xviii. 15-17, and His chastening hand will be heavy on him (Ps. xxxii. 3, 4) until he acknowledges his sin (verse 5) and obeys.

May we all remember the way He leads us, to humble us, to test us, to know what is in our hearts, whether we will keep His word or no (Deut. viii.), meeting the humble and contrite soul with a Father's restoring smile; and discern likewise His provision for such an one as Lot in that mercy-seat in 1 John ii. 2, *where grace abounds*.

That provision secures *all the family* eternally, and obedient children ever find mercy there, and grace to help in time of need.

T. C.

"A LITTLE WHILE."

(Heb. x. 27.)

A LITTLE while until the veil is lifted,
That hides Thee, Saviour, from our longing
view;
Then praise without a note of sorrow mingled,
Shall rise in endless anthem ever new!

A little while to serve amid the shadows,
Till breaks the day-dawn on our far-spent night:
Then in Thy Kingdom seek to gather round Thee,
For perfect service in unclouded light.

A little while to wait while Thou art bringing
Thy costly stones from nature's quarry yet:
All for the Temple of Thy glory needed;
Each on Thy heart in priceless value set.

A little while to watch till Thou shalt call us
To lay the weapons of our warfare down;
When in *Thy* victory we have more than conquered,
And in *Thy* worthiness we claim our crown!

Till then, dear Lord, as strangers here we tarry,
All that we prize with Thee has gone before.
Within the veil our love, our hope, our worship,
What but Thy coming can our joy restore?

"A little while," we trust, for Thou hast spoken,
Though dreary seems the night and long the way.
Come, Jesus Lord, and let Thy weary pilgrims,
Find in Thy presence our eternal day!—A. E. W.

LEVITICUS.

CHAP. I.—Access, or the way of drawing near to God; God speaking, not from Mount Sinai, but out of the Tabernacle. In this Chap. there are three classes of victims mentioned: bullocks (ver. 3); sheep or goats (ver. 10); and fowls (ver. 14); suited to the means of different classes of persons (2 Cor. viii. 12). The burnt offering (that which ascends) was to be without blemish, type of Christ (Heb. x. 7-10; Phil. ii. 8); also, of the offerer's own free will. Christ was The Free-will Offering (Heb. x. 7; John x. 18). The burnt offering was a sweet savour unto the Lord (verses 9, 13, 17), type of Christ in death (Gen. viii. 21; Eph. v. 2).

Chap. II.—The meat offering presents to us the humanity of Christ, His perfect manhood and character as offered to God, what Jesus does: hence the meat offering typifies him in life. The "fine flour," type of the perfection of the manhood of Christ. The oil type of the Holy Ghost. The oil was poured and mingled (ver. 1, 4). Type of Christ conceived, then anointed (Matt. i. 18; Act iv. 27, x. 38). Oil also typifies the *power* of Christ's ministry (Luke iv); Frankincense, the object thereof (ver. 18). Salt: type of the enduring character of Christ; always seasoned with salt. Leaven and honey forbidden: the former expressive of evil (Ex. xiii. 7; 1 Cor. v. 6), the latter of that which is sweet and attractive in nature (Mark iii. 31, 35; 2 Cor. v. 14, 17). The meat offering was "baken" (verses 4, 5, 7): symbolical of Christ suffering as the "righteous one" at the hands of man, by the power of sympathy and anticipatively (Luke iv. 28-30; Matt. viii. 16, 17; Matt. xxvi. 37-42). The priests feeding upon the remnants of the meat offering (ver. 10): type of the Church and the believer feeding upon the perfections of the "Man, Christ Jesus."

Chap. III.—The peace offering: typifies the communion of the worshipper with God; also, type of Christ having made peace on the cross, and our peace now (Col. i. 20; Eph. ii. 14). The "burnt," the "meat," and the "peace offerings," were offerings of a "sweet savour" unto the Lord.

Chap. IV.—We have what man is—sinful.

Chap. V.—What man does—transgresses against God and man; but a full provision made by the God of grace; thus we have in these offerings Christ typified as a sacrifice for sin (Isaiah liii. 10, 12; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. x. 11-14; 1 John i. 7-10; Heb. x. 8).

Chaps. VI. and VII.—Are instructions to Aaron and his sons in reference to the foregoing sacrifices.

Chap. VIII.—The consecration of Aaron and his sons; seven things were necessary for their consecration: taken, brought, washed, clothed, anointed, their hands filled, and they were to be sanctified (Heb. v. 10; Rom. viii. 28, 30; Heb. xiii. 20; Psalm. xl. 2; Rev. i. 5; Eph. v. 25, 26; Isaiah li. 10; 2 Cor. i. 21; Eph. iii. 19; 1 Pet. i. 16). The bullock for a "sin offering" (Ver. 14); death immediately follows the transfer of sin upon its head: type of Christ dying on the cross when made "sin for us" (Isa. liii. 6, 10). The ram for a "burnt offering" (ver. 18); that which "ascends" or "goes up:" type of Christ the "burnt offering;" a "sweet savour" unto God (Eph. v. 2). "In Him was no sin" (1 John iii. 5); "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21); "He did no sin" (1 Peter ii. 22); and "was without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). The "ram of consecration" "filling the hands;" and the blood was put upon the right ear, thumb, and toe of Aaron and also of his sons, illustrative of the believer having a blood-stained ear to hearken to His commandments; a blood-stained hand to serve in the sanctuary; and a blood-stained foot to tread the courts of the house of the Lord (Deut. vii. 12; John xii. 26; Ps. lxxvi. 13). Aaron and his sons eat the "flesh" with the "bread" (ver. 31): type of Christ and His Church feeding upon the results of an accomplished atonement (John xvii. 22-26).

Chap. IX.—The "eighth day:" type of resurrection and coming millennial glory. Moses and Aaron "coming out" to bless the people: points on to future blessing for Israel.

Chap. X.—The failure of Nadab and Abihu: typical of false worship and unscriptural ritual, which is nothing less than "strange fire," and will ultimately have its doom (2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Heb. xii. 29). "Wine and strong drink" forbidden to Aaron or his sons: illustrative of human excitement (1 Pet. v. 8).

Chap. XI.—Law of the clean and unclean animals: typical of the children of God and the children of the devil, holy and unholy (Ex. xi. 7; John xvii. 16, 17). "Chewing the cud:" illustrative of inwardly digesting the Word (Is. lv. 2). "Parting of the hoof:" the walk of the Christian (Eph. ii. 10; 3 John, ver. 3). Clean and unclean fish; those fish that were ceremonially clean had "fins" and "scales:" illustrative of the believer having power to move against the course

of this world, at the same time resisting its influences (Heb. xi. 13; Eph. vi. 10-18). Read for the moral principle inculcated in the whole of this chapter, 2 Cor. ii. 17; Mal. iii. 18; Ez. xlv. 23; with Acts x. 15, 16.

Chap. XII.—Reveals to us man's ruin and God's remedy (Pslm. li. 5; Job xxv. 4; Rom. iii.); hence the introduction in this chapter of the "burnt" and the "sin" offerings: typical of two aspects of the death of Christ. See chapters I. and IV.

Chaps. XIII. XIV.—Leprosy in the "person," "the garment," and the "house:" typical of "sin" in our nature, in our walk and character, and in the assembly (Job xlii. 6; Tit. i. 15, 16; 1 Cor. v). The law of cleansing the leper. The priest: type of Christ (John iii. 16). The two birds; one killed, the other let loose into the open field: type of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Rom. iv. 25). Blood and oil: typical of the believer *first* cleansed by blood, *then* anointed with the Holy Ghost; the ear (hearing), the hand (handling), the foot (walking). Leprosy in the house symbolical of the professing Church. Whether it was a portion or the whole house, all that was leprous had to be removed and destroyed (1 Cor. v. 11-13; Rev. ii. 14-16; Rom. xi. 20, 22).

Chap. XV.—Laws concerning ceremonial uncleanness; God will have *personal purity* (Gal. v. 16; Col. ii. 11, iv. 3-5).

ALONE, YET NOT ALONE.

"And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."
—John viii. 29.

THEY who fight the Lord's battles must be content to be in no respect accounted of: to be in no respect encouraged by the prospect of *human* praise.

If you make an exception, that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say: beware of this, for you may turn *them* into a world, and find in them a world, and may "sow to the flesh" in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them nor they by you so long as respect for them is your motive. All such motives are poison and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God. It is *not* the fact that all that see the face of the Lord do see each other. It is *not* the fact that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be

contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy and their cheers of approbation.

The man of God must walk alone with God; he must be contented that the Lord knoweth—that God knows.

It is such a relief to the natural man within us to fall back upon human countenance and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves and think it "*brotherly love*," when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow worm!

You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice you are "not alone," because the Father is with you, that you may give glory to God.

Oh! I cannot but speak of it, it is *such* a glory to God to see a soul that has been accessible to the praise of men, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, pleased and happy in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand! Here was the victory of Jesus! There was not a single heart that beat in sympathy with His heart, or entered into His bitter sorrow, or bore his grief in the hour of his bitter grief: but His way was with the Lord,—His judgment was with His God, His Father, who said, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

This was the perfect glory given to the Father by the Son, that in *flesh and blood* such a trust in God was manifested; and this is what you are called to, and you are not called to it as He was, but you are called to see God in Him. God has come near to you in Christ, and *here* you have a human heart—a *perfect sympathy*—the heart of God in your nature, and to this you are ever carried. And if there be *any other* sympathy with you in the wide universe, whether on the sea of glass, or still on earth, *it is only as the pulsation of the blood that flows from Christ to His members* that it is to you of any account. Feed upon it, and remember you are *thus* to walk in the world—not hanging upon one another.

Oh! Jesus, master! take my hands in Thine, and keep me with Thee,—with thee, walking above the worthless din of human praise or disapproval.

Then shall it be in my ear the empty sound which it is in Thine; and I shall walk in sweet unconsciousness,—too far for some,—not far enough for others,—but with Thee; putting my whole weight into that which in Thine eyes is service; no longer offering Thee the blind, the lame, the maimed desires of a spirit dreaming of the great things which it *would* do, but my waking, rejoicing energies.

Lord! shine upon thy poor servant, say unto me with power:

"Arise! follow Me."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. XLIX.

Should Christians in the present dispensation repeat, in prayer to God, what is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer"?

REPLY.

While the Lord was still on earth, the Spirit was not given; but the promise of Christ was that when the Spirit was come, He should guide the disciples into all truth (John xvi. 13). This blessed guidance of the Spirit was to avail for their help in prayer as well as in all beside; and consequently, in Rom. viii. 26, while our inability to pray as we ought is confessed, we are reminded, not of a form of prayer, however divinely

perfect, as our resource, but of the Spirit who helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession according to the will of God.

The disciples, when asking for a form of prayer, put themselves on no higher level than John's disciples (Luke xi. 1); but in John xvi., when the Lord has told them that He is going away and that He will send the Comforter, He adds (verse 24), "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

But even though we do not repeat the form of words, we shall do well to consider attentively the character and spirit of the prayer; for the Lord's words, in Matt.

vi. 9, "After this manner therefore pray ye," will surely always hold good.

If we oftener began with asking great things for God's glory, we should be more prepared to content ourselves with "daily bread," when we turned to the mention of our own needs.

Like all else that proceeded from the lips of our Lord, it is perfect. It puts the suppliant at once on the very highest footing as a son of God, saying, "Our Father," and from that each petition descends, as it were, to a lower footing. "Hallowed be thy name," is the expression of a *worshipper*. "Thy kingdom come," is that of a *subject*. "Thy will be done," is that of a *servant*. "Give us this day our daily bread," is the cry of a *beggar*. "Forgive us our trespasses," is that of a *sinner*; and "Lead us not into temptation," is the confession of a nature so corrupt that it is continually liable to trespass anew. Surely there is not any one of these petitions that may not be used by one who is "praying in the Holy Spirit."

QUESTION NO. L.

In the event of a husband putting away his wife for the sin of adultery, is he at liberty to marry another while his first wife is alive, though she be married again?

REPLY.

It seems to us that the words in Matt. xix. 9—"Except it be for fornication"—explicitly clear from the charge of adultery the person who acts as this question supposes. But to remain unmarried would better accord with the grace of the New Testament.

Under the law, if a man put away his wife for any cause, and she married another man, the first was forbidden to take her again, even though the second husband had died (see Deut. xxiv. 1-4); but in Jeremiah iii. 1, we find the Lord quoting this very commandment, yet declaring that nevertheless He will receive Israel again, though she had played the harlot with many lovers.

May we not learn from this that, while a believer may have right to put away his wife for the sin of adultery (Matt. v. 32), he should always hold himself in readiness to receive her again upon her repentance, and therefore that he should not make this impossible by a second marriage?

The same principle of grace is inculcated in 1 Cor. vii. 2, as regards an unbelieving husband. If the

believing wife departs, she must remain unmarried, in order that if the husband be saved, the way may be clear for him to rejoin his wife.

QUESTION NO. LI.

Could you briefly state how the first day of the week came to be observed as Sabbath, seeing that after the Lord ascended, and His disciples went forth preaching Jesus and the resurrection, the religious world still observed the seventh day (Acts xiii. 14-44; xviii. 4). And the disciples came together to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7)?

REPLY.

The complete distinction between the "ministration of death, written and engraven in stones," and the "ministration of the Spirit," was long ago lost sight of by professing Christendom, and Christians insisted in putting themselves under the law of Moses. Not unnaturally, therefore, they tacked on to the Lord's day the Sabbatical requirements of the Fourth Commandment, and tradition has perpetuated the confusion.

In opposition to all this, the apostle Paul classes the Sabbaths among the elements of the world, from which we have died (compare Col. ii., verses 16 and 20).

Whilst holding that the Lord's day is entirely distinct from the Sabbath of the old dispensation, we also contend that any who would secularize it, and put it on a level with the other six days of the week, are dishonouring the Lord of that day, and parting with one of their most precious privileges.

QUESTION NO. LII.

Have we any Scriptural warrant for receiving to the Lord's Table any who will not submit to the very plain command of baptism?

REPLY.

We do not know of any Scripture that sanctions the reception of unbaptized persons into the fellowship of the Church, nor do we believe it to be the mind of the Lord to ignore this precious ordinance by receiving into fellowship without putting the Scriptures concerning it before those who apply. We believe that much unfaithfulness to the truth the Lord has taught us as to baptism has resulted from fear lest baptism should become a *sine qua non* of fellowship. But to set the Word of the Lord before

believers, in the hope that it may please Him to open their eyes to the truth, is surely right under all circumstances.

To refuse fellowship to one who is ignorant, and, through false teaching and prejudice, slow to perceive the truth on a subject so much controverted, would surely be to set the figure above the reality, and to grieve the Spirit of God.

To say that such an one *will not submit*, is very far from a true statement of the case. To submit to an ordinance before it is seen to be the very thing the Lord commands, could not be *faith*, and therefore it must be *sin* (Rom. xiv. 23).

The believer in question probably believes firmly that the Lord's requirement has been fulfilled in his case when he was an infant. So long as he believes this, however erroneous it may be, the question is not one of *submission* but of *intelligence*.

Many of us were long in seeing that infant sprinkling is not baptism. But we were as willing to obey before we saw immersion of believers to be the mind of the Lord, as when we stepped into the waters of baptism.

It was therefore not a question of intelligence but of understanding. We know of a case in point. A believing woman desired fellowship. Baptism was spoken of to her; but she was rooted in the belief that baptism came in the room of circumcision, and that she, as an infant, had been baptized. Yet such was her desire to be received among the Lord's people, and to His table, that she said, "If I must be baptized before I can be received, then I am willing to be."

But surely this would only have been subjection to man. In no sense could such an act be "the obedience of faith."

What was to be done? There was no question as to her being a child of God. There was evident willingness to obey, so far as she saw. Was this not the case of one to be heartily received, and more fully instructed in the way of the Lord? (Acts xviii. 26-27).

It must ever be borne in mind that in these days of abounding error, when every doctrine is obscured, and every ordinance perverted, the Christian has *much to unlearn* as well as much to learn.

This may be a slow process, and it requires much patience, tenderness, and discrimination, to discern between the slowness of one and the stubbornness and selfwill of another.

Indifference will receive the stubborn and selfwilled without faithful dealing, whilst spiritual conceit, on the other hand, is liable to stumble, or even reject, a slow and timid, yet true-hearted disciple.

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The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. i. 10.

WE have been looking formerly at what may be called the preface to this epistle. Beautiful and most instructive we have surely found it to be. With verse 10 begins, as it were, the business of the epistle. And mark that at the outset, the apostle's very first words are a "beseeching" of them, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." With what power, with what weight, with what influence over heart and conscience ought exhortations to come to us which are introduced by such urgent beseeching?

Yet is it not the case that throughout Christendom there is no portion of God's Word which receives less serious attention or is more systematically set aside than this epistle?

"That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

In this verse we have unity demanded as regards *mind* and *mouth*. In Acts iv. we find a different aspect of unity. "The multitude of them that believed were of one *heart* and one *soul*." Mark the difference between the two. The first thing is "one heart and one soul" for Jesus our Lord: the next thing is to have "one mind," the mind of Christ; and one mouth speaking only that which expresses the mind of Christ within.

It is vain for us to attempt to have the "one mind and mouth" if we have not the "one heart and soul." It is only the person of the Lord Jesus who died for

us and rose again that can unite our hearts in one. It is only as the love of God, seen in the person of Jesus, draws our affections to Himself as the one blessed centre, that we can be of one heart and of one soul.

By the power of the Holy Ghost, in the early Church every heart was fixed on the risen Christ; therefore not one in that multitude said that ought he possessed was his own. All belonged to Him, all was yielded up to Him; hence the oneness of heart and soul.

But in the 1st Epistle to Corinthians, we have the apostle dealing with a condition of things far different from this. Satan had come in to divide and split asunder, and had already introduced the elements which in the end would reduce to fragments the fair fabric of the Church of God.

Before touching upon the broad principles of unity, I would, in the first place, observe that sin is the great disintegrator, the great breaker-up of everything.

Disease is just a type of sin. This is seen in the type of leprosy in the Old Testament. The process of disease is to loosen fibre from fibre, to separate particle from particle, until death is caused, and then comes the breaking up of all that binds member to member, and this goes on till bone is severed from bone, and nothing is left but isolated particles of dust. The weakness that results from a few days illness, requiring weeks or months to regain the lost firmness of muscle, is caused by this partial disintegration, the result of some poison having entered the system, which we call disease.

Such is sin. It first severs the link between the soul and God. The moment Adam sinned his soul

was separated from God. Then after separation from God, there follows the separation of friend from friend, of children from parents, natural affection crumbles away, every social relationship is undermined by a gradual process of decay, until in the world before the flood, "the earth was filled with violence." Sin had wrought the overthrow of the whole social fabric, and God in judgment swept it away.

But God has ever before His heart one blessed purpose toward which He is working, the very opposite of what sin has wrought.

This we get in Eph. i. 9, 10, "to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." Such is God's purpose; but what is Satan's? It is to divide, to break up, to scatter if possible that which God is uniting and gathering together in one.

One of the purposes for which Christ died was, "that He might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad;" and in fulfilment of this, God is making out of Jew and Gentile "one new man" in Christ Jesus. Yes, the purpose of God is unity, one blessed glorious perfect eternal unity. Notice, in passing, how often in the Epistle to the Ephesians you get the word "one." "Gather together in one," "one new man;" again in chapter iv., "one body," "one Spirit"—seven unities! "ONE" is, as it were, the keynote to the Epistle—it is God's purpose. And in pursuance of this, the mind and purpose of God, the Lord Jesus said, "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad." How important then that we act in harmony with the purpose of God—that our service here be a gathering with Christ, and a gathering unto Christ as the one centre and Lord.

Counterfeit, has always been one of Satan's most successful ways of opposing the work of God. If God has a unity, Satan will endeavour to get up an imitation unity.

After the flood, we read the whole world was of one language and one speech. They had one purpose too, and to effect that they banded themselves together to build a city and a tower, and to make themselves a name lest they should be scattered. But all this was without God, it was Satan's unity, therefore God in judgment and in mercy too, scattered it to the four winds.

But in the last days Satan will again work on the principle of unity. Turn to Isaiah viii. 9, "Associate

yourself, O ye people." "Association" is the great idea of the nineteenth century. The universal belief is that "union is power;" hence associations of every kind, unions, clubs, &c. But only God's purpose shall stand. The unity that He has purposed shall be brought about in the end, and every other association must perish.

Further down in the same chapter (Isa. viii. 20), we get the only principle on which real divine unity can be maintained. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." This corresponds exactly with the beseeching voice of the apostle in 1 Cor. i; "That ye all speak the same thing." But how is this unity of speech to be secured? Only as each one speaks in accordance with the Word of God.

Another glance at Satan's unity. In Rev. xvii. 13, we read concerning the ten kings of the last days, that "these all have *one mind* . . . these shall make war with the Lamb." Such is the end of this world's associations, enmity against God and the Lamb.

The same satanic unity is witnessed again in Acts. vii, where it is written, that, at the stoning of Stephen, "they ran upon him with one accord." Just as by the spirit of God the multitude of them that believed were of one heart for Jesus, so the multitude that resisted the Spirit of God were of one heart in their purpose of destruction; it was the unity of the spirit of Satan.

We might follow out this view of truth much further, but it is well that we should see clearly the principles that are at work in the world. How important it is in these days of the mighty energy of the spirit of Satan that the children of God should not be ignorant of his devices. That they should not be found in anywise furthering Satan's plans to break up every effort at divine unity, and construct a unity of his own; but rather, intelligently working in with the glorious purpose of God, which shall be perfected in the ages to come, to the glory of Him who planned it and wrought it out.

From this beseeching exhortation, it is evident that it is no light matter that the children of God should all speak the same thing; that to be speaking different things, contrary the one to the other, each holding and propagating his own opinions, is not the mind of God.

There is unity in the membership of the human body, and yet what variety! Again, it is written,

"the heavens declare the glory of God." We look up to the sky at night, and what at once strikes us is the variety; but, at the same time, what unity! What harmony!

As we sing together there is harmony and yet variety; four different parts can be taken by different voices, yet all can harmonize together in one perfect chord. But let a note be struck that is out of tune, and we no longer call it *variety*, it is discord.

So in the Church of God. It is a unity, but there is variety also. Variety there ought to be; discord there ought not to be. Harmony is what God desires. All speaking the same thing, because all speaking according to the Word of the Lord. All of "one mind," because all having "the mind of Christ."

There might be a denomination of Christians all of one mind; having articles of faith signed and adhered to be every member; but this instead of being God's unity might be brought about by Satan's device. God's unity is where God's mind is the mind of each one, and where God's Word is the word of each one. Nothing less than this is divine.

I would like to refer to a few other Scriptures bearing on this subject to shew what importance God attaches to this manifested oneness, and how essential it is that it be sought after and prayed for by us who are His children.

Rom. xv. 5, 6, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one to another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God," &c.

Mark where like-mindedness is to be found, "according to Christ Jesus." Only as we have His mind, His thoughts, His spirit, and follow His example, can we be so like-minded as to glorify God "with one mouth."

2 Cor. xiii. 11, "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." It is important to see these words coming in at the end of these two epistles. They contain two couplets of exhortations: first as to our individual souls, "be perfect," *i.e.*, be sincere, be straight up and down, be transparent; then, be of good comfort. The second couplet concerns the saints as gathered together, "Be of one mind, live in peace."

But some one perhaps has the thought, it is best to "agree to differ;" a common thought, and perhaps well meant, but not of God. Dare we agree to differ

where GOD HAS SPOKEN? He says, "be of one mind." Are we willing to bow before God, saying in our hearts, "Lord, I have no mind of my own, and I want to have no mind of my own; but show me Thy mind in Thy Word." God will indeed show us His mind if we are willing to bow to His will.

Phil. i. 27, "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel." Chap. ii. 2, "Fulfil ye My joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord of one mind." Chap. iii. 15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." This is not, each one holding his own opinions, and perhaps sinking for a time existing differences, in order to meet together on one platform agreeing to leave points of difference untouched! Paul sought no temporary platform unity, but that each one might have the mind of the master, and speak the truth of the Lord.

1 Pet. iii. 8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another."

Many other scriptures might be referred to, but these will suffice to show how God's desire for real, practical, manifested unity among His children is breathed throughout the Scriptures.

Whilst in the Church of God there will be found the weak and the strong, the babe and the experienced father in Christ, distinctions and varieties that are right, and which harmonize together; yet ought we to grieve and mourn over every instance of difference of mind, and speech, and judgment? God would have us content with nothing less than being "of one heart and soul," of "one mind and mouth."

But the exhortation is stronger still, "that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

It is not merely having got the length of *putting up with one another*. How perfectly every bone, and joint, and muscle, and nerve in the body is joined together. What pain is caused even by the separation of a hair from the skin. We are thus indeed, by God's grace, one in Christ; but Satan has succeeded in getting many to accept it quite as a doctrine that it is not intended we should be ONE in the eyes of the world. Nor indeed are we taught in Scripture that a united Church will be seen again on earth as it was in Pentecostal times. When the Lord comes and gathers His redeemed to Himself in the skies, then will the

pearl of great price, the glorious unity of the Head and the members be seen. Then there will be diversity, and yet unity—variety, and yet harmony. Every saint will reflect the likeness of Jesus, and every heart will beat in loyal subjection to His will. That is the unity God delights in. But though it may not be realized till the appearing of Jesus, be it ours meantime to learn His mind, to drink in His spirit, and to be subject to Him as our Lord, in all things.

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN VOTE ?

THE question is frequently asked, "Is it right for a Christian to vote, either at parliamentary or municipal elections?" There can be only one way of answering this perplexed question, and that is: by referring to the Word of God, and abiding by the broad principles laid down therein, in reference to the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of a Christian, who is not his own, but "bought with a price."

The first question that naturally suggests itself on the subject, is: What is the Christian's "position," "calling," and "hope;" is it "*earthly*" or "*heavenly*?" A clear and scriptural apprehension of this will remove many difficulties, and materially help the reader to form a correct judgment on the subject under consideration. In the xvii. chapter of John's Gospel the Lord Jesus said of His disciples, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me *out* of the world. I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the *evil*. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*"

The Apostle Paul, in Gal. vi. 14, says: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." In the Epistle of James iv. 4, we read: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." In the 1 Epistle of John ii. 15, we have this exhortation: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." These few solemn and heart-searching quotations from the New Testament, suggest another important question,

namely: What is the scriptural testimony concerning the moral condition of this present world or age, and who is it's "God?" "An evil and an adulterous generation" (Matt. xii. 39). "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John v. 19). "They are of the world therefore speak they of the world," 1 John iv. 5. Satan is spoken of as the "prince of this world," John xvi. 11. The "prince of the power of the air," Ephes. ii. 2. "The god of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4. And it is he who is blinding the eyes and hardening the hearts of men; and, just as the Jewish nation and Roman world united in crucifying God's Christ, so now the religious and political, as well as the ungodly world combined are saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Hence, for a Christian to participate in the government and rule of this world, whether parliamentary or municipal, is virtually to help to establish and build up a system of government, which will ultimately shut out God and herald in the Antichrist—the "Man of Sin," 2 Thess. ii. 3-12.

Some, very naturally, say, would it not be better to have a Christian Government than none? No doubt it would; but does Scripture warrant such a thing in this dispensation? A dispensation not of "law," but of "grace"—a dispensation unique in itself, when God is calling out from among the "Jew" and the "Gentile" a people for Himself, who form the "body," of which Christ is the only "Head;" the "bride," of which Christ is the only "Bridegroom"—spoken of in Ephesians as the "Church," "temple," "habitation," "perfect man," "one new man"—all those who compose this divine structure being "quickened together," "raised up together," and made "sit together" with Him in the heavenlies. Hence, the "citizenship" of every true believer in this dispensation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20; and thus it is Peter, in his First Epistle (ii. 11), calls such "strangers" and "pilgrims."

From these and other kindred Scriptures, it is evident that the Christian—though *in* the world—is looked at and spoken of as not *of* it, and his position, calling, and hope are entirely beyond this earthly sphere. He is, therefore, not looking for earthly power or position, but for *heavenly glory*.

Certainly a Christian rejoices in the privilege of a government which gives religious liberty, and heartily thanks God for it. But the Christian is

not spoken of in the Scriptures, in this dispensation, as *governing* or *ruling*, but as in *subjection*; so that, whether he lives in a time of despotic or constitutional, aristocratic or republican, conservative or liberal government, his place is to be in *subjection*, so long as that government does not interfere with his absolute right to obey God. To vote is given as a *privilege*, and not as a *command*, therefore to refrain from voting does not impeach the "powers that be." But whenever a Christian votes, whether in a quiet or more public way, he necessarily shares in that government, and is represented in Parliament by "his man," whether he be "Conservative" or "Liberal," a Christian or an infidel, and thereby, he imperceptibly glides off from his position, as a Christian under *subjection*, into that of governing and ruling the affairs of this world, in which he is spoken of as a "stranger" and a "pilgrim." Paul, addressing Christians, says, "Let every soul be *subject* unto the higher powers;" and they were taught to pray for "kings," and for all in "authority," that they might "live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" 1 Tim. ii. 1-3.

As to the moral bearing of this question, certainly no Christian could enter into the arena of political strife without coming out of it having his communion marred, and his soul's peace sadly disturbed. Spiritually he must suffer loss. Besides, in his public and private walk as a Christian, he fails to give a positive testimony that this earth is not his place of "rest," and that he is "looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus: who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" Titus ii. 13, 14.

"A little while," 'twill soon be past,
Why should we shun the shame and Cross?
Oh, let us in His footsteps haste,
Counting for Him all else but loss.
Oh, how will recompense His smile,
The sufferings of this "little while!"

A MAN who thinks himself to have attained Christian perfection, in the sense in which it has been insisted on by some persons, either deceives himself by calling sin infirmity, or Satan leaves him undisturbed in false security, or the demon of pride overcomes the demon of lust.

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTERS II. AND III.

IN going through Chapter I., we have had to trace the disobedience of the children of Israel, shown in their refusal to "go up" at the Lord's command. The question was, would they carry out the will of the Lord? And they would not; for the determination to go, after judgment was pronounced on them, was as sinful as to determine not to go when He bade them. God's word tested them, and they failed. And that unbelieving generation died in the wilderness, saving Joshua and Caleb. In these chapters we see the same testing at work with their children. The Lord will have obedience.

Two things, in the main, are shown us, *viz.*, what they were *not* to possess and what they were. They were not to go up against the children of Edom, nor were they to meddle with the children of Moab or Ammon.

"Take ye good heed unto yourselves" (chap. ii. 4), is the restraining word. Their temper, and all else, was to be under control. The Lord had given Mount Seir to Esau, and Israel was not to dispossess them. Old antipathies and feelings were not to guide them. National feeling is not easily set aside, but the Lord would not allow it to govern. "Ye shall buy meat of them for money," &c. (ver. 6). They were not to be indebted to Edom. "For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hands . . . thou hast lacked nothing," ver. 7. They had received to the full from the Lord; how, then, could they take from Edom? Their spirit toward Edom was to be as Abram's with the king of Sodom. "I will not take from a thread, even to a shoe-latchet" (Gen. xiv. 23). Where the Lord is trusted and relied on, what independence of man it produces! And this is what the world cannot understand. When Sennacherib came up against Israel with his host, how did Hezekiah speak? Staying himself on the Lord, he said, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria. . . . With him is an arm of flesh; with us is the Lord our God to help us" (2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8). But Sennacherib understood not such trust, and sought to turn Israel aside, and to make them afraid, by telling how other nations had fallen before him; but as Sennacherib returned alone, to his own land, leaving behind him that mighty army, stricken in death by the blast

of the Lord, he had to know that it is not a vain thing to trust in the Lord.

But, again, the world not only does not understand this independence that results from confidence in God; but they misrepresent it, as Eliab did with David, "I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart" (1 Sam. xvii. 28), whilst at that very time the Lord was stirring his heart to indignation at the sight of Israel trembling before the uncircumcised Philistine, and preparing him to go forward to the deliverance of the people.

"Thou hast lacked nothing," said the Lord to those whom He had guided and fed. "Lacked ye anything?" (Luke xxii. 35), said the Lord to His sent ones, who had not gone forth at their own charge. And in the bright days of the Church's history, after Pentecost, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul," there was not "any among them that lacked" (Acts iv. 34). "Great grace was upon them all," and at that time there was no shutting up of bowels of compassion, but they were forward in their love to help one another.

As the "Church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38), that is, the nation of Israel, lacked not, for it is written, "he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack," 2 Cor. viii. 15; so was it with the Church at Jerusalem, the "much" of the one with the "little" of another supplied all, and none lacked. Beautiful witness to the care of God! Thus their ways towards others were to be regulated by the Lord. And the first lesson in obedience was the subjection that He demanded of them as they passed through the lands of Edom and Moab, and Ammon.

After that we get the obedience of activity, as, in obedience to the Lord, they went against the Amorites, whose cup of iniquity was full. "Rise ye up," said the Lord, "I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite" (ver. 24). "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heavens" (ver. 25). Then, in grace, opportunity was given to Sihon to let them pass as others had done, but he would not, and so they "took all his cities" (ver. 34); "there was not one city too strong for us; the Lord our God delivered all unto us" (ver. 36). Thus they found that, whether it was the spirit of obedience in restraining themselves, or in going up against the Amorites, the Lord

was with them. And they found the same thing true as to Og, king of Bashan, "Fear him not" (ver. 12), is the exhortation. Before, it had been as to themselves. "Take ye good heed" (ii. 4). Now it is "Fear him not." So it should be with us; in self-restraint, "Take heed." As to the world, "Fear him not." Thus the Book opens by showing us, chap. i., the end of disobedience, 38 years of wandering in the wilderness; and chaps. ii. and iii., the end of obedience, the enemy displaced, that the Lord might give to Israel the land promised to them. In the government of God, an unbelieving generation in Israel dying under His judgment, and then the Amorites coming under the same judgment because of their iniquities.

We are then told how the land thus taken was given to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. Undoubtedly it had been included in the promise to Abram, and in Millennial times it will be occupied by the tribes as in their new order in the land (see Ezek. xlvi.) they spread themselves from West to East, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arabian. But, although this be true, it is well to observe that Abram had never been on that side Jordan. Moreover, although given to them, it was at their request. They drew near to Moses, and asked that they might not go "over Jordan" (Num. xxxii. 5), but that they might settle there. Now, that which called this forth was their "great multitude of cattle," Num. xxxii. 1, and so they sought to settle down where they and all Israel had been *wandering*. The cattle were the motive. Not, surely, a high one. It thus kept them at a distance from God's centre, Jerusalem, and in a part of the land ultimately designed to be occupied by Israel; but they were a source of anxiety to Moses (see Num. xxxii.), and afterwards to Joshua and all their brethren, as they builded an altar (Josh. xxii.), because they thus chose for themselves.

The bald head was not leprosy, but it was weakness, or, the result of it; there was an absence of strength. And so here, whilst their action could not be spoken of as sinful, yet it called for anxiety, lest it should lead to sin. And do we not know something of this in ourselves. Our course and actions have not been sinful, but they have been as the bald head—an absence of power in the soul has caused an absence of fruit in the life and walk. We

may not, with Demas, have loved this present world, and forsaken the Lord's people, but we have not been as Paul, or able to say with him, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

The close of the chapter gives us the touching prayer of Moses to the Lord, called forth by what He had already done for them. As Moses saw the beginning of victory his soul longed to enter in, "I pray thee let me go over and see that good land that is beyond Jordan. But the Lord was wroth with me, for your sakes, and would not hear me," ver. 25, 26. How solemnly this brings out the righteous character and ways of our God! In a moment of impatience, under the *greatest provocation* (therefore, he says "for your sakes"); the meek Moses *struck* the Rock when he should only have spoken to it. Disobedience to the Word of the Lord put Adam and Eve out of Eden. "So He drove out the man" (Gen. iii. 24), and the same disobedience *kept* Moses out of the Promised Land. How important, then, instant obedience to the Word of the Lord! What sorrowful results from the neglect of it! Moses may see it, but he cannot tread it. "But charge Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see" (ver. 28). And thus must it ever be. The servant must be encouraged ere he can encourage others. Joshua, encouraged and strengthened, can then again and again exhort Israel to "be of good courage" (Josh. i.) And thus Paul writes to the saints at Corinth, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who COMFORTETH US in all our tribulation, that WE may BE ABLE TO COMFORT them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. i. 3, 4). Is Joshua encouraged? It is that he may encourage. Is Paul comforted? It is that he may be able to comfort; and only thus can we help our brethren. There must be the experience gained, the comfort given ere we can effectually help others. And courage is communicated, comfort given, when, in fellowship with the Lord, we know it for ourselves. Nehemiah, strengthened, and stirred up, by the Lord to help the poor, weak, down-trodden

remnant, went to them and told them all that God had done for him, and how He had helped him. "Then I told them of the hand of my God, which was good upon me. So THEY strengthened their hands for this good work" (Neh. ii. 18), and the enemy could not hinder. Oh! for more of this energy of the Holy Ghost in our own souls, enabling us to help one another in the ways of the Lord.

FROM GLORY UNTO GLORY.

Written on reading some joyous verses on 2 Cor. iii. 18.

"FROM glory unto glory ;"
 Oh, speak it soft and low,
 As step by step from grace to grace,
 We in His likeness grow.
 For we are wayward oft and dull,
 And steep the upward way ;
 And sore the Shepherd's care and toil
 For sheep that will but stray.

From glory unto glory—
 A hidden glory now,
 For sorrow's touch has left its trace
 Upon both heart and brow.
 And weary grows the pilgrim band,
 While draws the morning near,
 When all the travail of His soul
 Shall in His saints appear.

From glory unto glory—
 But think ye of the cost
 To Him who seeks in desert ways
 The wandering and the lost!
 Into whose Shepherd hand the flock
 Of God, our God, were told,
 To bring without a stain of earth
 To the eternal fold!

From glory unto glory ;
 Though flesh and heart should fail,
 His strength shall be our refuge tower ;
 His purpose must prevail.
 Then work in us Thy blessed work,
 From grace to grace, until
 In all its glory perfected,
 We shall Thy joy fulfil!

A. E. W.

LETTER.

HAMILTON, CANADA, *January 26, 1881.*

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—The annual Believers' Meetings, held in this city on 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th of the present month, have been times of refreshing from the Lord, and souls, we believe, throughout eternity will praise Him for strength and encouragement received. The attendance was considerably larger than last year; and it was very cheering to find brethren and sisters in the Lord from the United States and various parts of Canada thus coming together. One brother, an ex-Presbyterian preacher, came from the western part of the State of Iowa, a distance of 900 miles. The meetings began at 10 o'clock on Thursday morning. Most of the forenoon was devoted to prayer and praise.

Afternoon Meeting.—Brother John Bain spoke from the Book of Haggai, and exhorted believers to increased devotedness and whole-heartedness to the Lord. Mr. Donald Ross followed with a unique and soul-stirring address on the same subject, specially dwelling on the need of energetic, aggressive gospel work, at the same time reminding us that God could only use us in proportion as we were in a good condition of heart and soul.

In the evening, there was a large attendance at the gospel meeting, which was addressed by various brethren.

Friday Morning.—After praise and prayer, brother Wm. Smith took for the basis of his remarks Numb. xviii. 1, and pressed on believers the importance of walking before God, of being upright in heart and soul, and being vessels meet for the Master's use. Brother T. D. W. Muir followed with a much-needed word on clean and unclean food for the soul, pointing out the evil effects of light literature, religious novels, and urged us to find more time for study and meditation on the Word.

Afternoon Meeting.—An address was given on the *Judgment-seat of Christ*. It was stated that we were creatures of extremes—that, like the pendulum of the clock, we oscillated from one extreme to the other, unless our minds and hearts were regulated and controlled by God's Word. We are all familiar with one of the "faithful sayings" (1 Tim. i. 15) mentioned by the Apostle Paul, but are we not often unmindful and forgetful of another? "This is a faithful saying, these

things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus iii. 8). We love to think of, and dwell upon, the blessed truth, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, but do we as often meditate upon the solemn and momentous fact, that every saved soul shall yet have to give account of himself to God (Rom. xiv. 12); that we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. xiv. 10); that then the Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart (1 Cor. iv. 5)? We will then be manifested in the full blaze of the light of His holiness. Motives, feelings, and actions will then be tested. Now, there is so much of self and sin mingled with our holiest deeds that we cannot properly estimate them. So much hypocrisy; so much profession and so little manifestation; so much high talking and low walking. Oftentimes we don't wish to weigh our actions and test our motives. We have our eye so filled with ourselves, and so much on circumstances, that we don't see the crookedness of our ways, or know the perversity of our hearts. *Then* we shall know, even as we are known. Everything will *then* be tested. "The fire shall try every man's work of *what sort* it is" (1 Cor. iii. 13). All our Christless service, our open and secret backslidings, our obstinacy and rebellion, our pride and selfishness will be *manifested to us*. The wood, hay, and stubble will be burned up, but the gold, silver, and precious stones will be purified. "If any man's work *abide* he shall receive a reward, if any man's work shall be burned he shall *suffer loss*" (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15). The rewards spoken of for faithfulness were briefly referred to, and believers exhorted to live in view of the judgment-seat of Christ.

Brother John Bain followed by tracing God's dealings with Israel, their perverseness and unbelief, and His inexhaustible patience and tenderness from the time that they left Egypt until the day that they entered Canaan. The present is time of fruit-bearing, and, in order to doing so, we must be walking in fellowship with God. Far better that we should be in heaven than that we should not be living to the glory of God, or be content with anything short of close communion with Himself. It will be manifest, not only at the judgment-seat of Christ, but throughout all eternity, how we have been living in time.

Brother W. J. Fenton spoke briefly on Matt. vii. 1. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." This Scripture, said the speaker, is often misapplied by the unsaved. We are obliged to judge whether those with whom we associate are the children of God or not. The command (Matt. vii. 1) was given by the Lord to His disciples, in connection with His wonderful address or "sermon on the Mount," in which He laid down principles for the new dispensation in such striking contrast to the old with which, as Jews, they were quite familiar. In Matt. v. 38, 39, He says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' but I say unto you that ye resist not evil." The disciples were slow to understand these principles. In Luke ix., He showed them His power by feeding the multitude with the five loaves and two fishes, and showed them His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, but afterwards, in the same chapter, we find them quarrelling amongst themselves as to which should be greatest. The Lord knows all about us. He searches the hearts, knows every motive that actuates us, and His judgment is according to truth. There may be, and there are, doubtless, differences of judgment amongst us on minor points, hence the necessity for the repeated injunctions of forbearance one with another. Harsh judgment of others' motives has proved a curse to many assemblies of God's children; and if we were constantly exercising self-judgment we would be more and more conscious that our own lives are but exhibitions of miserable failure; and would learn to exercise more forbearance toward our brethren. The evening gospel meeting was well attended, and a number of persons who seemed interested about their souls welfare were spoken to afterwards.

Saturday Morning.—Mr Ross was the principal speaker. I can only give a few jottings of his address, which was a very solemn and soul-humbling one. Several portions of the book of Ezra were read. In Ezra iv. we have the Jews beaten by the ungodly, and in Haggai this is attributed not to the strength of their adversaries but to failure within—to their looking after themselves and allowing the house of God to lie waste. 'Tis a bitter thing to turn aside from the ways of God—a very bitter thing. How much more might be done for God if less time were spent in foolish talking and gossiping. We often say that the unsaved are gospel hardened, but we might as well say

we are lame on both legs. Ezra vi. 6.—Here we have the positive need of separation not only from Babylon but from the filth of those dwelling in the land of Canaan itself. If I do not know that I am a fool, there is something in Christ I do not need, *i.e.* wisdom. We need nothing but Jesus. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. In Ezra vii. 10 we are told that Ezra had PREPARED HIS HEART to SEEK the law of the Lord, and to DO IT and to TEACH in Israel statutes and judgments. Ezra is now in a fit state for God to use him, and of course Babylon could not hold him, and he has to be out of it. First he prepared his heart to seek; (2) and to do, (3) and to teach the law of the Lord. The Bible is the Holy Ghost's tool in trade. That is what He uses in teaching God's saints. When Ezra had got into a right condition of soul he had little trouble to get out of Babylon. He was told to go. Ezra viii. 22.—No doubt the Babylonish king would have given him an escort, but he had been stating that he did not need one. What was he to do? He was ashamed, not yet being free from the trammels of Babylon. Ezra viii. 21.—Cleansing begins by afflicting themselves. They are fit to walk before Jehovah. If we are not clean—if we are nourishing sin in our hearts—our prayers will not ascend above our heads. God will not hear us unless we are really seeking to please Him. If we have back-slidden, and we won't return to Him, He has a rod for us; but if still rebellious, He will take us away. If not living in the presence of God, Satan will have plenty of work for us, but it will be of the "bite and devour" kind; but if we are really living in the secret of His presence, we will not have many to keep company with us, and if it be so blessed to dwell in God's presence below, what must it be up yonder!

Afternoon Meeting was chiefly devoted to reports regarding the progress of the Lord's work in Canada and the States, with special reference to summer tent work. Gospel Meeting at night was a very encouraging one as to interest, attention, and attendance. Quite a few seemed concerned about their soul's welfare.

On Lord's Day Morning between 300 and 400 brethren met in the Larkin Hall to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread. It was truly a hallowed season.

The afternoon meeting for Christians was addressed by brothers John Bain and John Smith. Brother

Bain's address was specially for young Christians, and he spoke of the coming of the Lord, and the security of the believer. Brother Smith took up Peter's fall and restoration. Peter, he said, was specially mentioned as one to whom the Lord appeared three times. (1) In Mark xvi. 7, "Tell His disciples *and* Peter"; (2) Luke xxiv. 34, "The Lord has risen indeed, and appeared unto Simon;" (3) 1 Cor. xv. 5, "And that He was seen of Cephas"—Peter, Simon, and Cephas are one and the same person. When the Lord Jesus was being spit upon and buffeted, he who said, "Though all shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. xxvi. 33), was *beneath*, with the servants warming himself—he who had been on the Mount of Transfiguration, who had seen Christ's glory, who had been with Him in Gethsemane's Garden—was enjoying himself when they were spitting on His Lord. I can hear him say, as he is outside, weeping, "No one has ever treated Him as I have done! Zebedee's children dishonoured Him by contending who should be greatest; but no one has treated Him as I, and He will never trust me again." Yet the Lord said, "go tell my disciples and Peter." It was Christ's look of love that broke Peter down. He not only said, "Tell him," but He Himself appeared unto Peter. First the Lord *looked* on him, then *spoke* to him, then *appeared* unto him. When Peter answered the Lord (Jno. xxi. 15), he did not say, "more than these," he had learned a lesson he never forgot. Three times Peter denied his Lord and Master; three times the Lord questioned him as to his love; and three times he was intrusted with the feeding of God's children. After a most heart-searching address on Peter's fall and restoration, the speaker, directed our minds to several exhortations in Peter's epistles, and brought before us the importance and necessity of being out and out for God. We felt that the Lord's-day afternoon was one of the very best of all the meetings.

The Evening Gospel Meeting was held in the Grand Opera House, which was crowded in every corner, hundreds having to be turned away, and an overflow meeting held in the open air. About 1600 people were present. The meeting was addressed by Brothers Ross, Smith, and others, and was a very encouraging one. Numbers were spoken to who seemed anxious about their souls, and a few have turned up at the gospel meetings now being held in

the city who profess to have found peace. On Monday most of the friends from a distance left by the various trains, and at the depot hymns were sung much to the astonishment, and we trust to the benefit, of other travellers.

Brother W. P. Charles and myself have been preaching in the city for the past seven weeks. On Lord's-day last we spoke in the Grand Opera House. Hundreds had to be turned away, and the doors closed. I ask the prayers of the readers of the "Witness" for the Lord's work in Canada and the United States, that many more labourers may be thrust forth, and that those who are already in the harvest-field may be kept in close communion with the Lord, and be better fitted to sound forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.—
Yours affectionately,

ALEX. MARSHALL.

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF GOD.

Continued.

AND it came to pass in process of time, that the King of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them" (Exod. ii). "The time of the promise" (ver. 17), had at length come, and now we find Moses about to be prepared and sent forth as the "ruler and deliverer" of Israel. One part of his preparation had been forty years passed in solitude—in secret training with God in the wilderness; but there was another thing needful—the manifestation of God's glory. "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush" (ver. 30). There had never been aught like this seen in Egypt. Egypt was not the place for God to show His "great sight." The wonders of nature were exhibited there in the periodical inundation of the river, and the like. The wonders of art were also there. But here was something that Moses' Egyptian wisdom failed in unravelling. "When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight" (ver. 31); "the bush burned with fire, and the

bush was not consumed." But unless we have wisdom to understand why the bush was not consumed, we have not the real wisdom of God. It is impossible in Egypt to see the glory of the living God. It is above all human thought or conception. It is something which man has no power of explaining. We may tell people of the sight, but they will not credit us—man's wisdom is at fault. Where did Moses see the same glory? In the pillar of fire which accompanied Israel through their wanderings in the wilderness. When shall it be seen again? When the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire, which will burn up His adversaries.

"And as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled and durst not behold" (ver. 31, 32). This "great sight" cannot be spoken of by Egyptian lips, it cannot be understood by Egyptian ears, and we must have the anointing of the eye-salve to see it. In the poor, feeble, worthless bush, in the midst of which the fire burned without consuming it, we have a blessed emblem of that, which, though weak and uncomely in itself, is encircled with the glory of God—the Church. What Moses learned was this, that it was God's purpose to encircle Israel with His own glory. And how could this be (either with regard to Israel or the Church) without its being consumed by that glory? It was to be encircled with God's salvation. Until a person knows the security of the Church—how precious it is to God, and that nothing shall prevail against it—he is not qualified to be the servant of God unto it. "Salvation has God appointed for walls and bulwarks." One feels increasingly the importance of a deep sense of our own insignificance. All that is merely natural must wither before the glory of God. What a marvellous thing, that there should be a little weak bush, as it were, on this earth, with everything against it, and yet nothing able to prevail. Has God associated the Church with His own holiness? And this is a deeply important truth. "Our God is a consuming fire." Well, we would not have it otherwise, for the bush in the fire is not consumed. He will not allow any sin connected with that Church to come before Him. He has judged it in the Cross—sentence has not only been passed upon it, but executed. When once the cross is really understood, the very holiness of God is seen to be the guarantee of the security of

the Church. Then said the Lord to him, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (ver. 5). We are brought by grace into the place of holiness, and to rejoice in God's holiness. There the soul learns its deepest lessons of what sin is; it sees, not only its own nothingness, but its oppositeness to God. There it learns that salvation must be of grace from first to last. These things are only fully learned in the sanctuary. The moment we are rescued from the world, we are brought to stand in the place of holiness, and God deals with us accordingly. The reason for His chastening and admonition is, that we may be thereby partakers of "His holiness." He desires that we should be as near Him in Spirit, as we are in Christ our Head. What must Moses' thoughts have been respecting all the glory of Egypt, when he turned aside to see "this great sight?" And what would ours be, beloved, with regard to the world, were the eye always, and steadily, fixed on the glory? When Moses was engaged in solitarily feeding the flock in the wilderness, there might have been some longings after the glory of Egypt; but these must have ceased when he had this manifestation made to him of the glory of God, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." So with ourselves. When we think of the true glory of the Church, we are able to look at the glory of "Egypt," and feel ourselves weaned from it, as well as weaned from the wisdom and power of "Egypt." But if our souls are only looking at their own weakness, we shall very likely be tempted to long after "Egypt," and the things of "Egypt."

Paul was qualified to serve the Church by his apprehension of its being one with Jesus in the glory. In Moses needing a spokesman (Exod. iv. 10-16), we are taught neither the wisdom nor the eloquence of "Egypt," will be of any avail in God's service. Very often there may be busy activity in service, but not the quiet sitting at the feet of Jesus, drinking in from His lips our knowledge of truth and grace. We need much to realise that we have to do with God even when we are serving others. Mark what follows. "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt." This same Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a

judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush^v (ver. 34, 35).

But God must bring Moses out of Egypt first. He could not make such a communication to him there. It was the bane of Abram to get into Egypt. Abram had no altar there. And so it is with us. When we get into the world, it is the same thing. We cannot have our altar. Communion is interrupted. In the first place, God reveals His name, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham," &c. (ver. 6); secondly, His grace, "I have seen," I have seen the affliction of My people," &c. (ver. 7). How blessed to be assured that there is not one sorrow of His people, not one groan, but that He knows it altogether. Then we get the formal commission, "and now come, I will send thee into Egypt." And Moses said unto God. "Who am I," &c. (Exod. iii). After he had worshipped God as an unshod worshipper, there was a shrinking from that which God had laid on him, though forty years before he had been most eager to enter upon the same sort of service. It is a most solemn thing to have to do with the people of God. The responsibility involved is that under which we must sink, if left to ourselves. Moses now knew that he that would serve Israel must have a great deal of shame and obloquy to encounter. Hence the need of the training through which he had been put. So with regard to service in the Church. If Paul is a "chosen vessel to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," the Lord, in making this known to Ananias, says, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." And what was Paul's after experience? "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches," &c.; again, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Paul had the flesh crushed at the outset, crushed again after he had been taken up into the third heavens, crushed all the way through. He never went on, in service, in the energy of the flesh, but as one who knew that it must be endurance to the very end. How often does a young Christian think, "I will tell others of the Lord's love, and they must believe me;" or, "I will tell Christians of the security of the Church, of the coming of the Lord, of the heavenly calling of the saints, and the like; and they must receive it." But no! we need to learn that we cannot carry everything before us.

Where there is the most ascertained mission from God, there is always the deepest humility. Paul, in speaking of his arduous service, says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me." The preparation for active service is in secret with God—in learning ourselves in communion with Him. There the battle is really fought. Power for active service is acquired, not in active service, but in intercourse with God in secret. Whatever we do in service, we ought to do as worshippers. Our service would then be carried on in felt responsibility to God, and it would bring blessing to others, and to our own souls. I believe the saints often think that it is an easy thing to serve God. But no; it is a hard thing to serve Him in spirit and in truth. To serve God in the sense of our being nothing, and His being everything, is a hard thing. The place of the servant of God is to hide himself, and let God appear. Thus it was with the perfect servant. The most splendid achievement, without this, is not service.

There would be much more profitable, happy, useful service if we only saw more of *God's order*. One delights to see activity in service; but then it should be connected with the being in *secret* with God, and the seeing His purpose with regard to the Church. Thus we should serve happily and holily; not as though God needed our service, but as desiring to glorify Him in our bodies and spirits, which are His.

J. L. H.

WILLING SERVICE.

Exodus xxxv., xl.

JUST previous to the time of these chapters, the people had been put on new moral ground altogether; they had been convicted, and humbled, and made to take the place, willingly to take the place of poor sinners. They had become all alive to the ways of the Mediator (chap. xxxiii.), instead of living full of the thought of their own sufficiency (chap. xix). This was the new moral ground to which their soul had been brought. And it is the business of these chapters, which I have now before me, to exhibit the fruit of this, which fruit I may say will be found to be of fine and excellent quality.

Zeal for the Lord was abroad in the camp—that is the great characteristic—there was life among them as well as within them, life in their ways and doings

as well as in their souls. It was no longer the darkness and drought of a self-righteous, self-satisfied mind, nor the indolence and vacancy of selfishness, but the quickened soul within, and energy and zeal in the service of the Lord abroad. And these chapters present some of the fine attributes of this zeal which had now been awakened.

We see it first in its internal heat. The people are stirred up. They are made willing either to give or to work. All was cheerfulness of heart and alacrity among them.

We see it then in its *self-denial*. They empty their tents, and strip their persons of ornaments, and dedicate whatever they have of gold, or purple, or precious stones. Thus denying vanity and covetousness at the bidding of zeal for the Lord.

We see it then in its *wisdom*, for though zeal is a fervent principle, when genuine it will act discreetly, because it consults for the glory of God in God's own way. So it is here; each one in the camp labours according to his measure either of natural skill or of gift from God.

Thus was it in the camp at this happy moment; all were occupied in giving or in working; male or female, there was no drone in the hive, all were busy; and the giving and the working came from willing hearts, and were in the measure, and according to the character of each one's ability whether of nature or of spirit.

It was a fine moral movement. Zeal was abroad, as I have said; the camp was alive; all was quickened within and among them; and so it went on to the end. There was no weariness or cessation till all was accomplished; and Moses has but to approve all that the people had done, as being good, according to the commandment of the Lord, and to bless them.

Moses himself, as the mediator, has then to act; the matter passes into his hands; and under direction of the Lord he sets up the fruit or result of the labour and gifts of the people. He sets in order all that which they had been making and fashioning with their tools and their fingers, and out of their linen, and purple, and gold, and precious stones; and as they in their day finished their part in the great process, so does Moses in his.

On the first day of the first month in the second year of the Exodus, the tabernacle was reared.

Then the Lord Himself acts, the glory comes in and fills the tabernacle, and the cloud covers it. This closes the whole work. In principle, the glorious rest was then entered. Surveying that moment, we may say the "tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." That was in principle the end of all labour, the entrance into rest; and now the congregation learned this, that nothing which they had laid out was lost, nothing that had been spent but was gathered again in the age of glory. He that sowed bountifully before, was now reaping bountifully. The more of his gold he had dedicated to the tabernacle, the more of what had once been his, did he now see in close intimacy with the glory. The present moment proved that there was no security for gold, or precious stones, or wealth of any kind like the cloud that now covered the tabernacle. The present moment proved that he who was rich toward God was rich for eternity. And this is a point in this lesson that would interest us deeply, if we valued our part in the coming Kingdom duly; but how little this is so, and how sad is such a state of soul, when but for a moment we consider and confess it.

We have, however, connected with all this—and to which it is very well to take heed—another time, similar to the time of these chapters. It is in the history of the Church in the New Testament, the time of Acts ii.-v., the days of the infant tabernacle again, I may say, when zeal was again abroad, animating the camp. But in the midst of all that, there is a voice of warning. It is this, that we take care of doing because others are doing; of seeking to be in appearance on a level with the influence that may be stirring around us. This was Ananias and Sapphira in the early days of the New Testament tabernacle, though we have no Ananias and Sapphira in the chapters we have been considering. The times, however, as I have said, are kindred: and the warning from this new ingredient is serious, and of general profit and application to us all. The apostles words, "while it remained was it not thine own, and after it was sold was it not in thine own power," read our souls a lesson on the temptations which attend a time of either spiritual revival, or of benevolent activity in the Church, when energy of any kind, and the spirit of either zeal or benevolence is abroad. The history of Ananias and Sapphira tell us of the temptation we are then under, of appearing to be on a level

with the movement that has set in, and warns us that all such fair show in the flesh ends in death. The congregation of God's people in Exodus xxxv., and in Acts iv. may provoke us to good works and to zeal; to a truthful and personal share in the stirrings of heart that may be abroad; and to catch the energy for ourselves through communion with the fountain, the Divine fountain of all that is living and genuine. If done for the sake of credit with the saints, our toil or our benevolence will end in death; if done for Jesus, the cup of cold water will not be spilt on the ground to be lost there, but be gathered after many days. The visit to the prison will end in inheritance in the Kingdom; the use of the talent will introduce to the joy of the Lord (Matt. x. 25); as here, the gold that was dedicated in the age of service, during the *hidden* glory, was found to praise, and in abiding security, in the day of the *manifested* glory.

What does my soul desire but capacity to enjoy such a prospect; the prize of the high calling of God; the portion of the faithful servant in the Kingdom and presence of Jesus! But if it desire it unfeignedly, how deeply is it also lacking in it!

How quickly would some fond promise of to-morrow move the heart, and how tardily does it answer the promise of the Kingdom. And I desire also that abiding habit of soul that refers my ways and doings to the Lord's eye and not to man's, not even to my brethren's; for we are to be encouraged and roused by the example of Israel in those chapters. We are to be warned, as we have said, by that of Ananias and Sapphira. Some of us may know the vanity of our heart so thoroughly as continually to watch its actings, and cry to the Lord for grace to walk more for Him and with Him and less under the eye of even our companions in the gospel. I have found relief when the ways of another are offensive or distasteful to me, in this thought—that all this unpalatableness to us, may come from the individual making it more his concern to please the Lord than to please his brethren. And surely such a thought must give relief, if we have any holy sensibilities of heart at all. Is it not a blessed comfort to be able to look at another with the full persuasion that he is constantly purposing rather to please the Lord, and to walk immediately with Him, than to accommodate himself to our tastes and approval.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION NO. LIII.

Is it Scriptural to exclude a brother who does not believe in eternal torment, and yet have fellowship with one who does not believe in everlasting life, i.e., one who believes that a child of God can be lost?

REPLY.

As a general rule, those who hold the pernicious doctrine of “the non-eternity of punishment,” if they be Christians at all, once in simplicity held the truth upon the subject as it is found in Scripture.

We never heard of a young believer, through his own searchings of the Word of God, arriving at such a thought. Those who embrace it have erred from the truth which once they held.

Far otherwise is it with many a true believer who never fully understood the fulness of the grace of God

in which he stands. He has never learned that eternal life is already his inalienable possession in Christ Jesus, and that, being born into the family of God, his standing is no longer that of a servant on the ground of obedience, but that of a son in eternal relationship.

Moreover, his ignorance as to the truth of his eternal security is fostered by misunderstood and misapplied texts of Scripture, the true meaning of which has never yet dawned upon him.

To class such a believer, weak though he may be in the faith, with one who has let go the truth he once held, and embraced error, is like not distinguishing between a ship on the stocks, very slow in being built, and a ship on the rocks going fast to pieces.

But we have known of cases where those who once rejoiced in the truth of eternal life and eternal

security have given it up, and sunk into darkness and bondage of soul. Such a case is quite different, and is invariably to be traced to some deep and evil root. This may not appear at first, but in time it will be manifested that it is not like the other—a matter of ignorance, requiring patient instruction till every doubt disappears, but a case of having made “shipwreck of the faith.”

QUESTION NO. LIV.

Is there any Scripture to warrant such as are professedly gathered to the name of the Lord (Matt. xviii. 20), and break bread on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7), to labour among the sects in gospel testimony.

REPLY.

The standing orders of the Christian are, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature.” The Lord, who thrusts forth His own servants, will open doors for them, often in quarters least expected. Their business is to be ever ready in all places whither He may lead them, and, under all circumstances, to witness faithfully for Him. The door He opens cannot be shut by man, and the door man shuts is no longer the one the Lord sets before His servant.

But when an opening for the preaching of the gospel occurs, the servant of the Lord must ever hold himself free to speak the Lord’s message. He is warned against being the servant of men.

The apostle never shrank from witnessing for Christ in the synagogues of the Jews; but he was prepared for the offence of the Cross, and took the consequences patiently. He shunned not to declare unto them all the counsel of God. He kept back nothing that was profitable. When he could no longer follow up the gospel with the truth that was essential to the well-being of the young believers, “he separated the disciples,” Acts xix. 8-10—leaving the synagogue to the opposers, and held daily meetings in a schoolroom given for the purpose.

Sometimes an Evangelist is asked to labour in the gospel in some of the denominations, under certain restrictions. Certain truths in the Word of God, which he believes and practises, are not to be referred to. To mention baptism while speaking to the young converts would give offence; and the truth concerning gathering to the name of the Lord, in

separation from the world, or concerning ministry in the body of Christ, must not be taught.

To go to preach the gospel under any such restrictions, we cannot see our way to reconcile with faithfulness to the Lord.

Moreover, even where such restrictions are not imposed openly or verbally they may be so implied and understood, that to overstep them would be regarded as a breach of confidence, and as taking advantage of the opportunity to advance what are called “peculiar views.”

Some have gone so far as to forego the breaking of bread for weeks together, preferring to hold gospel services. Could anything do more than this to confirm Christians in the erroneous belief, that the assembly of the saints to break bread on the first day of the week is unimportant, in fact, only a matter of opinion, that can be waived at convenience?

Would it not be rather the Lord’s mind to show practically that it is a matter in which we are not left to choose, but to obey?

But whenever liberty is given to go as the Lord’s servant *unfettered*, then, to go and keep nothing back that God gives is clearly his path, whether it be into an idol’s temple, a Jewish synagogue, a Roman Catholic cathedral, or an Evangelical Protestant church.

But if there be the compact, either expressed or implied, to keep back anything that is contained in God’s blessed book, then, surely such an opening may at once be set down as not the opening of the Lord.

QUESTION NO. LV.

In regard to Gospel preaching, is it right to select a text to speak from before a meeting, and look out other texts bearing on the subject, or to call to remembrance any anecdote that may illustrate it; or should the preacher take no thought what to say, but simply open his Bible and give out any text that occurs to him?

REPLY.

In replying to such a question as this, it is necessary to bear in mind the great differences that exist between different persons. Some are gifted with ready utterance, and can always, and on any subject, express with fluency what they wish to say. Others, with equal knowledge of the subject, and equal desire to express it, find it difficult and laborious to put it into words. And to this the preaching of the gospel

forms no exception. Most gospel preachers find it helpful to meditate upon a subject or a text beforehand, seeking the enlightenment and help of the Spirit of God in so doing. They need not feel *bound* to preach either upon the subject or the text which they selected. The character of the audience, or circumstances that arise in the course of the meeting, may at any time show that a preconsidered subject was unsuitable; and a true Evangelist will be able to count upon God to give him a suited message at the time. Moreover, any truly-gifted preacher will find that as he gives he gets, and that the most forcible thoughts and most pointed illustrations are not unfrequently brought to his mind while he is speaking.

But, whilst leaving room for the Spirit of God thus to guide and help, we believe it to be good and edifying to meditate beforehand upon a text or subject—and nothing is more to be deplored than the crude, ill-digested, rambling, and sometimes flippant talking that is often given forth as the preaching of the gospel.

In the recoil from the rigidly-ordered discourse, written out beforehand or committed to memory, many have gone to an opposite extreme, and, without being “thoroughly furnished” for the work they have undertaken, have publicly given expression to whatever occurred to them “on the spur of the moment.” Thus carelessness, and want of diligence in the work of the Lord, has been covered under the garb of high-sounding titles, such as “faith,” and “dependence upon the Spirit,” and defended by reference to Matt. x. 19, 20—a special promise given for specially trying circumstances, and having no direct bearing upon ordinary preaching and teaching from the Word of God.

He who has the Word of Christ dwelling in him richly, and who has much of the Spirit of God, will be at no loss, at any time, to speak words that will be profitable to the hearers. He may have had no opportunity for special preparation, but the habit of his life is meditation in the Word of the Lord, and so, his feet being shod with the “preparedness of the gospel of peace,” he is always ready in season or out of season to speak words of grace, seasoned with salt, out of the abundance of his heart.

In our reply to this question, therefore, we seek to lay down no rule, for God has given none. We would only point out dangers that we are liable to fall into on either side.

OLD CUMNOCK.—Believers are now meeting here, in Kennedy's New Hall, upon the First day of the Week, at 11.30 a.m., to Break Bread in remembrance of Jesus. Gospel Meeting—Same Evening, at 6.30.

BOLTON, LANCASHIRE.—Christians assemble in the name of the Lord Jesus every Lord's-day at 10.30 a.m.; in the **GOSPEL HALL**, corner of Lupton Street and Stanley Street, off Blackburn Street, Bolton.

The Believers assembling as above request prayer that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; and that they may be enabled to give “no uncertain sound” in Gospel work.

IMPORTANT.

As we find the Demand for the “Northern Witness” Volumes (1880) to exceed our calculations, so that they are already sold out, we think it well to invite our Friends and Subscribers to let us know NOW how many of the Bound Volumes for 1881 they would be disposed to take up.

To those who Subscribe for the 1881 VOL. *before the End of March*, we offer it in Paper Covers, at 1s. 3d.; and in Cloth, 1s. 9d. Carriage Paid.

Please to inform us if we shall continue to send to your present address your Standing Order for “Northern Witness,” “Herald of Salvation,” and other Monthly Magazines for 1881.

Subscriptions terminate in December, and are Payable in Advance by Post Office Order.

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We have to request that all Post Office Orders and Cheques be made payable in future to “THE PUBLISHING OFFICE,” 40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET, GLASGOW; or, to Mr. WILLIAM KYLE, Manager.

To Sunday School Teachers.

We would direct the attention of Teachers in Sunday Schools, to a **SCHEME OF LESSONS** prepared for the year 1881, by Brethren engaged in the work. It has now been issued for several years, and has met with acceptance generally. It may be obtained at

THE PUBLISHING OFFICE, 40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET.

It will greatly oblige the Publishers when any error or irregularity occurs in the supply of the Monthly Papers, that they should be immediately informed of it.

THE PUBLISHING OFFICE, 40 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.



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FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

EXOD. xv. 22-27.—THE WILDERNESS—MARA—ELIM.

"Thou shalt remember ALL the way the Lord thy God hath led thee, these *forty years* in the wilderness" (Deut. viii. 2).

"These *forty years* the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast *lacked nothing*" (Deut. ii. 7).

"My God shall supply *all* your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19).

SO Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the *wilderness* of Shur, and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water" (Ex. xv. 22). The song, the timbrel, and the dance had ceased, and that first gush of joy and excitement that fills the bosom of the newly delivered one had subsided. The people now get time to look around and ahead of them on the waste and thirsty desert. Their Canaan home is far before them, and Egypt is far behind them, with the Red Sea rolling between, to lock them out of it for ever. It is only now that they really begin to find out where they are, and what has happened. They find themselves in a new world, with new surroundings.

The young believer will easily see the application of this to himself. He well remembers the bondage of his former state, then how his eye was turned to behold "the salvation of the Lord" at the Cross of Jesus and the empty tomb. What joy and songs of gladness filled the heart! What hopes and prospects rose before the new-born soul. Almost impatient to be with Jesus, the happy heart would sing—

"Rise up, and hasten, my soul, haste along,
And speed on thy journey, with hope and with song;
Home, home is nearing, 'tis coming into view,
A little more of toiling, and then to earth adieu!"

Everything seemed so changed, the soul was in a new world, earth looked far behind, and heaven so near and real. Well do we all remember these happy moments when in a newly-known Lord Jesus we so rejoiced, and it is the will of God we should still rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

Many speak of those early days of pilgrim life as if they had been mere excitement, and congratulate themselves that now they have settled down to a more sober and intelligent condition. They have gained a deeper knowledge of the Word, and can speak fluently of many things that in earlier days they knew nothing of. Be it so; but we cannot help thinking that in the case of some there has been a growth in knowledge without a corresponding enlargement of heart, and if the understanding has *gained* something, the heart has *lost* a good deal. There is a want of that warmth of affection and love that marked their earlier days—a love that would have led them through flood and flame for Jesus' sake, and even if the energy of mere nature did at times mingle with it, we believe it was infinitely more pleasing to the Lord than a clear head and a cold heart ever will be.

Surely, dear brethren, the longer acquaintance with the Lord, and more knowledge of His ways, ought to have the opposite effect. Our affections ought to be the warmer and our joy the deeper as we go on to know *Him*. We cannot admit that such joys are only the portion of the new-born sons, and that "as we grow older we must grow colder," as some have said; we are sure, at least, that such is not the will of God, however true it may be of the experience of saints. The excitement

may pass away, as does the blossom from the trees, but the precious fruit of the Spirit of God, "the love, the joy, the peace" (Gal. v. 22) will mellow and ripen, as we live in the sunlight and warmth of His presence. "Fulness of joy" (John xv. 11; 1 John i. 4) and "continual praise" (Psa. lxxxiv. 4; Heb. xiii. 15) are the blessed portion of all who dwell and walk with God.

But how few continue to go on thus with God, and to sing amid the discipline of the desert as they did in the days of youth. How few of the voices that sang the song on the Red Sea shore at the *beginning* of the *wilderness* journey, joined in the song of Numbers xxi. 17, as they neared the *end* of it! How many had broken down by the way! How many had murmured and been destroyed! And is it not so still? I do not speak of the eternal salvation of the soul, but of the failure and declension of the saved on their heavenward journey. Reader, How is it with you? Do you still retain the freshness and simplicity of your first love? Do you find your heart sending forth its streams of praise to God, as it did when first you were converted—it may be years ago? Cold orthodoxy cannot make up for the lack of this, no amount of service done *for* Him, or knowledge of His Word, is of so great esteem in the sight of God as the devotedness of a heart affection for Jesus. O, may we be kept childlike and virgin-hearted in the simplicity of Christ.

But we must press on.

Exod. xv. 22 gives us an account of the people's first experiences in the wilderness. "They went three days in the wilderness and found no water." This was trial of a new kind; there had been nothing like this in Egypt. "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" (Psa. cvii. 5). Real wilderness life had now commenced, and they begin to feel the roughness of the way that leads them on to their Canaan home. The Lord who loved them had brought them into the desert to have them alone with Himself (Exod. xix. 4), that He might lead them about and instruct them in many things (Deut. xxxii. 10). And this was their first lesson; alas! how unwilling they were to learn it. "The people murmured, saying, What shall we drink?"

Such is the present scene to the child of God. Spiritually it is to him a wilderness. Rightly instructed, he will not seek a portion here, nor expect

the comforts of a home, while on a pilgrim journey. Many dangers he will have to face, many foes to meet and conflicts to endure. Hardships are to be borne—he will "find no water."

My dear young brother or sister in Christ, do you find it so, since you have been converted to God? How changed everything is. Associations and companionships that you loved and enjoyed previous to your conversion, have lost their charm and sweetness now. Worldly lusts and pleasures are now as foreign to your tastes, as a new creature in Christ, as they were palatable to the old man. The world is a waste howling wilderness, and in it you "find no water"—nothing to refresh or cheer your thirsty soul. But you need not murmur nor repine, for with God is the fountain of life, and He has been teaching you that you must look to Him for this as well as for salvation. This is the great lesson of the wilderness—to trust an unseen but present God, to draw from Him day by day, hour by hour, all that you need to sustain you in the desert. This is not learned in a day—nor is it an easy lesson—but we need not fear, for we know the Hand that is leading us on, and the love of the Heart that is planning for us. Should He lead us through seas of trouble, where the spirit is overwhelmed, and the tears made to flow, we know He will not leave us; but as He draws each false and failing prop from under us, on which He sees we too fondly lean, it is that He may draw us the closer to Himself, to prove how good and kind He is. Thus chastened, subdued, and weaned from trusting in an arm of flesh, we go along the wilderness leaning on the arm of our Beloved.

MARAH is yet a deeper trial. "And when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were *bitter*" (Exod. xv. 23).

What at first sight seemed to give relief was found to be but bitterness. How the heart does cling to anything of earth, rather than trust the living God, and let Him provide. But He loves us too well to allow of this, and turns our fancied joys to bitterness. We have all had our Marahs to pass since first we began pilgrim life. Some have found them at home, others in the world. It has been truly a bitter draught to some to find a once fond parent turned against them for Jesus' sake, or to be looked upon with contempt and scorn by those we once hoped would have helped us. To bear the daily frown of a cold and cruel world, and to be looked upon with suspicion by

those we seek to bless, is bitter enough to nature. But we need not be surprised at all this, for it is only what He promised, and we are only in company with the Master Himself and the saints of former days. He told us that in the world we should have tribulation, and that through much tribulation we should enter the kingdom (John xvi. 33; Acts xiv. 22). Although some who profess to be the Lord's, now-a-days have found out an easy way to heaven, in which they can have the world's friendship and approval; the old road, where Jesus and His suffering saints have trod, has its Marahs still, and who would be such a coward as to shrink from treading it?

Look at Paul. Converted on his way to persecute the suffering saints of God, he was immediately told how great things he must *suffer* for Jesus' sake (Acts ix. 16), and what these sufferings were let 2 Cor. xi. 23-28 tell. The first Epistle of Peter, which especially views the believer as a pilgrim passing through the desert, has for its key-note the word *SUFFER*. Look at chaps. ii. 19; iii. 14-17; iv. 12-19; what a record of *suffering*, but what *consolations* too!

At Marah of old the Lord showed Moses a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, they were made sweet. How near the waters of bitterness was the tree of sweetness found! How close to the suffering pilgrim of first Peter is the suffering Son of God. In chapters ii. 21-23; iii. 17, 18; iv. 13, the tree is in the waters, and they are made sweet. We are treading the same desert that His dear feet once trod, we meet the same kind of trials as He met, and who would fear to tread a path where we have such fellowship with Him. The dread and bitter cup of the wrath of God He drank Himself alone; that kind of suffering we cannot share, but the suffering that came to Him for righteousness' sake, and as God's witness in an evil world, *that* we may share, and we shall, if we walk with Him along the path. Others have, who have gone before.

Look at Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi; first cruelly treated, then made fast in the stocks. This was Marah, but the tree was in the waters. Praises rang through the prison at midnight, and we know what followed.

See the three Hebrew young men cast into the raging furnace of Babylon. Noble witnesses for the truth of the God they loved! But they were not left to walk in the furnace alone: they got a companion to walk with

them whose "form was like the Son of God;" and *who* would object to walk, even there, in such company?

The lesson to be learned by us is this—that it is not the Lord's way to remove the prison or extinguish the fire, but to be very near us while we endure them. He does not promise to keep us exempt from trial, but He has promised to be with us in it, and "*with* the temptation also to make a way of escape that we may be *able* to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). This applies to hundreds of the smaller things of every-day life. He does not remove the "thorn," but gives "grace" to bear it (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9), and the bitterness is made sweet. So "we glory in *tribulations* also" (Rom. v. 3).

ELIM, with its twelve wells and seventy palm trees, comes next. A green spot in the desert, and all the more seasonable after the trial. Elim was not Canaan, but it was a refreshing spot on the way, and a happy foretaste of the time when Israel should dwell in the land, and keep the feast of tabernacles under the shade of the palm. To us it speaks of the coming glory, when wilderness days are done, of which we even now have the *earnest* and the *hope*. Seldom do we so grasp the "blessed hope," or long for the joys of home, as when we have just been at the bitter waters; for

"Trials make *THE promise* sweet."

The "sufferings" and the "glory" are closely linked together in 1 Peter i. 11; iv. 13; v. 1, 10. Even *here* our Marahs and Elims are very near each other. The trial prepares us for the blessing, and the discipline and bitterness of the desert for the rest of home. How the little crew on the lake of Galilee must have enjoyed the *calm* He gave them, after so rude a storm! How the hearts of Martha and Mary must have brimmed with joy at that feast of re-union of John xii., after the sorrow and the tears of John xi. ! and thus shall it be with us when we reach our home. Oh how grand it will be to be there!

"There beside life's crystal river,
There beside life's wondrous tree,
There with nought to cloud or sever,
Ever with The Lamb to be,
Heir of glory! what a hope for thee and me!"

J. R.

MANY a child has died in the arms of a mother, many a patient in the arms of a physician; but never in the arms of Jesus did one soul ever perish,

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

By R. T. H.

CHAPTER IV.

HERE we begin another section. Having recounted the disobedience and obedience, the judgment following the former, and the blessing resting on the latter, he then bases on that the solemn exhortations contained here. "Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel."

"Hearken!" Seven times in this Book do we meet with this call to hear Jehovah. And how fitting this is. Does Jehovah speak, and shall not man hearken? Let Habakkuk speak to us: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what HE WILL SAY unto me" (Hab. ii. 1); or, again, "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. ii. 20). And when Isaiah in prophecy brings the Lord Jesus Himself before us, not as in the *place* of obedience, for that we get in Psalm xl. 6, "Mine ears hast Thou opened" (margin "digged," in reference to Hebrew servant, Ex. xxi.), but as in the *spirit* of obedience suited to that place; then Isaiah says, "He wakeneth mine ear to *hear* as the learned. The Lord God hath *opened* mine ear" (Isa. l. 4, 5)—opened, that is, sensitive to hear, not dull of hearing, but quick to hear the words of the Lord. This is ours, and how blessed when we sit down at His feet to hear His Word. More than ever do we need to have an ear and a heart to receive His words. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to HEARKEN than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). God had spoken—it was for Saul implicitly to obey; but no, he had a will of his own, and that led to a way of his own, and although he complacently said, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Sam. xv. 13), the solemn record is, that Jehovah said, "he is turned back from following me, and hath NOT performed my commandments" (ver. 11).

The Lord counted it not as done when Saul had acted in self-will, and had only done a part. To please Him we must perform according to His Word. Volumes might be written on this! Why did Eve take the fruit? She hearkened not to the word of the Lord. Why did Pharaoh fall under the judgment of God? He hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord, "Let my people go" (Ex. viii. 1). Why did Nadab and Abihu perish at the altar? They "offered

strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not" (Lev. x. 1). Why did that evil generation fall in the wilderness? "They despised the pleasant land, they believed not His Word" (Ps. cvi. 24).

Therefore did Moses with an especial emphasis say, "NOW, therefore, HEARKEN, O Israel." The carcasses of fallen ones in the wilderness—the thirty-eight years of wandering—the solemn cutting off of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—and the very shutting out of Moses from the land, all seem with terrible emphasis to re-echo it—"Hearken, O Israel."

And is instant obedience one whit the less incumbent upon us? Nay, verily. He speaks not now from Sinai, neither does He talk familiarly in the door, as with Abraham; but none the less is it our responsibility to hearken unto Him. He who "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. i. 1, 2). "This is my beloved Son, HEAR HIM" (Luke ix. 35). And in the confusion of these last days, and amid the many distracting voices, how blessed to open the ear to Him! "My sheep, hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John x. 27).

And as when apostasy was coming in amongst Israel, the call was to hear—so in the Epistles to the Churches (Rev. ii. and iii):—"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches" occurs in each of the seven.

"Hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you." When Paul rehearses the sevenfold privileges of Israel as a nation, he names one as being "the giving of the law" (Rom. ix. 4), or "the legislation," as we would say in one word. That is to say, Israel occupied this peculiar and unique position among all the other nations—viz., that they received not only Ten Commandments from the Lord, but all the legislation required for the wilderness and the land. All was given by Him. This we shall see as we proceed. Whether laws concerning their dress, habitations, health, their conduct to one another, and to other nations, and, above all, as to their worship, down to minutest details, all came from THE LAW-GIVER, perfect as Himself. Nothing but blessing could result from obedience thereto. None needed amending or altering. No circumstances could arise to show there had been want of foresight, &c. The circumstances only shed a lustre upon the legislation, as they

showed how exactly it was suited to them. Man's best laws often fail, are inadequate, or go too far, but not so with THE LEGISLATION, the judgments and statutes of Jehovah.

"Do that ye may live," refers to earthly life, as we see by what is added, "and go in and possess." Just as the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother, *that thy days may be long in the land.*" Earthly blessings for an earthly people, and amongst them the promise of life. Thus we see life shortened by the judgment of God, because of disobedience, or prolonged as He was obeyed.

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you" (ver. 2). The Word of God was to be maintained in its purity. Israel is thus solemnly exhorted to see that they did not corrupt the Word of the Lord. They were surrounded with dangers, and needed constantly to be watchful. ALL the judgments and statutes required by them were given of God, and therefore they were not to *add* to them. All were needed, and therefore were not to be made light of.

Thus, in the closing Book of the Law, they are exhorted to hold the law as given. It is instructive to notice how we get a similar injunction in each section of the Old Testament. In Proverbs, classed with the Psalms, we read (chap. xxx. 5, 6):—"Every word of God is pure. . . . Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." And in Malachi, the last of the prophets, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (chap. iv. 4). And how significant this is! The remnant, for they were only that, was held responsible to observe the law as it had been given. No lower standard was to be brought in. The Lord goes back to that which was given at the first, and though Israel was led captive for their disregard of it, and their kings were lost to them because they had disobeyed it, yet the few left were as responsible as ever to carry out God's Word as given.

And when we turn to the New Testament we get a remarkable correspondence to this. Let us take a few passages that will bring it before us. First, from the Gospels, "Go ye therefore and teach (margin, 'make disciples of') all nations, baptizing them in the

Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Teaching them to OBSERVE ALL THINGS, whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). Is not this as binding on us now as ever? Mark, it was not to them as apostles, but as *disciples* (ver. 16) that He spoke; and are not we, as disciples, equally required to "teach ALL things,"—that is, not to "diminish" from His Word. To give in our thoughts and in our teaching the same place that each truth occupies in the Word. "For we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God" (2 Cor. ii. 17). This verse, from one of Paul's Epistles to the Churches, shows that at such a very early period, even as Paul's own time, there were those who corrupted the Word of God. And the word used here is that taken from a word meaning a "retailer of wine," who, for profit's sake, adulterated the drink. At this early stage the Word was being adulterated, and that for gain—how essential, then, to keep close to the Word, and to remember that it will not do to appeal to fathers, or traditions, however early? We must have God's own Word.

And if we read Paul's Epistles to individual saints, we find the same thing—"Preach the Word" (2 Tim. iv. 2). "The things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2). Thus was the truth to be transmitted. The Word was to be heralded. The Truth committed. And John agrees to this, "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning" (1 John ii. 24). And the closing chapter of the New Testament, as Deuteronomy and Proverbs, says, "If any man shall add unto the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall add unto him the plagues," &c. (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). Well may Jude write, "Earnestly contend for the faith which was ONCE DELIVERED unto the saints" (ver. 3).

By a steady obedience to the Word of God blessing would be ensured to them. To despise, to slight it, to treat parts of it with indifference, would be the sure way to lead to judgment, and to their being scattered; and their history only too clearly shows this. Step by step they departed, till there was "no remedy" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). Therefore, they were scattered.

Names are heard in heaven; sounds surely reach there! "Wesleyan!" What a discord in heaven! I seek to train my ears *never* to get accustomed to such discordant sounds.

R. C. C.

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. i. 11 to 18.

THE house of Chloe are Paul's informants as to the state of things at Corinth. This was not evil speaking or backbiting. It was not exposing to others the faults of brethren to gratify a corrupt nature. It is quite a different thing to make known an evil to a wise and godly one with shepherd heart, in order that it may be dealt with according to God.

Oftentimes there is something wrong in an assembly, some root of bitterness is springing up. It is known to many of the younger ones, and they talk about it one to another until it spreads, and many become defiled; whilst those who would deal with it faithfully are never informed of it, but rather kept in the dark. But whenever Paul was informed of what was going on at Corinth, he went straight to the mark at once, and is not afraid to name the house of Chloe as his informants.

By comparing verse 12 with chapter iv. verse 6, we learn that the parties in the Corinthian Church were not specially attaching themselves to Paul or to Apollos; but Paul, with his usual tact and delicacy, avoided mentioning the names of those who had been leaders of division, and in a figure transferred the whole to himself and Apollos. If it would be so wrong to form sectarian divisions around such names as Paul and Apollos, how much worse to be taking sides with men who had neither their authority nor their grace!

Now mark the Apostle's answer in verse 13, "Is Christ divided?" Compare this with chapter xii. verse 12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."

A division in the Church of God is in the sight of the Apostle, and in the mind of the Spirit, equal to a rent in the body of Christ. That is the way God wants us to see it. All denominationalism, whether it be Romanist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Baptist—whatever it be—is, to our shame, a breaking up of the body of Christ, accomplished through the subtlety of Satan. Not that the body of Christ can be really eternally broken or deprived of a single member. The whole elect company *shall* be gathered, the "one new man" to fill the new heavens and the new

earth. God's purpose shall stand. But Satan's object in the meantime has been accomplished, by getting that which is *one* in the sight of God broken up into fragments in the eyes of men; that which should have been separated unto God, mingled with the world, and God's truth and character and purposes belied and misrepresented.

Who was Paul or who was Apollos? Were they not mere instruments in God's hands. What a dishonour to Christ the Head to say, "I am of Paul," as though Paul had been crucified for some, and Christ for others! And yet even to this day men do not hesitate to call themselves by party names, thus practically denying the grand truth of the *unity* of all believers in Christ Jesus.

And even among ourselves there are those who do not hesitate to say, "I belong to the Brethren?" I met one lately who said, "I once belonged to the Brethren, but I don't now." I asked him, "but do you not now belong to Christ?" That is the great point. We may imagine we have come out from sectarianism to own the One Lord, the one Head, and the one body, and yet we may carry with us sectarianism deeply rooted in our hearts. Whilst obedience to the Lord may shut us up to a separate path from other Christians where few may care to follow with us, yet never may that interfere with our holding and owning the blessed truth that all believers are one—one with us—in the risen Christ.

I dare not even say, "I of Christ," any more than "I of Paul," lest by that I should seem to imply that others of the children of God are not as really "of Christ" as I. Thus the question, "Is Christ divided?" or "were ye baptized in the name of Paul," goes right to the root of the error. The Apostle is not here making light of God's ordinance of baptism. He is thanking God that it was so ordered by the Lord that only a very few had been baptized by him personally. Peter in Acts x. did not himself baptize, but commanded them to be baptized, and this must, therefore, have been done by the "certain brethren" who accompanied him from Joppa. We do not even know their names. Thus we see that Apostles did not do everything themselves. The wise thing is to see that each one is being led on to do whatever service he is able to perform to the glory of God. Paul was not sent specially to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. Nevertheless he did baptize some, showing that he did not

set aside the Lord's will in this matter, although his life-work was worthily to proclaim the Gospel of God's grace, leaving that which others could do as well as he to be done by them.

And now, verse 18, as is his way in many of his Epistles, he glides into the subject before him. He foresees that the principles at work in Corinth would develop into sectarianism, and ripen at last into that terrible hydra-headed monster which Christendom has become.

He prepares the axe to lay it to the root of the evil, and the first thing he attacks is *man's wisdom*.

The preaching of the Gospel was not to be "with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect," (verse 17.) As it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

"The scribe" was one among the Jews instructed in the letter of the Scriptures. "The disputer" refers to those among the Greeks who contended upon questions of philosophy or science. But God did not choose these as His instruments. He rather chose those who in the eyes of men were weak and despised. Neither was it His purpose to reveal Himself to the wise of this world. The blessed Son of God our Master and Example did not fret because the wise rejected His testimony. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. xi. 25).

God has written folly upon all the wisdom of this world by the Cross of Christ. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." That is, by what the world calls foolishness—viz., "the preaching of the Cross."

Whether wise or foolish, rich or poor, male or female, God has set aside all distinctions in the flesh, and saves all that believe.

And this He does through "the foolishness of preaching." God did not mean by this that His servants should preach foolishly, though in the eyes of the world it may appear folly to expect such mighty results from such instrumentality. The religious Jew and the wise Athenian were alike stumbled at the preaching of the Cross, nevertheless it was God's

appointed means whereby sinners were to be saved. The Jews required a sign; but they got none save the sign of the prophet Jonas; for they had bad hearts, and signs will never convince hearts that are filled with enmity to God.

The Greeks sought after wisdom, but they could find nothing in the Gospel to gratify their craving for philosophic speculations.

"We preach Christ crucified." Not Christ the wise one, or Christ the great one. This was what stumbled the Jew and appeared folly to the Greek. "But unto them which are called." Though Jew and Gentile might alike by nature reject God's message, yet God has said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," and His mighty quickening voice is heard in hearts of every sort and degree; called by the grace of God, they hear and believe what stumbles the Jew and is foolishness to the Greek, and through believing they are saved.

I often think of Paul, after preaching at Athens on Mars Hill, turning away from that centre of the world's learning, perhaps down-hearted, as some mocked, and others put him off with a promise to hear him again; but God was with him, and some clave unto him and believed. But who were they? Dionysius—an Areopagite, one of the wise, the learned, but called by the power of God, and saved by what was folly to others;—and a certain woman named Damaris. We know not who she was—perhaps a careless passer-by.

To these Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God.

"We preach Christ crucified." That is what met our need; whether we were ignorant or educated, whether religious or irreligious; when we saw ourselves to be guilty sinners, what was it but the story of Christ crucified that gave us peace?

But what is the meaning of the Cross of Christ? I do not think any of us has sounded its depths—it will take eternity to do that, but I want you to consider for a little its deep meaning.

And, first, the Cross of Christ brings out *what man is*. God meant it to do that. It manifested two things about man, his enmity against God and his unrighteousness.

Behold the Son of God! He goes in and out among men for thirty years. For three years He laboured incessantly in the midst of Israel—in patient, unwearying grace—doing mighty works of love, leaving

behind Him a track of light and rejoicing at every step.

What was the result of all this love? The multitude surrounded the Lord of Glory, crying, "away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him." Thus was manifested what was in man. And this is what was in you and me by nature. Although we were brought up to respect the name of Jesus, yet our hearts said, "away with Him." We desired Him not.

Shall the Holy One, against whom not a single accusation could be proved, be condemned to death? Shall the innocent be judged as guilty? Yes, He is condemned as a criminal to be executed. The murderer is set free according to the people's desire; and the just one is crucified between two thieves. Was there ever unrighteousness like that? Oh, it is the Cross that tells me what I am. That shows me my unrighteousness as God sees it. That is the sort of creature which God has loved and forgiven.

But the Cross of Christ not only reveals what man is, it also manifests what God is. It is blessed to see God's love, brought out alongside of man's enmity and guilt—

"The very spear that pierced His side
Drew forth the blood to save."

See that Holy, Blessed One nailed to the Cross; does He cry for vengeance on His enemies? No; it is, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Does He utter the prayer that would have summoned to His deliverance more than twelve legions of angels? No; "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." And in all this He is the expression of the love of God to rebel man. "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). Then there was the pouring out of His soul unto death in atonement for sin, that the guilty might be pardoned and saved. And in that Cross I see, not only the love of God, but combined with that, His infinite holiness. Infinite love and infinite holiness meet together there. The God of Calvary is not a God who could deal loosely with sin, passing it over lightly. On no other ground could He grant forgiveness than the atoning blood of His own dear Son.

I believe we shall get a sight of what sin is, when the vials of wrath are poured out upon this earth, and

when the smoke of the torment of the damned ascendeth up for ever and ever, but never shall we get such a sight of its exceeding dreadfulness as at the Cross of Christ. When the sun was darkened; when the cup of wrath was given Him to drink; when that exceeding bitter cry was wrung from His broken heart, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" When I see the emptied bosom of my God and crowds of angels that surround His throne, as it were in silent wonder looking on, as He who knew no sin was made sin for us—it is there that I learn what sin really is, and how a Holy God abhors it.

Thus it is that in the Cross of Christ, God and man are brought together. What love and holiness in God! What enmity and unrighteousness in man! Oh, wondrous Cross! Oh, wondrous death! Let us bow and worship in the presence of the mystery of the Cross of Christ.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE GENTILE MONARCHIES; AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL AS FIRST OF THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH.

"O, sing unto the Lord a *new* song: sing unto the Lord all the earth. Say among the heathen the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Psalm xcvi. 1, 10-13).

SUCH words as these belong not to the present: *now* the foundations of all things are out of course—Satan is the god and ruler of this present evil age—creation groans in the bondage of corruption—darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the peoples.

But the glorious day is fast hastening on when creation's groan shall be hushed; when universal peace shall prevail; and when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

But this glorious day shall not dawn on our world until the Lord Himself shall come and take the government of the earth into His own hands. He shall come to end the evil and begin the good; to

remove the misery and introduce the gladness; to banish the curse and bestow the blessing.

In the Psalm I have quoted the people are called upon to sing unto the Lord a new song—the heavens to rejoice—the earth to be glad—the sea to roar—the fields to be joyful, because He has come to judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth. Then shall be fulfilled that solemn promise of Jehovah, uttered thousands of years ago—“As truly as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord” (Num. xiv. 21).

But Christ will not undertake the government of earth apart from His chosen city and His chosen people. He will give to Jerusalem and to Israel supremacy in the earth, and will govern instrumentally through them. They will also be the channel through which the appointments of His goodness shall reach the nations. “Many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. ii. 3).

Until the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Israel was the centre and seat of God’s government in the earth. When they acted obediently He subjected the surrounding nations to their sway; but when disobedient and rebellious these nations were used as His scourge to punish them. Still, His throne was at Jerusalem. Things continued in this state up to the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Then, the ten tribes having been previously carried captive into Assyria, the remaining two are given into the hands of the king of Babylon: God removes His throne and His glory from Jerusalem, and confers on this great head of the Gentile monarchies universal supremacy in the earth: and thus commenced what is by our Lord spoken of as “the times of the Gentiles.” “Thus was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance, and gave them into the hands of the heathen, so that they that hated them ruled over them” (Ps. cvi. 40, 41).

The times of the Gentiles are still running on; nor will they terminate until the days of Jerusalem’s tribulation shall be ended, and she shall cease to be trodden down any more: for we read, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

In the book of Daniel the times of the Gentiles are divided into four great empires, which were successively to bear rule in the earth. First, the Babylonian, which continued to rule for 70 years: secondly, the Medo-Persian, which lasted for 206 years: thirdly, the Grecian, which continued to bear sway in the earth for a period of over 300 years: and fourthly, the Roman—still running on.

It is to the last that prophecy most particularly directs our attention; *not, indeed, to its present state and condition* (for we get nothing relating to the political aspect of the present time in the prophetic portions of the Word of God), but to a still future period, when the Roman earth, that is, the countries conquered by Rome, shall exist in a tenfold form, under ten kings; and to a time when these ten kings under an acknowledged head shall be found in open and daring rebellion against God; followed by the awful and fearful judgments which will attend the coming of the Lord from heaven.

Moreover, as the people and the land of Israel were in times past the sphere especially chosen and appointed by God to manifest His dealings in the earth, whether in judgment or in mercy: so likewise in the time to come, when this great revolt shall take place, and the appointed hour for judgment arrives, Jerusalem and the land of Israel shall again be the platform whereon this great manifestation of the judgment and wrath of God shall take place: as again, it shall be afterwards the great centre of blessing to the renewed earth.

I stay not to speculate on the probable subdivisions of the Roman Empire, or the causes that may be likely to lead to these subdivisions, for it is but speculation at the best; but proceed at once to what is clearly revealed in the Word of God—namely, the last great gathering of the anti-Christian hosts against Jerusalem, and their overthrow.

Let me, therefore, refer you to a scripture with which you are all well acquainted. The first six verses of the second psalm. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His

wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

This psalm, written by David, was no doubt in the first instance applicable to himself; against him, as the Lord's anointed—anointed when another king was reigning in Jerusalem—the kings set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together. But notwithstanding their opposition, God anointed him king in Zion, the hill of His holiness.

But a greater than David is here, even that blessed One, David's Lord and David's Son: who proclaimed in the synagogue at Nazareth that "the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, because He *hath anointed Him* to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Him to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19).

Against Him, indeed, "the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together." "For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, . . . both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts iv. 26, 27).

But it is to the future we must look for the full accomplishment of these predictions. A glance at the psalm will clearly prove this. In verses 4 and 5 we read, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. THEN shall He speak to them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure."

"Then" is emphatic, showing that this unholy alliance, this linking together of Jews and Gentiles against the Lord and His anointed, is to be *closely followed by awful judgments*; which judgments are to be inflicted by the Lord Himself personally.

Now, we know that neither at that time nor since have the Gentiles been visited with the judgments spoken of here; on the contrary, God, instead of speaking in His wrath, has been proclaiming the Gospel of His Grace to every creature, beseeching men through His ambassadors to be reconciled to Him.

We therefore see that the psalm as a whole must be interpreted of a yet future period; although it may be applied (as in the passage already quoted) to confederacies that have already taken place.

"There is, however, only one confederacy that is to be crushed so immediately by the judgments of heaven, that as soon as it has been gathered, THEN it is to be

overwhelmed. There is only one confederation whose destruction shall be succeeded by the installation of God's King upon Zion, the mountain of His holiness. The day of the triumph of evil shall end for ever as soon as Christ shall arise to 'speak in wrath, and vex in sore displeasure.' The Scripture is full of allusions to the gathering of this great confederacy, and its overthrow."

John in vision beholds this mighty host, when the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the river Euphrates. "I saw," he says, "three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty . . . and he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. xvi. 12-16). This mighty host, thus gathered at Armageddon, will move thence upon Jerusalem, vowing vengeance on Israel, and saying—"Come, and let us cut them off from being any longer a nation on the earth; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Psalm lxxxiii. 4). In the tenth chapter of Isaiah we trace this mighty army, under their leader, step by step up to "the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (Isa. x. 28-32).

And here it becomes necessary to answer a very natural enquiry—What is the cause of this confederation, and their vengeance on Jerusalem? And to answer it, it will be necessary to go back a little, and retrace the history of the Jewish people up to this period.

John, in his first epistle, warns his readers thus—"Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that *antichrist shall come*, even now there are many antichrists . . . He is the antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."

It is clear that the Apostle in this passage speaks of a person, not then manifested, but who would afterwards be revealed under the name of "*the antichrist*," in contradistinction to the many antichrists who were then existing.

It is equally clear that *such an individual has never appeared on the earth up to the present*. The spirit of antichrist has indeed been in the world ever since these words were written, taking many forms more or

less blasphemous, such as popery, infidelity, &c.; but notwithstanding these developments of the mystery of iniquity, the antichrist himself, concerning whom so much is written in the Word of God, has not yet been manifested.

The revelation of this "man of sin" shall find the Jewish people back in their own land again; not, indeed, as a saved people, but in unbelief; with Jerusalem restored—their temple rebuilt—and their gorgeous ritual re-established.

When the blessed One of God came to His own nation they received Him not. Though His Father bore witness to Him from heaven—though He did among them the works which none other man did—though He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil"—though, in one word, He came to them as their Divinely accredited Messiah: yet they despised Him, they hated Him, they rejected Him. Their cry was, "Crucify Him, crucify Him; His blood be upon us and upon our children." Divine retribution brought upon them the Roman armies to take away their place and nation, to burn their temple, to cause the daily sacrifice to cease, and to scatter them throughout the earth, a proverb and a byword judicially blinded through unbelief. And notwithstanding all this, they are still rejecting their Messiah—still looking out for another.

When this man, the antichrist, appears, he will appeal to their unbelieving expectations, and they will gladly receive him and accept him as their long-promised deliverer.

The Lord Jesus Christ foreseeing this said to the Jews of His day, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, *him ye will receive*" (John v. 43).

He will make a covenant with them for seven years; which covenant he will treacherously violate, for in the middle of the week (*i.e.*, the seven years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and shall set up in the most holy place "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet." "He shall exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God shall sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (Dan. ix. 27; xi. 31-36; 2 Thess. ii. 3-12). "And he shall cause that as many as shall not worship his image shall be killed" (Rev. xiii. 15; xx. 4; xix. 20, &c.)

"Too many, alas! of the returned Jews will submit

to this last degradation practised upon them by Satan; having refused the blessed One who came in His Father's name, they will receive this apostate usurper of divine rights and honours who comes in his own."

Yet many will like Mordecai (Est. iii. 2-5) refuse to bow down to the haughty Haman of the earth; like Daniel (Dan. vi. 7-11) they will not acknowledge the righteousness of his decree; and like the three children (Dan. iii. 15-18) they will not worship his image.

They will, therefore, become the special objects of his hatred and his rage. In his pride and wrath, he will gather his confederate kings, with their armies, together against them to crush them, to annihilate them, and to cut them off from being any longer a nation on the earth. But the confederation fails; these mighty hosts are consumed by the awful judgments attending the coming of the Lord in vengeance upon them. We shall presently consider this more fully.

R. B.

(To be continued.)

LEAVEN.

PART I. THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF THE TYPE.

IO the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20.)

In 1 Cor. v. 8, the Word declares "leaven" to mean "malice and wickedness." Again, in Luke xii. 1, the Lord himself declares the "leaven of the Pharisee" to be "*hypocrisy*."

Again, in Matt. xvi. 6, He warns against "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," and ver. 12 declares that the "leaven" means the "*doctrine*" of these false teachers of the people.

There is also in the Lord's own teaching a warning against the "*leaven of Herod*," (Mark viii. 15.) Thus He enumerates three different kinds of *doctrine*, all evil, and warns against them, perceiving with divine foresight how each in time would be introduced by the enemy, and so the food of His people be corrupted.

To shew the particular form of doctrine specified by each of these three leavens, the leaven of the Pharisee, of the Sadducee, and of Herod, we have in Matt. xxii. 15-46, an example of each of the three sects, bringing to the Lord their most cunningly devised questions.

The question of the Herodians concerns the relationship of God's people to the governments of this world.

Next come the Sadducees; their question being in re-

ference to the great truth of resurrection, which they denied as a sect.

"But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, *they* were gathered together;" their boast ever was, "We are Moses' disciples" (John ix. 28.) Hence their question respects the law of Moses, or legal righteousness. The Lord's instruction and warning is therefore directed against everything that would savour of the teaching of these three ancient sects.

And blessedly He Himself repelled the subtle temptation of each. His words were "always with grace, seasoned with salt." Salt kills the action of leaven; so does *the Truth* meet and arrest the action of false doctrine, of whatever kind. Honey, on the other hand, is the very essence of leaven, quickening its action, energizing the power of corruption.

Hence "honey," as well as "leaven," was excluded from the offerings of the Lord made by fire; but "*salt*" was on no account to be lacking. See Lev. ii. 11, 13.

The expression, "*old leaven*," in 1 Cor. v. 7, has been adduced as proof that leaven of *some* sort might be allowable; therefore that it does not universally represent an evil thing, as if the purging out of the "*old leaven*" were to be followed by the introduction of a "*new leaven*;" but this has no sanction in the Word, the purpose of the "purging out" being "that ye may be a new lump, as ye are UNLEAVENED. "Let us therefore keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

PART II. THE USE OF THE TYPE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

But if the type be patiently traced from its earliest mention in the Old Testament, it will become abundantly evident that the Divine interpretation above given, serves as a key that fits the wards of an intricate lock, opening the spiritual treasures of every passage.

The first allusion to leaven is in Gen. xix. 3, where, from the fact of Lot having to bake *unleavened* bread for his angel visitors, it is evident that leavened bread was the habitual food of Sodom, and that Lot had so far learnt their ways. Contrast Gen. xviii. 6, the angels' visit to Abram, where no mention is made of leaven, as though it were unknown in his tent; but Sarai is called to bake a cake of three measures of fine meal upon the hearth.

There is also something significant in the fact that Lot, without being told, considered leavened bread, though palatable to him, unsuitable for his holy guests.

The next allusion to leaven is in Exodus xii. 8, from which it would appear that leavened bread was the common food of Egypt, and that the children of Israel had thus far adopted the ways of the Egyptians.

But this Egyptian ingredient, which is in fact a process of partial decomposition or corruption, required to render bread palatable to a corrupt nature, was an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and therefore His chosen people were commanded to put away leaven out of their houses, from the same hour that the blood of the passover lamb was shed, and to feast on the lamb with "unleavened bread." Ex. xii.

The soul that would eat leavened bread during the seven days of the feast was to be cut off from Israel. (Ex. xii. 15.) It was impossible to partake of Egypt's bread and *God's lamb* at once, as impossible as it is now to serve God and mammon (Matt. vi. 24), to drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, to be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils (1 Cor. x. 21.)

Of similar import is the instruction in 1 Pet. ii. 1—3.

Ere the new born babe can have communion with God in the Word, and drink in, to its nourishment and growth in grace, the sincere milk; the leaven of malice and guile, and hypocrisy, and envy, and evil speaking must be laid aside. The Spirit of God cannot minister the riches of Christ to the soul that cherishes such tempers as these. Practically such a soul is cut off from communion.

From 1 Cor. v. 8, it may be supposed that the Lord's supper answers to the passover. The fact of our Lord ordaining it on the same night, may also favour this conclusion—doubtless it is "for a remembrance" (1 Cor. xi. 24, see margin) of the same great event which the passover foreshadowed.

"The feast of unleavened bread," closely in connection with the passover, extended to seven days; till the dawn of the eighth day leaven was prohibited. And is it not interesting, in connection with this, that it is not said, on the first day of the month, or once in three months; but "*on the first day of the week*, the disciples came together to break bread?" (Acts xx. 7.) Our memorial feast continues, so to speak till renewed again on the morning of the eighth day. Thus sheltered by the blood of sprinkling, ours is a continual feast. Our privilege of nearness to God knows no interlude. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. (Heb. xiii. 15.)

But if the believer's privilege be thus perpetuated; so also is the annexed responsibility to banish from his person and association for ever that which leaven typifies. "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The necessity of "purging out" the leaven is urged by the consideration, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. v. 6.)

As leaven introduced into ever so large a proportion of flour will in time assimilate the whole to itself, every leavened particle having a like power to propagate the fermentation; so is the power of evil. The good will never transform the evil by contact, the uniform result is, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. xv. 33.)

Hence, whether in an individual or an assembly, whatever evil of doctrine or practice may be discovered, must be judged and put away. Failing in this, it will go on spreading and intensifying, "until (if not arrested) *the whole* is leavened." (Matt. xiii. 33.)

But action in such matters demands not only *promptness*, but *discrimination*. God would ever "make a difference," (Jude 22,) according to the actual state of soul of the persons concerned, "To take forth the precious from the vile," is God's way. (Jer. xv. 19.) The time of returning to God is also the time of "discerning between the righteous and the wicked." (Mal. iii. 18.)

Zeal without discernment may "cast out brethren" for His name's sake, and say, "Let the Lord be glorified;" but God will not approve it. See Isaiah lxvi. 5, and 3 John 10.

Satan gets the advantage as much in the casting out of the unleavened, as in the retaining of the leavened. (2 Cor. ii. 11.)

J. R. C.

(To be continued.)

"PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER."

James v. 16.

IN reading Paul's Epistles, who has not noticed how often he bursts out in prayer and thanksgivings on behalf of those to whom he writes, and again how many times he reminds them of his continual prayer for them? (see Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. xiii. 7; Eph. i. 16; Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2, &c.). But has it not also sometimes escaped notice, how the Apostle himself valued the prayers of fellow-saints, and earnestly desired them to continue in prayer for

him? asking their fellowship in prayer, when in circumstances of special difficulty; thus counting on their love to sympathise with him in his trials, and rejoice with him also, when, in answer to the "many" who "helped together" by prayer for him, the gift was given—the deliverance granted;—and, as a further result, "the many" had their joy deepened and their faith strengthened as they returned thanks for prayer heard (see 2 Cor. i. 10-11).

In further illustration of this, see Romans xv. 30, where he beseeches their prayers for four distinct things:—

1st. That he might be delivered from those who did not believe in Judæa.

2nd. That his service to the saints might be accepted, for we pause here to note that Paul thought it not enough to serve the saints, but made it a matter of prayer that such service might be accepted.

3rd. That he might come to them.

4th. That this visit might be blessed to them and him (Eph. vi. 19 and Colossians iv. 3), being the same thought before us, whilst Phil. i. 19 shows how he counted on the prayers of the Christians at Philippi. Again, from Philemon 22, we learn that not only did the "prisoner" Paul expect to be released through Philemon's prayer, but he was to prepare the lodging also, giving a fine example of carrying out the precept, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;" and the last chapter of Hebrews gives us the same Apostle again beseeching the prayers of believers that he might be restored to them the sooner. (ver. 19). Is it not, then, the privilege of all the saints thus to count on the love of their brethren to afford them this practical opportunity of "weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those who do rejoice?" And is it not because Christians forget their responsibility in this and the family character of the household of God, that they shrink from the measure of publicity of naming their special sorrows or joys in the prayer meeting? Thus, unconsciously, they rob themselves and their brethren of great blessing, and the prayer meeting is allowed to drift into a cold and formal gathering, and the prayers offered lacking definiteness of purpose; no wonder that praise for requests answered becomes the exception rather than the rule, and the opportunity which should bring out so much love and fellowship becomes at last to be called "Only the Prayer Meeting." W. H. S.

"READ YOUR BIBLES."

WE are certain that this exhortation is one required by many believers. Were we asked to give, in few words, important advice to young Christians, it is doubtful if we could give better than this, "Read your Bibles."

What the apostle charged Timothy, "Give attention to reading," requires to be remembered by us. The Word of God does not seem to receive the attention that it should. Do we forget that it contains the revelation of God's will? Do we forget that it is the food for our souls, our spiritual life? "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live" (Deut. viii. 3). The nourishment of our souls is as important as the nourishment of our bodies. Indeed Job considered that the spiritual needs were the most pressing. He "esteemed the words of His mouth more than his necessary food." Do we do so? Do we give the proper and necessary attention to our spiritual nourishment, and are we by feeding on God's Word growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

"But we have so little time at our disposal." No matter; if you neglect your Bible you'll starve. You can always get time for the daily papers, can't you? When you have so little time it would fit you better to spend it over your Bible. "Where there's a will there's

a way," and the man who can't *make* time for his study of God's Word is in a dangerous state.

Young believers! be "men of one book." You'll get all you need in the Word. If you want comfort, you'll get it there; if you want instruction, you'll get it there. Everything that is needed for our spiritual help and strength can be got from God's Word.

Do we need light on our daily path? "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm cxix. 105). Do we wish to be happy and to rejoice continually? "Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. xv. 16). Do we wish to keep from sin and all wrong-doing? "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm cxix. 11).

Do we sometimes find a dearth of subjects for profitable conversation? "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, . . . and thou shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. vi. 6, 7). "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If we talk much about worldly things, it is because our hearts are set on things below, and not on things above. If the "Word of God is dwelling in us richly," our lips will assuredly talk of it.

Again we say to you, dear Christians, old and young,
READ YOUR BIBLES.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION NO. LVI.

The cleansing of the believer from daily defilement, is it by "blood" or by "water"?

REPLY.

It is of great importance to see clearly the distinction between that which has been done once for all at the cross and that which is continuous, and often repeated in the believer's experience.

The Lord Jesus, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3).

To that hour God had looked forward from "before the foundation of the world," an expression that occurs in connection with His having "chosen us in Christ," and with "the foreordaining of the Lamb," whose precious blood, shed in due time at the cross, formed the groundwork of that purpose of infinite grace. Compare Eph. i. 4 and 1 Peter i. 19, 20.

When that atoning death was accomplished; when Jesus cried, "it is finished," and bowed His head in death; all was done that ever will be done towards God on account of sin,

Past, present, and future are in God's reckoning gathered into one focus at the cross. There "the Lord hath made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii, 6, margin). "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 12-14).

On the ground of this one offering God has acted from the time of His grace bestowed on Adam and Eve till the present hour, whether in justifying the ungodly, or in forgiving the sins of his erring children.

We sing—

"Happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away."

But by this we mean the day when first by faith we saw that our sins had been purged by the one offering eighteen centuries ago. In other words, faith reckons, as God reckons, that *time places no space between the day when Jesus died and the day when I believed*. By faith I am taken back in Spirit to the very spot and hour when Jesus died for me. It is all as plain and as real as if for me alone He had died but yesterday.

Strictly speaking, then, the purging of our sins was effected on Calvary. But, in striking contrast to this, justification is invariably referred to the day when first we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is never said that our sins are washed away "by faith;" but it is said that we are "justified by faith" (Rom v. 1). It is only as a guilty sinner believes the Gospel that he receives the benefit of the one offering. Then, and *not till then*, God justifies him. From that moment he passes, in God's reckoning, out from condemnation and death into righteousness and life. He is no longer in God's reckoning a sinner, a branch of the corrupt and condemned Adam tree, but a son of God in Christ, and partaker of the life of the New Man—Christ Jesus.

This justification—this passing from death into life—this regeneration is never, in Scripture, spoken of as being repeated.

It is the act of God's grace toward the believing sinner, based upon, and inseparable from, the one offering—the purging of sin effected on Calvary, solely through the Blood of Christ.

But if we are clear as to this, next arises the ques-

tion, what is meant by such a passage as "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin?" and also, closely allied to this, what is meant by the figure of cleansing by water?

Now, it seems to us that much of the obscurity that surrounds this subject in many minds arises from not seeing clearly that this great subject has two sides—which we would call the Godward and the manward. On God's part all is settled, all is clear, all is perfect. It is from God's side of the subject that the 10th of Hebrews is written. "Perfected for ever" is that which characterises it. But the other side has to do with my experience, my conscience, and is, therefore, affected by the measure of my faith and of my obedience.

The moment I apprehended by faith the glorious announcement that my sins had been laid upon Jesus, as my substitute, and purged by His blood, so that God's righteous demands were fully met, and that I was, consequently, discharged from the guilt of my sins—the burden that had lain upon my heart was gone; in other words, the crimson stain of guilt that defiled my conscience, and kept me far off from God, and in perpetual bondage and terror, was removed!

This was what is called *cleansing, as pertaining to the conscience*. This is not the removal of my sin from before God, but the removal of it from my heart and conscience.

Its removal from before God was effected by "the blood," and the "blood alone." Its removal from my conscience is effected by a threefold agency. The spirit, the water, and the blood have all had a part in it, yet not a separate part, for *these three are one*.

This is divinely illustrated in the ordinance of the red heifer (Num. xix.) There was but the one offering. It was wholly burnt. Even the blood was burned with the rest (ver. 5).

The *ashes*, therefore, contained in type all the permanent value of the offering. They always showed forth the fact that one offering had been made, on the ground of which defilements were to be removed not once, but many times, from many persons, and throughout their wilderness experience.

But together with the ashes there had to be always "running water"—literally "living water." In many scriptures it is plain that water represents the Word of God. (Compare Ps. cxix. 9; Eph. v. 26; compare, also, John xiii. 10 with xv. 3 and xvii. 17). But

"living water" represents the Word of God in the living power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit (see John vii. 38-39).

Is it not, therefore, evident that the cleansing of the conscience is effected by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, bringing home to the heart in power the blessed truth (typified by the ashes) that sin has indeed been put away once for all? The old Gospel truth concerning the value of the blood of Christ, is that which alone can purge the conscience (Heb. ix. 14). This is "the ashes of the heifer;" the Word of God is the means by which the truth is conveyed to the believing soul, and it is by the living energy of the Holy Spirit that it is made effectual in cleansing the conscience and in restoring communion.

The moment a child of God is conscious that he has sinned, that sin operates as a stain upon his conscience, and interferes with his confidence in drawing near to God. In other words, it mars communion. In such a case what God instructs is *instant confession*.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). That is equal to saying, if we come to Him with the defilement, whatever it be, He will not only forgive, as a father forgives a penitent child, but He will convey afresh to the conscience the sense of forgiveness, and restore to the confidence and communion that the sin had marred.

This He will do, not by a new offering, but by referring the defiled conscience anew to the same blood shedding, by the same unchanging Word, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is true that a believer in this present dispensation should have "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 2). Not that if he commit sin it should not trouble his conscience, but that, provision having been made in the one offering of Jesus for perpetual cleansing, it is his privilege to obtain without delay the forgiveness and cleansing which are ever ready for him in Christ Jesus, according to the riches of God's grace (Eph. i. 7).

There is another sense in which Scripture speaks of cleansing by the Word. It is not the cleansing of the conscience, but the cleansing of "the way" (Ps. cxix. 9). It is the application of the pure and holy teachings of the Word of God to my feet and my hands—in other words, to my walk and my actions.

Though once and for ever washed from our sins in the blood of Christ, we cannot acceptably serve the

Lord except as our hands and our feet are continually brought to the laver. Christ is that laver for us. May our hands and our feet evermore be submitted to Him, that we may be sanctified by that Word which is truth, and which tells not only of His death for us but also of His will concerning us.

GLASGOW.—The usual half-yearly meetings of Christians will be held, D.V., in Glasgow, on Thursday, 7th April, 1881, in the Large Hall of the Christian Institute, Bothwell Street. Cards, with particulars, may be had on application at 40 Sauchiehall Street.

DUNDEE FAST-DAY, APRIL 14.—The usual half-yearly meetings will (D.V.) be held in Thistle Hall, Union Street, on the above date.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Believers' Meeting for Breaking of Bread, in the Lower Room, in the House that Jack Built, Lower Reid Street, at Half-past Ten.

IMPORTANT.

As we find the Demand for the "Northern Witness" Volumes (1880) to exceed our calculations, so that they are already sold out, we think it well to invite our Friends and Subscribers to let us know NOW how many of the Bound Volumes for 1881 they would be disposed to take up.

To those who Subscribe early this Year for the 1881 VOL., we offer it in Paper Covers, at 1s. 3d.; and in Cloth, 1s. 9d. Carriage Paid.

Subscriptions terminate in December, and are Payable in Advance by Post Office Order. We continue to forward Magazines after expiry of Subscription, unless otherwise instructed.

New Orders, and alterations on Standing Orders for "Northern Witness," "Herald of Salvation," and "Monthly Illustrated Leaflet," should reach us not later than 10th of previous month, and for other Magazines on the 15th.

It will greatly oblige the Publishers when any error or irregularity occurs in the supply of the Monthly Papers, that they should be immediately informed of it.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS & OTHERS.

We have to request that all Post Office Orders and Cheques be made payable in future to "THE PUBLISHING OFFICE," 40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET, GLASGOW; or, to Mr. WILLIAM KYLE, Manager.

To Sunday School Teachers.

We would direct the attention of Teachers in Sunday Schools, to a SCHEME OF LESSONS prepared for the year 1881, by Brethren engaged in the work. It has now been issued for several years, and has met with acceptance generally. It may be obtained at

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THE NORTHERN WITNESS

LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,
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THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

By R. T. H.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT to this exhortation Moses adds a solemn example as a warning: "Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you" (ver. 3). When Balaam could not curse God's people, but had, in spite of himself, to speak forth God's word of blessing, then he sought to turn Israel aside. Alliance was formed with the daughters of Moab, and judgment fell on all involved. But though Satan was frustrated in the first instance, how soon he succeeded. The history of the kings only affords us too abundant evidence. Solomon's heart was turned aside; Ahab was stirred to wickedness by Jezebel. And soon almost all were only too well accustomed to worldly alliances being formed, and few were separate. And is there not, alas! with all of us, a tendency to make light of worldliness by reason of so much of it abounding round us?

Whether we look at Ezra or Nehemiah, we see each Book closing with a "cleansing" and "separating" going on. And when that ceased the remnant fell into that condition of infidelity, of worldliness, &c., so graphically described by Malachi. And our only safety now is in like manner to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord," to "purge" ourselves, that we may be vessels meet for the Master's use (2 Tim. ii. 21).

The worldliness with which we are surrounded is no

excuse for our being ensnared or affected by it. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John ii. 15, 16). Nothing so hinders growth, or is more destructive of spiritual life. Worldliness will choke the word, and render the Christian unfruitful. It is quite impossible for the two to go on together. Let no one deceive himself on this point. Many a promising young Christian has been turned aside by trying to believe he could keep in with the world, and yet maintain a Christian course; but soon, to his own sorrow, he had to discover that one thing being given up, another soon had to be, and yet another. For a time one may "stand still" (Zech. xi. 16), but it cannot be for long; and anxiously, therefore, should those with Shepherd care watch over, and earnestly should they exhort any who are in such a condition of soul.

Never was there more need to "exhort one another daily, lest any should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii.). The crowded city life, the anxieties and hurry of business, the keen competition, the underselling one of another, the haste to be rich, will shipwreck many, and has done. Young Christian, beware! and as you would not be thus turned aside, watch against the first incoming of worldliness. "Be sober; be vigilant" (1 Pet. v. 8). Learn even from the premature old age, the careworn brow, the anxious face, the unrest of those who are in the race for riches, that you have no place in it. "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. xiii. 5), and then, if riches

increase, your heart shall not be set on them ; they will not lead you into the worldliness and extravagance, the love of show and display that prevails in this age of mere profession, but you shall know how wisely to use, and with liberal hands to scatter. "Even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). Here the very highest example is set before us ; we are not simply to aim at being kept from outward worldliness, but we are to seek to imitate Him ; and what a remarkable verse is quoted in connection with this : "But as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." So fully did He take His place with, and for God His Father, that every reproach fell on Him. He escaped nothing. "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art Galilean" (Mark xiv. 70) ; and the reproach that fell on Him was to fall on Peter, but, alas, he denied Him, and thus escaped the reproach, but at what a cost ! How different when fully restored, and endued with power from on high ; he stood before the council and boldly said, "We are His witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts v. 32) ; and when beaten, they were let go, they rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (ver. 41). Has not many a bright and useful Christian first failed here. They were ashamed of His reproach. The contemptuous look, the sarcastic smile, the cutting word, the imputing of wrong motives, have been hard to bear—can only be borne as He is looked to, and His presence known. And having allowed themselves to be silenced by the bitterness of the world, they have been open to be drawn aside from the narrow path by its flatteries. "Great peace have they that love Thy law : and nothing shall offend them" (margin, they shall have no stumbling-block) (Psalm cxix. 165).

Balaam taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel (Rev. ii. 14), and because they lacked love for God's Word they fell. Satan is still seeking in many crafty ways to seduce God's children, but if His Word is laid up in the heart we shall not be stumbled.

But not only were they to keep the judgments and statutes, that they might honour the Lord and live, but that they might thereby be a witness to the Lord in the sight of surrounding nations. "Keep therefore, and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a

wise and understanding people." The Gentiles were to learn through them. Their obedience, their separatedness, their unlikeness to the other nations, was all to evidence the work God had done for them, the blessing He had bestowed. But, alas ! how different it really was. How little testimony they ever were ; and how soon God was dishonoured among the heathen by them. How soon—instead of the nations learning of God through them—they learnt from the nations their idolatrous ways, and quickly practised them. "They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (Judges ii. 13). "They took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods" (Judges iii. 6). They said, "make us a king to judge us LIKE all the nations" (1 Sam. viii. 5). "King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus, and sent the pattern of it to Urijah, to make one like it" (2 Kings xvi. 10). And Scriptures could be multiplied to show that, instead of the nations learning through them, they were apt learners from the nations. The world influenced them. And is it not so now ? Abraham was a testimony to the sons of Heth ; he could say without fear of contradiction, for his life witnessed : "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you" (Gen. xxiii. 4) ; but how few could speak thus now ? Is it not a fact that Christian life is well-nigh destroyed by the worldliness of this present time ? The need is POWER. The form of godliness has been assumed by the multitude, but the power has been despised and refused. The holy, harmless, undefiled One, who was separate from sinners, has left us an example. His life was one of constant witness : "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ?" (John iv.) "Never man spake like this man," said the officers who had been sent to arrest Him, but who were themselves arrested by the power of His words. How grievously have we sinned in this matter ! Has not the world been stumbled by us instead of learning in us something of God ? We owe it to the world to represent Christ, that in us they may learn of Him. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. xii. 2). Thus only can we become, and continue to be, a witness to the world around. And when the nations surrounding, learning by the bright contrast between Israel's ways, under God's rule, should say,

“Surely this great nation,” &c., they would only be saying what was true. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?” (ver. 7). How beautiful this is; God at the command of His people. Near in all things that they called upon Him for. But such a call would be the call of faith. “How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?” (Rom. x. 14). “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth” (Psa. cxlv. 18). Israel had been called out to walk before Jehovah. “I am that I am,” was His Name; and as long as they remembered that, and believed in the living God, they called upon Him for all; but how soon He was forgotten and turned away from! Then the golden calf, the work of their own hands, was looked to. They ceased to call, for He was not realised as near. Quickly, then, did they corrupt themselves, until they were cast out from His presence. But a day of restoration is at hand; and a people who are now keeping silence shall yet cry unto Him. How is this possible? Listen. “I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought me not” (Isa. lxxv. 1); grace shall visit them yet again, and then they shall call, and the Lord shall answer; they shall cry, and He shall say, “Here I am” (Isa. lviii. 9). Yea, such the grace in that day: “it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer” (Isa. lxxv. 24). Oh, brethren, how all this speaks to us; and how it puts us to shame! How often we have *lost sight of the living God*. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Heb. iii. 12). This is Satan’s object with each one of us, to draw our hearts away from the Lord. He cares not though our lips still name Him, though an outward profession is continued, though words of prayer still arise from our lips, if he can but get our hearts to forget Him, to leave Him out, who is the living God. How easily we are overcome then! But when God is seen and heard; and when we know that He is *nigh*, and that, as we call He hears, and therefore will answer; how strong, how trustful it makes us. What a relief; the burden is cast upon Him. He bears it. The way is committed to Him, and He brings it to pass. Before that a little trial overwhelmed us; now the heaviest moves us not, for we roll it on Him, and sing—

“Is God for me? I fear not though all against me rise,
When I call on Christ my Saviour the host of evil flies.
At all times in all places He standeth by my side;
He rules the battle’s fury, the tempest, and the tide.”

Remember then that, precious as it is to know the counsels of God, or to be as a scribe, able to bring forth things new and old, yet mind and head may be filled, and the heart not true to Him. “And David said in his HEART, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul” (1 Sam. xxvii. 1). What! Is this the same one who boasted in the Lord as having delivered him from lion and bear, and who went out with unbroken confidence to meet Goliath, saying, “This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hands?” (1 Sam. xvii. 46). Yes, the same one. The remembrance of past deliverance was not enough—could not keep him. He lacked the HEART’S trust in God in the time of need, and nought else would do. Thus is it with us. The heart must be trusting Him, or we too shall fall. And David having given up faith in the living God—no longer trusting Him as his defence and strong tower—sought shelter with the enemy; he received the wages of his unrighteous actings, Achish giving him Ziklag, and was ready even to go with the enemies of Jehovah against Israel. Thus low can a child of God fall. May we be kept “praying without ceasing” the prayer of faith, and thus know Him as “nigh in all that we call upon Him for.” On Carmel’s Mount Baal’s priests cried aloud, but they cried in vain. And Elijah, in bitter irony, said, “Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey,” &c. (1 Kings xviii. 27); but when his altar was erected, and his sacrifice laid in order, he had but to call, “Hear me, O Lord, hear me.” And the record is, “THEN the fire of the Lord fell” (ver. 37, 38).

“WE remain here for next year, if all well; but likely before May I will find myself wishing that we were going back to —, for more reasons than one; but I must watch against *this wishing*, for the Lord has taken trouble to teach me that His will must govern mine, and His patient tenderness with me in my waywardness has been wonderful. “Who teacheth like Him?” And in what little measure, by His grace, I have been enabled to resign myself into His hands, to that extent rest has followed; such peace as I never before enjoyed: only a foretaste to quicken appetite. I ask your prayers, that I may go on to fuller proof in the knowledge of Him.”—*Extract from a Letter.*

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. i. 21-29.

FOR after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." That is, it is a part of the wisdom of God that the world by all its wisdom shall be incapable of finding out God.

God has been pleased to reveal Himself in such a way, and to adopt such means of saving sinners as the world *must* esteem foolishness. It has pleased God, not by a voice of thunder, not by sending a mighty army of angels, not by means of miraculous displays of His power, but by means of "the foolishness of preaching," to save those that believe. Again I repeat it, *God never meant that the preaching of His Gospel should be foolish preaching.* It ought to be according to the Scriptures, it ought to be well considered, it ought to be a message from God, and it ought to commend itself to the understanding and conscience of all who hear it. Let it be all that, and still it will appear foolishness to the natural man, nor can it be regarded otherwise, until the heart is opened to receive it by the Spirit of God.

"But we preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

To show that Christ crucified was really "a stumbling-block" to the Jews, turn to John xii. 31-34. Here we find the real difficulty which presented itself to the Jewish mind. Christ had just spoken concerning His death, and indicated even the manner of it in terms which they well knew meant crucifixion. They had heard out of the law that Christ was "to abide for ever;" that of His kingdom there was to be no end; length of days for evermore were His portion. How then could He be the Christ, or the Messiah, if He was to die on a cross? So they asked for a sign. Did they not get signs in abundance? Every miracle He wrought was a sign. Abundant evidence there was that He could be none other than the Son of God, "but though He had done so many miracles before them, they believed not on Him" (John xii. 37).

A solemn word was that spoken to them by the Lord (Luke xvi. 31), "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

No amount of demonstration will ever save a soul. It is only by the mighty quickening power of the Holy Spirit, opening the understanding, and getting right in to the very core of a man's being, as by the thrust of a sword into the heart, that salvation can be effected. Whilst we seek in all simplicity and clearness to preach Christ crucified and risen from the dead, and exalted a Prince and a Saviour at God's right hand, Oh! let us never forget that we are dependent on the Spirit of God to carry that message in power to the unsaved, and that only as God thus gives testimony to the word of His grace can our preaching be blessed.

Clearness of preaching is good, but clearness will not save souls. We are cast on the living God alone for the increase.

We have seen how a suffering crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to the Jews. They did not see that Messiah was to die and rise again, nor would they receive it. Resurrection is the key that unlocks the mystery, and so the Lord told them, "Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

But this was not the difficulty of the Greeks. They sought after wisdom. This poor world has all along in its blindness been groping after wisdom, whilst rejecting that Gospel of God's grace wherein the wisdom of God is pre-eminently displayed.

It did not come to them in the way their proud hearts liked. It came not by the learned, the educated, the great ones of the earth. It came to them into the midst of their learning and philosophy with nothing that could commend it to them according to the flesh. It was only the story of one Jesus of Nazareth, who lived and died in the land of Canaan, who was crucified as a malefactor between two thieves, then laid in a sepulchre and sealed, and afterwards reported to have risen from the dead.

Might not an Athenian say in the pride of his heart, "Is this the sort of preaching that is to save my soul and give me everlasting blessedness? What folly!" Thus they rejected "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God," and clung to their own wisdom, science, and philosophy. But whether we are addressing the poor and ignorant, or the rich and learned of this world, we have only one story to tell. It is all about Christ. It is God's message, it is God's power unto salvation "that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Jesus was "crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). In the cross it seemed to the world as if God was defeated and the enemy triumphant, but the weakness of God is stronger than men, for now the crucified One "liveth by the power of God."

"Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, but God hath chosen the foolish things," &c., &c.

The preachers of the Gospel were not the wise or great of this world, the Lord did not choose such, but fishermen from the shores of Galilee. "When they perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts iv. 13). And this was God's appointment, in order that none might glory in man; and so it is still, the men who are most mightily used by Him are very commonly those who have but little of this world's learning, but their power is that they have "been with Jesus."

Satan's aim has been to get "Christianity" as it is called (but the word is not a scriptural one), allied with the wisdom, philosophy and science of the world; allied with the state and the crown; thus to strip it of its Christlike garb of lowliness, and to give it a standing and a respectability among men. In short, to lift off the reproach of the cross from the followers of Christ. But it cannot be. It is Satan's plan to remove the cross from the disciple, by beguiling the disciple from Christ.

And accordingly, in all this age the majority of God's people are the poor. Not all; as a Christian nobleman once said, "I thank God for the letter M. He has not said—not *any* noble, but not *many* noble." God has His witnesses among all classes. In the house of lords as well as among the poorest. As in Israel of old, the offering of first fruits contained a handful from every field, so God will have among His first fruits a specimen of every sort, from every kindred and nation, and people, and tongue, to show forth His praise. His object in choosing that the bulk of His people are and always have been the poor and the ignorant is, that there should be no glorying in the flesh.

If there ever was a time when the flesh was gloried

in it is now. It is a day of hero-worship. Political heroes, literary heroes, martial heroes, scientific heroes, &c., &c. Every class of men has its heroes and its hero-worshippers. Let us who are the Lord's beware of this sin; beware of glorying in the flesh. Whenever we begin to glory in man God will have to blow upon it. If saints begin to glory in God's servants, then God will have to lay them aside. I believe that many a time when a prominent servant of God has fallen into sin, or been removed from his sphere of service by weakness, it has been permitted by God in His wisdom, because His people were glorying in the man. It was the world's spirit of hero-worship, and God must blast it.

Whilst we ought to thank God for help and blessing received through any servant of His, let us beware of glorying in him.

Nearly all divisions in the Church of God have circled round men that have been gloried in. The cross of Christ lays the axe at the root of all this. We have One to glory in, even Christ Jesus the Lord! He is the treasure-house of all wisdom. Whatever we have received from man has come through the man only as the channel, but from Christ as the source.

PRAYER.

"Ye people pour out your hearts before him."—Psalm lxii. 8.

PF all the exercises in which the children of God can possibly engage, there is none more precious, none more refreshing, and perhaps none more solemn, than prayer. It is of the utmost importance that our approaches to the mercy-seat should be in the consciousness that we are indeed, and in truth, speaking face to face with our heavenly Father. What can be more incomprehensible to the spiritual mind than to hear a believer asking God to "hear him?" Is it not evidence that he fails to realise his privilege of entering by faith into the very holiest? It appears to me as if it were more the language of a Baal worshipper than of a child of God, whose soul is in communion, and whose language ought to be, "I know that Thou hearest me always." (Compare 1 Kings xviii. 26 with John xi. 41, 42). How precious are the examples of the Lord Jesus in prayer while here.

Never for a moment doubting God's hearing, but ever addressing His Father in words which show us how fully He knew the love of the Father's heart. And ought not this to be our privilege, as those who

know their place before God in Christ? Ought we not to rise above all the surroundings of this scene, and forgetting, for a time at least, that we are in the body, call on our heavenly Father in the Spirit and through the Son?

Much confusion often arises in the minds of young saints, when those, who ought to be intelligent in truth, wander so in their prayer that one wonders who the prayer is addressed to. There is such a mixing up of the different offices of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that the Father is addressed as if He accomplished the work that was peculiar to the Son, and oftentimes prayer, instead of being *in* the Spirit, is *to* the Spirit. Ought we not to see that we, as taught in the Word, pray intelligently; and while one would be far from criticising too closely the language of saints in prayer, ought we not to remember that others who may be listening should be edified and instructed by the words we utter.

It would appear, in Old Testament times, God's people ever had the thought of *distance* from God before them in their prayers, and that another and more perfect offering needed to be offered before they could presume to utter such words as Our Father; but let us who can look back to the Cross as an accomplished work, who can see in the one offering of Jesus a full and perfect and abiding satisfaction for the sins of His people, remember that we are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ, that it is our privilege to say Abba Father, and that we have access with confidence. So far from us having any difficulty in gaining God's hearing of us, He waiteth to be gracious, and the promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (See also John xvi. 26, 27). Truly, "we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." In all our prayers let us ever remember this, that God *does* hear, and that He delights to glorify the Son in the giving us the things we need, though often not the things we desire. May God give to His children to ask in faith, nothing wavering, that He may, indeed, supply all our need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, doing for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages.

W. D.

"YE DID IT NOT TO ME."

Matt. xxv. 45.

IT is written of our Lord, that "when He ascended up on high He gave some . . . evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." First, the unspeakable gift of God our Father, on the ground of which all our blessing and security now and for ever rests; then the various gifts of Christ to His Church, when, having by Himself purged our sins, He began in the sanctuary above His blessed resurrection service for His saints. Of the special gifts severally bestowed on individuals, we read in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians—"To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit;" but all are given for and to the Church, as tokens of His Shepherd care, by the living Head in heaven.

Now, it is a very solemn question for our hearts to-day—first, what value we set upon the ONE GIFT, concerning the preciousness of which Paul found no fitting utterance save in the word "unspeakable?" And then, what is our value for the gifts of Christ in the persons of those to whom He entrusts the message of His grace? Surely the one will always be in measure as the other.

Do we need to be reminded that in all the ministry for which the Holy Ghost fits the under shepherds—whether in gathering into the fold of God those who shall be heirs of salvation, or in feeding and caring for the flock—they are only the channels of His grace, having all the treasure in earthen vessels, and needing the prayers and sympathies of those ministered to in a double sense, *i.e.*, in their service as well as in individual trials and temptations, which the more beset them, because, as standard-bearers in the army of Christ, they are specially marked out for the fiery darts of Satan?

But, beside prayer and sympathy, there is another ministry which Christ looks for toward His messengers, and which He counts on from His Church. Concerning this Paul writes to the Corinthian saints, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"

We sometimes perhaps forget that those who labour in the word and doctrine have temporal needs, for the supply of which God holds us responsible. Many of them, finding they could not well carry on at the same

time secular and spiritual work, have chosen to cease caring for themselves, that they might care for the flock of God, or seek to gather into the fold those whom He has purchased with His own blood. Is it too much to say that He whom they serve expects us to care for the temporal need of such?

No doubt we should covet the high honour of ministering to Christ Himself if He were now a pilgrim-stranger here. But what means the word He has left with us? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it *unto Me*." Surely, though the parable has a special application, yet the principle is universal, wherever "one of the least of these" is found. He is no longer here in person, but He sends His messengers amongst us, and shall He not accept our reception of them as given to Himself? Nay, does He not care much more for the comfort of His servants now than in the days of His earthly ministry He did for His own? Surely those who know something of the grace of His heart would answer, yes. As He went throughout the villages of Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, healing the lepers, and casting out devils, which of those to whom He ministered thought of the needs of the lowly and rejected stranger? As we read in Mark i. of His abundant service, so also we read of His reception on the earth: "In the wilderness" (ver. 13); in "a solitary place" (ver. 35); "without, in desert places" (ver. 45). But not thus He cares for His saints. Let us look at His charge to the apostles in Matt. x.: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, neither two coats." And why? Did the Master not care that they lacked anything while they did His blessed work? Ah, not that; but He gave them this passport to the hearts of His people, "He that receiveth you *receiveth Me*." He trusted them to His saints. Let us answer, each one for himself, how have we honoured this confidence of Jesus our Lord?

And then, let us consider also how much might be accomplished in gospel labour, if those to whom God has given means would help those to whom He has committed His message to journey here and there with the Word of Life. Surely this was His purpose when He gave to some in the Church spiritual, to some temporal, abilities. As in the organization of an army, there are not only soldiers to fight, but also supplies of war, and a commissariat department to

provide the needed means, and all work together under the one will, to do the one work, so our God intended the one body of Christ to act in living concert. We have a blessed sample of this in Acts iv. 33, 34, when the Holy Ghost was in power amongst the newly-gathered saints. But how solemn if the work of Christ should fail because one department is closed: because one section gets frozen up, and ceases to act. Ah, beloved saints, who will be to blame? Is this what Paul means when he says, "I myself was not burdensome to you; forgive me this wrong?" Is our love to Christ so small that it cannot reach in a practical form to His members? Are there temporal means lying unused which might be devoted to His blessed work, and for lack of which it is suffering loss, while souls are perishing, and His faithful servants scattered here and there, waiting our sympathies and our help to go on? These are solemn questions. Shall we answer them to our own hearts to-day, or wait for the coming judgment-sent? Then the silver and the gold that once might have been used acceptably for God shall be counted dross, and our opportunities of laying out for eternity the perishing things of earth shall be at an end. Surely if we have not power of utterance, yet, if we have the ability of helping, or, by withholding help, of *hindering* those to whom God has given it, we are in this matter deeply and solemnly responsible before Him. Let us then covet the privilege while we have yet time of being workers together with God; and if the gifts of I Cor. xii. are not ours, let us the more diligently seek to use that which is committed to us for His glory, in the little while left, till He comes to take account with His servants.

THE right way of interpreting Scripture is to take it as we find it, without any attempt to force it into any particular system. Whatever may be fairly inferred from Scripture we need not fear to insist on. Many passages speak the language of what is called Calvinism, and that in almost the strongest terms; I would not have a man clip and curtail these passages to bring them down to some system; let him go with them in their free and full sense; for otherwise, if he do not absolutely pervert them, he will attenuate their energy. But let him look at as many more which speak the language of Arminianism, and let him go all the way with these also. God has been pleased thus to state and to leave the thing; and all our attempts to distort it, one way or the other, are puny and contemptible.

LEAVEN.

PART III.—PROHIBITION OF LEAVEN IN THE OFFERINGS.

THE next allusions to leaven are in connection with the offerings in the Book of Leviticus, and are surpassingly rich in food for the hungry soul. None of the offerings of the Lord *made by fire* were to have any leaven in them (See Lev. ii. 11).

FIRE—the emblem of the searching power of the holiness of God, was applied to part of nearly all the offerings; for nearly all represented the person and work of Christ in some of their many aspects.

He alone, tried in the fire of God's holiness, proved to be "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

When man is tried in the fire, how soon it appears that there is dross mingled with the gold. How soon it becomes evident that there is leaven in the meal, working and rising in fretful opposition to the will of God. Not so God's holy One. In His passage through a more fiery trial than ever mortal endured, or could endure, nought was exhaled from the precious sacrifice but the sweet fumes of frankincense.

Too sweet for mortal sense to apprehend—fit only for the presence of the Father, ALL the frankincense was burnt upon the altar (Lev. ii. 2). All the fragrance of the infinite love of Jesus the Son to God the Father was drawn forth upon the cross.

When the mighty flood had passed away for ever, and with it the curse that rested upon guilty man, "the Lord smelled a sweet savour" (Gen. viii. 21).

All the joy and glory that man had failed to yield to God, were now fully given by that only "untainted sheaf from human soil."

Oh the deep mystery of the cross! What joy, and yet what agony—what glory, and yet what darkness. How the Father's heart groaned as the avenging sword of justice awaked against His own beloved Son—faint picture of which is given in the tale of Abraham and Isaac; and yet what wondrous gladness, as the matchless love of God and the infinite perfection of Jesus shone forth in splendour, which the eternal, unfathomable counsels of God alone could have wrought out. That which represented such a sacrifice must indeed be *free from leaven*.

There are two exceptions to the otherwise invariable prohibition of leaven in the offerings—one is in Lev. vii. 12, 13, where, if the offering be "of thanksgiving," leavened bread was to accompany it.

The *burnt-offering*, the *sin-offering*, and the *trespass-offering*, represented what Christ Jesus alone could do. He only could give Himself unto God an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. v. 2). He only could pay the ransom price for trespasses. He only could be made sin for us; for He knew no sin (2 Cor. v. 21).

But whilst Christ is also the true *Peace-offering*, and alone could make peace by His blood (Col. i. 20), the believer being made partaker of His peace (John xiv. 27; xx. 12), is called thus into fellowship with Him, (1 Cor. i. 9), and privileged to offer one sacrifice continually—even "praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15). Thus the Christian's life should be one continued offering of thanksgiving to God. All service and all worship must be in this spirit—"the love of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 14), "the mercies of God" (Rom. xii. 1), the constraining power.

It is this, that we, in fellowship with Christ, are privileged to offer unto God, that is here typified by the "leavened bread." Hence it is called specially "*his offering*," and is immediately connected with "the sacrifice" (See Lev. ii. 13).

God only fully knows how the various forms of evil that leaven signifies, do enter into all our worship and service. If tested on their own merit by the fire of His holiness, the best we ever offered could only be rejected. Surely we are at no loss to discover from this Old Testament parable, that only in virtue of the blood of the true *Peace-offering* (Col. i. 20) could such leavened services be accepted.

Hence, if we give thanks to the Father, it must be "*by Him*" (Col. iii. 17). "*By Him*, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 15). "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Eph. v. 20). "A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God *by Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter ii. 5).

And are there not many who indeed know somewhat of the importance of *prayer* being offered in the name of Jesus—seeing all we receive is "for His name's sake"—who yet have never realized that ere our truest burst of gratitude could reach the Father's ear with acceptance, it must be presented by our Great High Priest in all the sanctifying efficacy of His most precious blood? But, blessed be God, "*He ever liveth to make intercession for us*." As truly as He was nailed to the cross *for us*—so truly does He now appear in the presence

of God *for us* (Heb. ix. 24). Hence the very words that are used of Christ Himself in Eph. v. 2, are applied to the service of the saints in Phil. iv. 18, and a similar expression in Rom. xii. 2, for the "leavened bread" is presented "*with the sacrifice.*"

PART IV.—THE NEW MEAT-OFFERING.

The other instance in which a leavened offering was prescribed, is found in Lev. xxiii. 16, 17.

Here a new meat-offering is ordained by the Lord—"Two wave loaves of fine flour baked with leaven."

Doubtless, many a prophet and righteous man searched what the Spirit of Christ did signify in this; but to us are revealed by the Spirit things that eye had not seen, nor ear heard before.

On the morning after the Sabbath, the same on which the Saviour rose from the dead, the sheaf of first-fruits was to be waved by the priest before the Lord (Lev. xxiii. 11). Meet emblem of Him, who, as the "Corn of wheat," has fallen into the ground, and died, and risen again—not alone; but bearing a rich harvest of blessing to man, and glory to God.

Seven Sabbaths from this were to be numbered, and on the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, the fiftieth day, or day of Pentecost, this new meat-offering was to be waved before the Lord (Lev. xxiii. 16).

The very day that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, and became "the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20), the sheaf of corn was waved, an empty form—before the riven veil—by a priest, whose order was superseded, in a temple whence the glory had departed.

Fifty days there after the two loaves fell to be offered, the day of Pentecost had "*fully come.*" Doubtless, all was gone through in due form by the very priests that had taken counsel against the Lord's Anointed; but the grand reality, of which this offering was the type, was now to be seen in the three thousand souls, who, through faith in Christ Jesus, were now in the sight of God dead and risen with Him.

Both the sheaf and the leavened loaves were "*first-fruits*" (see Lev. xxiii. 10—17). So, not only has the Lord Jesus become "the *first-fruits* of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20); *we* also are "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James i. 18).

The sheaf was waved before the Lord, to be accepted *for Israel* (Lev. xxiii. 11). So Christ is in all His work accepted for His people, and they in Him (Eph. i. 6).

But this is not said regarding the two loaves; on the

contrary, whilst the sheaf was in itself accepted, needing no sin-offering to accompany it; for there was nought in it to be atoned for—ere the two loaves could be accepted—a kid for the sin-offering; two lambs for a peace-offering; seven lambs, one bullock, and two rams, for a burnt-offering; together with meat-offering and drink-offering, must all be presented.

Even so, it is only in virtue of the full value of Christ and His finished work, as exhibited in all these offerings, that believers, whilst yet in the body, and unable to say they have "*no sin*" (1 John i. 8), can be admitted into the very presence of God, to worship Him, and be made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Having been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and made kings and priests unto God (Rev. i. 5, 6), their place is no longer outside the tabernacle, but within the veil (Heb. x. 20); brought there not in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21); and having an High Priest over the house of God, they have boldness to enter even into the holiest "*by the blood of Jesus*" (Heb. x. 19—21.)

There are two loaves, not one only; thus showing forth in shadow the bringing nigh in the one way of Jew and Gentile (see Acts xv. 11; Ephes. ii. 16, 17).

The loaves were to be baked of "two tenth deals." (Lev. xxiii. 17.) The same quantity, and the same material (*viz.*, fine flour) as the meat-offering, presented the *same day* with the sheaf of first-fruits (v. 13). Beautifully does this accord with John xvii. 23: "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me;" and also with Eph. v. 30: "For we are members of His body." Because members of His body, as precious in the sight of God as Christ Himself. They who touch the believer, "touch the apple of His eye" (Zech. ii. 8). He who persecutes the believer, persecutes Jesus (Acts ix. 4).

This offering was both "holy to the Lord" and "for the priest" (Lev. xxiii. 20). Does not this express a great mystery, *viz.*, that the Church is the peculiar portion of Christ? Compare John iii. 16, "God so loved *the world,*" with Eph. v. 25—27, "Christ loved *the Church,* and gave Himself for *it.*" See also Matt. xiii. 44, where the field is purchased; but the treasure in it was the object of the purchaser. Also John xvii. 11: "Those whom *Thou* hast given *Me.*"

(*To be continued.*)

God's goodness never faileth them that by naked faith do absolutely rest upon it.—*Leighton.*

LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE attentive reader of the first four books of the Bible will have noticed that there is one striking chapter in each book, which typically shadows forth the great truths of salvation. The 22nd chapter of Genesis; "substitution;" the 12th of Exodus, "redemption;" the 19th of Numbers, "cleansing;" and here, "atonement." Ver. 2—"Access." Three times the words "within the veil" are mentioned in this chapter (verses 2, 12, 15; Heb. ix. 12; x. 19, 20). Ver. 3—Typifying two grand aspects of the atoning death of Christ, in the "sin" and "burnt"-offerings. Ver. 4—The "holy linen coat," prefiguring Christ's spotless purity as the Righteous One before God (John xvii. 19). Ver. 6—Aaron and his house represent the Church in its priestly aspect (1 Pet. ii. 5; Heb. iii. 6).

In these "two goats" we have represented two aspects of the same offering for sin. The goat on which the Lord's lot fell: type of Christ dying on the cross, when the whole weight of God's judgment fell upon Him, Christ became a curse for us (Deut. xxi. 23; 2 Cor. v. 21). The "scapegoat." Three times the word "alive" is mentioned in connection with this goat (verses 10, 20, 21; John xvii. 18): type of Christ bearing the sinner's sins (Isa. liii. 11, 12; Psalm ciii. 12). With ver. 34—"Once a year" (see Heb. ix. 7; x. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 18).

Chap. xvii.—Two important lessons are taught us in this chapter. First, That "life" belongs to God; "the blood is the life thereof." Second, atonement is only by blood (Heb. ix. 22; Eph. i. 7; 1 John i. 7; Rev. vii. 12).

Chaps. xviii.—xx. contains general laws against all conformity to the corrupt usages of the heathen, or their own sinful desires. They were a "separate" people, and God would have them maintain their relationship to Himself, by guarding against all defilement. Hence He gives them these moral precepts (1 Pet. i. 13-16; Titus ii. 11-14).

Chaps. xxi., xxii. are laws obliging priests to preserve the dignity of their priesthood. All true believers are priests; but to maintain the full enjoyment of priestly communion and worship, there must be the unblemished character, a separate walk, a holy life (1 Tim. iv. 8, 12, 16; vi. 3-6).

Chap. xxiii.—"The feasts of the Lord." All these

feasts are typical and dispensational. The "Sabbath" (ver. 3), typical of "rest," which the believer has now, and which he will fully enter into in the future, in glory" (Heb. iv.) The "Passover" (ver. 5), typical of the death of Christ (1 Cor. v. 7). "Unleavened bread" (ver. 6). "No servile work," no legality, no effort, no labour of man's hands; "to live" must be "Christ," in whom there was no "leaven." The "sheaf of first fruits" (ver. 10), type of the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 20; 1 Thess. v. 13-18). "Fifty days" (ver. 16), the "Pentecost," type of the Holy Ghost, sent in Pentecostal power to form the Church *after* the resurrection of Christ from the dead (John vii. 39; Acts ii. 1). They shall be baked with "leaven" (ver. 17); here leaven was to be used: type of evil and corruption in the old Adam nature and the Church; the flesh is still the flesh, though indwelt by the Spirit; hence the need of "seven lambs without blemish," &c. (ver. 18), typifying Christ's perfectness, and not our sinfulness, which is ever a sweet savour unto God. The "feast of trumpets," typical of the awakening of the remnant, and the restoration of Israel (Zech. xii. 10-14). All grounded on "atonement" (ver. 27), typical of Christ's death (Zech. xiii. 1; Isa. liii.) The "feast of tabernacles," typical of Israel's glory in the latter day—a millennial scene (Zech. xiv. 16).

Chap. xxiv.—"Pure olive oil" (ver. 1), typical of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. "Lamps to burn continually:" of Christ, who is the "Light," ever burning in the presence of the Father in heaven, and in the Church. The twelve cakes: of Christ, who is the "Presence Bread," on whom the believer feeds in the "holy place" (verses 5-9; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17). The blasphemer of the "Name" put to death (verses 16, 22, 23; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Rev. xiii. 6; Heb. x. 28-31).

Chap. xxv.—In the previous chapter we learn that the house of Israel is preserved for the land of Canaan. In this chapter the land of Canaan for the house of Israel. "All Israel shall be saved," and the land shall not be "sold." Thus it is the year of "Jubilee" (ver. 10) is introduced in this chapter: typical of Israel's future deliverance from all those who have held them captives (Isa. lxxvi. 12-23).

Chap. xxvi.—Promises of reward in case of obedience, on the one hand (verses 1-13), and threatening of punishment for disobedience on the other

(verses 14-39). Then promises of mercy, to remember those who confess and repent, and accept the punishment of their iniquity (verses 40, 46), all based on the ground of His covenant made with their fathers—with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Chap. XXVII.—“A singular” or “special vow” of one who devoted himself and his property to the Lord. A provision made for the poor as well as the rich. The former had to submit to the valuation put upon himself or his gift by the priest. The latter had to rise to the standard of Moses’ estimation. Moses, illustrative of the unbending character of the “law” and divine “righteousness;” the priest, of the provisions of divine and sovereign grace. “And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 16, 17).

THE OVERTHROW OF THE GENTILE MONARCHIES; AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL AS FIRST OF THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH.

IN the meantime, we shall consider why it is that God permits them to *assail Jerusalem*. It is because He intends to punish the Jewish people, not only for rejecting His beloved Son, their true Christ, but for accepting the false one—the Antichrist. Ezekiel, speaking of these coming days of vengeance, says—“Thus saith the Lord God, because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you *into the midst of Jerusalem*. As they gather silver and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you” (Ezek. xxii. 19, 20).

The Jews have *suffered in the past*: they have lost their place and their nation. They *suffer in the present*, for they are still the people of “the wandering foot and the weary breast:” but these sufferings are as nothing compared to what they must *suffer in the future*. As I said before, they shall go back to their own land in unbelief—restore their city—rebuild their temple—and re-establish their worship.

From this passage in Ezekiel, we see that *it is of the Lord*: He permits it: yea, *He gathers them there*, that He may pour out upon them His anger and His fury to melt them. How is He to accomplish this? By allowing the hosts of Antichrist to *assail them*, and to

trample upon them, and to take many of them captive. Such is clearly the teaching of Isaiah x. and Zech. xiv. “O, Assyrian (one of the names of the Antichrist), the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets” (Isa. x. 5, 6). “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go into captivity, and the residue shall not be cut off from the city” (Zech. xiv.)

This is what the prophet Daniel describes as “A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time” (Dan. xii. 1, 2); and what the Lord Himself in Matt. xxiv. calls, “A great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. xxiv. 21).

Amid the horror of these scenes, and in this their time of trouble, God will touch the hearts of many of those doomed to destruction by this Man of Sin. Ah! they will have learned ere this the deep bitterness of being betrayed and deserted by a pretended friend, “the words of whose mouth were smoother than butter, and softer than oil;” but now, that he has broken his covenant, and revealed himself in his true character, they have learned that “his words were drawn swords,” and that “war was in his heart” (Psa. lv. 20, 21). Looking away from the one who has so cruelly deceived them, they will again seek the God of their fathers.

“In that day God will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem” (Zech. xii. 9, 10).

We have the experience of these down-trodden ones, while passing through these deep waters, most graphically described in many of the Psalms. As the prophets were inspired to write beforehand the experience of the Lord Himself, when He for us was passing through

the sufferings of Gethsemane and Calvary (Psa. xxii., lxix., xl., &c.); so likewise the bitter sufferings of the remnant (those described in the passage already quoted from Zech. xiv. 2 as the residue of the people which shall not be cut off from the city), and their experience during this season of bitter trial, are depicted in many of the Psalms. Their adaptability to the events, and to those personally acting in the circumstances, which I have endeavoured, feebly indeed, to describe, *is most striking*. Let us consider, as an instance, the words of the 83rd Psalm—"Keep not Thou silence, O God; hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones." (Striking words these, when we connect them with the 2nd Psalm—"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers *take counsel together*"): "They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against Thee." The 79th Psalm is also applicable to this time—"O God, the Gentiles are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled" (referring to the abomination, or idol set up by the Antichrist, in the holy place); "they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. . . . How long, Lord? wilt Thou be angry for ever? shall Thy jealousy burn like fire? . . . O remember not against us former iniquities: let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name. . . . Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee; according to the greatness of Thy power preserve Thou those that are appointed to die; and render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached Thee, O Lord."

Thus will these poor stricken and down-trodden ones plead; thus will they cry. Nor will it be in vain, for their supplications will be heard; their cries will enter the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and He will appear for their deliverance, and for the utter discomfiture and defeat of all their foes.

And now, having considered at some length the gathering of this mighty host—their object in meeting, and their partial success—let us for a little dwell on *their overthrow*.

The inspired writer of the Psalm calls this mighty confederation "a vain thing," for "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure."

The scene is changed. We are no longer on the earth, but in heaven. We pass from the tumultuous assembly of the wicked right into the presence of the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we learn that, when the Lord Jesus Christ "had by Himself purged our sins, *He sat down* at the right hand of the Majesty on high;" so, the One spoken of here as "sitting in the heavens" is none other than He. There He has been sitting while the last 1800 years have been rolling their course. Years of rich and wondrous grace to a world steeped in guilt: during which time the gospel has been, and is being, proclaimed in all its fulness, and freeness, and suitability. There, at the right hand of the Father, He sits, waiting, patiently waiting, until the Church of the first-born is complete, until the last loved one shall have been called in; waiting, patiently waiting, until Israel shall acknowledge her offence, and seek His face (Hos. v. 15); waiting, patiently waiting, until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet (Psalm cx. 1).

Then shall He come forth—having received full authority, and having full power—to crush His enemies beneath His feet, and to deliver His oppressed and afflicted ones. I say—*having received full authority*, because it is in heaven He is to be invested with the kingdom, as Dan. vii. clearly proves. When human iniquity has reached its height, and the decisive moment arrives—the judgment is set, the books are opened—the Son of Man is brought before the Ancient of Days, and there is given to Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom—everlasting dominion—a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.

From thence He comes forth to trample His foes beneath His feet—to deliver His persecuted ones out of the power of the oppressor—to wrest His kingdom from the hands of the usurper—to establish His righteous rule upon the earth—and to reign over it in righteousness, in conjunction with His risen saints.

His coming forth is thus described by the apostle John: "I saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful

and True; and in righteousness He doth judge, and make war; . . . and the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. . . . And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He had on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. xix. 11-15). Such is the army of heaven.

The opposing hosts are thus described by the same inspired pen. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army (ver. 19).

The glory of heaven will thus confront the glory of earth. And what is to be the issue? Will man prevail, or God? Let the Word of God answer (Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 20, 21). "These shall make war with the Lamb, and *the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*" "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. *And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, . . . and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*"

Equally explicit are the words of the prophet Zechariah in chaps. xii. and xiv. "Behold *the day of the Lord* cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will *gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle:* and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled," &c. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle."

"Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about. . . . In that day will I make Jerusalem a burthensome stone for all people: all that burthen themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness."

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it *shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*" (Dan. ii. 44).

We see clearly, then, that it is by desolating judgments on the wicked—by the overthrow of the Gentile monarchies—the millennial dispensation is to be ushered in. Then, not till then, shall Christ sit as King on Zion, the mountain of His holiness; and "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

There are many passages which inseparably link together three things:—

- (1) Israel's Restoration.
- (2) Judgment on their adversaries, and
- (3) The introduction of millennial blessings.

One or two will suffice. In Joel we read, "Behold in those days, and at that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem."

Here we have their restoration. Now let us continue the passage—"I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people, and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land." Thus, *we have God's judgment on their adversaries.*

Further down in the chapter, after describing the day of the Lord, it is added in the next verse, "The Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation." So that, following the judgments to be poured out in the day of the Lord, we have *the introduction of millennial blessedness in the earth.*

Zech. xiv. is equally clear. The chapter opens with these words:—"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh." And after describing the coming of the Lord, together with His saints, it is added in the 9th verse, "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one, . . . and Jerusalem shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, . . . and men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

There can be no manner of doubt about these passages. They clearly prove that Jerusalem and the earth must continue to exist *after the day of the Lord, and the coming of the Lord Jesus with His saints.*

Then shall the whole of the twelve tribes be

restored to the land of their forefathers, and be *permanently established* therein. "I will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezek. xxxvii. 22).

Then shall the grand and glorious prediction of Isaiah receive its complete accomplishment—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever."

"In His days the righteous shall flourish; and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . *All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. . . . His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed.* Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen" (Psa. lxxii.)

R. B.

WORSHIP.

ONCE more, O God, with hallowed joy,
Thy willing people meet;
Their plea, the merits of Thy Son;
Their place, Thy mercy-seat.

How oft when thus assembled here
Have they Thy Presence known:
The riches of redeeming love,
The glories of Thy Throne!

How oft have they, delighted, searched
The treasures of Thy Word;
And seen divine perfection shine,
In their exalted Lord!

Thine eye beholds Him, gracious God;
May they now see Him too;
The myst'ry of His grace reveal
To faith's adoring view.

Thus fed, and taught, and lifted up,
May all in peace depart;
The mem'ry of this sacred hour,
Deep graven on each heart.

And lead all by such heav'nly joys,
To long for that bright scene,
Where they in glory shall appear
Without a cloud between.

M. W.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION NO. LVII.

Did Judas partake of the Lord's Supper?

REPLY.

This is an important question. The supposition that the Lord permitted the presence of the traitor is the excuse with many for opening the Lord's table to all. They come (it is said) "on their own responsibility." It is very plain that, on this system, multitudes will intrude themselves who have no part

nor lot in the matter. The less conscientious men are, the more ready will they be to presume.

But when the Scripture is carefully weighed the case is made plain. The first and main point to observe is, that there were, beyond all doubt, *two* suppers. The first was the passover, of which the Lord said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). At *this* supper he that did eat bread *with* Him lifted up his heel against Him (John xiii. 18),

and dipped his hand *with* Him in the dish (Matt. xxvi. 23).

If we look at John xiii. 30, we see that Judas went out *immediately* after he was convicted. When was that? If we turn to Matt. xxvi. 25 and Mark xiv. 21, we find that it was before the Lord's Supper was instituted. In John's Gospel, we find that there was no interval whatever between his conviction and his departure. In the other two Gospels, we see that, at the time when he was convicted, the Lord's Supper had not been instituted. He went out *immediately*, during or just after the passover.

But, then, it is objected that Luke's Gospel speaks of the hand of the betrayer being with the Lord on the table, after the Lord's Supper had been instituted. Luke's Gospel, however, does not relate chronologically.* His order is rather moral. He does not at all separate or distinguish the two suppers, and does not make mention of Judas going out.

A careful consideration of the whole passage in Luke xxii. (which has occasioned the difficulty, and has been so much misunderstood) will prove that it could not all have been spoken in the presence of Judas, for he was then known as the traitor. John knew it, as we see by his Gospel (xiii. 25, 26); and he had inquired of the Lord, by Peter's desire. It is very possible that they by no means understood that the betrayal was so near; but they knew the true character of the man. How then could our Lord, at that time, say in the presence of Judas—"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom," &c. ? (Luke xxii. 28, 30).

It is true that, in Matt. xix. 29, similar language had been used in reference to all the twelve: but Judas was not then detected; and our Lord, in His wonderful grace, was still dealing with him as a chosen friend; empowering him to preach the Gospel, and to cast out devils; and regarding him as one of the twelve in His apostleship. But from that apostleship Judas, by transgression, *fell* (Acts i.), and he had, in fact, fallen at the time when the Lord was speaking the words in Luke xxii. 22-30. Satan had entered his heart.

Then, if the words in these verses (Luke xxii. 28-30) cannot be taken as spoken in immediate sequence to the preceding ones, there is no reason to conclude that ver. 21, 22, relating to the hand of the betrayer being

on the table, must have been spoken after the institution of the Supper in verses 19, 20. The whole passage which follows that solemn act (ver. 21 to ver. 38) includes a variety of searching warnings and instructions. Of these ver. 23 (as to the disciples inquiring who should betray Him) corresponds with John xiii. 22, of which we know the exact time, namely, when they were eating the Passover Supper, and before the Lord's Supper was instituted. And ver. 27, as to the Lord giving the example of service, was spoken at the same time, or earlier, according to John xiii. 15. It seems, therefore, to be very plain that the narrative in Luke is not given in chronological order, and that the only words in it which can be quoted as suggesting the presence of Judas at the Lord's Supper cannot be relied on to prove it; and so the case, as we gather it from the three other Gospels, remains untouched. Indeed, those Gospels are so distinct on the point in question, that some have attempted to support the theory of the presence of Judas, by suggesting that he went out and *returned*; but for this there is no Scripture warrant.

But we may view the matter in yet another light. The disciples had made ready the passover (Luke xxii. 12), that is, they had removed all material leaven; but the chief preparations had no doubt been made by the man of faith, whose desire had been to provide a room "furnished and prepared" for the Master (Mark xiv. 15). It remained to "make ready," and that was, to search for all leaven. At that passover-supper it was the manifest duty of Judas, as a Jew *ceremonially* clean, to be present; and it is certain that he was present, and partook. But how was it possible for the Lord to permit him, full of the worst spiritual leaven, to be present at the new supper? Were not the Master's own eye and words sufficient to enforce, by anticipation (1 Cor. v. 7, 8) the eating of the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth?

The matter may be cleared to many minds by remembering that, in the first supper, Judas could, and did, eat with the Lord. But, in the Lord's Supper, *no one partook with Him*. He gave the bread, and gave the cup to His disciples, for them to eat and drink that which symbolized His broken body and shed blood. We cannot suppose that He partook of His own body and blood, or of that which symbolized them. The words, therefore, in the

* This characteristic of Luke's Gospel has been remarked by many of the best expositors of Scripture.—(Ed.)

Gospel, respecting eating and drinking *with* Him, as Judas did, *must* refer to the previous supper—the passover. As a Jew, Judas had his place there; but he had gone out before the Lord instituted the other supper. That lost one, the son of perdition, could have no place at that new feast of love.

QUESTION NO. LVIII.

Am I correct in believing that the first Adam was before the fall INNOCENT, but NOT HOLY; if so, will you give Scriptural proof for it?

REPLY.

Adam before his fall is not in Scripture called either “innocent” or “holy,” but “upright” (Eccl. vii. 29). That he was “innocent” is evident; for not only had he not sinned, but he had no knowledge of evil. That he was not “holy,” in the sense in which this word is often used in the New Testament of those “called saints” (holy ones, 1 Cor. i. 2), in reference to their character as redeemed, is also evident. On the other hand, we have the word “holy” used in regard to the angels (Matt. xxv. 31), where there is no reference to redemption. On such points 1 Tim. vi. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 23 warn us not to be dogmatic in the use of words, one way or the other, without scriptural authority.

QUESTION NO. LIX.

Does the word “Lord” in the following Scriptures mean the Holy Spirit:—2 Cor. iii. 18 (margin), “The Lord the Spirit;” 2 Thess. iii. 5, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ?”

REPLY.

‘ Rather than making a distinction between the Lord Jesus and the Holy Ghost, such Scriptures seem very beautifully to have reference to the wondrous fact, that as the Father and the Son are one, so the Lord and the Spirit are one also.

QUESTION NO. LX.

The railway company to which I belong has recently established a superannuation fund. Should I be acting contrary to Scripture in joining it? Our Lord’s injunction, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth” is specially on my mind?

REPLY.

The Scripture referred to in the question does not seem exactly to bear on the point. “Treasures” in

Matt. vi. 19-21 are those things upon which the *heart* is specially set: “for where your treasure is there will your heart be also;” and making provision for old age, sickness, or relatives would hardly come under the head of the “treasures” here spoken of. But verses 24-34 may guide, especially ver. 33. In all such cases, it is better for each one not to go beyond his or her faith, but to act as before the Lord.

PARTICK.—The Christians assembling hitherto in 10 Orchard Street, Partick, purpose removing in May to Hall in Crawford Street, Partick. The prayers of God’s people are asked, for much help and blessing in New Hall.

BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE.—Christians meet to Break Bread each Lord’s-day at half-past ten a.m., in the Court House, and will continue to do so, if the Lord tarry, till the end of October.

IMPORTANT.

As we find the Demand for the “Northern Witness” Volumes (1880) to exceed our calculations, so that they are already sold out, we think it well to invite our Friends and Subscribers to let us know NOW how many of the Bound Volumes for 1881 they would be disposed to take up.

To those who Subscribe early this Year for the 1881 VOL., we offer it in Paper Covers, at 1s. 3d.; and in Cloth, 1s. 9d. Carriage Paid.

Subscriptions terminate in December, and are Payable in Advance by Post Office Order. We continue to forward Magazines after expiry of Subscription, unless otherwise instructed.

New Orders, and alterations on Standing Orders for “Northern Witness,” “Herald of Salvation,” and “Monthly Illustrated Leaflet,” should reach us not later than 10th of previous month, and for other Magazines on the 15th.


It will greatly oblige the Publishers when any error or irregularity occurs in the supply of the Monthly Papers, that they should be immediately informed of it.

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WE have to request that all Post Office Orders and Cheques be made payable in future to “THE PUBLISHING OFFICE,” 40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET, GLASGOW; or, to Mr. WILLIAM KYLE, Manager.

We purpose in our Next to give a List of Books, &c., issued by OTHER PUBLISHERS, which we can recommend to our Readers, and to Christians generally, as worth having, and which will be regularly kept in Stock at

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FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

EXOD. XVI.—THE MANNA.

“He rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the *corn of heaven*. Man did eat angels’ food” (Psalm lxxviii. 24, 25).

“As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that *eateth Me*, even he shall *live by Me*” (John vi. 57).

THE manna was the wilderness food of the children of Israel. For forty long years it was given them morning by morning from the hand of their faithful God, and neither their murmurings nor their sins restrained Him from sending it, until their feet stood in the land of their possession, and had eaten of its fruit. “Then the *manna ceased* after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more” (Joshua v. 12).

Precious and practical are the lessons we may gather from the manna. Like Israel of old in the wilderness of Sin, we are left to hunger. The new life, begotten of God within us, finds no sustenance in the present evil world, it sighs for heavenly things, it hungers after God. Egypt’s fruits are foreign to the taste of the “new man,” although “the flesh” still lurking in the saint can relish them well. Let us be on our guard then and watch, lest we *feed* the old and *starve* the new.

Exodus xvi. opens with a view of the wilderness, and a murmuring camp complaining for want of bread. It is the second month since Egypt was left behind, and whatever they had brought with them in their kneading troughs was exhausted. There was no help

for them but in God; and, blessed be His name, *He* was near and ready to charge Himself with the responsibility of supplying all their need. Not surely because they deserved it, for the sequel shows the reverse, but because He loved them, and with such a love as all their murmuring could not quench. Blessed it is for them, and *for us*, that such is the case; we could have no claim upon God but for sovereign grace. And so the manna fell in rich abundance from the courts of heaven, right down at their very doors. Unearned by the sweat of the brow, it fell during the hours of night while they slept, the gift of God, and they had only to gather it and eat. “Man did eat angels’ food”—“He *satisfied* them with the bread of heaven” (Psalm lxxviii. 25; cv. 40).

Jesus is the manna for our souls; it is by feeding on Him that our spiritual life is nourished and sustained. As He *only* can give life, so He *only* can sustain it. And this He does by presenting Himself to us in the written Word through the Spirit. Not only in His death as the Lamb slain, nor in His resurrection from the dead, as the old corn of Canaan; but as the *humbled* One, who was down here below in the likeness of men—“the Word made flesh who dwelt among us.” As strangers here, we need the friendship and the consolation of One who has felt the same, and this we have in Jesus. How cheering to our souls it is, to trace His footsteps along the gospels, from the manger to the cross. How the manna character of Jesus appears there. The *small, round* thing lying on the face of the wilderness unknown and unnamed among men. He came in the night of the world’s darkness, and passed away unheeded or despised by those He came to bless.

They knew Him not, but *we* know Him and delight to feed upon Him as the humbled One.

The manna was *white*. It lay unsullied in the dew-drop on the sand of the desert. Such was the blessed Lord. Although *in* the world, and continually moving amid its defiling scenes, He was holy, harmless, undefiled. *White* in His unsullied path from the manger to the cross, as His garments were on the transfiguration mount. So is the written Word that reveals Him. Infidelity and superstition have done their best to prove there are spots, and imperfections in it, but they have failed; the Word shines on in its brightness, and the saints adoringly proclaim, "Thy Word is *very pure*: therefore thy servants love it" (Psa. cxix. 140). It was *sweet*—the taste was like *honey*. Samson asked in his riddle "What is sweeter than honey?" The youngest saint could answer, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psa. cxix. 103).

Such is the bread on which the Lord would have us feed during our pilgrimage, and even after it is past we shall not surely forget the bread of our wilderness days; for such is His love, that an omer was to be treasured for a memorial. The manna once lying on the desert was treasured in the "golden pot" within the vail. He who had not where to lay His head on earth, is glorified in the highest heaven, and we shall see His glory. But even then, the memory of His humiliation shall not be forgotten in our hearts, for we shall "eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. ii. 17) in its everlasting sweetness there.

The way in which the manna was gathered is a point of great importance to us. May the Lord enable us to feel it so.

"*They gathered every man according to his eating.*" God gave it, they gathered it. It must be appropriated by them in order to be enjoyed, and so it is with us. There is bread enough and to spare, there is fulness in Christ for all our needs, but we must diligently gather it from the Word for ourselves. No believer can expect to prosper in his soul if he neglect the Word of God. It is the means appointed by God whereby He ministers strength and sustenance to His people, and he who slights it will be a positive loser. If a man neglect to feed his body, his strength will soon diminish, and his whole constitution suffer; so it is with the inner man, though alas! it may not be so readily perceived.

Christian reader! we desire to press this matter home upon your heart and conscience. We feel it to be a matter of immense importance and one affecting the very vitals of Christianity. The low state of spiritual life among the people of God, the lack of divine power in the service of the Lord, and the sadly uneven walk of many who profess to be, and many of whom we would fain hope are truly the Lord's, are things deplored and mourned over among us. But is there not a cause? Most undoubtedly there is; and we would humbly suggest that it may be this—*neglect of the soul's nourishment, through a lack of meditation on the Word, alone with God*. This is a busy age. Things go at a great rapidity, and everything tends to draw the saints of God from their *closets* and their *Bibles*. Controversies in the church, and upheavings in the world are engrossing the attention of many of the saints, and the devil is making capital of the occasion in quietly alluring the saints from the solace of the "secret place." Troubles and perplexities are abroad in the *commercial* world, and from early till late Christian men are occupied scheming how those difficulties are to be met. It is perfectly right that the Christian merchant should have his business so ordered that the world will not point the finger of scorn at any inconsistency therein, but *nothing on earth* can justify the neglect of having time to spend with God in meditation on His Word, nor will God's blessing rest upon the man who attempts it. It may be that such seasons will at times be necessarily short, but the Lord knows all our circumstances, and He can make a little gathered go a long way, "for he that gathered little had no lack." Every man gathered *according* to his eating, some more, some less, but the manna was adapted to the requirements of all; and little children, young men, and fathers, all find their portion in the Word (1 John ii. 12-17). The next point is—

It was gathered early. The camp was early astir; gathering the manna was their morning work, for "when the sun waxed hot it melted." This is an important point. "They that seek Me *early* shall find Me," is a statute in the kingdom of God and in experience of the saints. "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear" (Isa. l. 4), was the language of the Perfect Man; and His custom was "a great while before day," to seek the "solitary place" alone with God (Mark i. 35). If the "daily newspaper" or the "morning letters" be perused as the

first thing in the morning, there will be but feeble appetite for the heavenly manna. If the cares of the household or the anxieties of business are allowed to crowd in upon the soul, before it has received strength from God through meditation on His Word, it can scarcely be wondered if things be felt a drag and burden all day. A well known saint has written—"If I neglect morning meditation on the Word and prayer, nothing goes well during the day." O, that this was felt by each one of us more! But where the blessedness of the early gathered manna has never been enjoyed, the lack of it cannot of course be felt. Strengthened by the bread of God, renewed in the inner man morning by morning, how calmly should we go forth to meet the vicissitudes of life, and how peacefully encounter its conflicts, and bear the daily cross. We know full well that many of the dear saints from the nature of their calling have but little time to meditate on the Word. The mother, the domestic servant, and many others will find it difficult to secure such seasons; but the Lord is not ignorant of such things, and He can give much strength out of the little that has been diligently gathered.

It was gathered daily. Yesterday's portion will not do for to-day. Lord's-day manna cannot suffice for Monday. It must be gathered fresh, and used, or it bred worms and stank. Truth stored in the notebook or the intellect, unexperienced by the soul, and unpractised in our walk, is of little value: it neither sanctifies nor nourishes. Retailing out to others what has never been experienced by ourselves cannot be a blessing. It only stinks in people's nostrils and puffs up ourselves. It is by reason of "use" that we grow in the knowledge of Christ. Practising what we know, God gives us more. Walking uprightly in the ways of God along the desert, we shall never lack an appetite for the heavenly manna. Thus may it be with us, dear brethren, till the wilderness be past.

Numbers xi. gives the next account of the manna, but O, how changed! How soon the fine gold grows dim, and the warmth of youth and first love declines. The second year of desert life often finds the saints of God less true-hearted than the first. So with Israel. Redemption by blood, deliverance from Egypt, and even the daily manna are old stories now to them, very commonplace things too for a heart that has departed from the living God. The truth is, "in their hearts they had turned back to Egypt" (Acts. vii. 39),

and now they remember the nice things they once had there, and sigh to obtain them. Not a word about the brickmaking and the bondage; the devil takes good care not to remind them of their former state; he holds up the pleasures of it to the best advantage, and the result is, God's manna was despised.

Do you know aught of this, dear reader? Can you honestly say, "*Jesus, Thou art enough,*" as you did when first converted? You remember those happy days when He was so precious, and the Word so sweet that told you of Him. How eagerly you read and searched the Scriptures, and seized each spare moment to do so. Your Bible was your constant companion; the trashy novels, the light literature, the funny journal had no attraction then. Jesus, "*Jesus only,*" was enough; there was pleasure enough in Him, recreation enough in His service; nothing more was wanted. Do you find it so to-day? Alas! many do not; they have, like Israel of old, "*turned back in heart to Egypt,*" and desired its pleasures. What they cast aside long ago is now devoured with greed; things they would have been ashamed of years ago are now their boast. What mean the worldly gatherings, the innocent amusements, the questionable songs indulged in by many, and their conspicuous absence at the prayer meeting, the well-thumbed novel and dust-covered Bible, the *hours* spent in trifling conversation, and *moments* in prayer? All tell their own story; and, as an excuse for the miserable exhibition, they tell us, "We cannot be always speaking about Christ; we cannot be *always* reading our Bible; we must have *some* change, *some* variety." It's just the old story: "There is nothing at all *beside* this manna;" and I would like to know what more is needed. The everlasting song of heaven will be Jesus, *only* Jesus, and if He will be enough for heaven, why not for earth? If enough for eternity, why not for time?

The "mixed multitude" were the first to lust, the rest followed. Young believer! beware of religious professors, or even Christians of mixed principles and carnal ways. They can do more to lead you from God than an open enemy.

But this is not all; the lusting after Egypt's food changes the taste of the manna. Once it was like honey, now like fresh oil; any one knows the difference; the sweetness was gone. And not satisfied with the manna as it came, they began to bake it into cakes, perhaps to save the trouble of gathering it daily. When the heart

gets away from God how little sweetness has the Word; it becomes a barren and tasteless affair to read through a single chapter. Manna cakes, in the shape of sermons or addresses, are much nicer, and by reading them instead of the Word, trouble is saved. This is lamentable, but too true of many; if it be so of us, may God alarm us about it.

Numb. xxi. shows the evil full grown. The people tell God "There is *no bread* . . . and our soul *loatheth* this light bread." Fearful words. Judgment followed. How often has it to be so with the saints! Back-sliding begun in the heart, the *closet* and the *Word* neglected, then follows an open fall, or some terrible stroke of the rod. Thus only the sluggish soul awakes out of the devil's snare. How much more pleasing to God, and joyful for us, when the heart can sing—

"Jesus, Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill."

J. R.

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

By R. T. H.

CHAPTER IV. (*Continued*).

ANOTHER proof of their greatness follows:—"What nation is there so great, that hath judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (ver. 8). Thus the *righteousness* of their laws, as well as the *nearness* of God, told out their greatness.

The righteousness of their laws told it, for they were equal and proportionate, as we should say. Whilst overbearing tyranny and oppressive cruelty reigned amongst the heathen, the laws of God brought about in Israel the very opposite. What care for the poor, for the slave, for the unwitting man-slayer, and for the captive! No laws for the benefit of a class that would bear hardly upon another. The carrying out of His laws would have produced order and kindness of feeling toward all, and maintained righteousness in their midst. Thus their greatness was made to depend entirely upon God Himself. Well might the Psalmist exclaim—"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine

gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psa. xix. 7-11). And thus should every true child of God speak now. Let none say His commands are irksome; there is great reward in keeping His word, in fulfilling His wish. Oh for subject hearts and wills obedient to His; then shall we run in the way of His commandments, and true greatness shall be ours.

After thus unfolding to them their greatness, and having shown in what it consisted, he continues with solemn exhortations as to the walk and behaviour fitting to a people thus brought into covenant relationship with God.

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons" (ver. 9). Responsibility comes in, for if God had spoken, then it became them to keep in their hearts, and to obey in their lives all His precepts. And how needful such an injunction. Their fathers had not so done; and because they had not, had fallen under judgment. And they had hearts as evil, and prone to wander. And so corruptions within, in themselves, and corruptions around, in the nations they were to drive out, all called upon them "to take heed." God had spoken, and it was theirs to obey; only thus could "their greatness" appear to the surrounding nations. That which they had seen and heard of God was to be treasured up. They were to see that no one robbed them of it. They would be in constant danger of forgetting God's laws, and the requirements of His holiness, therefore diligence was demanded. The word of the Lord had been spoken; they were to hold it fast; "they saw no similitude;" they heard "a voice." Faith cometh by *hearing* (Rev. xxii. 7). "How shall they believe except they *hear*?" (Rom. x. 17). It is not by seeing, but hearing. And that which they heard at Horeb they were to treasure in their hearts. And is not this the call to us now? to hear Him; and, having heard, to lay it up in our hearts. Heart work is needed in the things of God, for only as the affections are engaged and centred on Him can there be willing, instant, unquestioning obedience. Depend upon it, if His will and Word depart from our hearts, the next manifestation of declension will be "an evil heart of unbelief in

departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). What delight there is in serving one we love, in carrying out their smallest wish, nay, in anticipating their wish, so that, before they can express it, we are executing it. Who, when watching over a sick one they dearly love, would willingly allow any other to serve them? What jealousy is manifested to do all; and if any other attempt to relieve them, it seems like depriving them of the work they value most; only as health is impaired, and they are actually obliged, will they let another step in and do some of the work they prize so much. And such love and patience is not wondered at. Is a loving parent laid low in fever? Would it not shock us beyond measure if we found the only daughter, instead of acting thus, letting servants, however willing they might be, or faithful and kind in the service, do her work; and if, when she did wait a little on that loved one, we heard her complaining of the loss of time it cost her, and saying, "It is very hard that all day I've to be doing these little things, and not to have a moment to myself," would we not say, "What a heartless, selfish daughter!" And if it be so in regard to earthly relationships and love, what should be the love drawn out by the infinite love of the Father to us? "Behold what manner of love" (1 John iii. 1); and love calls for love. Oh, what self-denying labours of love would be wrought in our midst if Christians lived in the remembrance of His love, and were diligently keeping their souls in that love of God. What alacrity would be shown in obedience. How we should prize the very smallest opportunity of manifesting our love. It would be enough, then, to know His will. To know would be to obey.

Only as Israel thus diligently kept their souls, and sought to keep His judgments and statutes, could they teach to their sons and their sons' sons these things. But, alas! how soon they forgot, and how quickly they turned aside and corrupted themselves; and instead of their children being taught in the fear of the Lord, they soon learned to follow in the evil ways of their fathers. How comes it that "disobedience to parents" characterizes the last times—times not of heathen darkness, but of religious light and knowledge? Is it not the outcome of God's will being set aside and treated with indifference by the mass of professing Christians? Can Christians be surprised that children are disobedient to their will, when they are them-

selves disobedient to their Father's will? Unless we more deeply see the importance of instant obedience to the will of the Lord, we shall not see the need of requiring obedience from children when young; and no greater wrong can be done to children in the family than to allow them to choose whether they will obey or not. Thus is developed the selfishness that comes out at the top of the list in 2 Tim. iii., "lovers of their own selves." But how can Christian parents lovingly instil into the minds and hearts of their children the need of obedience in little things, the unquestioning obedience that they should render to them, when at the same time they themselves set aside God's will and Word in many things? What greater curse in the professing Church, or hindrance to this obedience, could there be than the established method of classifying God's will—labelling a few things "essential" and all the rest "non-essential," and thus reducing obedience down to a minimum, and saying practically, "Now that we are saved by obedience to these essentials, we can please ourselves as to doing the rest." "I also am a man set under authority" (Luke vii. 8), said the centurion to the Lord, and then added, "having under me soldiers; and I say unto one go, and he goeth; and to another come, and he cometh." Thus, being under authority and having himself to render obedience to a higher power, he could look for the same measure of obedience in turn from those under him.

And so will it be with Christian parents. If they are seeking carefully to render the obedience required by their Lord, under whom they are, then they will look for the obedience that is due to them from their children, and blessing must result. Would we then hear so often of the children of Christians going into the world as they become older, and throwing off all restraint, and becoming even sceptical? Should not Christian parents, in spite of this evil and self-willed day, and just because of it, continually be looking up to the Lord for their children? Is there not apt to be a neglect of teaching in the Assembly about this? Would it not be most helpful if Christian parents, as such, came together for prayer and counsel in reference to their children? Thus seeking from the Lord, in faith and prayer, help to train them, and, above all, their conversion; they would by their coming together be reminded of the importance of their work, and be stirred to it in faithfulness to the Lord. Remember that soon the children will be from under your care,

and it's only during the few early years of their life that you have opportunity to train them for Him, and to instil into their minds the Word of the Lord.

"And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them" (ver. 14). Evidently there is a difference intended to be conveyed to us, or two words would not be used. But who would say it was more important to keep the statutes than the judgments, or the judgments than the statutes? From the connection in which we find these words used, it would seem that the "statutes" are concerning worship and the service of the Lord, or that which is specially connected with Him; whilst "the judgments" were laws concerning Israel specially in their actions one toward another. The following would appear to bear out this distinction:—In reference to the laver, "It shall be a *statute* for ever to them" (Exod. xxx. 21); the red heifer, "It shall be a *perpetual statute*" (Numb. xix. 21); the priestly service, "It shall be a *statute* for ever unto him" (Exod. xxviii. 43). But when instructing them as to the Hebrew slave, Moses said, "Now these are the *judgments*" (Exod. xxi. 1); and the man-slayer was to be judged "according to these *judgments*" (Numb. xxxv. 24). The one was equally to be obeyed with the other. There was to be no separating of the moral requirements of the judgments, and saying, "now if we do these things, it does not matter as to the statutes, the *spirit* in which we worship is the great thing, not the *place* or the *manner*." The people soon acted in such a lawless spirit; but what was the result? God being set aside in His things; man also was in his. And sooner or later it will be found that when evil doctrine comes in, and is tolerated, evil in life and walk follows. Do we not gather that from the closing chapters of the Book of Judges? Chapters xvii. and xviii. bring before us ecclesiastical iniquity; the following chapters the awful moral evil that followed; and also show to us, by the actings of Israel, that when God was set aside in His STATUTES, and an image was made, and a house of gods established (chap. xvii. 5), and a Levite was consecrated a priest by Micah (ver. 11, 12), *no indignation was roused*; but when moral evil was perpetrated, and "the JUDGMENTS" were set aside by man in his actions towards his fellow-man, then an outcry went through the land, which was not stayed until the tribe of Benjamin was nearly annihilated; whilst

Dan, who had sinned against God in the matter of the false gods and the man-made priest, was left alone. Are not these two solemn events in Israel's history brought together that we may learn by them that, whether it be sin against God in His statutes or in His judgments, we should be exercised and humbled about it before Him. God forbid that we should lower the standard as to moral evil, as to man in his actings in the world, socially or commercially; but let us beware lest we make uprightness in these all and in all, and become careless as to how God is worshipped and served.

Having carefully and minutely taught them where they were to worship, "in the place which the Lord shall choose" (chap. xii. 14), and how it was theirs to carry out His Word, and not their thoughts, they were carefully to guard against copying what they saw among the nations who had inhabited the land, and whom, as God's servants, they were to turn out because of their abounding iniquity. And is it not equally incumbent upon Christians now, who have instructions concerning ministry and worship as full and complete as they had, to search the Word, and so learn His requirements, in order that they may perform them? Never let us allow the thought that anything will do for God, *so long as we act uprightly to our neighbour*, or think that the spirit even in which we may do or worship is enough. Let us seek not only to be sincere in all our actions, but to be guided in them by the Word of God. As Israel thus acted, they carried out both the statutes and the judgments; but alas! how soon the statutes were set at nought. They had their "high places;" they worshipped "Baal and Ashtaroth;" and when thus the Lord was set aside, they soon disregarded the judgments of God, and immoralities, lyings, and drunkenness abounded among them, as the writings of the later prophets abundantly testify.

VANITY OF THE WORLD.—Its vanity appears in this, that a little cross will embitter great comforts. One dead fly is enough to corrupt a whole box of the world's most fragrant ointment. There are so many ingredients required to make up worldly felicity—as riches, health, honour, friends, good name, and the like—that if any of these be wanting, the whole composition is spoiled. You may as soon grasp a bundle of dreams, or take up an armful of your shadow, as fill the boundless desires of your soul with earthly enjoyments.

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. i. 30, 31.

WE cannot go wrong in glorying in Christ Jesus, and in all that He is to us. The world will look up to you and respect you if you are boasting about yourself, but not if you are making your boast in the Lord, and in what His grace has done for you.

As I pass on through this Epistle I would like to linger here and there on special verses; and this is one of these—

"Of Him are ye;" compare with this, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

It is not merely, as the creation is, *"of Him,"* but in a special and deeper sense every child of God is *"of Him."* You will find this in Heb. ii. 10, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Just as Christ, the Sanctifier, is *"of God,"* so are we, the sanctified, who believe in Him *"of God."*

The Father is *"bringing many sons to glory."* Christ is the first-begotten among many brethren; and He is not ashamed to call us poor feeble ones His brethren. It is wonderful grace in Him to call us by such an honourable name; but He does it because we are begotten of God: children of His own Father, as He said after His resurrection, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." Therefore, let us not degrade that precious name *"brethren"* into a sectarian title? The Lord Jesus looks down upon every one redeemed by His blood, and says, "They are My brethren; and we are to know and to own every believer as a brother or sister, because all are *"of God."*

"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." What depth of meaning is treasured in these words, "in Christ Jesus."

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, you will observe how often these words occur, "in Christ," "in Christ Jesus," "in Him." It is absolute unity; it is that we are a part of Christ; the Head and the members are one. God does not look on us apart from His Son. In His sight we are for ever identified with Christ.

Therefore each believer can say, "I am crucified with Christ;" "I died with Christ;" "I was buried in the grave of Christ;" "I am quickened in the life of Christ;" "I am glorified in the glory of Christ,

and will soon be with Him in that glory." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

"Who of God is made unto us."

What is He made unto us? He is raised from the dead, and seated at God's right hand. What is He to us?

He is everything to us. First, He is made of God unto us wisdom. Christ is the wisdom of God. Read Ephes. i. 7, 8, "He has abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence."

The world's wisdom has ever been seeking for man blessing in the flesh; but the world's gropings after wisdom have failed in attaining blessedness; but over the wreck of human wisdom the wisdom of God shines forth in Christ Jesus.

The grand redemption work of Christ crucified and raised from the dead is the very concentration of the wisdom of God. The salvation proclaimed through Him abounds in "wisdom and prudence," and springs from the deep counsels of God planned from eternity.

God is "the only wise God." All wisdom emanates from Him.

When God planned His salvation work, He did not only gratify His love and mercy, but He did it in wisdom and prudence. He considered all the interests that were involved in taking a rebel from the pit of his own sins and setting him as a child at His own table, an accepted worshipper before His throne. All is counselled for in Christ. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." All the wisdom that we can possibly need is in Him; and surely we may be content to have it so.

Shall the Church of God pass by the treasures that are in Christ, and betake itself to human learning or tradition for wisdom? Read Colos. ii. 8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in Him." Read also Colos. iii. 10-16, "Christ is all, and in all." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Mark in these verses how God casts us upon Christ for wisdom, and how wisdom is to come to us through the word of Christ. Read 2 Tim. i. 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind;" and in connection with that, look at Isa. i. 3. In these

verses we have the essential characteristics of the Spirit of God, and that is the Spirit which God has given to dwell in each one of His children; not only the spirit of power and of love, but of wisdom and counsel, and of a sound mind. I know of nothing more miserable than the folly of Christians. Truly, as the Lord Jesus said, "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." With the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, and with access to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in Him, why then should we be fools? God meant us to be fools in the eyes of the world, but He never meant us to be a foolish people. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." "The wisdom that cometh down from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

How beautiful is the wisdom of God! May God grant us much of this wisdom. It is not in the flesh. The carnal mind cannot acquire it; it is from above; it cometh from God, and is ever available to the prayer of faith.

Christ is also made of God unto us *righteousness*. "We are made the righteousness of God in Him." Standing before God in Christ, He sees us righteous in His own righteousness; as John Bunyan said, "My righteousness has been in heaven for 1800 years." The righteousness of God is "unto all;" and it is "upon all that believe."

Just as I have to get my wisdom from Christ, even so have I to get my righteousness from Christ. I am to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, but I can only do so as I am abiding in Christ, for without Him we can do nothing. Is there such a thing as an unrighteous Christian? Yes, plenty! There are many who have trusted in the blood of Jesus, but who are not living righteously before their fellow-men. Let us ask ourselves, are we so living before the world that no one can point their finger at us and say, "that person wronged me." It is a poor thing for me to be preaching God's righteousness, if I am not showing that righteousness practically in my life. If the testimony of the life gives the lie to the testimony of the lips, how then can the word preached be commended to the consciences of men? People will scout the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and say with a sneer, "let us see it in your life."

It was by faith in Jehovah of Israel that the saints

of other days "subdued kingdoms, and wrought righteousness." How contrary to the thoughts of man to bring together two such diverse results of faith.

Does some one say, "I would like to subdue a kingdom by faith?" Well, that is no greater a miracle than in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil, to live righteously in this evil age. Only by faith can either the one or the other be accomplished.

Christ is also made unto us "*sanctification*." The meaning of the word is separation unto God. All of us by nature were separated *from* God; but now in Christ, not only are we made the wisdom and righteousness of God, but we are also sanctified, or set apart for God. Being sanctified to God once and for ever in Christ Jesus, it is the will of God that we live a sanctified life, a life set apart for God Himself. How am I to be enabled to do this? Only through Him who is made of God unto me sanctification. Just as I am living by faith on Him, feeding on His Word, walking in communion with Him, will I be really and practically set apart for God. In what measure am I to be set apart for God? In the same measure as Christ was. There is no limit to this. To what extent are we to live for God? Altogether for God; as it is written, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Is it hard and grievous to serve Him; or do we account it our greatest joy and delight? We have a good God, a gracious, and compassionate Father, who wants us to live in the constant enjoyment of His love.

This is a sanctified life.

Finally, Christ is made of God unto us *redemption*.

Am I foolish by nature? then Christ is WISDOM for me. Am I guilty and unjust by nature? then Christ is RIGHTEOUSNESS for me. Am I separated from God to the devil's service by nature? then Christ is SANCTIFICATION for me. Am I under the power of sin, and corruption, and death, by nature? then Christ is REDEMPTION for me.

The redemption that is in Christ Jesus takes me from the power of Satan and the grave, to present me without spot before the throne of God for ever.

Oh, what consolation we have in Jesus. May it be our desire henceforth, that, depending upon His grace, our whole life may be one entire offering up of thanksgiving unto Him; that according as it is written, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' Take

up these things and meditate upon them, and let them fill your soul, until from your heart goes up the incense of praise to God.

May the result of our searching of the Scriptures be to make us wiser and more godly, that our lives may be more for the glory of God.

“ABIGAIL;” or, THE THREEFOLD BLESSING.

THE names occurring in the Old Testament are instructive and suggestive; examination of their meaning will repay the inquirer.

Some of those were given as expressive of the parents' thoughts and feelings at the time of the child's birth; some with reference to circumstances existing prior to their birth; some would appear to have been given under control of a prophetic spirit; while others were given immediately from heaven.

Abigail, a name pleasant in its sound, is made honourable in history by the conduct of her who bore it.

Its meaning, “father of exultation,” implies, that at her birth her father rejoiced, exulted, danced—she was her father's joy. If he rejoiced, danced at her birth, surely, if living at the time to which my paper refers, and acquainted with the facts narrated, he danced again when her conduct deserved to be admired.

How such a daughter should have become the wife of such a man as Nabal it is not easy to say, but so it was. Nabal was his name, folly his course, and wretchedness his end. Abigail was her name, her conduct prudent, and she most honoured at the last. To this her honourable end the circumstances from which the title of this paper is derived were the link, the stepping-stone to blessing.

She is introduced to us through the churlish conduct of her husband to David's servants, who, it would appear, had shown kindness to Nabal's servants, his shepherds and their flocks, as they testified: “They were (David and his men) a wall unto us.”

The youthful offended captain was on his way to avenge the wrong, when Abigail, hearing of her husband's unkind conduct to David's messengers, made preparations, and hastened to meet David. She met him; took the low place before him, falling at his feet; she disallowed her husband's churlish

conduct, and pleaded with Jehovah's anointed, with David, the beloved.

She was successful, and obtained the threefold blessing at his hand; he received her gifts, hearkened to her words, and accepted her person.

He blessed Jehovah, who had sent her; blessed her for coming, and for the advice she gave.

Happy daughter! to be still more highly honoured in the future, for she became his wife.

Let us now dwell briefly on this, not as typical, but illustrative; not typical, for Abigail obtained the treble blessing through her personal charms and wise conduct, on which ground no child of Adam can ever be blessed—but as illustrating the threefold blessing every believing sinner enjoys in and through another, even the Lord Jesus Christ, his risen Head and representative, the true David, **THE BELOVED ONE**.

In using this illustration, we must reverse the order in which the blessing here stands, beginning with last, viz., the acceptance of her person; until this becomes true in us, neither our worship—as we may have called it—offerings, nor service can be accepted by God.

In order to see more clearly the freeness and glorious grace of this acceptance, let us glance at the natural condition of those who, on believing, become acceptable, well pleasing to God; their condition is one of entire sinfulness and utter ruin. This is established, proved by divine testimony, by man's conduct, and also by the confession of those who pass out of it into one of acceptance with God. Ignorance of this utter ruin and sinfulness lies at the root of most, if not all, the doctrinal errors and mistakes, whether among men in general or in that which calls itself the Church. To deny it is to deny the testimony of God's Word, the first and all-sufficient testimony.

In Gen. vi. 5 it is written, “And God saw the wickedness of man, that it was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil, and that **CONTINUALLY**,” every day. Here we have both state and conduct, his conduct very wicked; and every imagination, separate disconnected thoughts, and also those when connected and formed into a purpose, *evil, only evil*, and that continually; not one exceptional feature or trait; not one redeeming quality or point; entirely evil, and always such. Who then can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.

In Psalm liii. it is written, "The fool hath said in his heart *there is no God*; they are corrupt. . . . God looked down upon the children of men to see if there were any that did good: that did seek God." The result of this search was, "every one is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Here again we have the testimony that both nature and practice are corrupt. This testimony, after centuries had passed away, is only confirmed by the Apostle Paul as true of the condition of man, Gentile or Jew, in his day. In chaps. i, ii, and iii. of his Epistle to the Romans, having for his ultimate object the introduction of the Gospel, of the doctrine of justification by grace through the blood of the cross, and by faith; he proves both Jew and Gentile to be under sin, and the whole world guilty before God.

Such is the divine testimony; and this has been proved to be too true in all the succeeding generations, both by young and old, high and low, rich and poor; history, observation, and experience joining witness to it.

Of those who by grace have passed out of this condition, and confessed it to be theirs by nature, I select two, one from the Old Testament, and the other from the New.

When David was brought to see and acknowledge the sinfulness of his conduct with respect to Bathsheba and Uriah, he confessed it fully to God, tracing his evil conduct to his *corrupt, sinful nature*. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me!" Man proves himself to be corrupt and sinful by his sinful conduct; but he is a sinner by birth, by original taint, through union with the first Adam, of whom it is written, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," hence a babe is born, breathes once, twice, or thrice, and dies. Paul's testimony agrees with David's. He tells in Rom. vii. that he was convinced of sin, not in connection with words nor deeds, but the inward hidden motions of the flesh. "I had not known sin, but by the law; I had not known *lust* (desire), except the law had said, Thou shalt not *covet*." Again, he testified that in him was no good. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" and then gives us this estimate of himself, nature, and conduct—sinner, "of whom I am chief." Such we are, and such Christ Jesus came to save; and such, on believing in Him,

become accepted of God, and blessed.

Yes! freely, fully, eternally accepted in this risen Lord of glory. The offerer of old and his offering were accepted together. It was accepted for him, and he with it. So now the believing sinner is accepted in with, and as the Saviour in whom he trusts.

The accepted Abigail became a wife of David; and those who believe, and are accepted in the Beloved, stand in a union with that Beloved, illustrated, typified by that tender, happy relationship (see Eph. v. 15). As Eve, who was one with Adam, *in* whom she was created, and out of whom she was taken, to be the portion of his affection and sharer of his bliss; so the Church is the object and portion of Christ's affection and sharer of all that the Father has given Him.

That wretched element, the flesh, finds no place in this union; nor can it touch the life: all is new—new life and standing, a new creation, and the indwelling Spirit of God in all His varied character—the spirit of life and sonship, of truth and holiness, of revelation and of power.

Possessing and believing this, beloved in the Lord, we can easily understand how everything which proceeds from this new, this Christ-life in us, can be both acceptable and accepted. It was so with David and Abigail. David having done first what he last named, accepted her person, said also, "I have hearkened to thy voice, and received thy presents."

"I have hearkened to thy voice." Beloved, do we really believe that our voice, that is, the communication of our thoughts of Him and feelings towards Him, is pleasant to Him? that He is ever saying to us, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for *sweet* is thy voice, and thy countenance is *comely*?" And that if we do not obey, respond to the invitation, we defraud Him, wrong our best Friend? If so, then let us be diligent, more so than ever, in giving Him His own, coveting above all else to hear and speak with Him.

True worship and praise, confession, prayer, and intercession, all delight Him, and enrich us.

Again, do we believe in Christ's high estimate of our service? Then let us take pleasure in it, not because we understand its value; nor, first of all, because of its benefit to others, to those whom we immediately serve, but because it pleases Him. Service for Christ's sake.

Our offerings also are more precious to Christ than we perhaps usually think. All that which is done to the members of Christ is, we know, regarded by Him as done to Himself (we cannot plead ignorance of this as the sheep in Matt. xxv. 35-40); and kindness even to the unbelieving will be owned by Him. Paul could say of the offerings sent to him by the saints, that they were "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God." Such offerings, being presented in the name of Christ, and to His members, are described in language similar to that which describes His sacrifice of Himself to God for us (compare Eph. v. 2). These things are true, and we believe them, but need a fuller understanding of them, and, still more, simple faith, that we may more intelligently, constantly, and cheerfully worship, serve, and offer. Let us ask that we may do so.

H. H.

A FEW REMARKS ON 2nd TIMOTHY.

CHAPTERS I. AND II.

IT is well, in the first place, to be clear, in reading an epistle, as to the *character* in which God addresses us; that is, whether He speaks to us specially as sons, servants, or saints.

If we read this epistle from the standpoint of *sonship* we shall very likely be puzzled, and even stumbled.

If, on the other hand, we perceive God addressing us as *servants* of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall receive help as such.

It seems to us, the key of the epistle is in chapter iv. 7, 8. Paul was now ready to be offered; the aged servant had through grace won the crown; and the whole epistle is to point out to Timothy, the young servant, how to act, so as to stand with the same triumphant language on his lips at the end of his course.

Timothy had parted with Paul in tears, and these tears Paul remembers (chap. i. 4), and longs to see him, that he may be filled with joy.

But Timothy was set in the midst of much to mar the testimony of the Lord (1 Tim. vi. 20, 21) and grieve the true servant. What Paul had foretold in Acts xx. 29, 30 had come to pass.

He is therefore counselled in chap. i. 6 to stir up the gift in him, and to remember (verse 7) that God hath given us, not the spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.

In the midst of profane and vain babblings (see

Psalms cxix. 113, where the vain thoughts of man and the thoughts of God are spoken of) he is not to be ashamed of the Lord's testimony committed to him by Paul, but boldly and fearlessly to preach it, and hold it fast; so becoming a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. Never forget that the same mighty power which saved us, is in us, to work in us both to will and to do (see 2 Tim. i. 8, 9; Eph. i. 19; Phil. ii. 13; and connect Colos. i. 24).

In chap. i. 11, 12 Paul brings in his own example, for Timothy's encouragement, showing him that his *faithful service* was the cause of his present sufferings; but, nevertheless, Paul is not ashamed, for his whole being, life, and reputation were committed unto Him who was able to keep all against that day (ver. 12).

Then he is to "hold fast the form of sound words," which he had received through Paul; for only thus could he stand against the evil around, and do the Master's work.

From ver. 15 to end, it would appear that the brethren in Asia had turned away from Paul, thereby proving they were ashamed of the Word.

Thus, as sects result in manifesting God's approved ones (1 Cor. xi. 19), so the *faithful* servant is thus used; for instance, Caleb and Joshua's *faithfulness* manifested or brought out the *unbelief* of the Israelites (see Numbers xiv.)

Onesiphorus was the only one who had sought out Paul, while the others shunned companionship with one whom the religious world regarded as an evil doer.

Thus these brethren's thoughts were moulded by *man's*, and God's servant was left alone; yet not alone, for the Lord stood by him (see chap. iv. 17).

In chap. ii. 1, Timothy, who needs encouragement, is exhorted to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, so that he may not act as others were doing: being ashamed both of the testimony and of the Lord's prisoner, though profane and vain babblings were *popular*, and a means of attraction to many (chap. ii. 16; 1 Tim. vi. 20).

In ver. 2, we have an injunction to commit the Word to *faithful* men (see 1 Cor. iv. 2; Heb. iii. 22), who would also, being apt to teach (Titus i. 9), be able to instruct others also.

Thus *faithfulness* is a quality indispensable, if we would be used to others. Such was Paul. He gave the Word pure and unadulterated, *as he got it* (2 Cor. ii. 17).

Moses also was faithful; and what a mercy to Israel he was so on that night of Exodus xii., for had he been unfaithful to God, and told Israel to put the blood on the *window*, all the firstborn had perished.

Eve added, "neither shall ye touch it" to God's word (compare Gen. ii. 16, 17 and iii. 3), and Satan took advantage, as he has done ever since. God knows this, hence the solemn charge in Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Hence Timothy is charged in 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16, to meditate upon and take heed unto the doctrine, for, in doing this, he would both save himself and them that heard him; otherwise, he would be *disowned* as a servant (compare 1 Cor. ix. 24 to end, and 2 Tim. ii. 5).

In ver. 3, he is to endure hardness, if he would end his servant's career as Paul—not to be *entangled* with the affairs of this life while labouring for necessary uses (Titus iii. 14, margin; compare Acts xx. 34).

He is to strive *lawfully* (ver. 5), and (ver. 6) to wait patiently for the fruit of his labours, at the coming of the Lord Jesus (James v. 7, 8; 1 Thess. ii. 19; 2 John 8), assured that His word will not return unto Him void (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16); and *considering* these things (Psalm i. 2), the *Lord* would give him *understanding* in all things (see Luke xxiv. 14, 15; compare ver. 27 and 32).

In ver. 10, Paul brings in his own example as an incentive to Timothy; "he endures all things for the elects' sake," after the pattern of his Master (1 Cor. xiii. 7).

In ver. 11-13, we must bear in mind we are addressed as *servants*, as indicated previously.

"If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." Paul died daily (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11); and thus, losing his life, he shall find it in resurrection: not lost, but laid up in store (1 Tim. vi. 19).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him;" as if He had said, let the glory fill your eye, so that all affliction shall be *light*, and not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (2 Cor. iv. 16-18). "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself; for the *faithfulness* of God shines out even where the servant fails in faith: thus, if Barak will not trust, Jael's *nail* will show a *faithful* God.

It would appear from ver. 14-18 that grievous errors were on every hand, particularly the theory "that the resurrection was past already;" connecting

this with ver. 8. we get what is to keep Timothy right, viz., "Remember that *Jesus Christ* was raised from the dead."

Thus Timothy is exhorted to keep his eye on *Christ*, even as the Corinthians are in 1 Cor. xv. 20, and the troubled Thessalonians in 1 Thess. iv. 14.

But though the faith of some be overthrown, Timothy is reminded that "the firm foundation of God standeth sure," for the Lord knew them that were His when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram perished; and He would know all His own in the day of Jude 15 (compare Jude 11); but "let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

It seems evident that chap. ii. 19 refers to Numb. xvi. 5 and 21, where *ungodly* servants and *true* were together; at *that* time there was no resource but *separation* on the part of God's true servants.

So in 2 Tim. ii. 19, we have vessels to honour (1 Tim. v. 17) and some to dishonour (2 Tim. ii. 16, 17; and iii. 8, 9), but all occupied with the building up of the "great house" Christendom.

But if a man would be a vessel unto *honour*, sanctified and meet for the *Master's use*, then he must "purge out himself" from these and be a vessel separated to do the Master's work (Luke xix. 13; compare 2 Pet. ii. 1). But, while refusing identification with this class of *servants*, he is to follow *righteousness, faith, charity with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart*, avoiding in their company foolish and unlearned questions, which beget strifes.

As a servant of the Lord, he is not to strive, but to be gentle, and apt to teach; meekly instructing those who *oppose* themselves, and, on bended knees, looking to God to grant them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth He thus presents, that so *erring saints* may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil (James v. 19, 20).
T. C.

You must hold intercourse with God, or your soul will languish. You must walk with God, or Satan will walk with you. You must *grow in grace*, or you will lose it; and you cannot do this but by appropriating to this object, a due portion of your time, and diligently employing suitable means. But, having said this, I leave it. I cannot limit and define the exact way in which you must apply these principles, but the principles themselves I insist on.

LEAVEN.

PART V.—THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM.

BEFORE considering that passage, which above all others, has been the subject of conflicting opinions in respect to this type, viz., the parable in Matt. xiii. 33, it may be helpful to glance at the general scope of the seven parables of our Lord, which this remarkable chapter contains.

The long foretold kingdom, that by John the Baptist had been proclaimed to Israel as "at hand" (Matt. iii. 2), which, in the mission of the seventy disciples, was "come nigh unto them" (Luke x. 9—11), and which, in the *Person of the King*, was "among them" (Luke xvii. 21, margin), had been finally rejected by the people of Israel.

In Matt. xii. their iniquity reached its climax, by their attributing the very miracles that attested the Divine authority of the Lord to the power of Beelzebub. And solemn indeed are the awful predictions that follow concerning the nation.

It is at this point in His ministry that the Lord begins to teach the people in *parables*: "And without a parable spake He not unto them" (ver. 34.) And the reason of this is fully given in verses 11 to 15.

Israel is thus, as a nation, judicially given over to their own blindness and hardness of heart; henceforth the manner of His teaching is such that only those who were willing to do the will of the Father, and thereby spiritually related to Him (see Matt. xii. 47—50), could understand.

Consequently the explanation of the parables of the sower and of the tares is given to the disciples apart; the rest are left unexplained, that we, by the Spirit's guidance, might discover their interpretation, in the light which other scriptures shed upon them abundantly.

From verse 11 we unmistakably gather that these seven parables are the Divine setting forth of "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

By-and-by the kingdom shall come in manifested power and glory, and the Lord Jesus Christ will then be revealed from heaven as King of kings, and Lord of lords. But His first appearance was "a mystery," as it is written, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, all were mysteries, "known" only to faith; inscrutable to the wisdom of men, "to the Greeks foolishness," "to the Jews a stumbling-block. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery"

(1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 7). The cross sums up the mystery—*The King crucified*, as witnessed by the superscription.

Just such are "the mysteries of the kingdom." An expression often overlooked in efforts to unveil the hidden treasures of these parables. With Israel's rejection of the King, the kingdom being taken away from that generation, is inseparably connected. See Matt. xxi. 42, 43, where the word "*therefore*" gives the force of this connection.

Meantime, whilst the King is rejected, and Israel, like branches cut off, like a wife divorced, God has in the world a *kingdom in mystery*; and it is of *this kingdom and period*, until the coming of the Lord as King, to fulfil for Israel and the world literally and manifestly every Old Testament prophecy, that these parables treat.

The time is coming when the mystery of God shall be finished (Rev. x. 7), when the "Word of God," clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, His eyes as a flame of fire, and on His head many crowns, shall in all His glory be manifested to a world heedless of its coming judgment, as the world before the flood, or the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; when those who despised the saints are made to worship at their feet, as seated on His throne, partakers of His glory, with Him they rule the nations (Rev. ii. 26, 27).

Then shall the mystery be finished. Then shall the reign of glory commence, on which the Spirit loved to dwell in the prophecies of the Old Testament, unfolding its glories with *no parable* to veil; for there will be no *mystery* in such a reign to hide from a godless world. It will be a reign of judgment, as typified in the reigns of David and Solomon. The holiness of God will be displayed and felt. There will be no mysterious subjection of the righteous to the wicked. "The sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away" (2 Sam. xxiii. 6). "In His days shall the righteous flourish" (Psalm lxxii. 7).

But regarding this period, described in the parables of Matt. xiii., *the Old Testament is silent*. Christ, though exalted to the highest glory, and wielding "all power in heaven and on earth," is yet unknown to the world as King. They say in their hearts, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard" (Ps. xciv. 7). No voice from the unseen world has broken the silence of nearly two thousand years. "GRACE REIGNS." But grace shall end in judgment—how soon is not revealed; but the Lord is "*ready to judge*." He waits the hour appointed by the Father. Then shall He gather out of His kingdom all things that offend—then shall the

righteous shine forth, and in an universal reign of matchless glory, perfect righteousness, and unperverted judgment—the devil chained, and the curse removed—the blessing and joy of earth shall be consummated for 1000 years. The kingdom and the rightful King no longer existing in mystery, but gloriously revealed.

(To be continued.)

UNDER THE WINGS & ON THE WINGS.

KEEP me as the apple of the eye" (Ps. xvii. 8). "He (the Lord) kept him as the apple of His eye" (Deut. xxxii. 10). It is remarkable that the picture of a mother bird caring for her young follows both of the above quotations. Most of our readers know how a hen gathers her "brood under her wings," when they need rest and shelter—(she never feeds them there). But some of them may not have heard that an eagle bears her young on her wings, for the purpose of teaching them to fly. She has to "stir up her nest," and bear her young "on her wings" up into the air, where she leaves them to exercise the strength given them in flying after her. The Lord loves to hear His children cry, "Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me UNDER the shadow of Thy wings." It is His delight to "cover them with His feathers;" and to know that under His wings they trust (Ps. xci. 4; Ruth ii. 12).

There they are secure from "terror," "pestilence," and "destruction."

No "arrow" shot "at a venture," nor otherwise, can make them "afraid," when they "make the Lord their refuge." But often He is grieved by seeing those loved ones taken up with the blessings He has so graciously bestowed upon them, instead of with Himself, and drawing the conclusion, "I shall die in my nest" (Job xxix. 18); therefore, if He is to "Keep them as the apple of His eye," He has to "stir up the nest," and "bear them on His wings," that He may teach them to "set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 2).

We get what we take, and nothing more. . . . We shall never be in a really healthy state until we are much more afraid of not believing enough, than of believing too much.—*William Lamb.*

THE believer should ever remember that Christ is his life, and that Christianity is nothing less than the living exhibition of Christ in His daily walk.

CONVERSATIONS WITH CHRIST.

IF I were asked what is the thing which the devil, and the world, and the flesh try hardest to prevent Christians from getting, I should reply, "Conversations with Christ." I say this from my own experience, and from observation of all the Christians I have ever known. A quiet unhurried speaking to Jesus alone and hearing His replies—this is what every Christian needs every day, and what many get only once a month—or more seldom still—or never.

WHEN DID YOU LAST SO TALK WITH CHRIST?

Do stop and answer this question to yourself before you read on.

It is so easy to go to services, and to listen to prayers and to join in them. It is so easy to sing to Him, or to pray to Him with others, or to think that we are doing so because we feel refreshed and helped by it. But what if it should turn out that it was a mistake of ours to imagine that we were actually conversing personally with Him at those times, and that we were really only talking or singing for other people and ourselves to hear? I tremble for people who only pray in churches, or at prayer meetings, or with other Christians present. Communion services are very blessed helps and means of grace, but they are not necessarily conversations with Christ; nor is preaching, or teaching, or working for Him. You may be a most religious person—busy all day long about God's matters; you may give time, and money, and thought to Him, and yet you may never converse with Him. And the danger is, that if you do not converse with Him alone each day, you will get thoroughly on the wrong road, and wrong altogether, and that when you and He meet, you will see all your work crumble away and yourself left naked—"saved, yet so as by fire."

WHATEVER is terrible in separation from God, whatever is melancholy in a soul that has no refuge, whatever is dreadful in a conscience void of rest, is a faint picture of hell. Just imagine the agonies of the mind and conscience, as well as of the whole frame of an unconverted man on his dying bed, continued through eternity, carried on for ages in an eternal death, and you may know something of what is meant by "The worm that dieth not," and "The fire that is never quenched." Yet who can know what that word HELL signifies! It is an ocean of sorrow that has never been sounded.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. LXI.

I notice in Isaiah and Jeremiah that the restoration and forgiveness of Israel is frequently connected with the final overthrow and destruction of Babylon; that being so, does not Scripture warrant us in believing in THE REBUILDING OF BABYLON; and is not this the city so graphically depicted in the 18th Chapter of the Revelation?

REPLY.

To answer the second part of the question first. The Babylon of the Old Testament and the Babylon of the Revelation are certainly distinct, though many of their moral characteristics, and the language used concerning them, are very similar. But the Babylon of the Old Testament was the kingdom which carried the Jews away captive, and whose king, Nebuchadnezzar, as representing it, is called, “The head of Gold” (Dan. ii. 38). This kingdom of Babylon was succeeded by that of Persia, and so all through the kingdoms to which reference is made in Dan. ii. The Babylon of the Revelation is symbolic of a *religious principle*, of which Rome is the representative (Rev. xvii. 9, 18). This Babylon will be destroyed by the Beast with the ten horns (Rev. xvii. 16, 17). The rebuilding of the Babylon of the Old Testament is nowhere distinctly spoken of in Scripture, though Dan. ii. 34, 35, and some other passages, may imply a future resuscitation of the kingdoms represented by the different parts of the image.

QUESTION No. LXII.

Referring to Question LVII. in May number of “NORTHERN WITNESS,” and the reply to the same: please give examples to show that Luke’s gospel does not adhere to chronological order.

REPLY.

The moral order of Luke’s gospel rather than the chronological is manifest throughout, but the following examples will indicate sufficiently that this is the case.

Compare Luke iii. 19-20 coming *before* verses 21

and 22, though it is certain from Matt. xiv. 3-4 that the former verses occur chronologically some years later than verses 21-22.

Compare Luke vi. 19, &c., and parallel passage in Matt. v., whilst the parallel to Luke vi. 39 is found in its chronological order in Matt. xv. 13, 14.

Compare Luke xxiii. 45, the rending of the vail mentioned before the death of the Lord Jesus; whilst in Matt. xxvii. 51 and Mark xv. 38, which evidently give the chronological order, the rending of the vail follows the death.

There is thus throughout the Book a constant grouping of subjects in their moral order, without regard to the time of occurrence.

QUESTION No. LXIII.

In our meetings around the Lord’s table, on the first day of the week, ought teaching to precede the “breaking of bread,” or is it not more fitting that it should come after?

REPLY.

It is not uncommon to find “the breaking of bread,” which is the special purpose assigned for the coming together of believers on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7), delayed so long through previous teaching and exhortation, that the Lord’s supper is as it were thrust into a corner, observed hastily, and some have had to leave the meeting before it took place.

This ought not to be; and generally we believe it to be more fitting that teaching or exhortation should follow rather than precede the supper.

It is worthy of note that the teaching of John xiii., xiv., xv., xvi. appears to have followed the institution of the ordinance of the Lord Himself; and also that in resurrection He maintained the same order, speaking words of exhortation to Peter *after* they had dined, and not before (John xxi. 15).

Nevertheless we must not lay down a rule where God has not done so for us. That such reading of the Word of God, or ministry in connection therewith, as leads the soul directly to the Lord Jesus and His redemption work, is often most helpful *before* the

breaking of bread we readily admit. Such ministry is to our souls nothing less than the Bridegroom's voice, and cannot fail to stir up love, and gratitude, and worship.

But many subjects of edifying ministry, however right and needful in their own place, are felt by the spiritual to be an intrusion before the breaking of bread, rather than helpful to worship.

LONDONDERRY.—The Children of God meet to Break Bread at No. 1 London Street.

PERTH.—The Believers, assembling hitherto in Parliament Close, have removed to the Hall in King James' Hospital and meet to Break Bread on Lord's-day mornings, at 11 a.m. "Brethren, pray for us!"

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God willing one company will begin work in Morayshire about the end of June, and another company in Kirkcudbrightshire about the beginning of July. We will be glad to hear from brethren who can go to either of these counties to help on the work.—Yours in the Gospel,

20 Princes Street, Kilmarnock,
14th May, 1881.

JOHN RITCHIE.

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THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

By R. T. H.

CHAPTER IV. (*Continued*).

THE following verses show what would result from their failing to take heed and to do His commandments. If the Lord was not constantly owned they would soon corrupt themselves by making graven images, or by worshipping the host of heaven. How fallen is man; how debased! Naturally he looks around for something in which to trust, that so he may walk by the sight of his own eyes. The moment man has a something to look to—an image, the sun—he has, in God's estimation, corrupted himself (ver. 16).

When Israel first of all made a golden calf, it was not avowedly in opposition to Jehovah. "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord" (Exod. xxxii. 5) was the proclamation of Aaron. They would not have allowed the thought that they had shut out God. No, they were looking away to Him through the calf. But in vain did Aaron say it, even if he desired to draw their hearts away to the living God. The calf—not Jehovah—had the homage of their hearts (Acts vii. 41).

Such is the plea now of a corrupt people with a corrupt religion. Strenuously do they deny that they worship the cross or the image. "No," say they, "through them we reach God. These are helps whilst yet God is unseen." But, is it so? Can their ways in this be palliated? Dare we make light of them, or hesitate to call them by their proper names? Not with such a Scripture before us as this. Unmistake-

able language! It is idolatry, and nothing less. The innocence of intention may be pleaded, but it goes for nothing. When man presumes to prescribe for himself the way in which to worship or to honour God it is because he has already gone wrong; SELF-WILL has been at work. So was it with Israel. It commenced with them. They suggested; Aaron planned and executed. And though it cost them something, they were ready; eagerly they gave up their golden ornaments to carry out their own ways. But, alas! what it really cost them; not simply their gold at that time, but later on their land, as they were led captive to Babylon for the idolatries thus originated.

And this scene, as we read in 1 Cor. x. 6, is one of our "figures," and has been "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). Thus divine principles and warnings are to be learnt by us.

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 21). Neither the mental picture nor the outward image is to be allowed. "God is a Spirit." We are to worship Him as such; this we can only do "in spirit and in truth." When He spoke to them at Horeb they would have broken through to gaze, but there was no similitude, only light and fire; thus carefully were they hindered from making an image of anything they had seen, for all they saw was the light and fire. "These be thy gods, O Israel," said Aaron (Exod. xxxii. 4); but the Holy Ghost, through Hosea, says, "The workman made it, therefore it is not God" (Hosea viii. 6). That which man can fashion is not God. "They that make them are like

unto them ; so is every one that trusteth in them " (Psa. cxv. 8). And when we see the bread-and-wine memorials of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord Jesus turned aside from their simple object, and hear a man-made priest, who boasts in his succession, saying, after he has pronounced certain words over that bread, that it has become the actual body and blood of the Lord, not only is it absurd, but it is profane and idolatrous. They are as guilty as Aaron in his folly, and their "wafer god" is like "Israel's calf," an abominable idol. "They became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image," &c. (Rom. i. 22, 23). And man now, amid the progress of civilization and educational refinement, may have a more subtle idol, but through it he can never worship God ; it shows departure from God ; and by it, therefore, man will never return to Him. Let us beware as saints. The shadow can never take the place of the substance. If we get not beyond "the bread and the wine," beyond prayers or hymns, as such, we shall rest in them, and they will be the very thing to hinder our entrance with boldness into the Holiest, there alone to worship where our Lord Jesus is as the living High Priest, in all the activities of His present intercession on behalf of His saints.

"Whatever passes as a cloud between
The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
Causing that brighter world to disappear,
Or seem less lovely, and its hopes less dear:
This is our world—our idol—though it bear
Affection's impress or devotion's air!"

"Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them." Keep it in memory. We need it every day. Let Christ in all His infinite fulness be seen and known ; let there be the looking off unto Him as the Leader who brought us out, and will bring us in ; and as grace discovers Him to our souls, the sure language of our hearts will be, "What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hosea xiv. 8). For it is within, in the heart, that the departure begins, that can thus quickly result in open idolatry. Stephen therefore says concerning Israel at that time, "And in their hearts turned back again into Egypt" (Acts vii. 39). Let the heart be true to the Lord, and He will at once get His right place—the place, the only place. He will be all and in all. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord ; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" (Psa. xxxiii. 12).

One reason given here why they should turn away from all idolatries is, "The Lord hath taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance" (ver. 20). And is not this the highest reason? Could anything more strongly appeal to a child of God? "He redeemed me," beautifully said one who had been delivered from a cruel slavery by a large ransom, paid by the one of whom she spoke. "He redeemed me." That with her was enough to explain her determination to serve him to the utmost. And speaking of a slavery equally bitter, deliverance from which could only be compared to being brought out from an "iron furnace," Israel might well have said, "He redeemed us," and by that precious fact have broken down self-will and rebellion and followed Him alone.

But He had not only redeemed them. They were to be to Him "a people of inheritance." The Lord's portion is His people" (xxxii. 9). This was the sustaining, invigorating thought to Paul. A prisoner, and on a drifting vessel in imminent danger, yet he could say, "WHOSE I am, and Whom I serve" (Acts xxvii. 23). Rising above all thoughts of what the Lord had done for him, great as the work was, or what the Lord was to him, infinitely precious as He was, he rejoices in, and tells out, the highest truth at once, "Whose I am ;" "His inheritance." "My Beloved is mine" is one thing, but "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is towards me" (Cant. vii. 10) rises above it far, for it takes a saint away from self-contemplation, and fixes his every thought upon the Lord alone. Without this there can be no assurance. The fruitful source of spiritual weakness and depression, of doubt and fear, is looking within, and trying to measure what the Lord is to us by our poor finite thoughts and love. But, oh! what a relief to turn away from self and meditate on what we are to Him. His love to us. His inheritance in us. "He whom THOU lovest is sick," said they, as Lazarus lay dying. No mention of Lazarus' love ; but they would reach the Lord's heart at once, by reminding Him of how He loved Lazarus. And this is the truth that Israel shall know and rejoice in, in a coming Millennial age. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will rest in His love ; He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. iii. 17). And as they

rejoice then in His love, they will acknowledge themselves to be His inheritance, and their song will be, "O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us, but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name" (Isa. xxvi. 13). Jehovah's love and care must be forgotten ere saints can turn away from Him and acknowledge another. As Satan would cast in the doubt, or our own hearts would fear, therefore, let us rejoice in this: we belong to Him, His inheritance; and He has pledged Himself to provide for our every want, and to lead us every step of the way.

But not only would Moses show them the folly and sin of idolatry, by bringing out the truth that they were the Lord's inheritance, he would further and solemnly press it home, from the way in which the Lord had dealt in judgment with his own sin of self-will and hasty, angry action. "Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance; but I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan" (ver. 21, 22). "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (ver. 24). His love is great, it is "strong as death;" but it is also shown in the "jealousy," which is "cruel as the grave" (Cant. viii. 6). He cannot tolerate that love being bestowed upon another, or the ear being turned away from Him. Three times does Moses appeal to the Lord's judgment on himself in shutting him out from the land, as a ground for their obedience, and as a solemn warning to them if they acted in self-will. He is a consuming fire, and in holiness He must consume the dross and judge all. "God out of Christ is a consuming fire" is no unfrequent expression on the lips of those who preach the Gospel. But let us not turn away the edge of God's Word thus from ourselves. "OUR God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). Sin He cannot tolerate or overlook. And just because He has saved us from the lake of fire He will, as a consuming fire, judge us in all our ways now, that so we may be a people according to His heart, serving Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; but this can only be done as "we have" or "hold fast GRACE." And so we are brought back again to the wondrous truth, "His inheritance." We are set down in grace in the Beloved, "complete in Him." We are Christ's, and

Christ is God's. And in a fuller understanding of this grace alone will our hearts be enlarged, and our desires go out after Him. Listen! "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). He calls us "His own." Could any other term come up to that? "His own." And the grace thus displayed teaches us. May we learn the lesson better, and live as those who are "His own," counting it as treason against Him to follow the dictates of our own hearts, counting it our chiefest joy to do all to His glory.

NUMBERS.

THIS Book derives its title from the *numberings* of the people of Israel. The first was made at Sinai; the second, thirty-eight years afterwards in the land of Moab (chaps. i. to iv. and xxvi). It may be divided into three principal sections: The whole camp getting morally ready for the journey (i. to x. 10); their journey from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea (x. 11—xiv.); from thence to the Jordan (xv.—xxvi.). The leading characteristic of this Book is *service* and *walk*.

We have (chap. i.) the children of Israel arranged according to their "*pedigree*" (ver. 17, 18): typical of the children of God now (1 John iii. 2; Gal. iii. 26-29; Rom. viii. 14-17).

Chap. ii.—"Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard" (ver. 1): typical of Christ. The only standard and Name around which the believer is to rally: "Jesus only" (Matt. xvii. 8; xviii. 20; Acts iii. 6, 7).

Chaps. iii. and iv.—The camp of Israel: typical of the Church of God in the world, but separate from it. (John xvii. 15; Acts i. 13, 14; ii. 1). The Levites set apart for *service*: type of the Church in the aspect of servant or service (1 Cor. xii.; Rom. xii.). "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John xii. 26).

Chap. v.—The purifying of the camp (ver. 1-4): illustrative of discipline in the Church of God. The wisdom that is from above is *first pure*, then peaceable (Jas. iii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 12, 13). Confession of the sin of trespass to the Lord was not enough, there must be satisfaction made for the offence by *restitution* (ver. 5-8). The priest, type of Christ; the woman, of Israel, and the professing Church guilty of spiritual adultery (ver. 11-31; Hosea ii. 2-5; Jas. iv. 4; Rev. ii. 20-24).

Chap. vi.—Nazarite means “separated:” type of Christ, the only true Nazarite, but illustrative of what the Church and the believer should be while passing through the wilderness. “Wine” symbolical of earthly joy—all that is of nature (John ii. 4). “There shall no razor come upon his head: typical of the surrender of all earthly dignity or position. “Christ made Himself of no reputation” (Phil. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 14). “He shall come at no dead body:” typical of separation from the world (1 John ii. 15-17). A provision made for any contracted defilement of the Nazarite. The burnt-offering: type of Christ’s death God-ward. The sin offering: the death of Christ to us-ward. The trespass offering: Christ’s death sufficient to meet the need, not only of sin in our nature, but actual sins committed (1 John i. 9).

Ver. 22-27 typical of future blessing for Israel in the latter day (Luke xxiv. 50; 2 Cor. xiii. 14).

Chap. vii.—The Prince’s free-will offerings: typical of what the Church and the believer should do now (2 Cor. ix. 7).

Chap. viii.—The golden candlestick and seven lamps. The candlestick: type of Christ. The seven lamps: of the Holy Ghost, and what the Church and the believer should be—a “light.” See this illustrated (Acts iii. 6; iv. 10; Phil. ii. 15, 16).

Chap. ix.—The passover was celebrated in three distinct places—“Egypt,” the “wilderness,” and “Canaan:” (ver. 13, 14), illustrative of the Christian’s obedience in breaking bread the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 26; Heb. x. 25). The cloud: symbolical of God’s presence with, as well as in His Church, to guide (Psa. xxxii. 8).

Chap. x.—The silver trumpets: typical of the preaching of the Gospel and testimony of God to gather His people around Himself (1 Cor. xiv. 8; Isa. lviii. 1; 1 Thess. i. 5-7).

Chap. xi. 1.—Typical of God a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 28, 29). The people lusting for flesh: illustrative of the believer lusting and going back in heart into the world; the mixed multitude of unbelievers mingling with believers (Gal. ii. 4; Jude 4). Moses complains of his charge. See the contrast in the “Son of Man” (Matt. xiv. 13-25). Read in connection with verses 26, 28 John iii. 26; Mark ix. 38; Phil. i. 16-18.

Chap. xii.—Moses marrying the Ethiopian woman. type of Christ and the Church, and the calling in of

the Gentiles. Miriam and Aaron type of the “Jew” (John vii. 5). Miriam type of the Jew shut out from God for a season (Rom. xi. 15, 16). There are three persons mentioned in Scripture whom God visited with the curse of leprosy. Here, Miriam for “evil speaking;” Gehazi, for “covetousness” (2 Kings v. 27); King Uzziah, for “spiritual pride” or “presumption” (2 Chron. xxvi. 21).

Chap. xiii.—We have here illustration of “faith” and “unbelief” (ver. 30-33).

Chap. xiv.—Illustrative of the fruit of unbelief. “Let us make a ‘*captain*,’ and let us return into ‘*Egypt*’” (ver. 4). Read in connection with this chapter 1 Cor. i. 10-13; ii. 21-23; Col. ii. 18-23; iii. 1-4.

Moses typical of Christ’s intercession; Joshua and Caleb illustrative of the Spirit and the Word (John viii. 37, 59). Presumption of unbelief (ver. 40-45).

Chap. xv. 39.—The “fringe of blue:” emblematical of the heavenly character and walk of the believer (Eph. ii. 4-10).

Chap. xvi.—The assumption of priesthood, and its merited judgment: type of Christ making atonement for our sin, and His intercession. The camp with the plague: type of the world and the sinner infected with sin (Heb. ix. 6-24; xi. 26-31).

Chap. xvii.—Aaron’s rod: type of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest chosen of God; also a figure of Israel now “dead,” but will in the future bud, blossom, and bring forth fruit (Isa. xxvii. 6), and of death and resurrection.

Chap. xviii.—Aaron and his brethren: type of Christ and His Church. All service to be in fellowship with Him (ver. 1-7); food provided for all the priestly family (ver. 10-13); “Every one that is *clean* in thy house shall eat of it” (1 Cor. x. 27-32). The “Levites:” typical of the children of God having no inheritance here (ver. 23).

Chap. xix.—Provision made for wilderness defilement. The “red heifer” was to be “without spot,” “no blemish,” and upon which never came “yoke:” typical of Christ, the “pure” and “spotless One,” whose obedience was ever so willingly yielded that the restraint of a yoke needed not to be laid on Him. “Slain without the camp:” typical of Christ suffering “without the gate” (Heb. xiii. 11). “Seven times:” figurative of completeness. Christ made a perfect atonement (Heb. x. 14). “Water of separation” or

“purification :” typical of the application of the Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to the conscience and heart of the believer (Titus ii. 13, 14).

Chap. xx.—The “rod :” typical of the living power of the priestly ministry of Christ; the “water out of the rock,” of the stream of spiritual refreshment that flows to us from our Great High Priest in heaven. The “Rock” (Christ) needed to be smitten, but *only once* (Heb. ix. 26, 27; Exod. xvii. 1, 6). Moses was commanded to “*speak*,” not to smite the rock (see Psa. cvi. 32, 33).

Chap. xxi.—The brazen serpent: type of Christ on the cross (John iii. 14, 15). The “wells” typical of the Holy Spirit: Christ must first die on the cross, then, after His resurrection, the gift of the Holy Ghost (John vii. 38, 39).

Chaps. xxii. to xxiv.—Balak: type of Satan trying to curse the people of God. Balaam: of false prophets and false religion (2 Pet. ii. 14). Israel: of the Church blessed of God, and protected from the devil and malice of ungodly men (2 Thess. iii. 1, 3; see in connection with chap. xxii. 26-34 Mark xiv. 66-72). Balaam, the false prophet, who loved the “wages of unrighteousness,” was used to bless when Satan and man would curse God’s chosen people.

Chap. xxv.—Israel seduced by the daughters of Moab: illustrative of the Church beguiled by the world’s foul religion. Phinehas: type of Christ, who by his zeal and faithfulness has obtained an everlasting priesthood (Heb. vi. 19, 20); also illustrative of the Church’s duty to judge manifested evil promptly and without delay (1 Cor. v. 13; Gal. v. 12).

Chap. xxvii.—The daughters of Zelophehad: illustrative of faith and its reward; Moses, the representative of the law; Joshua, of Christ in resurrection.

Chaps. xxviii., xxix.—There are two classes of sacrifices mentioned in these chapters, “burnt-offerings” and “sin-offerings:” typical of Christ, who was the “burnt-offering,” a “sweet savour unto God;” and a “sin-offering,” atonement for sin.

Chap. xxx.—This chapter has a dispensational bearing. The “man :” type of Christ. The “woman :” of Israel in two ways, under government and under grace.

Chap. xxxi.—The Midianite: typical of the ensnaring power of the world, but vanquished through the power of the priesthood and holy instruments of the sanctuary (ver. 6; Phil. iv. 13; 1 John v. 4).

Chap. xxxii.—Reuben and Gad: typical of the Christian coming short of the whole promise of God and his resurrection standing in Christ Jesus. (Connect with ver. 1 Gen. xiii. 10, 11; 1 John ii. 15, 16). Hence it is they cause trouble to Israel (see Joshua xxii. 12, 19); and are the first taken captive (2 Kings xv. 29).

Chaps. xxxiii., xxxiv.—A review of the travels of Israel and their encampments: illustrative of the Christian recording and remembering all the way the Lord hath led him (Psa. xxiii). The land allotted and portioned out for every tribe: this will be Israel’s portion in the future (Ezek. xlv. 1-8; xlvii. 13).

Chaps. xxxv., xxxvi.—The cities of refuge: typical of Christ a refuge and shelter for the sinner that trusts Him from the coming wrath and judgment that awaits this doomed world (Heb. vi. 10, 20; x. 26-28).

LEAVEN.

PART VI.—THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

MATT. xiii. 33.

IN the parable of the sower, a picture is given of the various receptions met with in the heart of man by the preached word.

In that of the tares and the wheat, it is shown that the enemy who first sought to prevent the reception of the word, by “catching it away” out of the hearts, has adopted a further line of opposition, viz., the introduction amongst the wheat of a sort of worthless weed, hardly in the blade distinguishable from the wheat, but in the time of fruit yielding none, and only having proved all along a hindrance to the development of the good seed. Such has been the work of introducing into the Church, by baptism of infants, and otherwise, what are called *professing Christians*—persons calling themselves Christians, but who, albeit they belong to some of the many denominations of Christendom, make no pretension to having been “born again,” or to having “peace with God.” They are not thorns or thistles—such are manifest—but *tares*—very like wheat; nevertheless, they are “the children of the wicked one;” and to aid the introduction of such among God’s children, is to do the work of the enemy. Alas! how many think that thus they are doing God service.

The parable of the mustard-seed follows, and then comes the parable of the leaven hid in the meal,

representing a fourth aspect of this kingdom in mystery.

We have already seen (Part I.), that in the teaching of the Lord Himself, the evil DOCTRINES of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians, were signified by the type, leaven (see Matt. xvi. 12); indeed, that there is in the Word but one unvarying testimony regarding it—hypocrisy, insincerity, malice, wickedness, a corrupt thing, rendering all that comes under its power unfit for the presence of God, except atoned for by blood. Its origin, Sodom and Egypt, the two places named in Rev. xi. 8 as the scene of our Lord's crucifixion; thereby leading us to expect that, in *all* the Word reveals regarding it, we shall find the same evil principle that manifested itself at last in the crowning sin of the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Can it for a moment be supposed that such a figure could ever be used by our Lord to represent that precious truth which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth?"—that glorious Gospel of the blessed God (1 Tim. i. 11), which gives peace and joy wherever it is known and received, emanating from the heart of God, and reproducing His image wherever its life-living streams find entrance, setting Satan's bond-slaves free, and ushering them into the liberty of sons of God, with access, constant and free, to the presence of the Father, secured through the one offering and priestly intercession of Jesus? IMPOSSIBLE!

And yet such is the dogma taught and received most generally. That the leaven represents the gospel, which is gradually permeating the world!

Has not the Word of God been made of none effect through tradition? "But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. xv. 6-9). "Surely such turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay" (Isaiah xxix. 16).

But this false—because unscriptural—interpretation of the parable necessitates an equally untenable conclusion as to *the meal*; for if the leaven represents the *Gospel*, the meal must be construed to signify *the world*. But, on searching the Scriptures, we find nothing but good recorded concerning meal. The word rendered "flour" in Judges vi. 19 should be "meal"—there it is accepted by the Lord, unleavened, just as the "fine flour" of the meat-offering. Amongst Solomon's daily provisions were "threescore measures of meal" (1 Kings iv. 22). The Lord Himself replenished the widow's barrel with meal (1 Kings xvii. 16). And meal was used

by Elisha to counteract the noxious effects of the wild vine that had poisoned the pottage (2 Kings iv. 39-41).

This figure, then, cannot be supposed to represent "the world lying in wickedness" (1 John v. 19), of which nothing good, but much that is awfully the reverse, is spoken in the Word.

Does it not rather represent the *food of the woman*—the Church—that which God has given her to feed upon—the pure and holy doctrines of the faith, as once delivered uncorrupted, unleavened, to the saints? (Jude 3).

From the beginning the *woman* has been Satan's instrument in his most deceitful plans; not because she had any greater proneness to evil than the man, but simply because she is the "weaker vessel" (1 Peter iii. 7).

When he lays his crafty semblance of righteousness aside (2 Cor. xi. 13), and, no longer transformed into an angel of light, declares himself the open enemy of God—seeking to prove that *he* is God (2 Thess. ii. 4, 9), with all power, and signs, and lying wonders—the man, and not the woman, will be his instrument of sin.

But so long as his object is to deceive by an insinuated lie, it is the woman he uses. "Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Tim. ii. 14).

The church, as it appeared on earth in its first love, is described in glowing language by the Spirit more than once in the early chapters of Acts.

But just as the bliss of Adam and Eve in Eden was too lovely to escape the cruel envy of Satan; so the glorious spectacle of a company of so many thousand souls, ushered by the power of God into greater blessedness than Adam and Eve in their innocence could know, wakes all the powers of the arch fiend to plot the downfall of this temple of the Holy Ghost.

His first attempt was *falsehood*; but his garb was far too dark, and in a moment the manifest judgment of God fell on the poor victims of his guile (see Acts v. 1, 2).

He pauses a little, and then, dressed in fairer colours, when the number of the disciples is multiplied, he sallies forth again. "Murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews" is the form his next attack assumes (Acts vi. 1); but this fails too. Seven men are appointed to serve the tables, and their names declare the lovely fact, that those murmured against gave way to those who murmured, for all those appointed were Grecians.

Thus, under two forms was the unclean thing presented to the woman—the church; but she, subject to Christ, and by Him nourished and cherished, was still

true to her risen Head. Dwelling in His Spirit, which is love—envy, the spirit of Satan, found no place.

His next attempt is open persecution, even unto death; but still in vain, and through the power of Christ, Satan's boldest instrument is smitten down, and preaches the faith which once he destroyed (Gal. i. 23).

Then follows, in Acts x., the adding of the Gentiles unto Christ; and here again the enemy attacks.

The subtlety of his plans is far beyond the utmost power of the intellect of man. With fiercest hate his unseen shafts are barbed; with the experience of upwards of four thousand years they are hurled. Well might the Spirit warn against the "wiles of the devil" (Eph. vi. 2).

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun" (Eccl. xi. 7). And those eyes which had been opened to behold in Jesus the "light of life"—"the Sun of Righteousness," could not easily be deceived by Satan in the dark character in which he had hitherto appeared.

As an angel of light, therefore, is his next attack. Hitherto "the woman" had steadfastly refused to "take" (or "receive") the leaven; but in Acts xv. Satan at last succeeds. The old "doctrine" (or "leaven") of the Pharisees is introduced by certain of them WHO HAD BELIEVED, and is *taught* (ver. 1) to the brethren.

Well did the Lord Jesus know, as He uttered these memorable words, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," that the doctrines of these two sects, and of the Herodians, would be the LEAVEN which Satan would induce the woman to "*take and hide*" in her food, the "*meal*."

It is not without signification either, that the term "three measures" is used in this parable. The number THREE almost always associates itself in some way with the Trinity. The faith delivered to us to feed upon, to build upon, and to contend for, is really *the truth* concerning God and that wondrous plan of salvation, in which each of the persons of the Godhead has had His place and work. Let the person and work of the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, be misrepresented; let the pure Word be tampered with, or corrupted in any degree, and leaven is introduced, that will surely work, until, if not arrested, ere long, "*the faith*" in its original purity may not be found on the earth. (Luke xviii. 1—see definite article in the Greek).

(To be continued.)

LETTERS FROM THE FAROE ISLANDS.

WHEN the "two or three" who have been seeking to witness for the precious name of Jesus through the winter in Faroe have been gathered together in one place, it has been to us a comfort to know that "brethren beloved of God" were continuing in prayer for us elsewhere. It is with deepest gratitude to those who have had us in their hearts that I copy the following extracts, translated from the Danish of a dear Faeröisk brother's letters to me. The writer of these letters has begun to speak of God's wonderful love in his native tongue (*i.e.* *Faeröisk*, not Danish). He has already been obliged to leave Thorshavn, and the pressure of priestly influence and public opinion is making it exceedingly difficult for him to find work and lodgings in the islands (see 1 Peter v. 6-11). Meantime, a believing merchant on a neighbouring isle has received our brother.

A. P. M.

"MIDVAAG, 12th Jan., 1881.

In accordance with my promise I seize now an opportunity to write thee a few lines. . . . My coming here has, so much the worse, caused G— much unpleasantness. His servants threaten to leave him if I remain; the priest hangs over him, and will have him either to have nothing to do with us or leave the Lutheran Kirk. May God give him strength to act after the Word! Thou canst see from the foregoing that I know not how long or short my stay here will be; yet our life is in a Father's hand, and we need not fear. I should have added above, that G—'s wife is against my remaining in the house, so that all except G— are against me here. Now hangs it upon God's will whether I shall be any time here; if it is to be so, then will He open the way for me one way or another. May He hold me near to Himself. I cannot do otherwise than praise Him for His goodness towards me since I came here; for though nearly all seem against me, yet has HE been with me. Blessed be His name in all eternity! Oh! His love is sweet; and still there's more to follow! A few moments ago I had opportunity to declare to three persons that the foundation on which I build is Christ and His death. May the Lord bless the weak testimony to their souls' benefit."

"25th Jan., 1881.

. I wrote in my last letter that my reception here was very cold, and the duration of my

stay very doubtful, and although all remained unchanged in the first two days, there has yet come a change for the better. The people as a whole are friendlier now, and it is my hope, further on, to be able to work among them.

It grieves me that so few come to the meetings. Surely enough it is Pastor E—— who has the hand in the game. What reward will one receive who, while pretending to serve God, really strives against Him?

All seems dark for the moment, but after storm comes calm, and often sunshine; and who knows if this be not merely a test which God sends us; but with the testing sends He also comfort and strength to bear it. I have seldom felt myself so glad and bold as the first days after my arrival here. I can assuredly say that God helped me through them. One of these days G—— came to me and said that his wife had again spoken with him about sending me out of the place, and he bade me conclude what I would do. I said I could conclude nothing before I had talked with God about it; and the same day I laid it wholly in God's hands, bidding Him do what He saw to be best. Since that time all has been quieter. He ever helps in the time of need them who cast themselves upon Him."

"22nd Feb. 1881.

Again I lift pen to send thee a few lines by the '*Surprise*,' as I know that thou art always glad to hear from me. Thanks for thy last letter; I had much pleasure and gladness in reading it. Thou speakest therein about my sufferings, but I can scarcely say that I suffer, unless it be from loss of fellowship with living Christians. Certainly G—— and I read and pray together; it is a great help, yet one longs always after more. I am vexed at the slow progress in Thorshavn, and fear that E—— has much to do with it; but the Lord is stronger than all, and will honour them who honour Him. The Holy Spirit is mighty to win even Pastor E——

. I have been in Sörvaag with G——. We were in several houses, and the conversation most often fell on the things of God. All seem to be against believer's baptism, which they call '*Gjendaaben*' (again baptism). In Sandevaag I have also been, but went only into two houses, as it was late in the evening. All are friendly towards me, and speak well of Sloan."

"22nd March, 1881.

. Here all goes in the old way. I think G—— begins to advance. We read pretty regularly God's Word together, along with one of the servant girls, who is named T——. I am not quite sure whether she is a Christian or not; she says that she is one.

G—— goes round in the houses and speaks God's Word where he can. If he would come out of the Lutheran Kirk, and follow God's Word alone, I believe he would be a blessing to many. I rise now at 6-30 a.m. to read God's Word in the mornings. I trust I shall be able to continue therewith, for it is a good habit. I am reading in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. Pray for me that the Lord may strengthen me in the faith, and hold me near Himself; pray for G——, that God may draw him nearer. I remember you also in my prayers. May the Lord hereafter teach me to say from the heart, 'Thy will be done!' May God give us strength and hold us together in love.

With loving salute am I thy affectionate brother in the Lord."

H. J.

PRAYER.

WHAT a high place is given to the prayers of saints in 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. If Christians only knew that their prayers for kings and governors were heard in heaven, they would not trouble themselves with this world's politics.

When we pray, let us be sure God is hearing us; if we ask help, kindness, favour, from a fellow man, it cheers us to observe *the kind, attentive look*; let us by faith regard our unseen Saviour and priest, settle it in our hearts that our prayer is received, and the answer will come in the best time.

When the Word of God enters the conscience, men pour out their hearts to the Lord; and those who edify us in prayer are those who have been made to feel their poverty and need.

Our need of prayer is as frequent as the moments of the day; and as we grow in spirituality of mind, the continual sense of our need will be felt by us.

In order to have power with God in prayer, there must be an undivided heart; and if we would come boldly to the throne of grace, we must come obediently.

When we ask for more communion with God, are we willing to part with all that which would hinder the gift? Let us take heed that all our ways agree with the profession of our mouths, when we pour out our hearts at the mercy-seat.

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. ii. 1-10.

PAUL was a man of education, such as became a Roman citizen. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and, as may be inferred from his address on Mars Hill, he was acquainted with Grecian literature. But when he came to Corinth—the headquarters of man's learning and refinement—he laid aside as useless, and worse than useless, all the wisdom and oratory that as a man in the flesh he had acquired and gloried in. He determined not to know anything among them save "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (ver. 2). Man's wisdom and elocution, which he calls "excellency of words," could not help, they could only tend to obscure "the testimony of God;" therefore his determination to confine himself to that which is embraced in this epitome of the Gospel, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Had you been one who listened to his preaching you would have come to the conclusion that Paul knew very little upon any other subject. That was the unvarying burden of his testimony: a Christ at God's right hand, who was crucified on Calvary. The world, with all its wisdom and religiousness, with all its guilt and folly, had been crucified to him and he to it, and so he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14).

Now-a-days knowledge, learning, eloquence are sought after; and that is popular preaching, which pleases the ear by a display of mental culture, but leaves the conscience untouched. The world says "knowledge is power," and there may be some truth in that; but the knowledge we want in declaring the testimony of God is the knowledge of the crucified One, and the power we want is power with God. Then God will use us in His service; not merely in the conversion of sinners, but also in gathering the saved around the Lord Jesus as their centre. Paul wrought with God, and according to the mind of God, and therefore he was mightily used.

We read in Acts vii. 22 that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." He went forth in his own strength to deliver his brethren, expecting they would understand that he was chosen of God to be their deliverer, but he met with nothing but disappointment.

In the work of God the wisdom of Egypt could not

help him; mighty words and deeds were of no avail. He had to be taken by God to the desert, there—during forty years of divine discipline—to unlearn all he had learned, to find that he was only a poor weak stammerer; and thus trained in the school of God, he is sent forth in the power of God to deliver Israel.

Our lack of human wisdom and learning has never hindered us in the work of God. God can use our weakness and our foolishness to confound the might and wisdom of this world. Witness the case of the man born blind in John ix. See him surrounded by enraged and wily adversaries, endeavouring to turn him against the One who had opened his eyes. But ignorant and feeble though he was, and contemptible in their eyes, yet was he more than a match for them all. He stuck to what he knew: "Whereas I was born blind; now I see."

And how often still has the testimony of a feeble, ignorant, inexperienced convert been used of God when he testified only that which he knew? "One thing I know, Jesus has saved me. He loved me. He died for me. He lives to save me to the uttermost. I know my sins are all forgiven. I know, on the authority of the Word of God, that I have everlasting life."

To go forth in the power of the Holy Ghost with a testimony like that is better than all the excellency of speech or wisdom of words that the schools of human learning can impart.

Ver. 3—"And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." What a picture this is of the great Apostle of the Gentiles! Many a time was he "cast down" and "perplexed;" enduring the sharpness of the thorn in his flesh, and so beset with the enemy around that, doubtless, he would have departed from Corinth in despair, had not the Lord specially revealed Himself to him in a vision, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." When he was weak, then was he strong; strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, although in himself like a reed trembling in the wind. But why did the Apostle tremble? Was it not that, conscious of the solemn responsibility laid upon him, he trembled lest by any means "the testimony of God" should be marred?

God appointed of old that His altar should not be

made of hewn stones. No tool of man was to be lifted up upon it; no grove was to be planted near it; no tree was to cast its shadow over it; nothing was permitted to intrude that would attract the eye, and draw it away from the bleeding sacrifice thereon. The Apostle understood the meaning of all this. He knew the simplicity which is in Christ. When he gathered the converts together unto Him he appointed no ornate ritual, no incense and vestments. His preaching was adorned by no learning or oratory; all was in keeping with the testimony of a crucified Christ; all was perfect simplicity.

The Church of Rome, with its gorgeous cathedrals; its splendid services; its enchanting music; its elaborate ritual, is the headquarters of apostasy from the simplicity that is in Christ. But are not the Protestant churches following in her track? Do we not see around us, on every hand, that the simplicity of the apostolic testimony has been departed from?

Ver. 4—"Enticing words of man's wisdom" may be required to please the ears of men; but such was not the Apostle's object. His addresses were not philosophic essays, got up to attract the scientific and the learned. His speech was plain, but it was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And this is still what is required in the preaching of the Gospel. Let us seek for grace from God to put the Gospel very simply and plainly before the hearers, so that the weakest and most ignorant may understand. All this is right and necessary; and yet, be it ever so plain and simple, it is only the Spirit of God that can *demonstrate* its truth to the understanding, and heart, and conscience of the sinner. During "the revival" of 1859, many as they listened to the preaching were struck down and rendered insensible. By some this was declared to be the work of the Spirit of God. But I do not find in Scripture that the Spirit of God ever so works. I do not believe that to have been the work of the Spirit of God, but rather Satan's opposition to the work of God's Spirit. The demonstration of God's Spirit is not in noise and outward excitement and tumult. It is the bringing home to the consciences of men in living power, by the Word of God, the grand truths of sin and salvation.

In our Gospel preaching, and in our Gospel meetings, let us ever be looking up to God to demonstrate by the Holy Spirit to the hearers the truth that is being preached. We want to have faith in God as to

His preached Gospel, and to be ever counting on Him to make it plain to the darkened understanding, so that it may find entrance into the hardened heart and the sin-seared conscience.

Let us make it our business to pray for those who preach the Gospel, that they may be kept clear of Satan's snares, that they may not mar by "enticing words" the testimony of God, but preach in all its fulness the truth of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Ver. 5—The Apostle was very jealous lest the faith of those to whom he preached should stand in anything short of "the power of God."

It is good for our own souls to deal with the awakened; it is wonderfully refreshing;—but there is a danger connected with it against which we do well to be on our guard. It is possible to press and reason with one, plying them with text after text, until we get them to admit—as they would admit the truth of a mathematical problem—that Jesus died for sinners, therefore He died for them, and therefore they are saved, and have everlasting life. But let us take care that, whilst seeking to meet every difficulty, and make plain the truth of the Gospel from the Word of God, we are ever casting the soul of the inquirer upon God, so that, in receiving the Word, they receive it, not as the word of man, but as the Word of God to their own souls. See 1 Thess. ii. 13. See that the "believing" is indeed a transaction between their soul and God. What is the value of a profession of conversion if there be not a personal dealing with God Himself and committing of the soul to a living Saviour as the result of believing "the Word of the truth of the Gospel?"

Remember the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip spoke to him—an anxious inquiring soul—and pointed him to Christ, the Lamb of God. Immediately after, the servant of the Lord was caught away by the Spirit. The Ethiopian was left alone with God and His Word; and he went on his way rejoicing, not in Philip, but in God. The Spirit had demonstrated to his soul that He of whom he read in Isaiah liii. was Jesus, who had died for him; and in Him he trusted and rejoiced.

Ver. 6—"Howbeit we do speak wisdom among them that are perfect."

The word "perfect" here does not mean "sinless," but "mature," or full grown; that is, capable of understanding the things of God.

It is as though he said, "We have got wisdom to speak as well as the philosophers of Corinth; we have a wisdom that is infinitely deeper than all the knowledge of the scientific and the learned; and yet it is not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to nought."

It is called "hidden wisdom." It is that wisdom of God which was kept secret as a mystery from ages and generations—the hidden wisdom which was ordained before the world unto our glory, but which is now revealed by the Spirit. This is the wisdom the Apostle has to speak of, but he can only do so to those who are capable of understanding it.

This wisdom is a mystery. If you search through the New Testament you will find seven distinct mysteries, the unfolding of which is entrusted by the Spirit to the Apostles for the instruction of the Church, so that they were, in a special sense, "stewards of the mysteries of God."

So deep is this wisdom of God that none but His Spirit could unfold it. One of these is found in Rom. xi. God's dispensational counsels regarding the Jew and the Gentile are there unfolded. Finally, it is shown that God has concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.

God shuts both Jew and Gentile all up together in unbelief—one damning sin; none is better than another—in order that His mercy may flow out un hindered to the ends of the earth.

Then looking back over the marvellous plan, he exclaims in adoring wonder, "Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

This is the worship of a devout mind in the presence of the unfoldings of the wisdom of the all-wise God.

All the world's learning results in the worship of man; it exalts man and ignores God. But the wisdom of God breaks us down in His presence, and we say, to Him be glory, to Him alone.

But the wise and the great—the princes of this world—knew not the wisdom of God. Had they known it—had Satan, the real prince of this world, known the hidden counsels of God, and all that in His wisdom would result from the death of the Lord Jesus, would he ever have hounded them on to crucify Him?

Had they known that, as the result of the murder of the Son of God, a countless multitude would be

raised up from under Satan's sway to trample him in resurrection triumph under their feet, would they ever have crucified the Lord of glory?

But they knew it not, for God had kept it a secret hid in Himself. Like the man who found the treasure in the field, he kept it secret until he had paid the purchase price and secured it for himself; so God kept secret these wondrous purposes of His concerning the union of Christ and the Church until the purchase price was paid and Satan spoiled; then taking Jesus from the grave to the right hand of the throne He sends down the Holy Ghost to declare "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world was hid in God.

Ver. 9—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," &c. And here many a saint of God has stopped, as though it were still impossible to know what God has prepared; "but," it is added, "God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit."

And what a revelation! The veil is drawn aside and we look up into heaven. There we see the throne of God. The Lamb is in the midst, and seated on thrones around are the glorified saints redeemed unto God by the blood of the Lamb. Seated in the heavens with Christ, they have fellowship with God in his dealings with this earth.

There they are seen gathered within the veil. The bride and the Bridegroom, the Heir and the joint-heirs, all gathered together.

When we come to consider such purposes of the heart of God as these, oh, what is all the world's wisdom in comparison? What are all the discoveries of science, wonderful as they may be, compared to a glimpse like this into the heavenly and eternal glory?

Let us, indeed, seek to occupy our minds with the wisdom of God, to be thoroughly furnished out of His treasures, that we be not the erring foolish ones we often are, so foolish as to be even rebuked by the world.

The Christian ought to be the noblest, most refined, most courteous, and yet most humble of men, seeing God has bestowed upon him His own spirit, His own mind, His own wisdom.

THE more a man knows of himself, the less will he love himself; the more a man knows of Christ, the more will he love Him.

EXTRACT.

IN reference to the letter alluded to, I feel it is a subject that we must approach with the very deepest reverence, for this reason, that in seeking to measure the sufferings of the lost, we are, unconsciously, it may be, measuring likewise the value of the cross of Christ, and the anguish of the awful judgment of Calvary in the day when God dealt with Him on account of our sin.

This may not at first appear, but on a closer view I think we shall see that the whole subject hinges upon it, because the one was endured as substitutionary for the other. God's mightiest realities are divinely simple. "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." We need to receive His truth as babes rather than to scrutinize or question it: to bring our intellect to His feet rather than to weigh His unsearchable judgments; for the purposes and ways of Jehovah are as deep waters for our scanty lines to fathom.

But to return; as a believer I know that Christ bore the judgment of my sin. Now, if I want to learn the measure of wrath due to it, there is but one measure—the cross of Calvary. There the infinite Son of God bore what was due to me as a hell-deserving sinner. How can I comprehend it? Psalm lxix. lifts the veil a little, and gives us as far as we can take it in some of the utterances of our blessed Substitute, when He drank for us the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out. But He was God—the eternal uncreated ONE. Let us ask our hearts, as we dwell on what is revealed to us in such passages as Psalms xxii. and lxix., what measure or duration of suffering that a finite being could be capable of enduring could outweigh the costly expiation of the holy and well-beloved Son of the Father?

But there is another aspect in which the limitation of punishment is a limitation (unintentional, we grant, but none the less real and dangerous) of the nature of the cross of Christ. God looks at everything in heaven and on earth in its relation to the cross. We see in the midst of the throne (Rev. v.) the Lamb as it had been slain; the songs of the redeemed are about the blood of His sacrifice; as the slain Lamb He takes the title-deeds of His earthly inheritance, and goes forth to victory "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood."

In keeping then with this glory, which God has made to centre in the cross, we read in 2 Thess. i. that Christ shall come forth in His hour of judgment, not then to deal with men even on account of special sins, but to take vengeance on them that "obey not *the Gospel*." This, no doubt, will include the testimony given to the "witnesses" and to the Jewish remnant (Rev. xi. and xii.), during the outpouring of judgment when the Church is in heaven; and when even this shall have ceased (Rev. xiii. 7), still the unwearied grace of God will send forth by an angel His "everlasting Gospel" to them that dwell on the earth (Rev. xiv. 6).

For their reception or rejection of this divine testimony they will be held responsible at His coming (Rev. xix.; 2 Thess. i.). Now, to estimate the righteous amount or duration of such vengeance, brings us back directly to the thought of what the Gospel is; what the value of God's unspeakable gift; what the depth of love that moved His heart to give His Son for sinners; what the measure of guilt that called for so great a sacrifice; what the anguish that it cost the soul of Jesus our Lord as He bowed beneath the wrath of God—His God. Surely, in the presence of such deep and holy mysteries, it becomes us to bow our souls in worship rather than to seek to penetrate them, while faith half-tremblingly asks the wondering question, Was this for me?

We know that if God has given to us eternal life, and all the glories attending, it is solely because of our relationship to Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life (or, in other words, eternal blessedness), and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And, indeed, it does seem that in all questions relating to the justice or mercy of God we should find more than satisfaction in the cross. Then infinite love gave Jesus for the sinner, and justice, inexorable and unchanging, expended its utmost penalty on Him, who paid in His own blessed person the uttermost farthing of our debt.

When the hour of judgment came—the awful hour in which a broken law claimed its victim, and there was none in heaven or on earth found to answer when the Holy One of God was found in the sinner's place—was there one billow less because Jesus was there? No, not one. Hear the cry of His anguish. "*All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me.*" Let it suffice us to see judgment and

mercy, meeting like two mighty currents on the cross of Calvary, flowing on to eternity. We can worship, though we fail to measure their infinite depths, for God is in heaven and we upon earth, and we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are as a shadow.

On the words "everlasting" and "for ever" I do not touch. They seem to bear one simple meaning. (Compare John viii. 35; vi. 51; and Jude 25). Surely what God has once clearly spoken no other word of His can be divinely intended to contradict.

"Destroy" and "destruction" we know are used in a limited sense, as, for instance, Exod. viii. 24; Hosea xiii. 9; Job xix. 10, referring to a change of condition, not to a blotting-out of existence. The primary meaning attached to "death" and "life" in scripture language is given to us in John v. 25; Eph. ii. 1 and 5. Life is there looked at in its highest sense, as the enjoyment of the presence of God, for which we were created. Death as the coming short of this; missing the end of our being—His glory. Refusing light and life, and taking the one awful irrevocable step into the outer darkness of eternity. Man, when he was created, received from God a life that could not be quenched, and yet existence out of His presence could be but a living death. We can find nothing in the Book to show that this God-given life can ever know an end; and we would entreat those who advocate this doctrine on the ground of "humanity" to beware of beguiling souls with a vain and empty hope which has no divine authority, and which must prove an awful fallacy when it shall be too late to awake from its soothing delusion.

In Gen. iii. 22, we trace the gracious purpose of our God to give to His people eternal life, or, in other words, eternal blessedness, by the cross of His beloved Son. A continued existence here, while under the curse of a broken law, would have been but continued suffering; therefore, the flaming sword that shut us out of paradise, shut us up to Christ in blessed oneness of life and sonship; and the death of the body that entered by man's disobedience was made in the sacrifice of Christ, the righteousness and life of His people.

This is but a very brief glance at this solemn subject. In the presence of such divine realities do we not need to be very simple, and to hear rather than to speak, lest we add to His words and be found liars? May we ever be learners only at the feet of Jesus.—Yours in Him.

IS JESUS DEAD ?

MRS. A. was converted. After her conversion she used to call on her neighbour, Mrs. B., and speak to her about her soul. By and by Mrs. B. was also saved. As the result of this these two women became more friendly than ever, and often used to talk together about the Lord Jesus and His Word. In course of time Mrs. B. removed to another part of the village, but still kept her intercourse with Mrs. A. But somehow the flame of first love began to burn less brightly, and now instead of the Lord Jesus being the subject of conversation, the different neighbours were discussed; and instead of what God said being surpassingly interesting, more interest was evinced in what "the folks" said. We fear that many could be found like Mrs. A. and B., ready to talk about all manner of worldly matters, and repeat every idle and foolish tale about their neighbours, and yet still profess to be "out for God!"

This state of matters continued until one day Mrs. B.'s little boy turned sharply to his mother's friend and said, "Mrs. A., is Jesus dead?" "Jesus dead, boy! what do you mean?" "Oh, you know when you used to come here you were always speaking about Jesus, but I never hear you speak of Him now."

What a cutting rebuke! Is Jesus dead? No, indeed, He is alive for evermore. But is this the Jesus in whom we believe? A real living person? Does he live in our hearts, our thoughts, our words, our ways?

The Christ of God is risen indeed; we are called to be witnesses of the fact; evidences of it; that Christ is risen and rules, guides, governs, and controls us in all our ways.

DO WE BELIEVE IN A
RISEN, LIVING, AND COMING CHRIST?

Do not shrink from the thought of living henceforth in full communion with your God. Be decided to let God draw nearer and nearer, and put His holy finger on every detail of your daily life; on every detail of your daily work; on every detail of your daily habits, of your conversation, your reading, your writing. Very small things can hinder full communion with God. Let us be united in this—that our God shall be God during our brief term here.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. LXIV.

Does “the appearing” in Col. iii. 4 and in 1 John iii. 2 refer to the coming of the Lord for His saints?

REPLY.

The Greek word rendered “appearing” signifies the manifestation of that which is hidden; and in the New Revision is translated “manifest,” instead of “appear.” In both the passages referred to above the manifestation of the saints in glory with Christ is put in contrast to their present condition, as “hidden” from the world.

Col. iii. 3, “Your life is hid with Christ in God,” exactly corresponds with 1 John iii. 1, 2, “the world knoweth us not . . . it doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

But to a world that now “knows us not,” and from which—as to our true dignity as sons of God and possessors of the life of Christ—we are at present *hidden*, we shall be manifested when Christ is manifested, and not before.

This we believe to be the sense of these Scriptures, and this in no way conflicts with the thought that the resurrection of the sleeping and the changing of the living saints, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, will precede their being manifested with Him.

QUESTION No. LXV.

Can God accept the offering of a Christian who owes money to the unsaved?

REPLY.

God told Saul to save nothing alive that belonged to Amalek; but Saul spared the best of the sheep and oxen, professedly in order to sacrifice them to the Lord. The prophet's rebuke went straight to the root of Saul's sin. “To obey is better than sacrifice.”

“Owe no man anything” is as much a command of the Lord as any other command in Scripture. Therefore, to offer money to the Lord which righteously belongs to the one to whom it is owing is as much as to say that sacrifice is better than obedience, and can no more be acceptable to Him than Saul's Amalekite

cattle. See also Isa. lxi. 8, “I hate robbery for burnt-offering.”

The extent to which the Gospel is hindered by Christians owing what they have no means of paying, and not only so, but appearing to be little concerned about it, is truly lamentable, and calls for decided testimony on the part of those who seek the honour of the worthy Name whereby we are called.

QUESTION No. LXVI.

Is there Scripture warrant for putting a person away from fellowship for false doctrine? If so, how is it in 1 Cor. v. there is the command to “put away” for an evil life, whilst from 1 Cor. xv. it is evident there were those in the assembly holding that there is no resurrection of the dead—an error that involved the most serious consequences—and yet there is no instruction as to the putting away of such?

REPLY.

The leaven of immoral and unrighteous behaviour is dealt with in 1 Cor. v., but in Gal. v. it is the leaven of doctrine subversive of the Gospel. The same expression occurs in both: “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” and upon this ground the necessity of purging out that which would otherwise propagate itself and contaminate others is pleaded for, whether as to practice or doctrine.

Again, in 2 Tim. ii. 17 a different illustration is used to enforce the same truth, “their word will eat as doth a canker.” Of those who had by legal teaching subverted the Gospel in the Churches of Galatia the Apostle wrote, “I would they were even cut off that trouble you;” and again, “I have confidence in you, through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whoever he be.” In 2nd Timothy the word that would “eat as a canker” was that of Hymenæus and Philetus. Their error was that the resurrection was past already; and in the 1st Epistle to Tim. i. 20 it appears that Hymenæus had been by the Apostle “delivered unto Satan.” The same expression as in

1 Cor. v. is applied to the immoral person, and that in order that he might be disciplined not to blaspheme. Restoration being still the object in view, even though the extreme measure of "putting away" be resorted to.

The immoralities referred to in 1 Cor. v. are of themselves evidence of entire departure in heart from the Lord; but in dealing with error in doctrine distinctions have to be made which have no place in dealing with ungodly behaviour. The first step towards one who is being entangled in error of doctrine is to seek to deliver from it. It may be imbibed through simplicity and ignorance of Satan's wiles, as well as through ignorance of the Word of God. The Apostle's 1st Epistle to Corinthians was a bold stroke in this direction. He had confidence that the effect of that Epistle would be salutary, that the entrance of the Word would give light, and that further and more severe measures might thus be rendered unnecessary. This is evidently the tone of chap. xvi. How far it was justified may be seen by 2 Cor. vii.; but 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21 and xiii. 1-10 show that as to not a few at Corinth the Apostle had serious misgivings, and he hints in no obscure way at the possible necessity of severer measures towards those who had not repented to the acknowledging of the truth, as written to them in the 1st Epistle. He, however, postpones such action till he should be present with them, still hoping that, in the meantime, there might be repentance and restoration of soul.

We think this sufficiently accounts for the absence of any allusion in the 1st Epistle to "putting away" for error in doctrine.

"A man that is a heretic" is to be rejected "*after the first and second admonition*" (Titus iii. 10). No such stages of action are inculcated in dealing with one who is a drunkard or an adulterer.

QUESTION No. LXVII.

Is it right for one labouring as an Evangelist to go and live UNINVITED in the house of a poor saint and not offer to pay for his keep?

REPLY.

Matt. vii. 12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

To live in the house of a poor saint unasked might be imposing a heavy burden on one who ought rather to be helped. At the same time, even a *poor* saint

might receive one of the Lord's servants and reap great blessing thereby. For example, the widow of Zarepta.

The courtesy of our Lord is very beautiful. He would not be an uninvited guest, and "made as though He would have gone further" (Luke xxiv. 28); though to the "*rich* man," in whose heart he read His welcome, He could say, "make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house" (Luke xix. 5).

QUESTION No. LXVIII.

Is it right for the unconverted to pray? Can we take Cornelius as an instance of an unconverted man praying and obtaining answer to his prayer?

REPLY.

There is a wide difference between the formal, unreal prayers of the religious world generally and the ignorant, yet real, calling upon God of a person who, though unregenerate, recognises the power of God to help in time of trouble. Many an instance might be given of such a cry being heard and answered, and not unfrequently such a response from the Creator to the creature has formed a link in the chain of divinely-appointed circumstances which resulted in true conversion.

Scripture is full of denunciations of the prayers, worship, offerings of the wicked, and plainly declares that they are abomination to the Lord. Yet where a real cry of distress—such as rose up from the men of Nineveh—reaches the ear of the Lord, there is abundant encouragement in Scripture to believe that it is favourably regarded by Him, however great the ignorance of the soul that gave utterance to it.

Cornelius, though a Gentile, was a believer in Israel's God, and, as such, was accepted as a worshipper. When the message of salvation, through Christ the crucified and exalted Saviour, was made known to him he at once accepted it, being prepared by the faith he already possessed in Jehovah of Israel to believe also in Jesus as the Son of God. Although he required to "hear words" whereby he might be saved—that is, to hear the Gospel concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—yet was he not in the position of an unsaved religious person of the present time who has heard and rejected or neglected the Gospel. According to the light he had he was a believer, and on hearing the truth of the new dispensation he was a believer still, and, as such, received, while Peter was yet speaking, the gift of the Holy Ghost.

To judge from the prayers and offerings of Cornelius being accepted, that the prayers of religious unbelievers now are equally acceptable, is a most serious error.

QUESTION No. LXIX.

Did Christ execute the office of a Priest while on earth, or is it in heaven only that He does so?

REPLY.

Scripture says, "If He were on earth He should not be a priest" (Heb. viii. 4). This we think conclusive. It was not until His resurrection that He was formally invested with the office of Priesthood. Compare Acts xiii. 33 (the Son, begotten again on the resurrection morning), Heb. vii. 16 (a priest after the power of an endless life), Heb. vii. 28 (consecrated by the word of the oath which was since the law, *i.e.*, after His resurrection).

The Epistle to the Hebrews shows plainly that God had only one order of priesthood on earth during the period of THE LAW—that is, from Sinai to the rending of the veil at the death of Christ. The Lord Jesus did not come of Levi, the priestly tribe, but of the tribe of Judah (Heb. vii. 14). He did not therefore enter into the Temple at any time as a priest; and when He died upon the Cross, it was rather as the voluntary Offering, on the ground of which He afterwards entered on His priestly service in the sanctuary in the heavens.

BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE.—Christians meet to Break Bread each Lord's-day at half-past ten a.m., in the Court House, and will continue to do so, if the Lord tarry, till the end of October.

LERWICK, SHETLAND.—The half-yearly meetings of Believers will take place (*D.V.*) here, on the 12th day of July. Any Christians coming from the south will be welcomed gladly.

PARTICK.—The Christians assembling hitherto in 10 Orchard Street, Partick, have removed to the Hall in Crawford Street, Partick. The prayers of God's people are asked for much help and blessing in New Hall.

SELKIRK.—Christians meet to remember the Lord's Death in Gospel Hall, West Port, every Lord's-day, at 11 a.m. (not in Union Hall, as formerly). "Brethren, pray for us."

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ON THE REVISED TRANSLATION OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY W. LINCOLN.

THIS revised translation of the New Testament now just issued seems to me to be, on the whole, far nearer, in many passages, to the original Greek than the authorised version. In a few places it seems to have receded, as in 2 Tim. iii. 16. In very many instances there is still room for further correction. Nevertheless, speaking generally, for this revision of the old authorised translation I am very thankful. The emendations in John v. 24; Heb. x. 23; Rom. xiv. 18, with 2 Cor. v. 9; Acts xx. 7; John xiii. 10; Rev. i. 5; 1 John iii. 1, 3, 4; John xvii. 21; 2 John 7 are the merest specimens of what the English reader has now gained.

Or take again corrections of inferior importance to some of the above, but still very valuable; such are Rev. xx. 12; Rom. v. 1; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 14; v. 15; Eph. vi. 23; 1 John iv. 17; 2 Tim. i. 9, with Titus i. 2; John ix. 5. The exacter rendering of such passages as "the gospel of the glory;" "the liberty of the glory;" "the might of His glory;" "the body of His glory" brings into view the meaning of the Holy Spirit much more vividly than the authorized does.

I rejoice in some of the omissions now made, as at 1 Cor. vi. 30; Rom. viii. 1, with Matt. ix. 13. Also in some, again, of the additions, as at Luke xiii. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 17. The alteration in the old translation of Rom. vii. 6 was imperatively demanded, inasmuch as it suggested that the law was dead to us, rather than we to it, as in the revised version.

Not that I am a thick and thin advocate of this new version. I think I can still perceive many blemishes. Thus: the same Greek tense is rendered variously in Heb. x. 14 with Acts ii. 47. For the Spirit, by using the perfect tense as to our sanctification in Heb. x. 10, but the present tense only in Heb. x. 14, teaches us not only a double truth as to this sanctification in its completeness, and withal in its incompleteness; but, further, by pronouncing over us the sentence, "perfected for ever," even whilst only "being sanctified," even whilst yet sin dwelleth within us, teaches us a different aspect of truth, so useful for us to learn well while yet in daily conflict with ourselves.

Some of the renderings are still too feeble, as Phil. ii. 12, or Rom. viii. 1, on which, for another purpose, I have already remarked: "Nothing therefore now is condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The word "nothing" referring to the preceeding argument of the Apostle, that the "blood" had dealt with our sins from iii. 21 to v. 11, and that by death and resurrection God had judged our old nature, and given us life in a risen Christ. What then is left to condemn? "Nothing" (Rom. viii. 1)—Greek.

Again, whole words in the original are still omitted, as in Heb. xii. 29, "Our God *also* is a consuming fire."

Or again it seems to me a pity that different Greek words are rendered by the same one English word, and that too when by their juxtaposition a contrast was suggested, as *peripateō* and *stoicheō*, in Gal. v. 16 and 25, also in Phil. iii. 16, 17. When Christ promises to give those that come to Him, and further, to those that take His yoke upon them an "up-rest," and

when the Spirit in Heb. iii. and iv. treats of a "down-rest," I cannot think that altogether the same thing in both places is treated of.

The important division into three classes by the different words used in Greek in 1 Cor. xii. 7 to 10, is quite lost sight of both in the authorised version and in the new revision. And the same rendering of the different Greek words by the one English word "another," has misled Beverly somewhat in his argument as to ministry drawn from this passage.

The Greek article instead of being treated as definite, as it ought to be, has been subjected to all sorts of treatment. Thus throughout Galatians, where we have simply "law" and "works of law," in the original, the revisers have added the article, "the law," and "the works of the law." The Spirit's mode is more comprehensive by far. Oftentimes the revisers have themselves inserted a pronoun to convey the force of the article, not, as it appears to me, always with the best results, but the reverse, as in Eph. iii. 12; Col. i. 14; Col. ii. 7, &c.; &c. On the other hand, the force of the article is lost by its omission from Romans viii. 24, where, in the original, it is "We are saved by (or to) THE hope." Again, in Rom. xv. 13, "The God of THE hope fill you, that you may abound in THE hope by the power of the Holy Ghost." And this last cited passage is the more noticeable, since in the very verse preceding, viz., Rom. xv. 12, the revisionists have now given the full force of the article, so that we no longer there read of "A root of Jesse," but of "THE root of Jesse." Here compare the Lord's own language in Rev. xxii. 16. To these instances I now only add Eph. iv. 15, 21, and 1 Cor. xii. 12, where the translation, as rightly it should be, "THE Christ" would surely have made the thought distincter. The rendering is now fairly given of the article in such passages as 1 Tim. vi. 13; Rom. xvi. 10, and notably in 2 John 7. I greatly rejoice at the entire translation of this last cited and most important Scripture.

There are many other passages, apart from any of the lists given above, where the point, and indeed the exact meaning of the Greek, is still much lost sight of, as in Romans v. 5, "The love of God is *poured out* into our hearts," which are no longer like some deep cavern excluding all heavenly daylight; again James v. 15, "And though he has committed sins"—where the question does not appear to be whether the sickness

sent is for sin perpetrated, but whether there can be such full forgiveness of said sin as to be followed by the restoration of the sinner; and 1 Thess. v. 10, surely in the original, there is contained the blessed announcement that grace must reign as respects every one that is its subject, insomuch as that whether watching or not when He comes, if we are His, He will complete His call of us. Or once more, John xii. 24, "Except THE corn of wheat," &c., teaching us that the Lord Himself is the first corn of heavenly wheat, and that saints before were rather "trees." For as to the latter simile, the thought is that as Heaven's blessing descends on such, the *more* are they attached to and rooted upon earth. But the Lord began a new thing. The corn of wheat is not so securely fastened to earth, but as it ripens upwards, it dies downwards, and so on.

But I have said enough for a single paper.

"ALL THAT WAS IN HIS HEART."

(2 CHRON. xxxii. 31).

HEZEKIAH has few equals on the page of Scripture for simplicity of faith, and obedience to the Word of the Lord. He began his reign with God, and it is written that he "prospered in all his works" (2 Chron. xxxii. 30).

When he was about forty years of age—in the very prime of life, after he had been the means of a mighty reviving in Israel, and after the Lord had marvellously interposed for his deliverance from the Assyrian host—when, as we should have judged, he might have looked for a time of quietness amid the prosperity that God had given him—suddenly the prophet announces to him the Lord's message, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live."

The dealings of God with His children may sometimes appear to us to be severe and arbitrary. We wonder when we see the obedient child afflicted; the spiritual saint put into the furnace; the faithful servant of the Lord smitten down and laid aside. But there is a "need" (1 Pet. i. 6) which He knows, though we discern it not, and a purpose to be served, an end to be reached, that can be arrived at in no other way.

The sickness of Hezekiah, and the message of the Lord declaring that it would prove fatal, came to him as a heavy stroke. He was a saint indeed, and as to his ultimate salvation may have had neither doubt nor

fear, but for this "cutting off in the midst of his days" he was not prepared.

In Jesus Christ death is "abolished" for the believer; and through the Gospel "life and immortality are brought to light" (2 Tim. i. 10). This "marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9) it is our heritage to dwell in. Never was it known until Jesus had risen "the first begotten from the dead" (Rev. i. 5) that to be "absent from the body," was to be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). Believing this, "the valley of the shadow of death" is illuminated, and the toil-worn servant longs "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23).

Not so Hezekiah. To him the grave was darkness and silence. True, "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest"—but to Hezekiah in the prime of life, in the midst of prosperity, developing amid a loved and grateful people his cherished plans and purposes for their protection and aggrandizement, death was no welcome messenger, and so he turned his face to the wall, and wept sore, and prayed unto the Lord.

The Lord, ever merciful and full of compassion, heard the prayer and beheld the tears of His servant. Had he then died, it appears that he would have had no son to succeed him on the throne, seeing Manasseh was only 12 years old at the death of his father; and it may be that, on this account, the Lord in His reply by the mouth of Isaiah to Hezekiah's prayer calls Himself "the God of David his father."

Yet the years that were added were years of humiliation, and the son that was begotten was a curse to Israel!

Hezekiah pleaded for recovery on the ground of having walked before the Lord in truth, and with a perfect heart, and having done that which was good in His sight.

Probably few had ever a better right than he so to speak concerning their own life. It had been a beautiful life, without a stumble, without a blot.

Yet in such a prayer is it not evident that there was beneath it all a tissue of self-righteousness—a satisfaction with himself, with his heart, his walk and his doings—that must have hindered his acknowledgment of the grace that had wrought within him both to will and to do?

David could never have prayed thus—his life was too full of failure. His sins and his backslidings had

taught him his vileness, and delivered him from every confidence but the sovereign grace of God. And God delighted to call Himself the God of David, and the God of Jacob, because these were failing ones who learned by bitter experience their indebtedness to the God of all grace.

The sickness brought out the lurking self-righteousness. We should never have discovered this dross had the silver not been put into the fining-pot of affliction.

Then came the testing, that Hezekiah himself might know that which all along was known to the Lord—"all that was in his heart."

The son of the king of Babylon hearing of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, availed himself of the opportunity to send ambassadors with a message of courtesy to congratulate him on his recovery.

But under cover of this congratulatory message was a deeper object. Doubtless he had heard of that stupendous act of power, the slaughter in one night of 185,000 of the host of the king of Assyria. It was a "wonder" indeed! An unseen hand had defended Jerusalem and avenged the insult done to Israel's God, and Merodach Baladan wished to know more about it. Who can tell the thoughts that had been awakened in the heart of that heathen prince? Who can tell what might have resulted had Hezekiah been alive to his opportunity, and sought to proclaim the greatness of Israel's God rather than the grandeur of his own kingdom?

Hezekiah was glad of the visit. Perhaps he saw in this the prospect of a powerful ally, instead of an enemy that he had secretly dreaded. At any rate his eye was off Jehovah.

Solemn words! "God left him to try him!"

Left for a moment alone; deprived for an instant of upholding grace; and Hezekiah falls! Instead of "walking in truth," he walked in vanity. Instead of "a perfect heart," there was a heart that was departing from the living God. Instead of doing good in the sight of God, he did that which greatly displeased the Lord.

The divinely appointed test exposed the real weakness in Hezekiah's character; it manifested to himself the lurking, unjudged, unbroken pride of his heart, and through grace he humbled himself before the Lord (see 2 Chron. xxxii. 26).

"God left him"—but it was only "to try him."

He did not leave him to perish. As a father may let go the hand of a beloved little child for a moment, in order that it may learn its own weakness and folly, and take it by the hand again with tender love; so was it with Hezekiah. The grace that left him to try him provided also for his restoration. With him, as with Peter, the contrite spirit that resulted from the discipline told how true and faithful was the love that left him but for a moment.

There are two ways of learning what is in the heart. One is by the Word of God. Self-judged, self-examined, diligently allowing the truth to search us out, we shall learn by the teaching of the Spirit of God the deceitfulness within. The lessons thus learned are hard to the flesh. It is not joyous but grievous to be exposed to ourselves, and to find, when we thought we were far advanced in likeness to the Master, that within us there are hidden unsuspected depths of pride and vanity, and self-will, unbroken, unsubdued. Yet is it profitable and fruitful work. If the truth be thus searching the inward parts, there will be no boasting of perfection, like Hezekiah, nor of greater love than others, like Peter—but a sense of the immeasurable distance between the disciple and the Lord, and of the grace that, on the ground of “precious blood,” can commune with and deign to use so unworthy a child.

The other way of learning what is within, is trial. Trial or testing finds out the evil within, and manifests it. It is the sifting that brings the chaff to the surface—the fining-pot that separates the dross.

“If we say that we have no sin” it is because “the truth is not in us” (1 John i. 8). There is self-deception going on. There is the pleasing self-satisfaction that all is right within, whilst underneath an outwardly blameless life there may be the deadly root of spiritual conceit—the vanity that is flattered by the admiration of fellow-christians—self-righteousness, thanking God for our experience so far beyond the majority of believers; in short, a condition of soul from which sooner or later there comes a terrible awakening.

As the ambassadors from Babylon prove the occasion of Hezekiah’s break-down, the occasion of bringing out a condition of pride and worldliness unsuspected by himself and by all but God—so sooner or later will the testing-time come to the self-satisfied Christian.

Then comes the rebuke of the Lord. It may be, “What doest thou here?” as to Elijah. It may be, “Thou art the man,” as to David. It may be, “Shouldest thou help the ungodly?” as to Jehoshaphat. It may be, “What have they seen in thy house?” as to Hezekiah. It may be the look that breaks the heart, as to Peter; but surely and certainly in love and in faithfulness comes to the conscience the Lord’s rebuke.

Let us thank Him for this grace. Let us bow to the chastening. Let us desire yet more and more the searching of the truth and the cleansing of the blood, that we may grow in the knowledge of, and in likeness to, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. J. R. C.

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER IV. (*Continued*).

By R. T. H.

WE have now arrived at the first prophetic warning found in this Book. Hitherto Moses had been recalling the past: God’s ways in grace, and Israel’s in failure and disobedience. He had also been exhorting them to serve the Lord only. Now he follows it up with a prophetic intimation, “When thou shalt beget children, and children’s children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God to provoke Him to anger; I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall be utterly destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations” (ver. 25-27). Their future conduct in the land is sketched by the Master hand through Moses. Notwithstanding all their promises and vows, and His exhortations and repeated warnings, he foresaw what they would soon fall into. The state of heart and soul in which they were at that time would produce it. Already it was there, as in seed. It needed but the surroundings of nations practising idolatries before their eyes to lead them quickly to copy such evil ways, till they outstripped the heathen in folly. For when the Lord had brought them out to Himself, and had separated them in the wilderness from all other nations, they even

then manifested the murmurings and rebellions of a self-willed people; and on the first excuse, as we have seen, set up their calf, and danced around it.

Moses, as the leader, had been the one to instruct them as to the delivering blood on the door-post; and the one to bring them out, and form them in their national capacity, giving to them, as such, all the laws, statutes, and judgments required by them for their blessing, and as the test of their obedience.

It is noticeable how he, too, is the first prophetically to depict their future, and the scattering among the nations that would follow.

In like manner, Paul, as one born out of due time, the one in whom it pleased God to reveal His Son (Gal. i. 16), and who was used to bring out the unique position and character of the saints of this dispensation, as "the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23), is also the one, first of all, to predict the Church's failure. That which had been hidden from the ages was made known to him, and then by him to others (Eph. iii. 3-6), that Jew and Gentile were made one—fellow-heirs of Christ (see Rom. viii. 17), and fellow-members of the body, as baptized in the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 13). It is easy, and yet of immense importance as to our practical walk, to see the great contrast between a nation as a whole, called into national position, and blessed with earthly blessings; and the Church of God called out from the world, and blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). Our position and calling regulate our conduct. And just as the Holy Ghost uses Paul to bring out this truth first, when writing to the saints at Ephesus, so Paul is the one to give to the elders of Ephesus the first solemn warnings of departing and error, sounding an alarm to them to watch the grievous wolves outside, and to watch themselves inside, as those who, if they once gave up the Head in self-will, would draw away disciples after themselves. Thus, when self becomes the centre, even to a child of God, at once he seeks to make himself a centre for others in the pride of an evil heart. The only safeguard, therefore, is "God, and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32). God as the one centre; His Word, as able to build up.

So long as Israel owned the Lord, bowed to His Word, and carried it out, they not only worshipped in the one temple and offered the same

sacrifices, but they were together. When He was departed from, and idols followed, through their hearts being corrupted, they were scattered every tribe from the other, and they were left few in number. And is not the history of the Church of God the same? So long as Christians owned the One Head, and simply gathered to the Lord alone, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul" (Acts iv. 32). "And believers were the more added, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts v. 14). But as soon as division and strife came in, it resulted in separation one from another. What more painful scene could be exhibited? Schism and failure, where unity and power should have prevailed!

When Adam and Eve had disobeyed the Word and transgressed, at once judgment was pronounced on them; yet grace came in, and in the same moment the death of Christ was foreshadowed. So here, following the first prophetic intimation of their corrupting themselves, and the scattering that would follow as a consequence, we read—"But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul" (ver. 29).

What mercy and grace shine out in these words! Before they had even taken possession of the land, from which they were to be driven if they corrupted themselves, grace comes in; and because of what God is in Himself, the promise is given of restoration if they turned to the Lord with all their heart. How this would be accomplished; how repentance would be wrought in them, and their being brought back into the land, in spite of their enemies, would be effected, is passed over here, just as in the prophetic word to Adam concerning the bruising of the heel. In both instances further Scriptures distinctly reveal how He would bring it about. As we read, therefore, prophetic intimations of the Lord Jesus and His sufferings, and then from the New Testament see how accurately they have been fulfilled, our faith is strengthened; and we know that, in like manner, the Lord will in His time fulfil all these promises to Israel. Their preservation as a distinct people during eighteen centuries of scattering and oppression is not only a miracle in itself, but it should teach us that God assuredly means to fulfil His promises to them. Why are they thus preserved everywhere distinct from the people among whom they dwell, with a

creed, customs, and laws peculiar to themselves? Undoubtedly for the accomplishment of that restoration and glory so constantly spoken of by all the prophets. And such restoration depends upon the Lord; it hinges upon His unfailing mercy and faithfulness; not theirs, or it never could be accomplished. "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them" (ver. 31). Not which *they* swore unto Him, but He unto them. Thus its fulfilment is ensured. The "mercy" referred to here, in this first intimation of restoration, is the very thing brought in on the first occasion of rejoicing, in connection with the birth of John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the Lord. Zachariah, filled with the Holy Ghost, sung, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant" (Luke i. 68-72). And although the people at that time would none of His mercy, and rejected His Son, yet "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29); and the mercy shall be displayed in the ingathering of Israel, now down-trodden; and although blindness still prevails, it is only *in part*, and the veil shall yet be taken away. "They shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced" (Zech. xii. 10); and it will be that sight that will convince them of their fearful sin in crucifying the Lord of life and glory. Then will they turn unto Him with their whole heart, and national repentance will precede the nation's glory and honour.

Moses appeals then to all the actings of God in grace on their behalf. Had there ever been the like? Had He ever taken a nation out from other nations before; manifesting as He did such sevenfold power as ver. 34 describes? Never; but it was showed unto them that they might know that the Lord was God alone, and that there was none beside Him" (ver. 35). All this was intended to appeal to them to serve the Lord only.

Exactly in like manner would He appeal to us to live to and for Him alone. His grace teaches us

as nothing else can. And yet how slow Christians are to acknowledge this? How many of them will cling to the thought that the law had better be brought in, or that it is a wholesome thing to think they can fall away from Christ and perish after all. Such thoughts, it is held, will make persons fear and work. If free grace, unmixed with law or works, is proclaimed, the cry is, "You will make Christians presume; they will become careless; they will live as they like if you tell them their safety is ensured." Never will Christians live more fully for God by doubting, or by putting themselves under law. Even though we may see some professors *living* differently from what they profess, and talking loudly at the same time of free grace, let us not be moved thereby; but all the more loudly say, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus ii. 11, 12); and we may make up our minds to it, that if this is not sufficient to draw out the hearts of His people after Him, and to cause their feet to run in His ways, nothing else will. The whole teaching of Scripture is, that law only brings out transgression, seeing it has to do with one who has already sinned; and that grace, pure and unmixed, captivates the affections, instructs the mind, and guides the feet; in other words, influences the whole being for the One whose grace was so fully manifested on the cross.

NOTES on the 2nd & 3rd EPISTLES of JOHN.

(BELLET).

WE will now meditate on both these epistles, and each has a character of its own, but all gathering about what John calls "the truth," and the truth is that which stands in contradiction to the lie of the serpent which hid God from man. It said there was neither truth nor love in God—two terrific slanders, by which man was estranged from God, and became what John's gospel calls "darkness." "The light shineth in darkness." The truth comes first in the Person and Ministry of Christ to declare itself, and the business of the truth is the contradiction of the lie. It restores us to God, puts us back into the Divine presence.

Now in each of the three Epistles of John the truth stands differently related to us.

In the first, we are told how to enjoy the truth, and how to use it. I will give you samples of what I mean.

In the first chapter, we are told that the Son of God was manifested that our joy might be full. Chap. iii.—“To take away our sins;” “that he might destroy the works of the devil:” iv.—“That we might have boldness in the day of Judgment;” and again, that we might have “victory over the world”—that is the use my soul makes of the manifestation of God. In the first epistle, therefore, we get the truth commended to us for our own personal enjoyment and use, and until we make use of it for our own very selves, we have not done our first duty by it.

But then, if we *enjoy* it, we *owe* it something, and that is what we get in the second epistle. I see in it a duty I owe the truth, and I see another duty in the third. The duty in the second is this, *to make our house a sanctuary for it*; and the duty in the third is, *to serve it abroad*. So the first Epistle explains the truth to me, and tells me to sit down and enjoy it; and the Spirit comes in the second and tells me, “Ah! but you have a duty to perform to it; if you have proved its value to your own soul you are now to make your house a sanctuary for it, and to be a fellow-helper to it.” That is the difference between the Elect Lady and Gaius. It is much easier to make our own house a sanctuary than to be a fellow-helper abroad; so the weaker vessel is put into the gentler service. Now, here he says, in addressing the Elect Lady (some say she ought to be called Kuria, that it was her own proper name), “whom I love in the truth.” “For the truth’s sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.” Yes, it shall never be robbed from the Elect, as it was from Adam. Why can the Church say that which Adam could not say? Because the truth was committed to him as a stewardship; it is kept in you by the power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore can never be taken from you. “You must be faithful, or everything will be ruined,” said God to Adam. “It is kept in you, and you in it,” is said to the Elect Lady.

“I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth.” Beautiful! How he does echo again and again this sweet word, “the truth;” it has become a little technical in our language, and a pity it is: when we utter it, “The Truth!” we ought to put a note of admiration after it. It is magnificent:

“the truth!” yes blessed Lord, that is what Thou hast brought with Thee, to scatter the darkness of the lie.

“And now I beseech thee Lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.” John is very fond of this style, because as the Divine nature is unchanging, so His counsels touching you and me are unchanging. Here we get the two tests that we were looking at in the first epistle—“Walking after His commandments,” and “Loving one another.”

“For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” &c. This is the great foundation of every thing; that the Son of the bosom dwelt in this world in very manhood. John was a Kohathite; if you read Numb. iv. you will find there three sons of Levi, Kohath, Gershom, and Merari, each having a trust committed to them. Kohath had to take care of the sacred utensils; the most sacred trust was committed to the Kohathites. That is exactly the service I get in John. The guardianship of the *Person of Christ*: the most sacred deposit is in the custody of John. Paul may defend the faith. John surrounds the person of Christ as a wall of fire: everything hangs on that. Supposing God had allowed man to die under sin, it would have been the vindication of His *truth*; but where would have been the display of His *love*? Or if God had overlooked the sentence of death, there might have been *love*; but where would have been His *truth*? But when you see the God-man die in vindication of truth, the lie of the serpent is gone for ever. If I believe Him—God in flesh dying on the accursed tree that I might live for ever—I have a glorious testimony that there is both love and truth in God. But if people question either His manhood or His Godhead, they have no materials whereby they may tell the serpent that he has told a lie; and, therefore, no wonder that John should hedge round this blessed mystery. As Fry in his book says, “If Jesus were a *man*, you might talk to me of a *certain man*; or if He were an angel, you might talk to me of an angel; but if Jesus be not *God*, don’t tell me that God is love.”

“Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God.” That is, not the doctrine that Christ teaches, but about *Christ Himself*. The doctrine

that Christ *is*—whosoever abideth not in that hath lost God; he may have a god of his own making, but he has not regarded Him whom the lie of the serpent slandered. The Elect Lady is to make her house a sanctuary of that mystery.

“If there come unto you any, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house; neither bid him God-speed, for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” Now I don’t believe the Apostle meant here the office of charity—“Do good unto all;” but take care that your house be never anything else than this, and keep outside that which denies the truth. That is a man’s duty. Does it not comfort you to think that you have duties to perform to Christ? The principal duty that attaches to you is to be, with the Spirit, the guardians of the Person of Christ, and he that comes *in contact* with uncleanness, I find in Leviticus and the vi. of 2nd Corinthians, is defiled.

Now we pass on to the third epistle. Gaius was called to be himself a fellow-helper to the truth; as the Elect Lady had a service to do at home, so he had a duty to the truth abroad. “The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth;” the link between John and Gaius was the same as between John and Kuria—“The truth.” But do not get into a dogmatic way of talking of the truth; let it stand as symbolic of the blessed manifestation of the Father that was the contradiction of the serpent’s lie. “Even as thou walkest in the truth.” He did not ask Gaius to be a patron of the truth if he did not himself “walk in truth.” Oh! it is uncleanness, looking for the great people of the world to be patrons of the truth, when they themselves don’t care for the truth.

“Whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for His name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.” They had gone forth after a godly sort, not making bargains with those at home how much they would give them: that was not what these did. Can anything be simpler—can anything be purer? And this is purity connected with zeal.

“I wrote unto the Church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.” The Church was going down even then. “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds”—“a prating fool shall fall”—and the very next writing of John was when the Church had

fallen down. Here he is on his way to that sight. He talks of something symptomatic in the pride of Diotrephes, and Rev. ii. and iii. show the pride ready to fall. In ver. 12, we have personality again—Demetrius put in contrast with Diotrephes—“Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.” Oh, the deep personality of John. Henceforth let the words “the truth” be very sacred in the thoughts and associations of our minds.

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. ii. 9-16.

I WANT you to notice three things in this passage for which we are dependent on the Spirit of God—the Spirit acting in three different capacities. First (in the 10th verse), we have Him as *the Revealer*. Secondly (in the 13th verse), as *the Teacher*. Thirdly (in the 14th verse), as *the Enlightener*.

I believe it is important to see these three offices of the Holy Spirit. None but the Spirit of God could know the hidden counsels of the mind of God. For this reason He alone could be the revealer, and we are thus shown the utter impossibility of man ever attaining any knowledge whatever of the plans, purposes, and counsels of God, except He had given a revelation of Himself. The apostle here quotes from Isaiah 64th chap., 4th verse, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” But, observe, he does not stop there—he goes on to add—“*But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.*”

I do not think that Christians generally have a right apprehension of the marvellous revelation the Spirit of God has given us since Christ ascended to God’s right hand, of the thoughts, counsels, and purposes of the mind of God. There is, indeed, one part of the New Testament which is called “the Revelation,” *i.e.*, “the Book of the unveiling of Jesus Christ;” and, surely, it is a wonderful “Revelation.” But there is not any part of the Old or New Testament that is not equally a “Revelation.” It is the Spirit of God opening up, unfolding, and making known to us that which was hidden in the heart of God. If God has thus taken us, as it were, into His

confidence, treated us as his friends, by telling us His counsels and purposes, surely it is our responsibility to give attention, and to use the greatest diligence, that we may understand what He means to convey to us.

Would you look with me at a few Scriptures concerning the Spirit of God as the Revealer. We find here that the Spirit, in this passage, is spoken of as the One who knew the secret and deep things of God, and who alone could reveal them. Turn now to Rev. ii. 7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This is repeated seven times over, summoning the attention of God's children to what the Spirit of God has to make known.

Turn now to another Scripture, "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come" (John xvi. 13). Before reading further, I would refer you to a chapter in John's gospel (vii. 39), "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Notice here that the Spirit was *not yet given*; that the coming of the Spirit was postponed till another event should take place, and that was—the glorifying of Christ.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John xvi. 7). "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John xv. 26). Here, again, we are pointed forward to a definite period, at which the Holy Ghost would come; His *coming* being as definite as the *going away* of the Lord Jesus. He speaks of the Holy Ghost personally coming, just as He speaks of Himself personally going.

Read now in Acts i. 7, "And He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Still, you see, the coming of the Holy Ghost was future. But now turn to Acts ii. 32, 33, and you will see the accomplishment of these promises, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise

of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." He who was crucified in weakness fifty days before, was raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God—glorified. "He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Turn again to John, 16th chapter and 13th verse, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come." That we have seen was after Christ ascended to the right hand of God, and was glorified. "He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself." That meant, He shall not speak *from Himself*. "But whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He shall show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

There, you see, is the work of the Holy Spirit; the one grand purpose for which He has been sent, that is, to be the Revealer of all the wondrous purposes and counsels that God has stored up for us in the gift of Christ, His own Beloved Son. God, in giving us Christ, has given us all things; and the Holy Spirit has been given to reveal to us the wisdom, love, beauty, and glory of Christ's person, work, and coming Kingdom, and to show us, who have believed in Him, our interest in it all. This He has shown us in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Turn now to another Scripture (1 Cor. iv. 1), "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ." Literally "the servants of Christ." And we are all servants of Christ; but we are not all, in the same sense as the Apostles, "stewards of the mysteries of God." He had entrusted to them the mysteries of His counsels by direct revelation given to them by the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. And chiefly among them all had He selected the Apostle Paul to be a steward of these mysteries.

Read Rom. xvi. 25, 26, and you will see this, "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest." This special aspect of the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, not only as the Saviour, but "according to the revelation of the mystery," was revealed—committed to the Apostle Paul. It had been "kept secret since the world began." It was not revealed in the Old Testament; but now is revealed by the Holy Ghost, through "the Scriptures of the

prophets," according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Another passage bearing on this point you will find in the Epistle to the Ephesians, 3rd chapter, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to you-ward," mark the words, "How that by *revelation He made known unto me the mystery* (as I wrote afore in few words), whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." How is it that Paul knew more than Peter and the other apostles? He says, "I have written to you in order that you may understand how I know." It was made known to him by special revelation.

The Apostle Paul was as really separated by God unto Himself, in order to receive a special revelation when he went into Arabia, as Moses was when in the mount forty days and nights with God, receiving the instructions of Jehovah concerning the tabernacle and other laws.

He had been taken also up into the third heaven, and had revelations given unto him beyond any other man, and so he became, in a very especial way, "a steward of the mysteries of God."

One part of this revelation was "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promises in Christ by the gospel." Not only that the "Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with the Jews," but "partakers of His promise in Christ—joint-heirs with Christ."

It is not that Gentiles should be saved in the age to come; that is not the mystery; the future salvation and blessing of Gentile nations, as such is plainly foretold in many Old Testament Scriptures; but that Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and members of the body of Christ, and partakers of the promises made to Christ through the gospel;—that is a mystery indeed, that is not spoken of in the Old Testament, nor in any way revealed, until Christ had been glorified, and the Holy Ghost sent down. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Mark—the Spirit of God taking of the things which are Christ's, and showing them—revealing them, through His servant and Apostle; not the riches of this earth, but the unsearchable riches of the Son of God, as the

portion of those who believe on His name, seeing they are joint-heirs with Him. "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Who could reveal that which had been "hid in God" but the Spirit of God? These things the world, with all its wisdom, could not search out or know. It never entered the mind of man that, through the murder of God's Son, there should be gathered by the Holy Ghost, out from both Jew and Gentile, a great multitude, to be one with Christ as members of His body; as joint-heirs, to share His coming Kingdom and glory, and to inherit, in virtue of this union with Him, all the promises that were made of old time to Abraham's seed, and to David's Son and Lord.

ISRAEL'S MESSAGE TO EDOM & MOAB.

Numb. xx. 17, 18; xxi. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 18;
Phil. iii. 20, 21.

LET us pass through this stranger land :
Pass on the King's highway ;
The guiding Pillar leads us on,
And will not let us stay.

Nor would we wish your fields and vines,
Or earthly wells to share ;
We see a better land beyond,
And know our portion there.

The eye can trace the utmost bound
Of all that charms it here ;
Your fairest scenes and dearest joys
Must fade and disappear.

Rich the supplies your land pours forth :
Your rivers constant flow ;
But we have bread and heav'nly streams
Which you can never know.

But if perchance some worldly good
Come to us on the road,
We'll pay it all in bringing down
Requital from our God.

Yet still we cannot turn aside,
To lose our full reward ;
Our pilgrim feet must hasten on,
Obedient to His Word.

M. W.

THOUGHTS on MEETINGS for WORSHIP, PRAYER, and PREACHING.

LET us examine calmly and thoughtfully for ourselves what seems most in accordance with God's Word concerning the various meetings we are accustomed to hold; for we may be sure that the more carefully we attend to God's order, and seek His glory, the greater will be our blessing and profit.

It is somewhat noteworthy that, whilst the most minute detail was given by God concerning the building of the tabernacle of Israel—its worship, its sacrifices, its ceremonies, and its priesthood—there is no *detail* whatever given us as to how Christians are to worship, save only the broad principles, such as, "They who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth;" and "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips," and kindred passages. Scattered throughout the Acts and the Epistles, we get glimpses to show the way in which believers of old acted; yet nowhere is there given, in consecutive detail, any form or mode of worship which God has enjoined for His redeemed ones.

Is not this silence intentional? Is not this absence of direction on God's part, as to the mode of procedure in worship, &c., significant?

Yet does God thereby permit licence to man's will? Does His silence render it necessary that His people should have scope and option in such important matters? Does He leave us, without interfering, to do as we like?

Let us consider, then, from the Word what is the appropriate mode of worship; then let us ponder how our meetings for prayer, and for preaching of the Gospel, should be ordered.

And firstly, What is worship?

The word betokens the act of reverence or reverential devotion to a superior. What is worship, as rendered to God? What is the worship "the Father seeketh?"

Surely we may answer, *The outgoing of the renewed soul unto Him in spirit and in truth.*

The form, the method, the substance of the soul's outgoing may vary; but if the soul go out *unto Him*, in spirit-enkindled desires or affections or raptures, it is worship such as He looks for, and loves to have. Neither, on the one side, should there be the

monotonous wail of self-condemnation; nor, on the other, that of ideal, fanciful word-praise, but the healthy, vigorous outcry or out-song of the soul unto Him, as led by His Spirit, according to His truth.

God's people are redeemed unto Him by the precious blood of Christ, to be "a holy priesthood," to offer up spiritual sacrifices; and "a royal priesthood," to show forth His excellencies.

It is meet, therefore, when they are gathered together avowedly to worship Him, that they comport themselves as a holy and a royal priesthood. And the command being, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together;" and that also, "till He come." His own are to show forth His (Christ's) death in the breaking of bread (1 Cor. v.); thus carrying on the emblem of the Passover accomplished.

Surely it is becoming to consider, amidst the varied ways of men, what will please our God, and to fully recognise His sole authority in matters pertaining so nearly to His glory in the Church, in Christ Jesus.

We come together, then, avowedly to worship God, and to shew forth, in the breaking of bread, the Lord's death.

We are reminded solemnly that it is incumbent on us to discern what we are doing, so that we come together for the better, and not for the worse, for no formal observance of the Lord's Supper can please God. The discerning, *i.e.*, the conscious realisation that, in partaking of the bread and wine, we are showing forth unto God our soul's confidence in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, is what God desires. And to this end He would exercise us, saying, "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup, for he that eateth and drinketh eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, *if he discern not the body.*"

We well know how few come together from quiet prayerful meditation; how that the many are gathered from amid the various busy scenes of home life. Some with aching heart, and some with weary body. Some with little understanding, and looking for comfort; others with vague, indefinite knowledge of what is looked for, or what they ought to give.

Generally speaking, it is but a few that have apprehension of what God desires, and even fewer are fitted to express (so that all may be led together in worship), the common soul out-speech; so that He who desires truth in the inward parts may be glad in the midst of

His people. What causes this? Is it intentional? Does it accord with the custom of the early Church, as related in the Word of God?

In every assembly there will, as a rule, be found young and old, learned and unlearned, intelligent and simple, spiritually-minded and otherwise, gifted and ordinary members. The presence, then, of these various groups causes inquiry as to the mode of procedure authorised of God, lest all things should not be done in that decency and order enjoined by Him.

Should all take active part? Should all lead in prayer? Should any one be at liberty to serve at the table, in the giving of thanks, and the handing round the bread and wine? Should any one minister the Word, or give out a hymn? Should there be ministry of the Word at any special time? And should it partake of the character of teaching, or exhortation, or correction?

These and many other similar questions arise in the minds of those who disown the authority and customs of men in these matters, and who desire solely to be guided by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. How barren and unprofitable do words that are but the talk of the lips become! How seasonless are oft-repeated platitudes! How savouring of cant and hypocrisy all talk from an unexercised soul, from a mere religious machine. God desires truth in the inward parts, and would therefore—for the correction of these evils, and the ordaining of that which is right—enjoin us to “be filled with the Spirit.”

This is the corrective against formal profitless worship.

When, therefore, we come together to worship God, unless we are filled with the Spirit our worship will be in vain; and, moreover, will be a positive bane to those who are seeking for true worship, and to those young in the faith.

“If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk” (R.V.)—This walk will ever be according to God’s Word.

Now in that Word, in 1 Cor. xii. and xiv. chapters, we get the constitution and the functions of the Church; the exercise of the various members noted and set in order.

Met together, then, in the assembly to worship God, those who are truly filled with the Spirit will be also led by the Spirit in worship. The special form that worship may take is not noted, but we may

surely gather it will be in accordance with the Holy Spirit’s teaching, if it truly represent the soul-condition of the assembly generally; and that the prayer or praise, or ministry of the Word, will be so directed as to meet the present condition of the assembly, and gently lead it unto God.

What godly wisdom and care! What continual watchfulness are needed to insure this end we can all see. Yet no pre-arranged service nor carefully-planned words can avail to do it. We must be “filled with the Spirit.”

And they who daily do feed on God’s Word, hearkening unto His voice, becoming wise unto His salvation, being led in daily life by His Spirit, being gifted by Him to serve, will surely also be of one mind and one spirit in thus leading the worship of the assembly; feeding with food convenient; giving forth utterance, whether in prayer, or confession, or praise, according to the spiritual condition of the assembly.

The mode will vary, because the condition varies; and because God desires truth in worship; but the aim will ever be to have each soul in living communion with the living God, and ever realising the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the great High Priest of His people.

May we not, then, draw these conclusions from the general teaching of His Word—

1. That those who take active part in the worship of the Church must be filled with the Spirit.
2. That this fulness is not a sudden impulse, but the calm, prayerful, daily feeding on the Word of God, and being led by the Spirit in the daily walk of life.
3. That this fulness enables us to understand the spiritual needs of others, and intelligently to lead in prayer, or praise, or ministry of His Word.
4. That it is essential that no novice, nor any one who has not a good report of those that are without, should take a leading part.
5. That our worship will vary in form, according to our spiritual need or fulness.
6. That the condition of all in the assembly must be studied—as to whether they be young or old, tried or otherwise, intelligent or simple—so that the expression of worship may be in accordance with the minds of the many, and not the experience of one or two.
7. That the ministry of the Word be ever directed to the building up into Christ, that He may be the object to whom every heart turns.

A. O. M.

(To be continued.)

2nd EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE importance of having Scriptural views on service in an active day of Christian work, such as the present is almost self-evident. It is not simply to be doing something, but we should aim to be doing it alone to the Lord. Ere that can be the case we must know from Himself how to serve, and that can only be gathered from the Scriptures. Such were my thoughts on reading the article on this epistle in this month's *Northern Witness*, and it led me to try and add a little on it.

The title most frequently applied to our Lord in an epistle often helps us to see the line of truth contained in it.

In Phil., "Christ" is the prominent Name, for it is the epistle on Church or collective service. Therefore fitly in that epistle in the opening salutation, Paul writes "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons"—specially thus naming those who were servants of the Lord in and for the Church.

In Timothy, however, the characteristic name is "Lord," which occurs seventeen times. Thus, in service, the saint is thrown on his individual responsibility to the Lord.

In Phil. we read, "For your fellowship in the Gospel" (chap. i. 5). "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel" (i. 27).

"No Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only" (chap. iv. 15). Verses that abundantly suffice to prove that the theme is "Church service."

Whereas here we get not only an epistle addressed to an individual, but such verses as "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (chap. i. 6).

"Watch thou in all things," &c. (chap. iv. 5), and many others.

Again, when Paul writes of himself, it is in his servant character—"a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (chap. i. 11).

He exhorts Timothy to endure hardness as "a good soldier" (chap. ii. 3); and shows that the essential of a soldier is—1, No will of his own in exercise; 2, No self-pleasing; 3, No entangling of himself with the

world. All his directions must come from the Lord. At any cost he must please Him. And this can only be done by being free from the world out of which he has been called that being enrolled in his Lord's ranks, he might be instantly ready to fulfil His commands.

Again he presses this serving on Timothy by another illustration in apt keeping with it. "The husbandman that laboureth" (iii. 6). And that evidently in view of the future. The crown is for the one who strives lawfully, and the fruit will be *first* for the one who has graciously been used of God in the production of it. "Ye are God's husbandry" writes Paul when he would turn away Corinthian eyes from teachers to God Himself that He might have His own place. And this he does by bringing out the truth "I have planted, Apollos watered." And now to Timothy he says, "The husbandman that laboureth must be the first to partake of the fruits" (ii. 6: see revised version). All the sowing, planting, watering, in divine tillage will produce divine fruit, of which the husbandman will first partake. It will be for his joy *first* in the heavenly ranks. As Paul wrote to Thessalonian saints, converted through him, "Ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. ii. 20).

But Timothy was not only a soldier under divine orders not to move a step or lift a hand save as ordered by his Lord—or a husbandman labouring in his fields—he was also "a workman" (ii. 15), and as such he had to use the Word of God. As a workman is not responsible to use other tools than those supplied him, yet has to see to it that he uses all supplied him, if needed, the more skilfully to turn out his work;—so the heavenly workman is responsible to use the perfect Word of God. He is skilfully to use, by "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (chap. ii. 15), that is as the Greek word conveys, "holding a straight course in the Word of Truth" (see new version, margin); thus he will be kept from corrupting it on the one hand or keeping it back on the other. There will be no avoidance of the Truth, it will be maintained and well used in meeting error, or in whatever way the Lord calls to. And whether used in sowing, planting, pruning, or aught else, he will have to remember that he has to do it in direct responsibility to the Lord Himself.

In another sense he is "a vessel" (ii. 21), and needs

to be a vessel unto honour meet for the Master's use, *prepared* unto every good work by departing from iniquity; and *furnished* for it by the "God-breathed" Scriptures of Truth (chap. iii. 16). Thus only can any be fitted to carry out the injunction, "apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (ii. 24, 25).

But our titles are not exhausted yet. "The man of God" (iii. 17) is to be "thoroughly furnished," in order that, as an "evangelist," (chap. iv. 5) he might "preach the Word." Is not this overlooked by many? Does the expression "I am only an evangelist, and *simply* preach the Gospel" accord with it? Surely not. It is "the Word" he is to preach in all its fullness. Thus ten distinctive titles are used, and all more or less connected with the thought of serving.

But before we close this line of thought it would be well to see the place "the Word of God" occupies in the epistle, for without it what service could be rendered?

And as Paul has laid it down that the Word alone can furnish, so he himself, as the servant of Jesus Christ, in this epistle constantly brings in the Word of God.

Timothy is to "hold fast the form of sound (healthful) words" (chap. i. 13), and especially in view of the

solemn fact that the time would come when many "would not endure sound (healthful) doctrine" (chap. iv. 3). Nevertheless that which he had "heard" (chap. ii. 2), he was to commit to "faithful men" who should "be able to teach others." Putting man in office, is man's way, and often utterly unfit ones are set to God's work, but Timothy was to commit the Truth, not to ordain. To put into them by the Spirit's help that which would furnish, not to put them into a mere official position. And he was to *continue* (abide) in what he had "learned" (iii. 14). Whilst hearing and giving he was to abide in what he had learned. No small thing so to have learned from the sacred writings that he had not to unlearn and give up. Well for us all if, whilst we may have much yet to learn from the Word, we have not to unlearn or give up what we hold or teach by His grace. He was to preach the Word (iv. 2), rightly to divide the Word of Truth (ii. 15), remembering that the "Word of God" is not bound (chap. ii. 9), and that if for so doing he suffered bonds with Paul, the Word he had spoken could not be bound, but would win its way to many hearts in the accomplishment of God's purposes, for the "holy Scriptures" are able to make wise unto salvation (chap. iii. 15), for they are from God Himself.

R. T. H.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. LXX.

Is it possible to be reconciled to God through the death of Christ, but not saved by His life (see Rom. v. 10)?

REPLY.

The teaching of this verse to a simple mind is most blessed. Several times in this chapter we find the expression "much more," and each time it is directed towards the complete removal from the heart of every remaining shadow of unbelieving doubt.

If God reconciled enemies at such a cost, in giving up His Son unto death for them, how *much more* shall He save them now that they are no longer enemies, but reconciled, and now that it no longer needs the provision of a ransom, but only the putting forth of the power of the living One who died.

How unreasonable it would be to allow the reconciled ones to perish, for whōm—whilst they were yet in enmity against Him He spared not His own Son.

It is by the life of the risen One that the reconciled ones are to be saved. He is "able to save

unto the uttermost," because He "ever liveth" (Heb. vii. 25). What the sinner needs is not only a dying sacrifice for sin, but a living Almighty Saviour. We have both in Jesus.

It is He alone that can save day by day from the defilements of the world around, from the desires of an evil heart within, and from the wiles and fiery darts of Satan; even as it is He alone who can change these bodies of our humiliation, and fashion them like unto the body of His own glory.

We are as much dependent upon Him for victory over sin now as for victory over death and the grave by and by.

But the power of the Lord Jesus to save is known only in such measure as He is counted upon by faith.

He who in every trial trusts Him will in every trial experience His delivering grace. He who every day "abides in Him" will every day "bring forth much fruit." He who knows his own weakness, and leans on His might, will find that His grace is sufficient, and that the power of Christ is made to rest upon Him.

Some know much of Christ as a present Saviour, because they trust Him much; others know little, because they trust Him little; but he who knows Him not at all, as a living Saviour from sin, is deceiving his own soul.

QUESTION NO. LXXI.

Is it possible to be a believer in the Lord Jesus, and yet not to have received the sealing of the Spirit?

REPLY.

In Rom. viii. 9 it is written, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." This verse we should judge to be conclusive to any simple mind. But, the thought that some believers have received the Holy Spirit, and others not, is now being held by so many, that we must reply more fully.

In Gal. iii. 2 it is asked, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" Again, in chap. iv. 6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." With these two verses, compare a third, viz., Gal. iii. 26, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

These three passages taken together show—1st, That all who have faith in Christ Jesus are the children of

God; 2nd, That the Spirit is received in the same way, "by the hearing of faith;" and 3rd, That God sends the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of all His children, enabling them to call Him "Father."

So in Eph. i. 13, "in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance."

We may remark here that the words in this passage, "after that ye believed," do not imply any lapse of time between the believing and the sealing; and in the New Revision it is correctly rendered, "in whom having also believed ye were sealed."

The Apostle, in writing to the Ephesian saints, never supposes that some are "sealed" and some not, but exhorts them thus: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

So also, in writing to the Corinthians—although he accuses them of being "carnal," and walking as men—he says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

Again, in 2 Cor. i. 21, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Again, John vii. 39, "This spake He of the Spirit which *they that believe on Him* should receive."

The Spirit of God is thus shown to be the portion of all saints, and it is He Himself who is to each one who receives Him—the "anointing," the "seal," the "earnest," the "witness." To have the Spirit and not to have the seal or the anointing is an absurdity, for the Spirit Himself is God's Seal put upon His children, and the unction that teaches and enlightens them.

The babe in Christ has the Spirit as much as the oldest believer; and the difference between a carnal and a spiritual believer is not that the one is sealed and the other not, but that the one is enjoying the light and joy and comfort of the Spirit, whilst the other is grieving the Spirit. The one is "full of the Spirit," the other is so full of self and the world that he has the Spirit only in a very little measure.

The giving of the Spirit at the beginning was in various ways—according to God's sovereignty and wisdom.

At Pentecost—to Jews—directly from heaven (Acts ii.).

In Acts viii.—TO SAMARITANS—mediately through the Apostles; thus making those who, according to the flesh, would have had no dealings with the Samaritans the channels through which the outcasts were brought into the blessed unity of the One anointing.

In Acts x.—TO GENTILES—directly from heaven, by “the hearing of faith.” God thus bearing them witness, even as He did at Pentecost to Israelites (see Acts xv. 8, 9).

Then, finally, the Spirit is communicated mediate through the Apostle to a few of JOHN’S DISCIPLES, who had not heard the Gospel of the glory of the Lord Jesus, but had been baptized upon confession of their sins, in expectation of the Christ that was to come.

Surely the wisdom of these variations in the method of bestowing the gift is unquestionably perfect and divine.

Nothing but the grossest ignorance could argue, from the way in which the Spirit was given to Samaritans and to John’s disciples, that any one who now believes on the Lord Jesus Christ could remain unsealed, unanointed, and destitute of the Spirit of Christ.

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THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER IV. (*Continued*).

By R. T. H.

WE have now arrived at the closing section of this deeply-interesting chapter.

We are constantly reminded as we read that Israel's blessing and continuance in the land depended on their obedience. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Nevertheless, at that time Israel having promised obedience, for they had said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Exod. xix. 8), had thereby taken upon themselves the law, and pledged themselves to keep it; and therefore Moses informed them that, failing in keeping it would involve curse, and not blessing, and would entail the loss of the land; yet only for a time, long as that may appear to be, for the Lord has pledged Himself to bring them back. But this Book does more than that. It lets us into the secret of their failure and sin; shows why they broke down when they did, and explains the only way by which they could have been kept. They needed a heart for the Lord. And this they had not got. No other Book in the Scriptures contains so much about the heart, and thus it goes to the root at once.

About forty occurrences of the word "heart" are found in this Book. Nothing less will satisfy the Lord than a true heart to serve Him. This He will give to Israel in the latter day, when He takes them from the heathen, and gathers them out of all countries. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will put

My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers" (Ezek. xxxvi. 26-28). All this He will secure to and for them in His infinite, unwearied grace. But here it is not the prophetic "shall," with the Lord acting for them; but it is the exhortation in a day of promised obedience, calling upon them to fulfil that promise, yet plainly showing them that they could only yield obedience as they had a "heart." "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt therefore keep His statutes, and His judgments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever" (ver. 39, 40). How explicit; yet what a contrast to the passage from Ezekiel. There it is the Lord fulfilling His original promises to Abram. His purpose carried out by Himself in unconditional grace. Here it is a people who had promised being called upon to fulfil their promise, by serving the Lord only. How utterly they would fail is prophetically given us. How they did so, is to be found in the historical Books that follow.

But whether it be as dealing with a people under law or under grace, nothing will satisfy the Lord save a heart true to Him. "Thine heart is not right in the sight of God," said Peter to Simon. Then nothing was. However correct the outward life may be to the moral standard man would give, even though he

takes it from the Word of God, the absence of a heart for Christ renders all valueless. It is not head knowledge He looks for, nor even a life free from gross sin, save as it flows from the heart being true to Him. When Herod gathered the chief priests and scribes together, that He might ascertain from them where the Christ was to be born, they could readily, from their prophetic Scriptures, give the answer, "In Bethlehem of Judea" (Matt. ii. 5); but whilst they had the head knowledge from which to give the quick reply, they had no hearts to see whether, indeed, that Scripture had been fulfilled or no.

And this is another day of knowledge, when many can give the ready answer on Scriptural teaching, who, alas! plainly show they lack heart for Christ. Oh "that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17); then shall we be able to please "God, who trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. ii. 4), and to approach Him with boldness in worship, having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. x. 22).

Following the earlier exhortations of this chapter, the prophetic warning of failure was given; and now again, in the instructions as to the Cities of Refuge, we get practically the same thing.

Undoubtedly, in thus providing Cities of Refuge for the man-slayer on the east side of Jordan, as he afterwards gave them on the other side, we get His equal ways shewn out and maintained, as well as His universal pity and love.

Although the two and a half tribes seemed to fail in His call to go over the Jordan with their brethren, and possess the land on the west of it, yet He equally sees to the man-slayer amongst them.

But are not these cities mentioned here for another reason? They clearly seem to be brought in at this point for the purpose of the prophetic teaching that lies in them.

The first prophetic warning of Israel's failure is thus followed by a picture of their being kept by the Lord from destruction as a people.

The fact that the next chapter begins another and distinct section of the Book would also bear this out. Remember that much that connects with Israel's history has its typical and spiritual teaching for us. That whilst the Lord was manifesting His care for the man-slayer, by thus beforehand securing to him a place of refuge, He was, at the same time, by this and similar merciful provisions, storing up types and shadows of His Beloved Son, of the Church, and also of Israel in their future. It is this that

sheds such a glory on the Old Testament Scriptures, that binds them up so indissolubly with the New, and that gives to them, for the child of God, such value and interest; for they all speak of Him, whom God hath highly exalted; the Lamb that was slain, now in the midst of the throne, around whom angels move as they praise Him; the One to whom all creation, as well as all Scripture, gives witness.

Whilst, therefore, we are to avoid receiving fanciful interpretations, which really only obscure the Scriptures, we are to expect in every part of them, by the Holy Ghost's teaching, to learn of Him who is the theme of all. As the mere worldly reads such a Book as this, he sees no beauty in it, for he utterly fails to discover Christ, and to him much of it is useless repetition. He has read of the law in Exodus, of the Cities of Refuge in Numbers, and sees no use for their being mentioned again. But when spiritually read, and the connections of chapters, and the completeness of sections of Scripture are discovered, then we admire in all the perfection of the Word, as given to us by the Lord. Thus, when first we read of the Cities of Refuge, we see God's care for man in the person of the unwilling man-slayer; but here we not only are again reminded of this, but we specially learn His further care for Israel as such. We are evidently intended to learn this, as foreshadowed in them. The Lord will Himself shelter and preserve Israel from being exterminated and blotted out as a nation, even though He allowed them, for their sins, to be scattered in many lands, and left defenceless in the midst of other nations. Whilst it is true that the land upon which the two-and-a-half tribes settled on the east side of Jordan, will not only be included, but far exceeded, in the territory that Israel will ultimately be put in possession of, yet, at that time, it seems equally clear that they came short in staying where they did, and thus, in a sense, that territory was outside the portion that the Lord would have had them enter upon then. And therefore, all the more fully do the three Cities of Refuge on the east side of Jordan, which are the only ones referred to here, prefigure Israel not only as preserved, but preserved outside of that into which the Lord will bring them in His time. The City of Refuge was God's provision for the unwitting murderer. Peter, in addressing the multitude, who ran together, wondering at the miracle wrought in the healing of the lame man at the Temple, charged home on them the murder of the Son of God. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a

murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life," yet added, "And now, brethren, I wot that, *through ignorance*, ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts iii. 17). Plainly bringing out the unwitting man-slayer as the type of Israel in that act.

The man-slayer was to remain in the City of Refuge "until the death of the high priest" (Josh. xx. 6). The priesthood, then, was not an abiding one, by reason of death; but Jesus, our High Priest, abideth ever in the power of an endless life. It is by way of contrast, and not comparison, we are to learn, therefore, for there could be no analogy here. Does not the death of the high priest in those days—the result of which was, that he ceased from his active priestly intercession, &c.—shadow forth the Lord Jesus in the future, when He shall bring to a close His present priesthood, as exercised after the pattern of Aaron; and when, having taken up His saints to be with Himself, He will act thenceforth as the Melchisedec Priest in blessing.

During the exercise of His Priesthood, after the pattern of Aaron, the Church is still on earth. He is still taking out a people for His Name, and the tabernacle of David is in ruins yet. The land is desolate, keeping her Sabbaths; the people are scattered, without king or sacrifice, but preserved, as in the refuge provided for them by God.

Out of this they will be brought in His time, and after the saints of this dispensation have been caught up. And as the man-slayer, on the death of the high priest in his day, returned to enjoy all the privileges of his home and city as before, so Israel will return to the land the redeemed of the Lord, not only to enter upon blessings and privileges, which were theirs in Solomon's day, when peace prevailed, and everything was theirs in abundance, but in far greater measure. The whole land shall be theirs then, and no enemy in it. The King Himself shall be there. "Jehovah, Shammah," "the Lord is there," shall be the language for that day.

Thus fitly at this point does Moses write of the Cities of Refuge, which he had severed "toward the *sun-rising*." Their eastward position is doubtless pointed out by this; but what a "sun-rising" awaits Israel. When Christ shall be to them "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. xxiii. 4). It is written concerning Jacob, after recording the eventful scene of the night in which, by his wrestling, he would ignorantly have kept himself out of the blessing, had

not the "Man" touched the hollow of his thigh, and so withered up his strength;—"And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him" (Gen. xxxii. 31). What light and blessing once the flesh was withered! Thus is it still. And with Israel it shall be equally so when the flesh is withered, and the True Light shines; what a sun-rising it will be! "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be laid low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. ii. 17). "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people" (Isa. xxx. 26). For though the darkness covers the people now, the Lord shall arise upon them. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. lx. 3). Not only so; for it is further written, "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall the moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. lx. 19, 20).

LEAVEN.

PART VII.—THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES.

THE depth to which the doctrine of the Pharisees soon penetrated will be seen in Gal. ii., where Jews holding it, who came from James (from whom doubtless, as may be inferred from his words recorded in Acts xv., this evil doctrine had been *hidden*), became a stumbling block to Peter, and led him and other Jews, and even Barnabas, to dissemble their true convictions, and separate from the Gentile believers, under a hypocritical pretext to which their consciences must have given the lie. This was publicly rebuked by Paul; but the leaven had entered too deeply. The Epistle to the Galatians testifies that even there, where Paul had twice gone to confirm them in the faith, though hindered by the Spirit from visiting other churches in Asia (see Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23), the evil doctrine had penetrated, and drew forth the fervent reproof, "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?"

The doctrine was briefly this:—"Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be

saved." "It is needful to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts xv. 1—5).

The Galatian churches were "desiring to be under the law" (Gal. iv. 21). Once they had known the blessedness of being "called into the grace of Christ." The gospel they had received had proposed no terms of legal righteousness; but perfect justification and eternal life through faith in the crucified Christ, without the deeds of the law. "Christ had redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them," and "by the hearing of faith," not by the works of the law, they had "received the Spirit" (Gal. iii. 2, 13).

A fuller witness to forgiveness (Heb. x. 15), a surer seal of acceptance (Eph. i. 13), a more holy and honourable anointing (1 John ii. 27), a more precious earnest (2 Cor. i. 21, 22), God could not bestow.

In this spirit they were baptized into Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13), constituted members of His body, and by His gracious indwelling given the conscious experience of sonship, "crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). Sovereign grace could do no more.

But now, through Satan's subtlety, they had been "removed into another gospel," "which," the Apostle adds, "is not another; but there be some that would trouble you, and pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. i. 6, 7). Having, as we have seen, "begun in the Spirit," they were now seeking to be made perfect by the flesh. They were seeking to perfect their salvation by *doing* and *lawkeeping*, when God had shown them their completeness in Christ through *believing*. How could they worship God in the Spirit, or rejoice in Christ Jesus, whilst thus having confidence in the flesh? Impossible! Their former blessedness was gone; they were groaning again under the bondage of that yoke which none but Christ had ever been able to bear. Attempting to build again the old relationship between the flesh and the law, of which the gospel had declared the end by the death and resurrection of Christ, how could they reap ought else but corruption?

Now-a-days the proposal to be circumcised in order to secure a fuller assurance of salvation, would be rejected even by the most ignorant. The enlightenment, theological and otherwise, of the nineteenth century, forbids it. The woman would now scruple to receive and incorporate with the faith she holds, anything so palpably the Pharisaic leaven.

But are there not more subtle forms of this leaven abroad, equally effectual in perverting the truth?

In the Romish church—the head-quarters of corruption—good works, prayers, penance, and much else, are prescribed as necessary to salvation, as well as faith in Christ Jesus. If it be not circumcision and the commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy which they impose, it is some humanly-devised ordinance or legislation, lacking the holiness, justice, and goodness of the law of Moses, and altogether without its power to convict of guilt.

By certain other ecclesiastical standards, it is plainly taught that the administration of what is called "the initiatory rite of baptism" is the occasion of the regeneration of an infant, that it is then "received into the congregation of Christ's flock."

"All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient," was the promise of Israel at Sinai, a promise that only proved their ignorance of their own hearts. But now every one of the ten thousand infants annually baptized in the State church, is brought under a promise, through a poor human surety, to "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomps and glory of the world, &c., &c., and obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of its life."

What is this but bringing the flesh to God for acceptance under a burden of promises to do His will? Alas, could "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke xii. 1), find a more fearful development than this solemn farce?

By some the diligent use of sacraments, subjection to church ordinances, observation (religiously) of "days, and months, and years," are trusted in as at least helps, indispensable to salvation, if not indeed the basis of it. Is not this the same Pharisaic leaven rebuked in Gal. iv. 10, 11?

By a very large proportion of professing Christians in nearly all the Protestant denominations, the doctrine of the death of Christ as our substitute, that God might be "just and the justifier of the ungodly," is declared to be a popular error, an idea fit only for weak minds, borrowed from "the bloody shambles of heathendom."

By such, Christ is held forth as a pattern for humanity to follow. They inculcate morality and universal brotherhood, derived from the universal Fatherhood of God; but they know not, or care not to own, that it is written, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8); "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22); "Except a man be

born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3).

All such religions are careful to place the attainment of forgiveness and eternal life at the end of the race; with one consent they deny the possibility of knowing in this life whether sins are forgiven and eternal life secured, or not. These blessings, which are declared to be the gift of God, and received infallibly by believing His Word (see John v. 24; Acts xiii. 38, 39), are thus made to depend upon following, obeying, persevering, holding on; whereas God shows us in His word that pardon and life, justification and peace, being secured at once, and by faith only, He whose grace provided these, has in the same grace secured the final entrance into resurrection glory. "Whom He justified ('all that believe are justified,' Acts xiii. 38), THEM HE ALSO GLORIFIED" (Rom. viii. 39).

Thus the rainbow of grace, with one mighty sweep, has spanned the path from justification to glory; so that "being justified by faith," we can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 1, 2).

But how often, alas! is the pure grace of the gospel corrupted by the introduction of some other condition than faith, even where orthodoxy and tenacity of old foundation truth is prided in.

Sometimes it is put thus: "Believe, and walk up to it;" or, "Believe, and do the best you can as well." As if it were written, "He that believeth hath LIFE, and it remains with him so to live that it may be 'EVERLASTING.'"

As if obedience to the law, after a fashion (certainly not that of Matt. v., vi., vii.), were, together with Christ, God's way of salvation.

As if, when weighed in the balances in the day of judgment, and found wanting, the blood of Christ would make up the deficiency.

Is not such teaching like the introduction of the dead fly into the apothecary's ointment—a turning of the gospel that, in its purity, is the only divine balm, into a most subtle and fatal poison?

The result of this doctrine is, that thousands are led to hope they are in the way of peace, and to make a profession of religion, who have never believed the word that "preaches peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts x. 36), or found rest of heart and conscience in His precious blood. Such are worse by far than the openly ungodly. Self-deceived and hardened by familiarity with spurious evangelical doctrine, they eat and drink damnation to

themselves, and secure for themselves, if not awakened from this fatal slumber, the final sentence, "I never knew you."

Another equally sad result is, that many a true believer is shakled by fear and doubt all the days of his life, supposing that assurance of salvation can only be attained through long-continued perseverance in the way of holiness. To how many such might the apostle now say, as to the Galatians (iv. 15), "Where is the blessedness ye spake of?" Where is the constant incense of thanksgiving for pardoned sins? Where is the joy unspeakable and full of glory? The harps that should be strung to Zion's songs, are hung upon the willows by these captives of the spiritual Babel.

God never meant that "*strong consolation*" should be found from feelings and experience. Looking within for evidences to comfort, is like casting the anchor into the hold of the ship—no safeguard from the waves of Satan's fierce accusations. Not the faith that holds the Word; this may be only as a grain of mustard seed; but the "two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie"—God's *Word* and God's *oath*—alone can give strong consolation (Heb. vi. 17, 18).

These testify not of us, or our amended life, or better heart; but of Christ and His finished work and precious blood; and of Christ risen and able to save unto the very uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

There is another form in which this leaven works, that may not pass without notice. God is not only the quickener of the dead; He is the *Restorer of our souls*. We need to be renewed day by day; often through unbelief, or through allowed sin, the soul of the believer keeps at a distance from God the Father, striving to work itself out of its coldness, and to merit a restoration of the communion that sin had broken.

Such was the idea in the heart of the prodigal son, when he purposed, saying, "I am not worthy to be called thy son; *make me as one of thy hired servants.*" But grace could never have it so. A hired servant could never sit at the father's table, and no other place would suit the grace of the father's heart. "A foreigner or a hired servant could not eat the passover" (Ex. xii. 45). The believer in Jesus is no longer a "foreigner" (Eph. ii. 19); as little can he be a "hired servant." He is a son of God, and a bond-slave of the Lord Jesus—no longer his own; but purchased by His precious blood. How then, when he departs, is his soul to be restored? Simply as at the first he received pardon and life. "If

we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Nothing ever restored a soul but a fresh sense of the abounding grace of God. Law and hell have alike failed when the whisper of love, "Return unto the Lord, for He will abundantly pardon," has melted the frozen heart.

"He restoreth my soul; He maketh me to walk in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake." Our Pharisaic hearts would reverse the order; but it cannot be.

(To be continued.)

JOSHUA.

JOSHUA was first called "Oshea," or "Hoshea" (Numb. xiii. 16), which signifies "a Saviour;" "Salvation." Afterward changed by Moses to Jehoshua, or Joshua, "He shall save," or "The salvation of Jehovah" (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8).

Joshua in this book is a type of Christ passing through death (the Jordan), and rising the third day. In short, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation, leading His ransomed ones into the promised blessings.

This book is a book of *warfare*: illustrative of the conflict of the inheritor's of heaven with spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. vi. 10-18).

Chap. i.—Joshua called to service: thus Christ, our Joshua, does that for us which could never be done by the law of Moses. Until we are dead to the law we cannot be established in our privileges, as believers in Christ, in resurrection life (Heb. ii. 10, 11), see in connection with ver. 8, 9; Psa. i. 2, 3; John x. 18.

Chap. ii.—Jericho: type of the world under judgment. The spies: illustrative of the Christian in the world, but not of it; yet a witness to its coming judgment, but subject to persecution (Acts x. 42; John xv. 18, 19). Rahab: type of the Church and the individual believer saved out of the world's condemnation (1 Thess. v. 9). "A true token:" typical of the blood of Christ (see ver. 18, with Exod. xii. 13; Psa. lxxxvi. 17).

Chap. iii.—Jordan: type of death; the cross of Christ. The ark of the covenant: type of Jesus. The ark was made of two materials, shittim wood and pure gold; pointing to the manhood and Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ. It contained the testimony of

God. Christ fulfilled the law, then, like the ark, went through the waters of death and judgment, and we with Him, to the other side (Rom. vi. 7-10; Col. iii. 1-4).

Chap. iv.—The twelve stones: typical of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and illustrative of the oneness of the body of Christ, Christ and the Church. The twelve stones placed in the midst of Jordan: typical of the remembrance of the death of the Lord Jesus. These twelve stones are also symbolical of Israel's unity. Joshua magnified in the sight of all Israel: typical of the Lord Jesus Christ in resurrection life, magnified by Jehovah (Phil. ii. 9; 2 Chron. i. 1; Acts xix. 17; Phil. i. 20).

Chap. v.—The kings of the Amorites and Canaanites "hearts melted:" illustrative of Satan's power shaken when Christ had risen from the dead (John xvi. 11; Acts xvii. 31; Mark v. 7). Circumcision: typical of death to the flesh (Rom. ii. 29; Col. ii. 11-15).

Gilgal signifies "rolling," or "to take away." The believer is not only "dead," but "risen" with Christ. Hence he is told to "mortify" therefore his members which are upon the earth (Col. iii. 5). "The old corn of the land:" type of Christ risen as the believer's portion (John xii. 23, 24).

"A man," Christ, the Captain of the host of the Lord. The Christian's life is one of warfare (Eph. vi. 10-18) between Christ and Belzezebub. Hence faith owns no *neutrality*. "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. vi. 24).

Chap. vi.—Jericho: type of the world under judgment and fortifying itself against God; also of the human heart (Job xv. 20-25). The ram's horns: illustrative of the Gospel (2 Cor. x. 4, 5; 1 Cor. i. 18). "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot *alive*, and her father's household, and all that she had" (1 Thess. iv. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23, 51).

Chap. vii.—In the previous chapter we have Israel victorious over the enemy, here defeated: illustrative of the Church and the believer's victory too often leading to negligence and wilful disobedience and sin (Heb. xii. 15, 16).

Achan: typical of sin, and sin judged in the assembly. *Confession* is not enough; there must be holy discipline (1 Cor. v. 5, 6). Then grace provides a door of hope (Hos. ii. 15; Ezra x. 2).

Chap. viii.—Ai taken: victory *after* sin is confessed, judged, and put away; not before. The King of Ai

taken *alive* and hanged (ver. 23, 29; see Rev. xix. 20). Joshua, acting in this chapter: illustrative of Christ and His Spirit.

Chap. ix.—The Gibonites' deception: the devil's wiles are to be feared more than open opposition (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15). Ai trusted in its own strength; the Gibonites in their own wisdom (Jer. li. 53; 1 Cor. iii. 18-20).

Chap. x.—Conflict and victory; the king slain and the cities taken: type of Christ's victories over Satan and the power of darkness, and the believer's victories through Him (Psa. cx. 1; Rom. xvi. 20; Phil. iv. 13).

Joshua returns to Gilgal before and after success. Hence, whatever our victories may be, there must be entire abnegation and annihilation of self and the mortifying of the flesh.

Chap. xi.—The King of Hazor smitten: type of the destruction of antichrist; also of the Lord giving His people power, through the Spirit, to enter into all the promised blessings (Eph. i. 17, 18).

Chap. xii. and xiii.—Illustrative of the gifts of God, and the gifts given to His Church; each hath his own portion (Rom. xii. 1-8). The Levites: type of the Church having no inheritance here.

Chap. xiv.-xvii.—Judah and Joseph taking possession of their lot: illustrative of the believer entering fully into the promises of God.

Chap. xviii.—The tabernacle set up at Shiloh. The name of this city is the same as that predicted by Jacob concerning Christ (Gen. xlix. 10): type of Christ our Peacemaker (ver. 3), illustrative of the believer being slack to take full possession of the blessing God has promised (ver. 8). The three men from each tribe sent to see and describe the land: type of the advanced believer living in the power of the Spirit; sees with the eye of faith the promises, and enters into their fulness; and thus is in the position to help others who are slack, and drawn aside from simple faith and confidence in God (2 Pet. i. 8-11).

Joshua: illustrative of the spirit pointing out the heavenly portions and blessing that belong to each believer in Christ Jesus,

Chap. xix.—Joshua waited till all the tribes were settled before he required provision for himself: type of Christ, who did not enter upon His inheritance till he had secured the eternal inheritance of all His people (John xiv. 2, 3).

Chap. xx.—Cities of refuge: type of Christ a

refuge for every sinner. 1. The cities were put on an eminence; Christ was hung upon the cross, and now exalted up on an high. 2. The way marked pointing to the cities: type of the Holy Ghost and the Word. 3. The gates of the cities were kept open day and night: Christ is the open door. 4. Nourishment provided for all who fled there: Christ, who is the Life and Food for the believer. The names of these cities are significant.

Kedesh signifies holy; Jesus, our refuge, was holy (Acts ii. 27). Shechem, a shoulder; strength (Isa. ix. 6). Hebron, fellowship (1 Cor. i. 9). Bezer, a fortification (Nahum i. 7). Ramoth, high or exalted (Acts ii. 30-34). Golan, joy or exultation (Rom. v. 1-5; John xvii. 24).

Chap. xxi.—The Levites enter into their possessions, and the land and rest to the Israelites (Heb. x. 36).

Chap. xxii.—Ver. 29, illustrative of only one place of meeting, at the altar of the Lord. The only true place of meeting now is in heaven, and around the adorable Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xviii. 20).

Chaps. xxiii. and xxiv. close this Book. Joshua and Eleazar die; and the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, are buried in Shechem, the parcel of ground bought by Jacob. Joshua, the Captain of our salvation, is alive for evermore; and Eleazar, our Great High Priest, lives and abides for ever. Hence it is the Church and redeemed Israel will assuredly enter into the purchased possession: unto the praise of His glory. But the Church's Hope is *Himself*. The coming One (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

“But, Lord, 'tis for Thee: for Thy coming, we wait;
The sky, not the grave, is our goal.
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope! blessed rest of my soul!”

2 SAMUEL xx. 15.

IN the first verse of this chapter, we have the occasion given by Sheba for the action of Judah in verse 15th.

Sheba had revolted against David, the anointed king.

Amasa had been sent to put down the rebellion, “but tarried beyond his allotted time,” and Abishai is sent in his stead.—ver. 6 (connect Revelation iii. 11).

Joab slays Amasa, and, without the king's appointment, goes forth to *execute judgment*.

He comes before the city in which the traitor has taken refuge, and, without seeking counsel of God, or desiring to know His way, at once lays siege to the city.

In the city dwelt a wise woman, *wise* because she knew the will of Jehovah (Ephes. v. 17; connect Prov. ii. 1 to 10); and the Lord not only delivers the city through this wise woman, but exposes the ignorance of Joab, and rebukes, through her, his departure from the ways of God.

In Deut. xx. 10 to 14, Jehovah had given instructions as to how the besieging of the city was to be gone about. But, while Joab ignores the will of God, this woman remembers it, and uses it as a means to deliver the city, by getting Joab to act out the word, and "*propose peace to the city.*" His terms are, "Sheba hath lifted up his hand against the king, even David, deliver him only, and I will depart from the city;" in other words, let justice have its way on the *guilty*, and I will spare.

The woman, through the people, executes judgment on Sheba, and the city is spared.

And thus God came to us—preaching peace by Jesus Christ—proposing, as terms of peace, that "we should judge ourselves sinners" (Rom. iii. 23), and accept Christ as the One who died for such (Rom. iii. 25, 26). We kissed the Son, owned Him Lord, who on the cross for us *let justice have its way on Himself*, and *now* we are saved.

The Pharisee in the temple refused—the publican accepted—God's terms, acknowledged his guilt, and found mercy.

Oh, what fearful vengeance will come on those who refuse the terms of peace; when, in flaming fire, the very one who "preached peace" will take vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the glad tidings (2 Thes. i. 8, 9; connect Deut. xx. 12, 13). But as servants of the One who delivered (Deut. xx. 11), there is much to be learned here.

Joab, the *murderer*, goes to judge Sheba, the *rebel*; in other words, he goes to *judge, without judging himself*—willing to use *one* edge of the two-edged sword, but not to let the two edges have play—therefore failure ensues. Thus was it in Judges xx., and thus will it ever be.

Why is it that even a righteous judgment in an

assembly so often breeds a division? *Because* those who have truth on their side *have not felt its keen edge on their own souls.*

Look at church history, and what do we see? One man in an assembly teaching evil doctrine—spreading leaven—which will soon leaven the whole if allowed to work.

Then a very gifted servant, with knowledge, detecting it, and, like Joab, besieging, without having felt his weakness through the two-edged sword (ver. 12), so that his own *thoughts are unjudged*. No terms of peace, such as *God* would dictate, are offered, but the high-handed use of the *one edge of the Word*, and thus we have divisions, which will only be healed, we fear, "when He comes."

In this chapter, Joab is out of fellowship with God—neglects God's way—and God humbles him through a weak woman. Thus it will ever be, if, in seeking to exercise discipline, we are not *self-judged*.

Paul saw a Sheba in Corinth; he goes about it in God's way—*justice has its way on the guilty*—and Corinth is saved. But notice Paul's spirit through it all, and especially in 1 Cor. v. 4. He is not *outside* besieging in the first place—no, no, he is *inside*, proposing terms of peace, "when ye are gathered together, *and my spirit*, with the *power of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Oh, how different from that spirit which coldly executes judgment wholesale; not in the power flowing from our Lord Jesus Christ, but in the power of a *majority*, which is the first step on the journey to the "holy mother church" of the dark ages.

A majority *may* have to act, but let us see we have been in Judges xx. 26 to 28, and Nehemiah i. 4.

Let us learn then from this wise woman to see terms of peace in Matt. xviii. 15 to 17; Luke xvii. 3 to 4; Matt. v. 23, 24; Rev. ii. and iii., and study the things that make for peace.

T. C.

LERWICK CONFERENCE.

A FEW recollections of this happy meeting may again prove acceptable to our brethren who are interested in the work of the Lord in the Shetland Islands.

The hour of prayer, from 12 to 1, began with the hymn, "My Jesus has done all things well"—still our

song, after the day's fellowship. At 1 p.m., the reading of Psalm cxv. gave us the thought, "The dead praise not the Lord" (ver. 17). This was carried out in John xii. 20-24. There is just one way to see Jesus, so as to be satisfied. Had we seen Him in His incarnation, would not we also have seen no beauty in Him, that we should desire Him? But now "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, crowned with glory and honour." The corn of wheat has fallen into the ground and died, and we are the fruit; not the dead who cannot praise the Lord, but the living to praise Him. Boasting is excluded. We *were* dead, and are alive. We attain Glory through Death.

Being thus left with "Jesus only," we thought of His speedy return, and its bearing on (1st) Witnessing and work; (2nd) Trouble and sorrow; and, (3rd) Purifying ourselves; in connection with Luke xxiv. 48-53, John xvi. 22, and 1 John iii. 1-3. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

If God's secret is death and resurrection, the Devil's creed is denial of resurrection. See the Sadducean quibble in Matt. xxii. 23-32. The grave cannot praise God. There is no honour to God in the praises of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins." For this very reason Satan will assemble dead, unregenerated ones, and set them to singing words ascribing glory to God. If there be no resurrection, God can get no praise. Hence the watch, the stone, and the seal at the tomb of Jesus. But "the Lord is risen indeed," and we who were dead have been quickened together with Him, and live in resurrection-life.

In 2 Tim. ii. 16-18, we find the resurrection of the body set aside. In modern days it is the necessity for *resurrection of the soul*, which is denied. As an expression of this, we find Baptism, the ordinance which proclaims our identification with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, administered to natural babies. Even superstition will tell any one that the infant is thus brought into a "place of privilege," without requiring to be converted. Thus does man's religion deny that he (man) was ever dead, and receive a theory, which teaches that he has in him by nature a germ of good, which only needs to be developed. God's word shews that human development came to its climax at Calvary, where man, with wicked hands, crucified and slew the Lord of Glory.

What life then should *we* live who are, in truth, dead and risen ones? Lazarus was hated because he was a resurrection-man; a living evidence of the power of God. Are we so *manifestly* people who have been made alive that the world will hate us for the same reason?

We then looked at Enoch, walking with God in the earth that was "filled with violence." What did God do with him? "He was not, for God took him." Elijah also was a faithful witness amidst the apostasy of all Israel. What became of him? He "went up by a whirlwind into Heaven." We also shall be "caught up to meet the Lord," we know not how soon.

But Enoch, before his translation, had this testimony, "that he *pleased God*." Is this our aim? We accept the truth about our standing. We are very willing to be saved, and to know it. It pleases us to say that we are going to Heaven. But is it our intense desire now to "serve Christ"—to "please God." For not by our profession, but *by our fruits* will we be known. Let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

"My song shall be of Jesus" most fittingly opened the evening meeting, when we had tea together, and spent the remainder of an hour in conversation, after which we enjoyed further ministry of the Word.

From Zech. xiv. 20, 21, we learn that "holiness to Jehovah" will be characteristic of Jerusalem below during the millennial age. What tongue then can tell how it will be in the heavenly city? But, oh! that we lived out more *in the present* the holiness which becometh the Lord's house.

Heb. xii. 28 to chap. xiii. 7, gave us a line of searching practical teaching, and set before us "Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"—on whom we must fix our eyes if our walk is to glorify God. How solemn is chap. xiii. 4 in view of the spiritual adultery around. Yet some of God's children think so lightly of this that they can be professedly worshipping in the true place of worship "inside the veil" on Lordsday forenoon, while in the afternoon they may be found in one of man's so-called "places of worship" on earth. One part of the day in the place where the Lordship of Jesus is owned; another part of the same day helping by their conduct to build up Babylon—that which the Lord will spue out of His mouth! Is it possible? Then remember that "God *will judge*" these things.

Still considering Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, we had before us God's old-time purpose, that "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). We are to-day gathered together "unto His name" (Matt. xviii. 20). Man may seek to gather us on the ground "of the Body;" but we seek to "hold the Head." The Body is not greater than the Head. Shall we then gather to *the Body*. Nay surely! Lastly in the "sweet bye-and-bye" we expect our "coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thes. ii. 1). Still gathering "UNTO HIM."

A word of exhortation, followed by the hymn, "The night is wearing fast away," brought the conference to a close, and we parted—parted with the bright hope of re-union "when He comes."

A. P. M.

LERWICK, 12th July, 1881.

ON THE REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY W. LINCOLN.

PERHAPS in this Second Paper on this subject, it will be advisable that we should take some special portion of the Word, and glance at the treatment which it has received at the hands of the Revisionists. Suppose, then, that we select for this purpose the Gospel of John.

In chap. i., there is in the Greek a sublime contrast, drawn out at some length, between Jesus as the Creator of all things, and the creation itself. This important distinction is pressed upon the readers in the careful, the discriminating use of the two verbs—to *be* and to *become* (*einai* and *ginesthai*). Thus, as regards the Word, in the beginning even, this was. Four times over in the first two verses is this language used of Him—the Word. Ever, ever "He WAS." But then, in the third verse, we first encounter the other verb. In that single verse we find that one verb used three times. Surely there is a very marked contrast here between Him, of Whom it is recorded that He ever WAS, and of the all things which *became* by Him. "All things became by Him, and without Him there became no not one thing which had become."

In verse 6, we read of a man who had been sent from God. But in the Greek, the Spirit has here

selected a word for which we should scarcely have been prepared. I think it is so chosen with the design of continuing the contrast. Not "there came a man," as in the Revised Version, but "there *became* a man," &c. So likewise we have the same word in ver. 10, "The world *became* by Him." Nor will the Spirit allow the word "am" to be used of John whilst this contrast is being drawn out. Hence the omission of the "am" in the Greek of ver. 23, "He said I, a voice of one crying," &c. I am aware that the word "am" is often omitted; but I believe the above is the true reason for its non-appearance in this verse. Yet the Revisionists have inserted it, even without the usual italics, as they also have so added the article, when it should simply be "a voice."* Even if grace and truth can be made known to us at all, Jesus Christ is the cause thereof. "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth BECAME by Him" (ver. 17). And so we, we who "receive Him and believe on His name, *become* children of God" (ver. 12). Such is this contrast of the two verbs, to teach us the difference between Him and creation; and so is this contrast worked out. By one beautiful and expressive variation in the use of these two verbs the condescending love of Christ is set forth in ver. 14. Yes, in one sense, in one particular it is true that Christ, the Word, also "*became*"—became what? "And the Word became—flesh, and pitched His tabernacle among us." And His glory filled that tabernacle as surely as that which Moses erected was filled of old. But the glory now had assumed another form. Now, it seems to me that this evidently designed contrast is scarcely brought out into sufficient relief in the Revised Version, any more than again it appears in the new Version, of the language of the Lord Himself. "Before Abraham BECAME, I AM" (viii. 58). And ere I pass from this one feature in this Gospel, brought out so vividly in chapters i. and viii., I may be permitted to express the wish, that the revision suggested by the American Committee of chap. viii. 25 had been accepted. "They said, therefore, unto Him, Who art Thou? Jesus said unto them, Alto-

* The reader is aware, it is hoped, of the vast difference between "the Word" and "a voice." For a voice, or sound, does not of course exist, ere it is uttered; but a word does. We think with words. Words are in the mind ere they proceed from the mouth. And Jesus is "THE Word of God."

gether that which I also speak unto you." For in that said chapter, the reader will find that the Lord there says, several times over, "I am." And when He speaks, His words are therefore the very expression of Himself.

Chap. II.—John never once uses the word miracle, albeit displays of Divine power are made to introduce the discourses. But these displays of Omnipotence are ever appropriately in John termed "signs," as here, in ver. 11.

Chap. III. should commence with the word "But." For a difference is shown to exist between the many glanced at near the end of chap. ii., whose faith was inoperative and inert, and Nicodemus, truly drawn of God, first coming to Jesus by night, next found witnessing for Him among the Sanhedrim in chap. vii., and proving by that witness that he was then pulled hither and thither. For, of course, had he then been quite on the Lord's side, he would have been found amongst His rejected followers. Yet, on the other hand, when he heard Him referred to disparagingly, his conscience made him to speak out in His favour. But in chap. xix. he is seen bending over the dead body of his Lord. The cross of Christ has crucified Nicodemus to the world. But all this struggle has cost him much. He had to be a Nicodemus, "a conqueror of the populace;" and therefore chap. iii. begins, "But there was a man." The force of this "But" would be better seen if chap. iii. had been commenced at ii. 23, as ought to have been the case. And then this belief, of which the Spirit speaks here in ver. 23-25, would have been seen to show to us the other counter truth to that in iii. 16, "Many believed in His name," and, "But Jesus did not trust Himself to them," &c. "But there was a man of the Pharisees," &c.

I would add another remark or two on iii. 16-18. The English reader will notice that, in iii. 14, the clause "should not perish" is now omitted, and rightly. But it is to be found in its proper place in ver. 16. For God's explanations always add somewhat. And so, when in the second place we hear of the love of God, as before we had heard of the righteousness, then it is that we hear of the depth of the woe, as well as the height of the bliss as the alternative. Again, in ver. 18, I notice that the two Greek words for our one word "not," the Spirit has caused to be discriminatedly used. For the word *ou* denies a thing;

but the other word *mē* suggests a refusal. Accordingly, "he that believeth on Him is not (*ou*) judged; but he that believeth not" (*mē*), &c. Thus, if the language be weighed, it will be perceived that a distinct refusal of the message is that which is here contemplated. It is only here the second class of 2 Thess. i. 8. Compare, too, John iii. 36 in the Revised Version. What an awful thing it is to reject God's message!

In ver. 34 of same chapter, the italics "unto him" are now omitted. This is a sure gain. For many were so wont to read this verse, including the italicised words, that without themselves being aware of the fact, they allowed the meaning to be obscured in their minds. God gives not the Spirit by measure. This is an absolute statement. We are not straitened in Him; we are straitened in ourselves. See how, if we had faith, it should be with us, in vii. 38.

Chap. v. 18 now reads, that Jesus called God "His own Father." And this important word "own" is in the original. I cannot conceive why the Authorized Version had omitted this word. A like valuable improvement is in x. 39. Often have I grieved as I read the Authorized Translation there, that Jesus "escaped out of their hand," as if men could have hurt Him, unless He Himself consented, and ere His time had come. No such a sentiment is conveyed in the original, as the English reader can now perceive. The wording of the passage simply is, that "they sought again to take Him, and He went forth out of their hand." The Ark of God could ever protect itself. If He for a while was in the enemy's hand, what confusion He wrought among them.* Similarly in xi. 34 (margin): if Jesus was troubled, "He troubled Himself." If there was a ripple on His spirit, that ripple came not without His sufferance.

Ver. 24 was alluded to in the preceding paper. In the Authorized Version, one single Greek word is rendered in this chapter by no less than three English words: "condemnation," "judgment," and "damnation." This needless variation of language obscures the point. Judgment (*krisis*) is the term which the Lord uses throughout the passage.

* In Acts iii. 24 there is, I think, an allusion to Christ as the Ark having been in the Philistines' hand. For why did Peter in his discourse so specially refer to *Samuel*?

THOUGHTS on MEETINGS for WORSHIP, PRAYER, and PREACHING.

IT is not within the scope of this paper, nor is it the purpose of the writer to dwell upon the evils that have arisen, and that do arise, through unspiritual worship, ministry, and prayer. The consciences of many of God's people have been stirred to seek to obey God, and to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, according to the written Word, rather than follow the customs of men, or the traditions of the professing Church, in these matters. And although the God of grace bears with us in our weak endeavours, and in our faulty efforts, yet will He not brook any presumptuous self-will; nor is He able to continue to bless, when once our carnal pride asserts it better to do as men like, than to follow the distinct guidance of His Word.

That the people of God have ever prayed to Him is so well known, that we need not stay to prove it. That prayers, supplications and intercessions, mingled with thanksgivings and praise, have continually and increasingly ascended, is also clear. That it is appropriate, and that it is commanded, let the following Scriptures prove:—"I will therefore that men pray everywhere" (1 Tim. ii. 1, 8); "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17); "Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20); "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephes. vi. 18); "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1); " whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you" (John xvi. 23); "These all (the disciples) continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts i. 14); "Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church to God for him" (Acts xii. 5); "The prayer of faith shall save the sick. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (see James v. 13-18). Thus are we enjoined continually to pray, both individually and unitedly, for all things. According to the words, "Be careful for nothing, but in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And (then, if ye so pray) the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." It has, then, evidently been a custom from the beginning of Church history, and

the custom has of later years (for various, and also for extraordinary necessities) been revived, for the children of God to meet together to pray unitedly, especially relying on the never-revoked promise of Matt. xviii. 19, 20, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

How pleasing to God—how really blessed—such united prayer! Surely God delighteth to record and answer His children's petitions thus offered up in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we come together, therefore, let us have well-considered what we are about to do, lest we lose the things God delighteth to give.

Firstly, then, we are to pray in the Spirit and with the understanding—definitely, for known and felt wants—in accordance with God's will—in the name of the Lord Jesus—unto God our Father.

Secondly, His Word is, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Thirdly, seeing that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Unless, therefore, there is definite spiritual understanding of the matters for prayer on the part of those who unite for prayer, and definite, simple confidence in God as the hearer and answerer of prayer, there will be proportionately little blessing attending our prayer meetings. As a little boy once observed, when asked why he went to prayer meetings—"I go to do business with God;" so may we act. But gradually our meetings become wearisome, through indefinite lengthy speeches, and utterances of unfelt (perhaps not unknown) wants; and recapitulations of what we know about God—vague statements of supposed needs of some present—and at last the young and ardent converts, as well as the elder and thoughtful, become chilled by the unrealities, and cease to attend altogether, finding it more profitable to stay at home and pray.

Without laying down a law then—for still, as in our meetings for worship, let us remember His Word that He is “in the midst;” let us consider whether we may not be guided as to more profitably uniting together for prayer, by the following suggestions:—

1. Let the meeting, as a rule, last for a definite time only—and one of the elder brethren so enjoin—one hour generally will suffice.

2. Let there always be ministry of the word, for a short time, on the subjects before the meeting for prayer, so that the faith of all may be strengthened to ask believingly.

3. Let the prayers always be directed to the point, and in very few words, according to the Scripture “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore, let thy words be few” (Ecc. v. ii.); for *we* must not think to be heard for our much-speaking, or use of vain repetitions.

4. Let the hymns of praise be in accordance with the spirit of the meeting—let spaces for silent prayer be allowed.

5. Let one or two pray consecutively, *as led of the Spirit*, and filled with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and then let fresh exhortation—short and pointed—from the Word and praise be given.

6. Let honest confession be made, and humiliation when needed; and let thanksgiving for answered prayers, and for His never-failing grace, never be forgotten.

7. Let no personal allusions be made in public prayer—let the common wants and common praises be expressed.

8. Let the young consider, when present, their proper place; but let them not be backward for fear of man, when drawn out by the Holy Spirit to pray.

9. Let no prayer exceed four or five minutes at most, that many may have opportunity to pray during the short time of meeting; and let all things be done in that decorum and godly order He loveth—kneeling down on the knees to pray, and standing to praise, as the saints of old were wont to do; and, “in His temple may every one speak of His glory” (Ps. xxix. 9).

A. O. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. LXXII.

1 Cor. xi. 30. *Does this refer to spiritual weakness, &c.; or is it chastisement laid upon the body on account of disobedience?*

REPLY.

The word here rendered “sleep” is the same that in other passages refers to the death of a believer. Connecting this verse with the two following, it is evident that the “weakness,” “sickness,” and “sleep”

here referred to are the Lord’s judgment taking the form of chastisement, on account of the dishonour done to His name by their partaking unworthily of the Lord’s Supper.

1 John v. 16 doubtless refers, in like manner, to death, as the Lord’s judgment upon sin; and James v. 15 indicates also that the sickness is at least in some cases the Lord’s chastisement, and connected with special sins.

It is remarkable that Paul, who possessed and

exercised so remarkably the gift of healing, is recorded to have left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. iv. 20).

But it would be rash to set down all physical ailments as the chastening of the Lord, on account of special sins. It is evident that Timothy was weak in body, and a frequent sufferer from some form of dyspepsia, and yet we have no warrant for attributing his "often infirmities" either directly or indirectly to sin. Neither was he directed to those having the gifts of healing, but instructed not to be so abstemious, as had been his habit, but to take a little wine (1 Tim. v. 23).

Some may have "a thorn in the flesh," like the Apostle Paul, as a *preventive discipline*, restraining a hidden tendency, undetected by any eye save the Lord's. With others, it may be "the purging" by which they are made to "bring forth more fruit."

And though the chastening of the Lord should fall upon a believer, even unto death, it is in order "that he may not be condemned with the world," but "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (see 1 Cor. v. 5 and xi. 31).

All Israel who came out of Egypt "fell in the wilderness," except Joshua and Caleb. Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and many others, of whom we know that they are saved (*e.g.*, Moses being on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ), were hindered by death from entering into the promised land. It was the chastening of Jehovah upon their unbelief. See also the death of the young prophet (1 Kings xiii. 23, 24); Jonathan slain with Saul (2 Sam. i. 4); Uzziah, Asa, and many others, as instances of the Lord's judgment, even unto death, upon His own people.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

QUESTION No. LXXIII.

What is the teaching of 2 Tim. ii. 21? "If a man therefore purge himself from these." From what?

REPLY.

In ver. 16 Timothy is exhorted to "*shun* profane and vain babblings;" and again (ver. 23), to "*avoid* foolish and unlearned (ignorant) questions."

In the midst of these various exhortations to separation from those things which would surely impair his usefulness as the Lord's servant, an illus-

tration is introduced of a great house with many vessels differing in kind and value, and also in the importance and honourableness of the services in which they are employed.

Does Timothy desire to be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work?"—then like a vessel cleansed and set apart and ready—he must purge himself out from babblings, from foolish questions, from iniquity of every kind; he must "flee also youthful lusts" (ver. 22); and thus "approved unto God," he will be *used by the Master* for honourable service. But if entangled, dragged into controversies profane and iniquitous, with ungodly professors of religion, he will himself become defiled, and be set aside as unfit for use. Alas! how often have honourable servants of Christ been themselves laid hold of by the very errors which they sought to refute; terrible instances of the truth of what is written, "their word will eat as doth a canker."

QUESTION No. LXXIV.

Referring to Luke vi. 13; Matt. xxiv. 45; xxv. 14, Are the "servants" in these Scriptures really children of God, or do they include all who profess to be Christ's, the counterfeit as well as the genuine?

REPLY.

It is not conceivable that any true child of God could entertain such thoughts of Him, who "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," as are figured in the words of the servant, "I knew that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." Such a servant can only represent those who are ignorant of the grace of God, unreconciled, and in the darkness and bondage of unbelief, yet seeking to merit God's favour by serving Him, or, as many say in their blindness, "Doing the best they can."

How many there are professedly servants, but never having known the grace of God in truth. Unregenerate persons, yet teachers in Sunday schools, church members, elders, deacons, ministers, &c., &c.

Such also are, the wicked servant of Matt. xxiv. 48; the foolish virgins of xxv. 5; the man without the wedding garment (xxii. 11). The same are referred to in Matt. vii. 22, and in Luke xiii. 26.

It is important also to note the way in which Scripture puts in contrast the *servant* and the *Son* (see John viii. 35; Gal. iv. 7). There are numerous passages that speak of wicked servants, and of servants being condemned to final destruction; but in no single instance is any thought of this kind referred to a son.

The servant holds his position on the ground of obedience, and is liable to be "cast out." The son holds his position on the ground of birth—a relationship that may be dishonoured, but not dissolved at will; hence the portion of the disobedient son is not "casting out," but "chastisement" (see Heb. xii. 6, 7; also Psa. lxxxix. 30-34).

QUESTION NO. LXXV.

Is it scriptural to admit unbelievers into the place of meeting when gathered on the first day of the week to break bread?

REPLY.

1 Cor. xiv. 24 clearly supposes the presence of unbelievers. If the ministry be to edification through the Spirit, it will also have due effect upon the consciences of unbelievers who may be present, although not directly addressed to them. It was through the "prophesying" that such, if present, were to be convinced, judged, and made to bow down in the presence of God. But the prophesying was not directed to unsaved ones present; it was for those that believe (see 1 Cor. xiv. 22). The words that are for "the edification, exhortation, and comfort" of the Church (see ver. 3) will have the effect of convincing the unbelievers present that the gathered company of God's children is indeed the dwelling-place of God.

The gift of prophecy we do not assume to have, nevertheless, words are spoken by teachers and exhorters that are indeed "to edification and comfort," and we may count upon God to bless such to unbelievers who may be present, whether they be strangers, or the children, friends or servants of those in fellowship.

QUESTION NO. LXXVI.

It is a very general custom in meetings for the preaching of the Gospel to give out hymns, which the unconverted join in singing. Can there be any Scripture adduced in favour of this practice?

REPLY.

We know of no Scripture that warrants the giving out of hymns for the unsaved to sing. Especially when these hymns contain language that can only be true in the lips of a believer.

The singing of hymns in a Gospel meeting we could not countenance, except on the principle of the Christians singing the Gospel to, or in the presence of, the unsaved. In this case, the unsaved present ought to be distinctly told that the hymn is not given out for them to sing.

To hear the voices of those who, we know, are on "the broad road"—alienated from God, and enemies in their mind—blending with the songs of the blood-washed company of believers, uttering language expressive of a full apprehension of the love of God, and of the value of the blood of Christ, which, coming from such, is simply mockery and a lie,—cannot be otherwise than dishonouring, to God and grieving to His Holy Spirit.

But the idea is general and deep-rooted: a part of the religious systems from which by grace and truth we have been separated, that a religious service composed of praise, prayer, and preaching must be decently conducted—a sort of "public worship," in fact, though the name is repudiated—in which the saved and unsaved can join unitedly.

We trust the consciences of God's children may be aroused to consider this subject, and in nowise to sanction any proceeding that tends to deceive the souls of the unsaved, by leading them to suppose that their unfelt singing or praying can be acceptable to God.

Why should a Gospel Meeting not be commenced by simply reading suitable portions of the Word of God, followed by one or two pointed addresses, and then the earnest loving invitation to wait for personal conversation?

Is not the singing resorted to in order that uncircumcised ears may be pleased, and the orthodox hour-and-a-half agreeably passed?

When preaching the Gospel to an individual, or to several in a railway carriage or elsewhere, who ever thinks of "preliminary services?" Do we not simply deliver the testimony of God and leave it? Wherein does a Gospel Meeting differ?

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The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. ii. 9-16 (*continued*).

IN the 13th verse of this chapter we have the Spirit of God brought before us as the *Teacher*. He is not only the Revealer of the mind of God, but He unfolds it to us in certain *words*, which were not received from man, nor learned in his schools, but *taught by the Spirit of God*. When the Apostle wrote, he did so in the words of the Holy Ghost. This is a point on which we should be very clear in these evil days. We say again, that not only was the Spirit given to be the REVEALER, but the TEACHER of the counsels of God; and He has revealed them to us in words which are divine, and therefore perfectly adapted for conveying the thoughts of God, and not to be tampered with by human criticism.

I do not say that this applies to the translation that we now have; nor could it be said of any translation; but to the original language in which it was written. We know that the translators were not inspired by the Holy Ghost to put the original into its present form. They used their knowledge and ability, in order to give a faithful rendering of the original. Many passages might be better rendered; but that does not touch the point for which we contend, viz., that it was originally given in the words which the Holy Ghost taught, so that the apostles wrote the very words which God gave them to write.

I believe it is important for us to keep to this. Satan has done his very best to make out that the *sense* was given, but not the *exact words*. But the

teaching of this passage is explicit as to the divine inspiration of *the words*; and there are other passages which show us this, to which let us now turn.

The first that we will look at is 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the *words* which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

Observe what is written here. "*That ye may be mindful of the words,*" &c. Not of the general tenor of their teaching.

Another Scripture you will find in 2 Tim. i. 13. "*Hold fast the form of sound words*, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Mark again. It is not hold fast chapter and verse, but the *form of sound words*. God is jealous of the very form of words in which it pleased Him, by His Spirit, to reveal His thoughts.

Turn now to 2 Peter i. 19. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts," &c. Read also Rev. xxii. 18, 19. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book," &c.

Observe that it is *the words*. All this is in opposition to the current of the popular teaching of the present day, which is, to make light of the VERBAL INSPIRATION of the Scriptures. The Lord help us to be clear and firm on this point, for the current of infidelity is setting in with tremendous

power; and "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Having seen that the Spirit of God is first the Revealer, and also the Teacher—using His own words for this purpose—let us now see what Scripture says as to the Holy Spirit being *the Enlightener*. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

Why are they foolishness to him? Why can he not know them? The answer is, "because they are spiritually discerned." This is a point that we ought well to consider, viz., that our mere natural understanding is not capable of comprehending the things of the Spirit. Until a man has been "born again," and has received the Holy Ghost, he has not the capacity to understand the teaching of the Spirit of God.

There is much in the Scriptures that the natural man may to some extent understand; such as the plain precepts of the Book of Proverbs, the demands of the law, &c.; but the unfolding of God's mysteries, as therein given to us by the Holy Ghost since Christ ascended to the right hand of God, nothing can enable a man to understand but the Spirit of God, which dwelleth in each believer.

The precious truths of the believer's oneness with Christ and joint-heirship with Him, and His coming again to take His own to be with Himself, these, and many more, have been kept sealed from the Church almost since the days of the apostles; it is only of late years that these things have been brought to light; and only here and there are they yet taught.

The teaching of the Church fell into the hands of the unregenerate, as in the Church of Rome, until Luther came forth from her with the blessed doctrine of justification by faith, and not works. But it has gradually slipped back again, to a large extent, into the hands of the unregenerate, even among the denominations of Protestantism.

The reason the Scriptures are not understood by such, and therefore not taught as God would have them taught, is, that they are dependent on their own wisdom, and not on the Spirit of God. If there was shown by God's people a cleaving to His Word, and entire dependence on the Spirit of God for

enlightenment and guidance, there would be more seeing eye to eye, and more agreement as to the mind of God. The Holy Ghost will not teach people in two contrary ways; but if really looking to the Lord to enlighten them, there would be harmony of mind and unity of judgment in the things of God.

Let us now look at a few Scriptures which show us the Spirit of God as the Enlightener. "And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. . . . And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c. (John xx. 20-23).

Turn now to Luke xxiv. 44, 45, "And He said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Mark! There was the opening of their understanding by the Lord Himself. He was enabling them to know something of that which lay hidden in the Old Testament concerning Himself; but the full opening up of these truths was postponed until they were "endued with power from on High," referring to the gift of the Holy Ghost, bestowed according to promise on the day of Pentecost.

Turn again to 1 John ii. 27, "And the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

"Teacheth you all things"—implying that through the anointing which is in us, there is not any secret, or purpose, or counsel of the heart of God that is not open to us. What are all the researches of men in science and the world's wisdom compared to this?—That we have access by the Holy Ghost into the very treasures of the wisdom of God!

Turn now to 1 Cor. ii. 12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God."

One or two other passages will show us what is the spirit of the world. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"

(Rom. viii. 15). This verse tells us that the spirit of the world is a spirit of bondage, which causeth slavish fear. But turn now to 2 Tim. i. 7, and we will there see the kind of spirit which we have received: "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Also, Ephes. ii. 1, 2, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

The children of this world are possessed by the very spirit of Satan. Whether he leads them to the dram-shop, or professedly to worship God, it is the same spirit of Satan, the god of this world.

But the Spirit which we have received is a "Spirit of power, love, and a sound mind." This threefold cord gives us the essential character of God's Spirit. It is a Spirit of power. May we know more of the power of the Holy Ghost; the sustaining, comforting, strengthening power of the Spirit, ministered to us through communion with God in His Word. The power of God is not like the power which is in the world. Paul writes, "When I am weak, then am I strong." God's mightiest power is silent. Elijah was waiting for God. There came a mighty wind, an earthquake, and a fire; but God was not in any of these. But there came to him a "still small voice;" and he wrapped his face in his mantle, for it was the voice of God.

The power of the Spirit of God is not in noise and outward demonstration; but it is seen in holy, patient, godly living, and testimony, which commends itself to the conscience of all. There is a reality in a godly life, which the world observes, and it has power over them.

The Spirit of God is called "the Comforter." Patiently He dwells in us; but how often His ministry is hindered, because He is grieved by our foolish and froward ways.

But He is the Spirit of Love; and how He comforts us with the comfort which is in Christ through the Scriptures!

And He is "the Spirit of a sound mind." Three or four times over is He called "the Spirit of Truth." There is no lie in the Spirit's teaching. It is the Spirit of Him who was **THE TRUTH**; who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

All God's truth is absolute and eternal. Then do not let us go to the Scriptures without depending upon the Spirit of God to enlighten and enable us to understand them.

Thus shall comfort and sustaining grace be ministered to our hearts as we read and meditate therein.

THE TRUE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES.

IN discoursing of the allegorical and figurative illustrations of divine truth, there is a stronger tendency than in treating of any other portions of the Word of God, to expatiate on all that may be said on the subject, instead of inquiring into the exact meaning of the Spirit of God in the passage. Again, we are more than usually apt, in expounding such allegories and figures, to be governed by preconceived notions and adopted opinions; a habit which, indeed, is the occasion of very many of the difficulties and obscurities which we find in all parts of the word of God. Such difficulties seem most intractable where the words of Scripture are the plainest. To take an example which will occasion no discussion. No prophecy of the Old Testament appears more beautifully simple and clear, from our point of view, than that quoted in Matt. xxi. 5: "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." Yet we can well understand that it must have appeared inscrutably obscure to the scribes and doctors, with their preconceptions of the character and career of Messiah; and they may have attempted many ingenious solutions of what they regarded as a profound mystery. With these cautions, we invite an enquiry into the exact import of the great practical lesson which the Lord uttered, in circumstances equally remarkable for solemnity and tenderness, as recorded in John xv. 1-6.

Trench remarks that there is a wonderful significance in the simple image running through the whole of Scripture, according to which men are compared to trees and their works to fruit—the fruit being the organic produce and evidence of the inner life, not something artificially attached or fastened on from without. "There are three kinds of works spoken of, which may all be illustrated from this image: first, *good* works, when the tree, being made good, bears fruit of the same character; then *dead* works, such as

have a fair outward appearance, but are not the living outgrowth of the renewed man—fruit, as it were attached and fastened on from without, alms given that that may be gloried in, prayers made that they may be seen, works such as were most of the works of the Pharisees; and lastly, *wicked* works, when the corrupt tree bears fruit manifestly of its own kind.” Keeping these distinctions in view as we proceed, we scarcely need remark that no amount of culture will change the nature of the fruit, though it may affect its quantity or quality. An apple-tree still produces apples. The only way in which we can obtain a different fruit is by obtaining a different kind of tree. There must be a new nature before man, the sinner, can bear good fruit. The fruit of the unrenewed man must be dead works or wicked works.

The Lord announces Himself as “the *true* vine;” and we direct attention to this use of the word “*true*.” We find it in a number of analogous descriptions or designations of the Lord Jesus. As when He is called “the *true* Light,” “the *true* Bread,” “a minister of the *true* tabernacle,” where evidently it does not mean *true* in opposition to *false*; but that he was the perfect, essential, and enduring reality of which other lights were but faint reflections, other bread and another tabernacle were but the types and shadows—“the figures of the true.” In the instance of the tabernacle this will be more readily acknowledged, because it was what may be styled a positive type—expressly made to be a type—“the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” The same thing may be said of the bread, since it refers to the manna, which was expressly designed to be a type of Christ. “The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

But in addition to these instituted types of the Old Testament, there are natural types, such as the light or the vine, regarding which we again cite Trench, who draws from many eminent teachers of former times: “It is a great misunderstanding of the matter to think of these as happily but yet arbitrarily chosen illustrations, taken with a skilful selection from the great stock and storehouse of unappropriated images, from whence it would have been possible that the same skill might have selected others as good, or nearly as good.

Rather they belong to one another—the type and the thing typified—by an inward necessity; they were linked together long before by the law of secret affinity.” And so we may say of the vine in the passage before us; the Lord did not arbitrarily select it out of the multitude of natural objects from which an ordinary teacher might have drawn illustrations of his subject. Rather the vine was created and constituted as it is, that it might be the type of Christ and His people in Him, as in this present life they bring forth fruit unto God.

But there is a double type here, just as we find a double type in the bread; a reference to the manna in the wilderness, and behind that a reference to bread in general as the staff of human life. The vine itself is indeed constituted to be an earthly type of a spiritual truth; but we find a previous appropriation of it to that which is itself a type of the perfect reality which the Lord at length presents to us. We refer to the passages in psalm and prophecy, where Israel is spoken of as “the vine brought out of Egypt.” And then this brings out another, it may be the principal, meaning of the word “true,” when applied to the great Antitype in contrast with the type. For the type had proved not only in its nature imperfect, but in its results a failure; as God testifies by His prophets concerning Israel: “He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.” Isaiah v. 2. “Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” Jer. ii. 21. Now, in contrast with this failure and degeneracy of the typical people, Jesus says, “I am the true vine”—the antitype which shall fulfil all the expectations of the heavenly Husbandman.

We may turn aside for a moment to notice here a method of applying the language of prophecy to the spiritual reality, of which Israel was the earthly type, which has sometimes been the occasion of cavil or perplexity. Thus in Hosea xi. 1: “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” Then follows God’s recital of His thankless and ill-requested care, ending in Israel’s perverse wanderings and backslidings, just as the vine brought from Egypt brought forth wild grapes. But then, as in the one case, the purpose of the husbandman has a full accomplishment, and all his expectations are met at last in the true vine; so, in the other case, the pur-

pose of the Father is accomplished, and all His love responded to, by the true Israel; and so we find the words of the prophecy quoted as fulfilled when Joseph brought Mary and her child back from exile upon the death of Herod, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matt. ii. 15). In all these figures we find it uniformly and clearly brought out that, under whatever advantages fallen humanity is placed, there is nothing but failure to be expected; and then, when man's utter failure is demonstrated, God comes in graciously with a provision in which there can be no failure. The "fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead;" but Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." Israel, the child whom God called out of Egypt, sacrificed to Baalim, and burned incense unto graven images; but again God called His Son out of Egypt, and His meat was to do His Father's will. The vine which God brought out of Egypt and planted brought forth wild grapes; but at last One comes, who says to His disciples, "I am the true vine;" and then the Father is glorified.

We need not dwell here upon the beauty, the grace, the exuberant fertility of the natural vine, which was from the first fitted to bear this important lesson. But we may remark that with all this it evidently is not designed to show forth the relationship between Christ and believers in its highest and its permanent aspects. For example, though we may not be able to find in nature any higher example of vegetable life, either in respect of beauty or fertility, it is still much lower than the lowest form of animal life, and therefore must represent a lower aspect of our relationship than the figure of a body with all its nicely-adjusted parts and co-operating members—the body of which Christ is the Head. Even that, wonderful as it is, presents an aspect of our relationship in some respects inferior to that of the bridegroom and bride, in the full fellowship of love and glory, as He shall "present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

The vine and its branches express, indeed, oneness, a common life, and *that* the life of the vine, and the complete dependence of the branches upon the vine—the idea which runs through all this lesson. But then it results simply in fruit-bearing by the several branches. There is nothing like the various members of the body moving in obedience to the common head,

co-operating in the common interest, and so united in interest and sympathy that, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. If any member were cut off, the body itself would be permanently marred and maimed. In short, the view of our relationship which is represented by the vine and its branches, is that of which this world is the sphere and this life the period. It is *here* and *now* that we are to glorify the Father by bearing much fruit; and we are taught our absolute dependence on Christ, the vine, for this, and are at the same time assured of His sufficiency for us. The whole strain of admonition, warning, encouragement, promise, and direction in the passage, shows that the figure has reference to our present, visible, and individual dependence on Him for the true purposes of our present life, in a world which hates God, and in which we are to glorify Him. Our salvation, our essential and indissoluble oneness with Christ and in Christ, our standing before God, our heavenly calling, our adoption in Christ, and our joint-heirship with Him, are not brought into view nor called in question by any thing that is said here. It is by dragging in these truths that expositors have created the difficulties of the passage, and, we venture humbly to say, have come short of its true uses.

Before we proceed, let us adore the grace which is displayed in the provisions which secure the objects of our existence as believers in this world. The failure of man under all possible circumstances is attested by the history of the race. But in this view of what we are as believers, there is no repetition of the old experiment. They are not represented as so many separate trees, planted in more fertile soil and under a more propitious sky than those whose failure the prophets bewail. No, they are branches of the true vine, and it cannot fail; and moreover, the Lord adds, "My Father is the husbandman." He does not let it out to others, and thus assures us of the wisest, most tender, most faithful care of the vine and its branches.

This truth, "My Father is the husbandman," has a solemn and awakening voice, as well as a tender and assuring voice, to the believer. For if it assures us of the protection and careful training of the weakest tendril and most tender shoot, it also assures us of a watchfulness which nothing can escape. The branches will not be allowed to run to waste in a neglected luxuriance of leaves only. And so observe the very first consequence of His being the husbandman:

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.” The very purpose for which believers are left in this world is that they may bear fruit. “Ye have not chosen Me,” says the Lord, in a subsequent verse, “but I have chosen you, and ordained (appointed) you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” If the believer is not fulfilling this appointment, why should the heavenly Husbandman allow him to continue here? From failing, as we have observed, to see the true scope of the allegory, expositors have been accustomed to deny that those here spoken of as being taken away are really believers. We are so much accustomed to concentrate every thing on our own salvation, leaving out God’s glory in the saved, and so disposed to place our salvation on legal grounds, that nearly all the exhortation, warning, and rebuke which the Spirit has stored in these Scriptures, which are declared to be “profitable for reproof and correction,” as well as “for instruction in righteousness,” are neutralized, and the nature of the divine discipline is entirely lost sight of. If these barren branches do not represent believers, and if it is the question of salvation that is yet to be determined by those whom the Lord addresses in His discourse, then evidently salvation is of works, and the whole instruction of the passage is inapplicable to those who are saved.

But the words of the Lord leave us no choice in our application of the passage, to whatever conclusion it may lead us. For surely they are believers to whom He says, “Ye are the branches;” and then, in the warning before us, He not only introduces the word “branch,” but gives it the utmost precision by adding, “in me,” the uniform significance of which, in the New Testament, cannot well be questioned. If there is one form of expression which, by invariable and unexceptional use, indicates a believer more emphatically than another, it is this “in me,” “in Christ,” “in Him.” And this is just the awakening, we may say startling, thought, that a believer in Him, bought with His blood, saved by His grace, may yet in this world fall into a barren and unprofitable life, and fail to glorify God in his body and his spirit which are His. Believers, your salvation is not of works, but of grace; your fruit-bearing does not affect it. Those who are *in Him* have everlasting life. But that surely is not all for which you care. We have been too much accustomed to take it as a matter of course that believers

must bear fruit, and must all be saluted at last as good and faithful servants who have done well. Your Lord here warns you; do not, for the sake of maintaining a received dogma, put aside His warning, that you may be a “branch in Him,” and yet bear no fruit. The Epistles abound in analogous warnings. Remember also that the Father, though His love is infinite and everlasting, is also faithful. He is a husbandman who will not overlook the condition of the branches—not the least of them. He judges us as a Father, and chastens us, though we will not be condemned with the world. And when the condition of barrenness is confirmed, “He takes them away.” The import of this taking away will, of course, be determined by the view we take of the scope of the allegory. If it relates to our present dependence on the vine for the fruit which is borne in this world to the glory of God, then the taking away must point to judgment affecting this life. The body of Christ would be for ever maimed, disfigured, and injured, if a member was cut off. But the vine is not maimed; on the contrary, it is for the benefit of the other branches when the rank, fruitless shoot is removed.

(To be continued.)

DEBT: A WORD TO CHRISTIANS.*

“**W**HAT’S a fine day, Mrs. Brown; will you have a little Gospel book?”

“Thankye, sir; I’ll read it when I’ve time.”

“I was going to ask you to come to a Gospel meeting to-night; do you think you could get?”

“O yes, I’ll come; it will be in the Mason’s Hall, I suppose?”

“No; it’s not to be there to-night, but in Mrs. Logan’s house, at the end of the street; you know the place.”

“Yes, I ken the place well enough, but I ken the woman tae; and I’m not going one step to her house; and if the meeting is to be there, I’ll no be at it.”

“But it will just be the same speaker in Mrs. Logan’s as it would have been in the Hall, and it’s not half so far for you to go.”

“I don’t care if it was next door, or who was speakin’; I would not go into her house.”

* This Paper may be had in Book Form at the Publishing Office—3d. per Dozen.

"I was not aware that there was anything wrong with Mrs. Logan; what is the matter?"

"Well, I would not have said anything about her, for it's nae business of mine; but noo that you've speired, I'll just tell ye. Do ye no ken the woman's in debt with everybody almost in the town that will take her on? A' body winders that you would keep such a woman about ye; she is just a greedy, wasterful thing, that's what she is; she disna care who wants, if she keeps herself right. To be plain wi' ye, sir, it keeps lots o' folks frae going to your meetings; they ken a' about her, and they say ye're a' alike. Fancy her standing on the High Street, opposite Dickson's shop, when you was preaching, and been owing the man 15 shillings for seven months, and will not pay a penny o't. Don't take my word for't; go and see Mr. Dickson himself, or Taylor, or Wright; and there's plenty more besides them. I tell you she's in every place where she can get anything. She gets a lot of young folks into her house, and sits and sings hymns. It's awfu' wark."

"I am very sorry to hear it; I had not the least idea of it."

"Well, I was just thinkin' you didna ken, or ye widna let her come so much about your meetings. And there's nae reason for her being in debt; her man has six shillings a week more than mine, and she has only two of a family; I dinna ken what she dis wi' a' her sillier."

"Well, I must go, Mrs. Brown. You'll come to the Hall on Lord's-day evening, I hope. Good day."

"Well, Maggie, is your mother in?"

"No, sir."

"She will be in before dinner time, I suppose?"

"No, sir; she told me to try and make some dinner for father; she took Johnny with her; she will be home in time for the meeting."

"Just so; I will call again in the afternoon."

"Come in, sir; come in. I hope you are quite well to-day, sir. I was sorry I was out when you called; I was just out with a neighbour for a little: sit down, sir; sit down."

"No, I will not sit down; and if what I have been hearing is true, I have sat here too often."

"What is wrong now? The Lord knows there is nothing wrong with me; people are very ready with

their tongues, especially about the Lord's children; it's terrible how we are lied on; but the Lord knows."

"Are the people telling lies, Mrs. Logan, when they say you are in debt?"

"Me in debt! Who said that? If people would only mind themselves. I am sure no one has any idea of the work I have to make the two ends meet."

"But do the two ends meet, Mrs. Logan? Are you not owing Mr. Wright, the grocer, something?"

"Oh, well, if that's all; it's just a trifle; I could pay that any day."

"So much the worse, then, when you have not done it. It has been standing for 18 months, has it not?"

"I could not say if it is so long as that, but, the Lord knows, I mean to pay it."

"What about Taylor? Are you in there?"

"No; I'm sure I have not been in that man's debt for years."

"That is well. Then is Wright the only man you are in debt with?"

"Yes."

"Are you not owing Dickson anything?"

"Oh, my! I see now; it's been that unconverted woman Brown that's been telling you all these lies; you should not have listened to her stories, sir; everybody knows what she is. She came up when we were at the street meeting two nights ago and gave me a punch on the back, and called me an old hypocrite, and said Dickson was standing watching me, but I don't care; she has no business with me at all."

"Answer my question, please; are you owing Dickson some money?"

"It's a mere trifle, and I'm paying it off."

"But you told me that Wright was the only one you were owing anything to; you told a lie. This is very sad. How long have you been owing Dickson, and how much?"

"Well, it's not passing two years."

"Two years! And how much?"

"About ten shillings now, I think."

"I cannot wait longer at present. There will be no meeting here to-night, I have arranged for it elsewhere. Good evening."

Oh! what cause the enemy gets to blaspheme, through those who profess to be Christ's living beyond their income, and in debt. Extravagance and selfish-

ness seem to characterise many who talk much about "the Lord." That He is no lord of theirs is very plain, for His command to "owe no man anything" (Rom. xiii. 8) is entirely neglected. "Whose God is their belly" (Phil. iii. 19).

What a sad thing for you, reader, were Christ to come and take you away from this scene, if you are owing some unsaved ones five, twenty, or fifty shillings. Your position on earth, when taken from it, so dishonouring to Him. To go to heaven, after having swindled some poor lost souls, who are to be for ever in hell. Ruined perhaps by your dishonest life; having judged the Gospel you professed by your ungodly ways.

And all just to gratify your lust of the flesh, or your pride of life.

Young woman, is your dress, is your bonnet paid for? Wives, are you clear with your grocer and baker? Fathers, do you smoke tobacco, and your child's school-fees not paid? Young man, what about your last suit? You once professed to be converted; what were you converted to?

If in debt, keep quiet about your conversion; don't talk about Jesus being your Lord; don't stand and pretend to help at the Gospel meeting on the street; your presence there is a hindrance; you are a disgrace to the name of Christ.

Come now, and for Christ's sake begin *to-day* and live within your income, and pay off all you are owing as fast as you can. Stint yourself in everything till all is clear. Don't put anything in the box on Lord's-day; it would be abomination to God. This good living and fine dressing is terribly opposed to the Spirit of the One who made Himself of no reputation. Oh, Christian, get down on your knees and confess all to Him Who is faithful and just to forgive; and then live for God, instead of self. Read 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; Col. iv. 5; Rom. xiii. 8; 2 Kings iv. 7; Psa. xxxvii. 21.

PERSONAL APPEAL.

OUR Lord once said that the children of light were not as wise as the children of this world. And this is frequently proven true.

Here is a case in point. A great election is at hand. Two candidates are asking the suffrages of the electors. They hold monster meetings. Night after night they talk and argue and appeal

and abuse. But meetings do not complete their work. They are only the public side of that work. There is a private work, a personal interview with the individual voter. The candidate asks for his vote and support. He buttonholes the voter, cajoles him, makes promises to him, kisses the babies—if the voter has any—anything to get him to vote. And these political candidates know that a large part of their success, and that perhaps the largest, depends upon the *private interview*. It is not saying too much to affirm that in the last conflict nearly all the voters of this country were personally seen and personally solicited for their vote.

Are the disciples of Christ as wise as this in their work to bring men to Christ? The public side of Christian work, the meeting side, is grandly sustained. But what about the private side, the personal interview side? Is it sustained? We fear not. It is certainly not slanderous to say that but a very few of the many who sing and pray are ever found going up to a man alone and asking that man's heart for Christ. And that is one of our greatest lacks. No one could estimate the grand results if the vast army of dumb Christians could find the string of their tongue loosed, so that they could recommend the Saviour to the persons they meet in their daily work. What we need now more than anything else is a personal canvass of the unsaved millions of our country in the interests of Christ! But we are not able to secure that, and the work of conversion drags because we are not wise enough, not earnest enough. The political candidate, and the tax-collector, having to do with terrestrial things only, can interview everybody; but we who have to deal with things celestial are slow or impotent to interview men for Christ. Was not Christ right when He said that the world's wisdom was sometimes superior to the wisdom evinced by the children of the Kingdom?

My firm conviction is, brethren, that numbers of unconverted people not only would not repulse a Christian man's approach, but that they are looking for it and desiring it. An incident brought this home to me a few days ago. I went to see a young girl who was very low from inflammation. She was so deaf that though I spoke to her in the loudest tone she could not hear me. A vacant stare was the response. I conversed with her mother, and then went down stairs, having promised to call again. I had just gone down, when the mother called me back, saying, "Lizzie

says you didn't speak to her about her state, nor lift a prayer for her!" I leaned over the bed, and spoke of Jesus. She heard me well. I offered up a short prayer. She heard that, too. I came away and thought as I walked along, "I must not conclude too rashly that people are deaf; they may be able and willing to hear about Jesus." I have learned my lesson. *I shall not decide beforehand that any one is unwilling to hear about my Saviour.* I shall assume that he is ready to hear my recommendation of Christ. This is the spirit with which to approach this great work, my brother. Get first the assurance that such a work will be greatly blessed, and then the fact that numbers are ready to listen to our appeals. And then begin it at once.

THE BRIDE AND THE BOOK.

IT is said that a book written by a well known author was once placed in the hands of a young lady, who was requested to read it carefully. She complied with the request at least in form, but honestly confessed to the friend from whom the book was received that she found it exceedingly dry and dull. At length, however, she met the author face to face, and was loved by him, and, loving him in return, she became his bride. Then she discovered that the book which was formerly so uninteresting became luminous with beauty, and she could peruse its pages with absorbing and unwearied interest. The change was not in the book, but in herself. She had learned to know and admire and love the writer, and very naturally the deep affection that centred in him attached to his writings.

This incident illustrates the marked difference that exists among professed Christians with regard to the Sacred Scriptures. Some read them with constant and ever increasing delight; and others, if they were honest enough to tell the truth, would acknowledge that they either almost wholly neglected the inspired volume, or at best that they take it up under the spur of conscience as a heavy and unwelcome task. The former look upon the blessed Bible as containing the revelation of their Father's will, the breathings of their Saviour's love, the communications and consolations of their divine Comforter, and hence it possesses a charm for them which no other book can possibly have; while

the latter know nothing of their personal relations to God.

Two gentlemen were riding together on horseback, when one said to the other, "Do you read the Bible often?" "No," was the answer, "for I frankly confess that I do not love God." "No more did I," was the quiet rejoinder, "but God loved me." The one to whom the remark was made afterwards stated that simple as it was, and easy to be understood, it seemed that it would lift him from the saddle in the joy the reply brought to his heart. From that day the Bible was a new book to him, for he did not read it thinking of himself, but of God, and God's great heart of love yearning over him with unspeakable tenderness. If its assurances, its promises, its testimony concerning the coming glory of Christ and His people, were simply believed, many an hour would be snatched from the pressure of daily duties to bend with delightful contemplation over its precious pages.

Charlotte Elizabeth in her Personal Recollections, referring to the time when she was under conviction of sin, writes, "I dared not read the Bible, it bore so very hard upon me." But when she turned her thoughts away from her own unrighteousness to rest upon Christ's finished work, her peace passed all understanding. "In this there was nothing uncommon," she says; "but in the opening of the understanding, that I might *understand* the Scriptures, was the mighty miracle of grace and truth. There I lay, still as death, my hands still folded over my eyes, my very soul basking in the pure, calm, holy light that streamed into it, through the appointed channel of God's Word.

. . . Those who have received the Gospel by man's preaching may doubt and cavil: I took it simply from the Bible, in the words that God's wisdom teacheth, and thus I argued: 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: I am a sinner: I want to be saved: He will save me.' There is no presumption in taking God at His word: not to do so is very impertinent: I did it, and I was happy."

If all Christians did the same thing, they also would be happy, and they would be in another respect like Charlotte Elizabeth, who ever after her conversion was an enthusiastic student of the Bible. A bride does not become weary of reading her absent bridegroom's letters, but peruses them again and again, and ponders every line and word, to her the sweetest testimonials of his love until she is with himself. Alas! it is sad

evidence of the coldness of the heart toward Christ, when there is no eagerness to look into His Word, and no thrill of joy responsive to the declarations of His unchanging affection.

One prevalent cause of the indifference to the Bible manifested by so many professed Christians is the pre-occupation of the mind with other reading. They begin the morning with the secular newspaper, and even the Lord's day with the abominable Sunday papers that are doing more against the cause of Christ than all the infidels of the world combined; and the rest of their reading consists of trashy novels or merely human books. No wonder they take little interest in the Sacred Scriptures, for they grieve the Holy Spirit of God. They make "provision for the flesh," nourishing and strengthening "the old man" with appropriate food, and neglecting, starving, enfeebling "the new man."

Oh what a sifting of the churches there would be, if the Lord should immediately appear. To how many thousands who claim to be His followers would His shout from the open heavens sound like the knell of their doom, as they would look back with unavailing regret upon misspent time and wasted opportunities for knowing more of Himself as revealed in His Word. Not only would the self-conceit and natural depravity of the heart, that lie at the foundation of all infidelity, be exposed in their hideous deformity by the glory of His coming, but the delusion of multitudes, who fancy that all is well because they are "members of the church" would vanish, and nothing would be left but the appalling reality that they are not among the happy number caught up in clouds to meet Him in the air. Even if translated they would need an introduction to Him, so little have they had of His sweet companionship along the journey of life, so rare has been their fellowship with Him in the Spirit, so seldom have their hearts burned within them, while He talked with them by the way, and opened to them the Scriptures. They surely will have a sense of shame in the presence of the Bridegroom, when they remember how they slighted His messages. The Lord kindle in us stronger love for His Word.

ON PRAYER AT MEETINGS.—He who prays *with* his brethren, cannot say things to which they cannot say Amen. If he is praying *for* them, he then can pray according to *his own* faith and knowledge; but if he is praying *with* them, he cannot go beyond *theirs*.

THOUGHTS on MEETINGS for WORSHIP, PRAYER, and PREACHING.

AND He gave some *to be* apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." And He gave the command to all His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." And "they went everywhere, preaching the Word."

In 2 Cor. v. 17-21, we get the capability of the new-born for, and their designation unto the business of the ministry of reconciliation, "Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and *hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation*; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and having *placed in us* (margin) the Word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God God did beseech you by us: *we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*"

Yet to "every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." And "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;" "dividing to every man severally as He will." For "God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased Him." "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting." "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; *if any man speaketh, speaking as it were the oracles of God*; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Thus, then, are we instructed by the Word as to the

instruments God hath chosen and prepared for the ministry of His Gospel, and also as to their mode of utterance and responsibility. It is also manifestly the duty of the Church to recognise those thus appointed of God; and to receive such, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake; also, to pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.

It has become a custom, from various causes, for meetings to be held specially for the preaching of the Gospel, apart from other meetings called for worship or prayer, or mutual edification. These meetings have become, generally, promiscuous assemblies of saved and unsaved souls; of believers, and of those who are still outside the fold of Christ. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other class predominates. Sometimes the evangelist is preaching to a known company, sometimes to an unknown; and he can never certainly know, in larger assemblies, the spiritual condition of the majority of his audience.

Sometimes, again, it so happens that the preacher has been located for a length of time in a given place, and is fairly acquainted with the condition and needs of those he is preaching to. These things cause necessarily various modes of presenting the truth, so that the condition of all may be met.

Now, at first sight it would appear that the task of knowing what to say, or how to address, under such varying conditions, would be too much for any servant, however wise and ardent he might be; but let us ask again the question, "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . Has not the Lord?" and is it not He who still says to His chosen ones, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say?"

But does the Lord send forth His servants unprepared, ungirded for the battle, and unfit for His ministry, by being called unawares to do things they are not in spiritual or mental condition for? Nay. Again and again do we find throughout the Word examples of the wisdom and prudence of God in selecting instruments prepared aforetime by Himself, and whom He knew He could depend on. Witness Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, the Twelve Apostles. After the Lord's ascension, Stephen, Paul, Philip, Timothy, Titus, &c. And are there none, nowadays, on whom He can depend to do His business? Surely. Yea,

"The Lord gave the Word, and great was the company of those that did publish it." The Lord hath still faithful and prepared servants, and is still preparing other faithful servants to carry on His business till He calls them hence. Unto these servants thus separated by Him unto the Gospel of Christ does He give the Spirit of wisdom, who guideth them into all the truth, and openeth their understanding to *understand the Word*; wakening them, as it were, morning by morning, to hear as the learned, so that they may know how to "*preach the Word*—be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Yea, the Spirit of God enableth the servant to "do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry;" and enjoineth "to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . to *meditate* upon these things; to give oneself wholly to them." Thus evidently are the servants of God carefully trained and fitted for the work of the Lord.

Surely, then, it would be both unseemly and presumptuous for any one to attempt to do God's work uncalled and unprepared by Him. For a servant to go, unsent by his master, to tell certain people his master had sent him with a message, when he had not, or to give a different message, if sent, from what he had been entrusted with.

How solemn, then, on the other hand, is the responsibility of the messenger to be faithful to his master; and of the people, as they hear the message the Lord has sent!

It is also evident that there should be a calm, godly pre-arrangement of all service in the Gospel; that labourers should choose their co-labourers; that the assembly should recognise those fitted of God to labour; that should there be plurality of gift (which there is but seldom), labourers should seek other modes and spheres of labour, waiting on the Lord to know His mind, and not taking advantage of another man's line of things made ready to hand. It is plain that some are accepted of some congregations, others in other places.

Some can command and keep together an audience in the open air who would not be acceptable in a cottage meeting. Others can quietly talk over the Word to a few, who would utterly fail to address a crowded room. Some influence by their matter, others by their spirit; but blessing comes, as the

Lord wills, on either or both, as they do His bidding. Let no servant think, therefore, he is unnecessary ; but let each wait on the ministry assigned him by the Lord, and do it cheerfully ; so shall the Lord in due time exalt him that is humble.

Moreover, it is plain that if an audience has been drawn together by the consciousness that they shall hear men in whom they can trust—who shall present to them solid matter for their belief, it would be unfair—a breach of faith—to that audience to permit crude and unfitted labourers to occupy the place of the trusted servants. It would virtually drive away and disperse the audience, and hinder their good. The assembly, then, must wait prayerfully for guidance in this matter, and not open the door to any one who likes to speak.

The servant then also may choose his co-helper, as Paul chose Silas, and refused John, surnamed Mark ; for the elder may, and should thus encourage and lead on the younger, and so open the way for him to share the work of the ministry, according to the Word, “the things that thou hast heard of Me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

From the foregoing considerations, may we not conclude, that in all our assemblies for preaching the Gospel—whether they be occasional or stated ; whether in public or more privately, as in cottage meetings—we need guidance, not by impulsive feelings at the time, but by the Holy Spirit aforesaid preparing and fitting unto such ministry as the Lord hath designed ?

The following suggestions are therefore humbly and prayerfully put forward, in the earnest hope some may find them useful as a guide to the conduct of—and their conduct in—meetings for preaching the Gospel :—

1. In order that all things may be done in the decorum and order that God desireth, let much prayer be made for the fulness and supply of the Spirit of God in all the service designed.

2. When hymns are sung, let those generally be chosen which tell forth the power and glory of God in the salvation of sinners ; and frequently let the preacher warn such as are unsaved, when giving out the hymns, that the song of praise is for God's children only to sing. Let no false helps be used, in order to attract and excite the fleshly emotions of the unsaved.

3. Let prayers be made unto God, solemnly and pointedly, for the objects before the meeting, and that the Word of God may have free course, and be glorified.

4. Let those who believe that are present continue in silent fervent prayer for the constant supply of the Spirit. Let them refrain from mental criticisms on the matter or manners of the speaker.

5. Let the word spoken be short or long, according as need is seen ; but, as a rule, let not the meeting be kept beyond the allotted time (from 1 hour to 1½ hours will generally suffice), lest many be hindered coming again, owing to the uncertainty of getting away to their homes and duties.

6. In any after meeting let there be much silent prayer ; and let those anxious be spoken to, in wisdom, by brethren meet for such work ; godly caution being needed, lest the adversary gain an advantage. A fresh word from some, other than the preacher, will be often found of blessing.

7. Let the meeting be closed with prayer for a blessing on the Word ; and let opportunity be given for any anxious ones quietly to remain.

8. Let the preacher be full of God's message, armed with His words, and careful only to please God in his utterance.

9. Let him hold fast the form of sound words that cannot be gainsayed ; avoiding all that the natural mind merely would suggest as helpful to enforce his words.

10. Let the realities of eternity, the value of precious souls, the glory of God, be ever before the minds of those preaching.

11. Let the preacher, as a rule, meditate prayerfully over the subject he is going to speak on beforehand ; but let him not be bound to speak thereon, if it is evident the audience need other matter. It is well always to be prepared, both in mind and spirit ; yet, if called unawares, or if circumstances alter, he may count upon the grace and strength of his Lord.

12. Let everything that savours of cant ; let all meaningless and extraneous expression be avoided ; and let the message be given in the natural tones of the speaker, avoiding undue excitement in manner or gestures, speaking so that all may know how much on the heart of the speaker his subject is.

13. If possible, let a few remain for solemn prayer, that the end may be in quietude of spirit, and in the fear of the Lord.

14. So shall they who preach know how dependent they are on the Spirit, and on the Word of the living God, and give the glory of the salvation of precious souls to Him alone.

"Now, to Him that is able to stablish you according unto my (the) Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory for ever. Amen." A. O. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION No. LXXVII.

Is it, in your judgment, suitable for the Revised Version of the New Testament to be read, instead of the Authorised Version, at the gatherings around the Lord's table to remember His death; its being done before the breaking of bread is especially in the writer's mind? Does it not among the intelligent induce thoughts—endeavouring to judge of the relative value and correctness of the two translations—which are distracting from the object for which gathered, according to the word of the Lord, "This do in remembrance of me?" Also, does it not distract in other ways the aged and unintelligent, who are puzzled trying to follow in their accustomed Bibles, and who are unable to judge of the difference? Your judgment is likewise asked as to the Revised Version being used at Gospel meetings among illiterate people?

REPLY.

Although many passages of Scripture are in the New Revision much more correctly rendered than in the authorised version, with which we are so familiar, yet very many other passages are, in the judgment of those in whom we have confidence, altered for the worse; and many more alterations are merely verbal, and appear to us unnecessary.

We can only regard it, therefore, as a Book of Reference, and use it as hitherto we have been accustomed to make use of other translations, such as Alford's, Young's, Darby's, &c.

We thoroughly agree with the writer of the question, and should regard the introduction of the New Revision, under the circumstances referred to, as a decided intrusion.

In Gospel meetings it can serve no good purpose to

depart from the accustomed version. Even the altering of the translation should be done with extreme caution, and only where it is absolutely necessary for a proper understanding of the subject.

QUESTION No. LXXVIII.

What should be the behaviour of those in fellowship towards one who has been separated for any of the sins enumerated in 1 Cor. v. 11? Does the injunction "with such an one no not to eat" apply to sitting at meat? Or should we be seen in their company at any time until they be restored?

REPLY.

This last extremity of discipline has two sides: First, towards the person "put away;" that he may by means of that divinely-appointed punishment be brought to repentance, and be restored to fellowship with God and with His people. Next, towards the assembly; that it may be cleared from complicity with the evil, and saved from contamination with that which would operate in its midst like leaven, or like a gangrene.

It is therefore necessary that every individual in the assembly so act towards the separated one that he shall feel himself to be outside the circle of Christian fellowship—in the same position as "an heathen man or a publican."

It is not a putting away from the Lord's table merely, any more than the bringing in of a believer at first is a receiving to the Lord's table only. It is a bringing into a definite circle of fellowship, and, in like manner, it is said, "put away from among yourselves."

To be found on such friendly terms as eating together usually implies (especially in the East), would be to counteract the discipline, and would show that he who does so has failed to estimate aright the evil committed, or else that he is not really willing to act in this matter in subjection to the Lord's command. He will thus certainly injure his own soul, and also hinder the discipline from having its due effect upon the conscience of the others.

There are circumstances in which eating and drinking at the same table might not involve the question of *fellowship*. For instance, if a son were put out of fellowship, it would only be giving him the place of a son to allow him to sit at the family table, and would not affect his position as separated from the fellowship of the assembly. Again, such an one might be met accidentally at the same table in a restaurant.

There might be the showing of courtesy and civility without an approach to that friendliness which implies fellowship.

Opportunity might be taken of such occasional meetings to reach the conscience of the impenitent, but never for a moment forgetting that it is the pulling of one out of the fire, whose garments are defiled and defiling (Jude 23).

How contrary to this is the behaviour of those who will in false compassion invite the one who has been "put away" to their house, and have a "friendly cup of tea" together, &c.; or go walking with them as intimate associates, between whom no barrier has been raised!

Where this has been done, we never knew of anything but unmitigated evil as the result, and disaster to all concerned.

If all this be truth—and we believe it will commend itself as such to those who are willing to learn, how immensely important it must be, that all in the assembly be fully convinced that the sin imputed has really been committed; that each one, without exception, be ready, as it were, to cast the stone of the Lord's judgment at the offender (Josh. vii. 25).

This may involve time and trouble. There are always some who are hard to convince, but it is *essential*, in order to secure the full blessing. Hence every means should be used in patient waiting upon God, that all may be "perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10).

QUESTION No. LXXIX.

What is the teaching of Rom. xi. 21, 22? Do these Scriptures imply that a believer may fall away, and be finally lost?

REPLY.

The whole of this chapter is dispensational. Israel nationally had been put by God into the place of privilege upon earth (see Rom. ix. 3, 4). But Israel nationally had been set aside. Not that any in Israel who believed were cut off—that is not the thought in the passage—but that Israel, as a nation, was cut off from its high place of privilege, because of national departure from Jehovah; just as natural branches, because of unfruitfulness, might be cut off from an olive tree. Then, after Israel has been cut off, to whom has the place of privilege upon earth been given? Clearly to the Gentile nations, out of the midst of whom has arisen that highly-privileged, terribly responsible, and guilty system known as Christendom. In short, Gentile nations, like branches of wild olive trees, have been partakers of similar grace to that which was formerly shown to Israel. The result of this has been, that the Church, gathered from among the Gentiles, has failed to glorify God, as His witness in the earth, as completely as did Israel. Believers there are still, who, as individuals, are seeking to walk with God, just as there were in the days of Israel's apostasy.

God always reserves a remnant, according to the election of grace, that He may be glorified (Rom. xi. 5).

But the professing Church, or Christendom, with all its boasted privileges, has not continued in the goodness of God. The sentence, therefore, has already gone forth against it, as against Israel, "thou also shalt be cut off." But this in no way affects the standing in Christ of the individual believer.

QUESTION No. LXXX.

In answer to the question asked in Matt. xii. 38 by the scribes and pharisees, the Lord Jesus said (see ver. 40) that the Son of Man should be THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS in the heart of the earth. I can only make calculation of TWO NIGHTS AND ONE DAY by reading Mark xv. 42 to the end, &c. Can you show me my error.

(Answer next Page.)

THE DAYS OF THE PASSOVER, CRUCIFIXION, AND RESURRECTION.

<p>13th DAY</p> <p><i>Of the First Month, ABIB, about March or April, commencing after Sunset on TUESDAY, and lasting till Sunset on WEDNESDAY.</i></p> <p>Ex. xii. 1, 2. See Lev. xxiii. 22.</p> <p>PASSOVER KEPT</p> <p>By Christ and His disciples. After Sunset, First Evening.—Matt. xxvi. 20-25. Mark xiv. 17-21. Luke xxii. 14-18, 21-23. John xiii. 1-20. About six o'clock on Wednesday Evening. Judas goes out.—John xiii. 30.</p> <p>LORD'S SUPPER INSTITUTED</p> <p>Matt. xxvi. 26-30. Mark xiv. 22-25. Luke xxii. 19-20. John xiii. 33-35; 26.</p> <p>GETHESEMANE.</p> <p>Matt. xxvi. 39, 36-46. Mark xiv. 26, 32-42. Luke xxii. 39-46. John xviii. 1.</p> <p>BETRAYAL.—Matt. xxvi. 47-56. Mark xiv. 43-52. Luke xxii. 39-51. John xviii. 2-11.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Before</i></p> <p>ANNAS and CAIAPHAS.</p> <p>During the night.—Matt. xxvi. 57-75. Mark xiv. 53-72. Luke xxii. 54-71. John xviii. 22-27.—[Till cock crowing.]</p> <p>PILATE and HEROD.</p> <p>Between the FIRST hour (6 o'clock) and THIRD hour (9 o'clock).—Matt. xxviii. 1-32. Mark xv. 1-24. Luke xxiii. 1-32. John xviii. 28-40; and xix. 1-16.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CRUCIFIXION.</p> <p>Between the THIRD hour (9 o'clock) and SIXTH hour (12 o'clock).—Compare Mark xv. 25, and John xix. 14.</p> <p>Matt. xxviii. 33-44. Mark xv. 23-32. Luke xxiii. 33-42. John xix. 17-19, 19-24.</p> <p>Darkness from the SIXTH hour (12 o'clock) to the NINTH hour (3 o'clock).—Matt. xxviii. 45. Mark xv. 23-26. Luke xix. 44.</p> <p>The women and John by the cross.—John xix. 25-27. "finished"—John xix. 28-29.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DEATH.</p> <p>Between the NINTH hour (3 o'clock) and TWELFTH hour (6 o'clock).—Matt. xxvii. 50-56. Mark xv. 37-41. Luke xxiii. 45-49. John xix. 30-37.</p>	<p>14th DAY</p> <p><i>Commencing after Sunset on WEDNESDAY, and lasting till Sunset on THURSDAY.</i></p> <p>Passover Eve.</p>	<p>15th DAY</p> <p><i>Commencing after Sunset on THURSDAY, lasting till Sunset on FRIDAY.</i></p> <p>Preparation Eve.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BURIAL.</p> <p>After Sunset.—Matt. xxvii. 57-61. Mark xv. 42-47. Luke xxiii. 50-57. John xix. 38-42.</p> <p>After 6 o'clock on Thursday Evening.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jews' PREPARATION DAY.</p> <p>That is <i>the day</i> before <i>the Sabbath</i>.—Mark xv. 42. Luke xxiii. 34. John xxi. 31-36, 42.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPICES PREPARED.</p> <p>During the Friday.—Luke xxiii. 56.</p>	<p>16th DAY</p> <p><i>Commencing after Sunset on FRIDAY, and lasting till Sunset on SATURDAY.</i></p> <p>Sabbath Eve.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SABBATH DAY.</p> <p>A high day.—John xix. 34.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SEPULCHE SEALED AND GUARDED.</p> <p>Matt. xxvii. 62-66.</p>	<p>17th DAY</p> <p>See Gen. viii. 4.</p> <p><i>Commencing after Sunset on SATURDAY, lasting till Sunset on SUNDAY.</i></p> <p>Lord's Day Eve.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EVENING VISIT.</p> <p>Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1.</p> <p>After 6 o'clock on Saturday Evening.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EARTHQUAKE.</p> <p>Matt. xxviii. 2, 3.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RESURRECTION.</p> <p>At early morn.—Mark xvi. 9.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MORNING VISITS.</p> <p>Before sunrise, yet dark.—John xx. 1. Mary Magdalene, Peter & John.—John xx. 1-10.</p> <p>Christ's appearing to Mary.—Mark xvi. 9-11. John xx. 11-18.</p> <p>At the morning star, to early and patient watching.</p> <p>Entrance into the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HOLIEST.</p> <p>John xx. 17. Lev. xvi. 11-14.</p> <p>Ascension to His Father.—John xx. 17, 18.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AFTER SUNRISE.—Mark xvi. 2.</p> <p>Visit of the women.—Matt. xxviii. 5-8. Mark xvi. 2-8. Luke xxiv. 1-12.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">APPEARINGS.</p> <p>To the women.—Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.</p> <p>To the two disciples.—Mark xvi. 12, 13. Luke xxiv. 13-34.</p> <p>To the eleven.—Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 36-39. John xx. 19-23, 24-31.</p>
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The following Scale shows the relative position of JEWISH and ROMAN DAYS.

THIRTEENTH DAY.	FOURTEENTH DAY.	FIFTEENTH DAY.	SIXTEENTH DAY.	SEVENTEENTH DAY.
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SUNDAY.

HAPPINESS.—To make the heart truly happy, and the life really holy, love and fear must be united. If we love to enjoy the comfort of the precious truths of God, we must fear to transgress the holy commands of God. "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long" (Prov. xxiii. 17).—*Mason's Crumbs.*

ADVERSITY.—A christian never falls asleep in the fire or in the water; but grows drowsy in the sunshine.—*Berridge.*

THE eye of Jehovah rests on all those who belong to Him. Not one of them is or ever can be forgotten by Him. Their names are engraven on His heart. They are precious to Him as the price He paid for them, and that is nothing less than the precious blood of His own dear Son.

GLASGOW HALF-YEARLY MEETINGS OF BELIEVERS

will be held (if the Lord will) as usual, on the "FAST-DAY," OCTOBER 20.

Cards with all particulars may be had on application at

40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET.

AIRDRIE.—The Christians gathering to the name of the Lord, formerly in Graham Street School, have removed to No. 13, Cullen Street Hall. Meeting for Breaking of Bread at 11 a.m.; Gospel Meeting at 6.30 p.m. "Brethren, pray for us."

BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE.—Christians meet to Break Bread each Lord's-day at half-past ten a.m., in the Court House, and will continue to do so, if the Lord will, till the end of October.

DUNDEE.—Christians gather in the Name of the Lord to Break Bread every Lord's-day, at 11 a.m., in the Albert Hall, 115 Murraygate.

SWANSEA.—Believers' Meet for Breaking of Bread, in George Street Hall, every Lord's-day, at 11 a.m.; and for Gospel Preaching, at 6.30 p.m. Also on Mondays and Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

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THE TABERNACLE in the WILDERNESS.

REVISED NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN RITCHIE.

I DESIRE to state, in a few words, the object we have in view in coming together to search and meditate on the typical teaching of the Tabernacle.

It is not to instruct those who have been searching and inquiring into this subject for years, and who can therefore rejoice in its riches; nor is it to expound minutely, or go into all the details of this deeply-important portion of the Word of God. Those who do so will find it an interesting study, and a large and fruitful field for deep searching and meditation. Our desire is to guide the dear lambs of the Lord's flock—those who have been recently converted to God—to these green pastures, and, as the Holy Spirit may show them, seek to point out a few of the precious things concerning the Person and work of Christ, as they are found lying on the surface of these types, trusting that they may be sufficiently interested to dig deeper for themselves.

I suppose we have all been struck, on reading our Bibles, to find how much of that book is occupied with types. The first five books are almost entirely typical, and may other parts of the Word abound in them. It was the Lord's method of teaching His people in days of old; and when the Lord Jesus was here on earth, we all remember how often He used those types to illustrate the truths He taught. See John iii. 14; vi. 31-33.

We cannot for one moment entertain the infidel and foolish speculations of some would-be wise men about such parts of the Word of God. They would

like to make us believe that they were only intended for patriarchs and Israelites, and that we can derive little or no profit from them; indeed, some are now saying that they are no part of the Scriptures at all! But the youngest of us knows better. We prize them as part of our Father's holy Word, and of which it is written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (or is God-breathed), and is profitable" (2 Tim. iii. 16); and, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4). The first of these Scriptures assures us that the typical books are *from* God; the latter, that they are *for* us. In our unconverted days we saw no beauty in long chapters about bullocks and altars; and we either passed them by unread, or were glad when we got through them. Like a young lady I have read of, who once was presented with a book, and was asked to read it carefully. Out of courtesy to the giver she did so, but found it uninteresting and very dry. By-and-by she became acquainted with the author, loved him, and became his bride. With what interest and pleasure she read the book then! How eagerly each line was scanned, each page perused! To her it was a new book. And why? Because she knew and loved the one who wrote it. So it is now with us. We know God; we love His Book. The types are God's own pictures, and they point forward to Christ.

I remember seeing in this city, several years ago, a well-marked Bible. It belonged to a precious saint, who has gone home to be with her Lord. Along the margin of one of the typical books the following two lines were written:—

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE NEW LIES HID ;
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE OLD LIES OPEN.

Now I thought this was very sweet; and it expresses most simply the meaning of the types, and how we may understand them. It is the Jesus of the New Testament that we see in the types of the Old; Jesus in the Lamb, the Altar, the Priest; Jesus in the varied glories of His Person and the varied aspects of His work. The believer who has most acquaintance with Jesus—who loves Him best—will see most beauty in the types. Love is quick-sighted: it sees beauties and perfections in its object, where a stranger's eye sees none. We look narrowly at those we love; the lineaments of the countenance, the ways, the habits, and resorts of the loved one are all observed. The deeper our appreciation is of Jesus, the closer we will study each type that speaks to us of Him. Remember they are no mere rough sketches; each detail will bear the closest inspection; and the deeper we search, the more we shall feel that the types are the work of God, and, like Him of whom they speak, unsearchable in their riches.

I have sometimes thought how real they must have been to the Lord Jesus as He read them. What feelings must have filled His holy soul as He mused on such types as the killing of the paschal lamb, and the burning of the sin-offering without the camp, knowing, as He did, that they had to be fulfilled in Himself.

The types of GENESIS are chiefly *dispensational*. Turn to chap. i. Here we have the story of the Creation:—the six days' work, beginning with the giving of light, and ending with the creation of man in the image of God. The story is most interesting; but how very much more so when we learn that it is a figure of the new creation (see 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10). It illustrates the work of God, by His Word and Spirit, in a sinner's soul, from the day that the entrance of God's Word gives light on to the perfect day, when he shall be presented in the image of the heavenly. Chap. ii. introduces Adam and Eve. Adam "is the figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14), "the last Adam" (1 Cor. xv. 45), the Head of the new creation; and Eve, the type of the Church, His Bride (Gen. ii. 21-23, with Eph. v. 30-32).

The story of Hagar, the home-bringing of Isaac's bride, and Joseph's rejection by his brethren, abound in typical truth.

EXODUS is the Book of REDEMPTION. The passover, the Red Sea, and the tabernacle with its furniture, are all types of redemption, and its results to the people of God.

LEVITICUS is the Book of the priests. It chiefly consists of types showing the way of worship and access to God, and how communion with God may be maintained, or restored when broken; and so on.

May the Risen One, who drew near to the two weary travellers on the Emmaus road, and, "beginning at Moses, expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," draw near to us, and reveal Himself, while we meditate on those very portions of His Word; so shall our hearts burn within us, and we shall go on with quickened step toward our home.

THE NATION'S HISTORY.

A word on the history of this favoured people, in whose midst the tabernacle was. Turn to Exod. i. Here we have a picture of Israel in bondage. They had no tabernacle, no glory-cloud there. Like the unconverted sinner, they were slaves; and they lived without God. Yet He loved them, and, faithful to His promise, He redeemed them.

Chap. xii. shows their redemption. It was their birthday as a redeemed people.

Next comes their separation to God. The Red Sea opened to let them out of Egypt's power, and closed behind them to keep them out of it for ever. They were brought out to be alone with God in the desert, far away from Egypt's altars and its gods; and here it was that God came down to dwell among them; here it was that the tabernacle was pitched. Let us learn a lesson from this. No believer that tarrys in Egypt need expect to apprehend the typical teaching of the tabernacle. So long as a child of God is governed by the world's maxims, and mixed up with its abominations, he can know but little of communion with God. The promise "I will dwell in them" is closely followed with the precept, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 16, 17). It is vain to sigh and cry over one's barrenness and lack of communion, and still remain in friendship with the world. If God's child can afford to forfeit the sunshine of his Father's face to gain the pleasures of the world; if he can coldly barter the friendship of his God for that of the enemies of the cross, he has no just reason

to complain of his bargain. If he know not the fellowship of the Lord's redeemed encamped around His tabernacle, let him heed the call, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and I will receive you, saith the Lord."

THE TABERNACLE LITERALLY AND TYPICALLY.

The tabernacle was the dwelling-place of JEHOVAH, God of Israel. It stood in the centre of the twelve tribes facing the east. The cloud abode above, and the glory dwelt unveiled within its inner circle. To the nations around it must have appeared a very common-looking edifice, more resembling a huge coffin than the temple of Israel's God—the palace of their King.

It consisted of three distinct circles. First, the outer court, 100 cubits long by 50 broad. It was surrounded by a hanging of fine linen, and within it stood the altar of burnt-offering and the laver. The tabernacle proper stood in the western end of this enclosure. It was divided into two apartments. The first was called the holy place. It was 20 cubits long by 10 broad; and contained the altar of incense, the table of show-bread, and the golden candlestick. A curtain hung on four pillars, called the veil, divided between the holy place and the holiest of all.

The holiest was a square apartment, 10 cubits long by 10 broad; and within it stood the ark of the covenant, with the mercy-seat and cherubims, the cloud of glory resting between them.

The twelve tribes were gathered around, each in its divinely-ordered place. The camp consisted of probably over two million souls.

When Moses was in the mount with God he was shown a pattern of the tabernacle, and he also received instructions how each part of it was to be made. Not one single pin or knob was omitted in the Divine instructions, and Moses was repeatedly told to adhere strictly to them in all their details (Exod. xxv. 40; xxvi. 30). The house was God's, and He ordered it. Moses, as a faithful servant, obeyed. It would be well for us to-day if all the servants of Christ would remember that the Lord has not been less careful about the building of His Church. He has given the most minute instructions, and the Divine pattern of how His house on earth is to be ordered (see 1 Cor. ; 1 Tim.) This abides the unrepealed, unchanging will of God for His people's obedience throughout the whole of the Church's history until the Lord comes.

The Tabernacle was God's first dwelling-place on earth. He *walked* in company with Adam in Eden. He *visited* Abraham at Mamre, but he had no dwelling-place. Here he comes down to *dwell* with His redeemed, and from then till now He has had a dwelling-place on earth. After the Tabernacle, the Temple in the land (2 Chron. vi. 3-6); and when its day was past, the Son from the Father's bosom came. God was manifest in the flesh, "the Word became flesh, and *tabernacled* among us" (John i. 14, revised version), and the glory of God was manifest in the temple of His body. Next came the mystic body of Christ, the Church—a spiritual house, an holy temple built of living stones. This is the present dwelling-place of God. No house, however gorgeous, no temple made with hands, however grand can claim the honour of being the house of God. He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but where two or three of His ransomed saints are found gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *there* He is in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20). This is His rest; here will He dwell, for He has desired it (Psa. cxxxii. 14), and by-and-by, when time, when sin and death shall be no more; when wilderness toils and tears are past, the last foe vanquished, and God shall be all in all, then shall "the tabernacle of God be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people" (Rev. xxi. 3).

TYPICALLY it pointed onward to Christ. "In His temple every whit of it uttereth His glory" (Psa. xxix. 9). Christ is all. The glories of His person and work are stamped on every part of it, from the ark of the covenant within the veil to the smallest pin and cord of its outer court. This will be seen more clearly as we look at its several parts.

It was also a figure of the wilderness condition of the Church of God—*IN* the world, but not *OF* the world.

THE FREE-WILL OFFERINGS.

The whole of the materials of which the tabernacle was built were the free-will offerings of the people of God. No stranger or alien's gold was allowed to adorn the dwelling-place of Israel's God. An unconverted sinner's gifts are not accepted by the Lord, nor ought they to be mingled with the offerings of the saints. Christendom has deeply sinned in this. The world supports the nominal Church, and wealthy worldlings are its pillars. Ill-gotten gain, extorted

from carnal men, and sanctified in the name of God, is used to build religious temples, in which the pride and vanity of man may be displayed. With such sacrifices God is *not* well pleased; they savour of the offering of Cain, and from God they have no respect. God is a bountiful *Giver*; and we who have been the recipients of the riches of His grace, may well reflect His character. The sense of God's goodness was present to His people's hearts; redemption and its results they had tasted the sweetness of. They were in the dew of their youth, and they gave, and gave their very best to God. Rulers brought their precious stones and spices; women brought their bracelets and their jewels; and they who had no wealth to give showed their love in labour. Strong men felled the shittim trees; and wise-hearted women spun. Morning after morning (Exod. xxxvi. 3) the gifts of willing hearts poured in, and in such abundance that Moses had to bid them cease. "For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and *too much*" (Exod. xxxvi. 7). Lovely grace! It reminds us of the early days of the Church of God, when mammon lost its hold, and the wealth of saints was given to God. How sad the change in the days of Malachi the prophet! The people had departed from the Lord. They had lost the sense of His goodness; and they asked, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" (Mal. i. 2). They brought the lame and diseased of their bullocks to God's altar, and kept the good ones for themselves. None would open a door or kindle a fire for God unless he were paid for his work. And when to this very people the Son of God appeared, they valued and sold Him for thirty pieces of silver.

THE WORKMEN (See Exod. xxxi. 1-6).

Bezaleel and Aholiab were called and fitted for the work. The former from the tribe of Judah—the royal tribe (Heb. vii. 14); the *first* also on the march (Numb. x. 14); and the latter from the tribe of Dan, the *last* in the camp. Thus does the Lord show us that He can find His "*chosen vessels*" *wheresoever He listeth*. He called one apostle from the feet of Gamaliel, and another from his fishing-boat on Galilee's lake, and linked them together as the apostles of the circumcision and of the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 9). And those whom He calls He fits for His service; and this is more than man can do.

"Every one whose heart stirred him up came to the work to do it" (Exod. xxxvi. 2). Willing hearts brought willing hands to work for God, and so will they yet. A willing heart—a mind to work—is the crying need of the present hour. Cold-hearted saints will always find some lame excuse for idleness; but hearts a-glow with the love of Jesus will easily find work to do for Him. God is building His heavenly tent, and now is the opportunity for His saints to show their love. Nothing really given to God, or done *for* Him with single eye, will be forgotten on a coming day.

"Deeds of merit as we thought them,
He will tell us were but sin;
Little acts we had forgotten,
He will own were done for Him."

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Chap. iii. 1.

IN the previous chapter two classes of persons are mentioned—in the 14th verse, "*the natural man*," and in the 15th verse, "*he that is spiritual*." That is one way of describing the difference between the saved and the unsaved; between the man who is not born again, and the child of God. In the 3rd chap. we have two distinctions among Christians, that is, "*spiritual*" and "*carnal*."

Notice in the first place, that the Apostle says of these Corinthian believers that they were carnal, and that because they were carnal, he could only treat them as babes. Now some have argued from this, that babes in Christ must necessarily be carnal, and therefore, that there is no difference between a babe in Christ and a carnal Christian. A babe requires to be fed upon milk, because its digestive organs could not bear anything stronger. A grown-up person may have become, through sickness, so feeble that they have to be fed on milk also; yet a sick adult is not a babe, and a babe is not a sick grown-up person. We may have to say of the sick person of thirty years, "You must just be treated as a child, and be fed on milk." That is the simile we have here. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual." Why? Because they were "*carnal*," that is, "*fleshly*"—because they were not "*spiritual*" in the sense in which the word is here used.

Turn to another passage which throws light upon this, and confirms what I have said, Hebrews v. 12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The writer of this Epistle has got the length of mentioning Melchisedec, concerning whom, as a type of Christ, he has a great many precious things to open up to them; but he suddenly breaks off, and says in the 11th verse "seeing ye are dull of hearing." That is another way of describing their condition—another description of what it is to be carnal. A carnal Christian is one who has not a quick ear to hear what God has to speak. His ear has become dull; just as one who is accustomed to be where there is much noise; he cannot hear a gentle voice. How hard it is to speak to a deaf person!

You will find that these two passages differ much from one in 1st Peter, which also refers to babes and milk (ii. 1, 2): "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, etc., as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." These words have reference to little children—to those newly converted; this is the word of exhortation to them. Thus we have before us two classes of persons who require the simplest kind of nourishment; to whom the deep things of the Scriptures are unsuitable; and therefore, what they need is the most fundamental teaching; such as, that which concerns man's ruined condition, and the provisions of God's grace in the gift of His Son.

In this passage in 1st Corinthians Paul charges them with being "carnal." The meaning of the word carnal is "fleshly;" wherever you find the word "carnal," it is the same word as "fleshly." Here it is put in contrast to "spiritual." Now, would you turn with me to a few Scriptures that speak of "flesh" and "spirit?"

The flesh is used in the Scripture in various senses. We find it used concerning mankind generally; such as, "The end of all flesh is come before me" (Gen. vi. 13). Then again we find it used in reference to men in their bodily condition: "For though we walk in

the flesh, we do not war after the flesh" (2 Cor. x. 3); and again, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Eph. iv. 12). That is to say, "We are not like the children of Israel, who, when they entered Canaan, wrestled with flesh and blood. But, in a great many passages—by far the majority of passages in the New Testament, it is a moral description, and tells of our condition as born of Adam, and as sharers of his corrupt nature. It is to this that Paul refers when he says in the Epistle to the Romans vii. 18, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Again, in the same Epistle (chap. viii. 4): "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." That is, not according to the thoughts and principles of the natural man, but according to the thoughts of the Spirit of God.

"For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh" (Rom. viii. 5). That answers to "the natural man" in 1 Cor. ii. Here it is: "They that are after the flesh (that is, the unsaved—the unregenerate), do mind the things of the flesh;" "but they that are after the Spirit (that is, those who are born again), the things of the Spirit. For the minding of the flesh is death; but the minding of the Spirit is life and peace." Some have taken from this that there is a something wrong in paying attention to the body. But this passage does not refer to the flesh physically, but to the flesh morally. It is an evil thing for a man to neglect his body. Monks may starve, and otherwise afflict themselves, thinking that thus they are mortifying the flesh; but they are only injuring their bodies corporeally, and failing to reach the corruptness of the flesh morally. The Lord Jesus says, "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face" (Matt. vi. 16, 17). Pay attention to your body, and keep it clean and comely as you ought to do. The neglecting of the body is as far from God's thoughts as pampering it. God would have us be "temperate in all things." There is a great distinction between the flesh bodily and the flesh morally, which is an evil and corrupt nature inherited from Adam.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." That is the very essence of man's mind by nature, as

inherited from Adam. How important it is that whenever one is converted, they let go all their natural thoughts, all the opinions of the carnal mind, and become as a *newly born one*. As far as I bring the old into the new I am bringing the carnal into the spiritual.

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Observe, it is not they that are in the body. It is those who have never been converted; those who are not in Christ; those who are in the old man, Adam. There is no possibility of them pleasing God, for they have not got a single good thought of God in their heart. "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually." This is said of the people before the flood, and the same is repeated after the flood. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It is unchangeably corrupt. We can only begin to please God when we are reconciled to Him. "But ye (saints) are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." That is, God does not look upon us as being any longer in connection with the old man, Adam, but as being created anew in Christ Jesus.

(To be continued.)

ON THE REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY W. LINCOLN.

JOHN viii. It is a great pity that the revisionists have put into brackets the first eleven verses of this chapter, designing to imply thereby that their authenticity and inspiration are doubtful. Admittedly these verses are absent in many of the oldest manuscripts. But the tendencies of the great majority of professors of the second and third centuries are quite sufficient to account for this omission. I have not a doubt that these verses form an integral part of God's word. The reasons for this opinion cannot be stated here. Generally, if not invariably, the discourses in John's Gospel are each introduced by a suggestive and typical narrative. Now John vii. closes a subsection of this Gospel. Throughout it, the Lord is seen as the Life. Then in chap. viii. and following, He is the Light. And in the narrative about which there is dispute, He is flashing light on the consciences of the Pharisees, whilst to a convicted sinner at His feet, when His work of writing in the dust of death is completed, He can, still as the Light, pronounce the sentence of no condemnation. Chapters

ix. and x. are properly one, and to be viewed together. They both refer primarily to the case of the poor blind beggar, restored to sight by Him, who "whenever" He is "in the world," is "the Light of the world," and hence the discourse of chapter x. is introduced by the incident of chapter ix. Once more the discourses, or rather the discourse, maintained throughout xiii. to xvi. is touchingly and appropriately preceded by the feet washing at the commencement of chap. xiii. For the Lord Jesus not only loved us up to the cross, but He loves us now in resurrection and in glory, and He loves us "unto the end." Therefore He is, as it were, girded with a towel though enthroned in majesty. And, whenever we fail, as we so frequently do, He washes our feet in the water of the word, and thus encourages us likewise to wash one another's feet, and thus to show our love mutually to each other, as He even, though there yonder, displays His love to us. How touching is all this! And how admirably apt as an introduction to xiv.-xvi. And thus, as throughout this Gospel this manner of illustrating a discourse obtains, we may be confident that from internal evidence alone, chap. viii. 1-11, are a necessary portion of the divine word.

The inadequacy of the translation of viii. 58, has already been remarked upon. The language of ix. 5, Greek, seems to me very sublime. "Whenever I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." Oh, that the Church, during His absence, had acted up to her holy and high calling!

Chap. x. 16, "One flock, one Shepherd." Here, certainly, the revised version is correct, and this emendation is an important one. In times ere He came, the sheep were truly in a "fold," ver. 1; and the enclosure was the law. But now it is one flock round one Shepherd, and the sheep at His feet. What kept the sheep together before was the walled enclosure; what attracts them to congregate now is the presence of the Great Shepherd Himself in their midst.

Again, attention has already been directed to the perfectly warranted and most valuable alteration in the revised version of chap. x. 39.

In xi. 3 with 5, there are two Greek words, each rendered by the one translation, "love." They are the same two terms, as most readers will be aware of, found in chap. xxi. Yet, as well the revised version as the authorized, here keep to one word. The Spirit of God surely had some object in using the

two. Now the verb *phileō* denotes special fondness, *agapaō*, is love in its vaster, more comprehensive sense. So when the Spirit refers to the family of Bethany here as the type of the Church, it is the great, the grand, the vaster term, that is used. The sisters in their message had alluded to His fondness for Lazarus. But the inspired writer, when grouping together the Church, as is so frequently the case in Scripture, in three classes, selects with perfect appropriateness, that word for love which embraces them, and embraces them all alike.

The change made in the language of xiii. 10 has already been noted. The revision here is a certain gain.

On xiii. 25, the manuscripts differ as to the true reading.

But in xiv. 5, there we encounter a most valuable and instructive alteration. For we do *not* know very well about the other end of the way as yet, notwithstanding the language of the authorized version. But we *do* know about the way thereto, and that even now. We have a foretaste, we have the earnest of the inheritance; but we are not yet in full possession of all the inheritance itself. Hence says the Lord, as in the revised translation, "whither I go, ye know the way." And with this suggestive emendation, which marks a limit to our present knowledge, there agree the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and other early manuscripts.

Chap. xv. Would that the word here translated "branch," "branches," had been rendered "twig." Then its solemn teaching had perhaps been oftener and better perceived. For *klados* is a branch, which is not the term that Christ uttered, but *klēma*—twig.

Chap. xvi. 13. "He shall guide you into all *the* truth." The insertion of the article by the revisionists is a help to the understanding as to what is the thought intended to be conveyed. Men are deceived and perish through their belief of a lie about God. Christ has come to manifest God, and to give us understanding. Therefore, He is the Truth objectively. And the Spirit has come to tell us the love of Christ and His glory. Therefore, He is the Truth subjectively. It is remarkable that whilst Christ and the Holy Ghost are each called the Truth, we do not, I think, find this term precisely applied to God. For the Truth is *the manifestation* of God.

Chap. xvi. 16. "A little while and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while and ye shall see Me." Here,

and throughout the passage, we have two different Greek words, each rendered "see," in the authorized version. The revised translation has indeed varied the words, but has not succeeded in conveying to the English reader much difference in the sense. Now *theōreite*, which is the term the Lord first uses, and in reference to His standing as He then did before them, denotes, calmly and deliberately to survey. But the word *opsesthe*, which he utters in the latter clause, denotes rather a view opened up to one, a revelation made, unattainable by our own power. Hence this latter word is never found in the active form in the Greek. That a distinction was intended to be drawn between the two words is evident from the fact that the inspired writer, again and again in the after verses, retains in the original the exact language of the Lord. If I might paraphrase the clauses, I would do so in some such way as: "A little while and you shall not survey Me in humbled guise as now; and again a little while, and My glory in resurrection shall dawn upon your delighted gaze."

Chap. xvi. 23, has two different Greek words rendered "ask." *Erōtaō* is "quest;" *aiteō* is "to petition." The latter word is never, so far as I remember, used of the Lord's own addressing the Father, save once in ignorance by Martha, in xi. 22. The word which He Himself uses, as in xiv. 16, is *erōtaō*, which should be translated "request." For it is remarkable that there, xiv. 13, when speaking of His disciples praying, He uses *aiteō*. "Whatsoever you shall *petition for* in My name," &c. And I will "*request*" the Father. This variation of language by the Lord Jesus when referring to His own speech with the Father in contrast with the disciples', should be reverently noted by all who love the Lord. Then further, as *erōtaō* means "quest," and therefore "request," so it likewise means sometimes, as in xvi., to *question*. So ver. 16, "and in that day you shall ask Me no questions,"—*erōtaō*. But then, "verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall petition the Father,"—*aiteō*. The Spirit of God has Himself varied the language; we can but do well carefully to heed the word.

Chap. xvii. 21. The second "one" is omitted here in the revised translation. The manuscript authority for this omission, and its doctrinal importance, I have attempted to show in my Lectures on the Revelation, in a note to pages 37, 38 of volume i.

Chap. xx. 17. "Touch me not." In the Greek, the word for touch is in the present tense. The force of the present tense is continuous action. Hence the sentiment conveyed seems to be: "persist not in clinging to me here now." Accordingly in this Gospel of John, the Lord proceeds to point Mary and His brethren to His heavenly home, and to His Father and God, as all theirs likewise. Thus the teaching is in remarkable contrast to Matt. xxviii. 9, where the women were permitted to hold Him by the feet. or Matthew's Gospel brings before us more particularly Jewish hope, and a people as if on the earth, and yet having free access to Him. But John treats rather of the heavenly calling, and the place of the Church of God.

Such seems the true point of this passage. And the attempt to prove an immediate ascension therefrom altogether fails. Further, those who argue for this earlier ascension, are yet fain to admit of His coming, bodily, into the assembly subsequently, that is, on the evening of that day. So too the very next verses clearly show this. But then, how great the confusion would this theory of an earlier ascension make of all this. For then His "second" coming is past already. Then also, we should now have to be looking for His THIRD coming, in direct opposition to the Holy Ghost's ruling in Hebrews ix. 28. Besides, if there be two real bodily ascensions, why not also two resurrections? Surely those who thus argue, had better take heed, otherwise they may drift away from fundamental truth ere they are aware thereof. For the thought of two bodily resurrections of the Lord would militate not a little, against the real, the only Scriptural one. Jesus died once, according to the Scriptures. He rose again once from the dead, on the third day. He ascended into heaven bodily, once, which ascension took place according to the Scriptures, "*after that He, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments to the apostles.*" See Acts i. 2 and 9.

So far as I can see, if there be any place in John's Gospel where the Lord earlier in spirit ascended to heaven, it is in xvii. 25. "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where *I am.*" Accordingly in that chapter He regards His work, speaking by anticipation, as already "finished." Then are we formally, officially introduced to the Father; whilst in xx., the Father is now fully revealed to us. For, ere we could hear that wondrous word of association with Himself ("my," "yours"), the Cross must be an

accomplished fact. But to *God* it could be considered, and was considered as already endured, even ere such was the case, xvii. 4. Compare also the peculiar and striking language of xiii. 1. But these cases are quite different to a real bodily ascension, which only took place forty days after the resurrection. See Acts i. This book of the Acts shows us the Church united to her risen Head by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Therefore, they who would prove two distinct ascensions from Leviticus xvi., would prove too much. For such would prove that the ascension as recorded in Luke and Acts i., was for Israel only, and that the one for the Church was the real or imaginary one, earlier in John xx. 17. But as the proverb says, "*Quod nimium probat, probat nihil,*"—"what proves too much, proves nothing." No! The high priest's twofold entrance into the holiest on the day of atonement finds its counterpart, not in two past bodily ascensions of the Lord, but in the divers objects of that one ascension. Scripture is full of double types of the one Lord, and of His completing His work once for all. "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." And the whole of this present dispensation is the period of time corresponding anti-typically to the Day of Atonement. As for the other passages, occasionally pressed into the service of the doctrine of two ascensions of the Lord, they will be found too weak for that purpose.

Chap. xxi. There are three variations of some importance, as to the words used by the Lord here. First, "Simon, do you love me, &c.?" To which question, Peter replies, "Lord, I am fond of you." But again He asks, "Do you love me?" and again the answer is given, "Lord, I am fond of you." Then the Lord says, "Simon, are you *fond* of me?" Thus the Lord allowed Himself to be overcome, as by Jacob in old time. Secondly, the Lord says, "My lambs," "My young sheep," "My sheep." This three-fold division of His people is similar to 1 John ii. Thirdly, He enjoins, "Feed" them, "tend" them, "feed" them. As if the first and last thing which sheep required is food. Of these three variations, the revised version notes two. There may reasonably exist more doubt as to the second of these. But for my own part, I have none; not to mention that the Codex Vatican and Codex Ephraim read in the sixteenth verse, "My young sheep." Internal evidence also favours this distinction.

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER V.

WE now enter not only upon a new chapter, but evidently on another section of the Book which occupies many chapters.

The opening verses are very similar to those of chapter iv., from which it would seem that Moses paused ere he told out the judgments and statutes, occupying the rest of the chapter with solemn exhortations. The Lord had not spared sinning ones at Baal-Peor, and the judgment that had fallen there might well warn them as to the awful consequences of self-will and disobedience. They were to take heed to themselves, and prophetic warnings fill up to the end.

After these parenthetic exhortations, we read again, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them" (ver. 1). Thus we have, in one sense, made no progress in knowing what the judgments and statutes are; but have, nevertheless, listened to the solemn exhortations and warnings that precede them, just as thunderings and lightnings preceded and accompanied the first delivering of them by Jehovah.

How different the ways of law and grace! Warnings and exhortations to beware precede the promulgation of the law. Grace unfolds and displays itself in the New Testament ere words of exhortation are given. For instance, when Paul pauses after writing, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. iii. 1), it is not to warn concerning the consequences of disobedience, or to tell of scattering. No! it is that he may yet more fully dwell upon the grace of God. In chap. i., God has been displayed in the "riches of His grace" in forgiven sin. In chap. ii., the exceeding riches of His grace are shown in the union of the believer with Christ; but still he has not exhausted the tale of grace. His riches are not yet displayed in their fulness, and so Paul breaks off, and postpones the exhortatory part of his Epistle, that he may explain the unsearchable riches of Christ, as seen in the making of twain one new man. Then, chap. iv. 1, he repeats the 1st verse of chap. iii., and exhortations are given, based upon the grace so fully made known. Similarly do we find it in the Epistle to the Romans. We have to tread the pathway of grace right through chapters i.-viii., and then even have to read three chapters more, showing God's unailing love and

unchanging grace to the nation, before we arrive at the "beseechings" of the Apostle concerning the ways and life of a saint brought under such "mercies" (chap. xii. 1). And in other Epistles it would be easy to note the same way of setting us down in grace ere exhorting to practice.

What designed contrasts between law and grace we find right through the Scriptures! Who can confound them? or seek to bring them together, that each may give its quota of help to a poor sinner? It is impossible. Jehovah had *promised* the land to Abram. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the *promises made*" (Gal. iii. 16). When commanded to get out from Ur of the Chaldees, the Divine promise was, "I WILL GIVE." And this is the root of all Israel's blessing. On the ground of that promise alone, Jehovah remembered His people, and raising up Moses, delivered them from Egypt's tyranny, and bore them "on eagles' wings," and brought them unto Himself (Ex. xix. 4). No law aided this, or helped in its fulfilment. It was of promise, not of law; of promise given 430 years before the law was. And promised obedience to the law on Israel's part only hindered the fulfilment of the promise; so that to this day it remains unfulfilled, and Israel is still outside the land, into which they will yet be brought, and given to inherit all that was promised to Abram, not on the ground of obedience, but of God's unchanging promise and by His Almighty power. His promises will be all fulfilled, for they are "Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus." Theirs never were or could be, for like all the promises or vows of men, they were made in the pride of self-will, and in entire ignorance of themselves. So it was in the day when first they said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. xix. 8). They then assumed a power they had not, and only too clearly proved that the evil of their own hearts was as yet undiscovered.

It was after this voluntary vow that the law with its judgments and statutes was announced. With what end on the part of Jehovah? With any thought that they could keep it? Assuredly not. That by it He might reveal Himself? Let the reader ask himself, has he learned what God is, through the medium of the law? It could not be! The law is not a revelation of God's affection or grace, but of His righteous claims upon the sinner. "Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). Once man had spoken as if ability was in him to obey,

then the law was added, and at once man's heart was shown out. Instead of the law drawing out any gracious feeling, it only proved man was destitute of such. All that was bad, and therefore natural to the heart of man, was stirred up by the "Thou shalt not," as it thundered from Sinai. Although man fell back to a distance—for he "could not endure that which was commanded" (Heb. xii. 20), and besought Moses to receive the words, and then communicate to them—it was not the distance of conviction, in which utter inability to do or say was owned, but it was a distance that corresponded to the distance at which their heart was from the living God. "Thou shalt not," stirred all the evil that was within, and soon greater enormities were perpetrated by that people than ever had been before. Thus by the commandment sin became exceeding sinful (Rom. vii. 13), working death by that which was good. God's requirements were held up, and man at once fell into the place of helpless, hopeless condemnation, as far as he was concerned, for there was no strength in the flesh. "The commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. vii. 9); and equally so, as far as the law was concerned, for it could only exact—never giving, and never helping. Let this be clearly held, for it is of the utmost import. Law demands its due, but never gives or increases power—never bestows life. It only tests, and man everywhere must inevitably break down under it. What folly in Israel thus putting themselves under obedience—pledging and vowing, as if it were an easy matter to obey. And is it not so still? What is a temperance pledge, as taken by a helpless sinner, but the same in principle? Let us by all means decry drunkenness in every possible way; but let us, as Christians under grace, see the folly and sin of all vows and pledges which the evil heart of man may prompt him to make.


But one to whom this may be new may ask, "Is the law abrogated then? Is it dead, or has it passed away?" Now this is an important question, because many, doubtless, have spoken as if it were so; but Scripture is very clear on the point. The law abides; it is holy, just, and good; it has not died; but the one who was under it, believing in Christ, has died. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10), can never be set aside. Given, a sinner who has failed here—and is there one who has not?—then the law must

curse and condemn. No forgiveness emanates from law. Grace cannot proceed from it. In stern justice it acts. Then the sinner must die. "The law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them!" (Gal. iii. 12). Mark it! it does not say shall obtain eternal life. Eternal life never was or could have been connected with law keeping. "Shall live in them," as long, that is, as Adam kept the one commandment given to him (Gen. ii. 17), he lived in it. In the moment he transgressed, he died out of that circle of blessing resulting from obedience, and came under the penalty. Therefore, it needed that Christ should redeem from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13). Draw near and gaze upon Him as He hangs on Calvary's tree, and there, as nowhere else, you can see God's heart in all the fulness of His love. There you learn that He is "Light," and "Love." Before, at Sinai, you saw what tested man and manifested sin.

Then, because Christ died, Paul could say, "I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 19, 20). Thus, it is not the law that died; it abides, but Christ died under its penalties, penalties due to the sinner, and it is Paul in Christ who has died, and every believing one too, is dead to the law in Him.

R. T. H.

MY CUP IS RUNNING OVER.

 H! wondrous grace, what heights I see,
What endless depths discover;
Whene'er my heart with David says,
"My cup is running over!"

What meant Paul's sudden midnight song?
Can I its tones recover?
Methinks the pris'ners heard him say,
"My cup is running over."

Then how my Saviour's praise and ways
Shall I in silence cover?
Ah, no! my lips aloud shall tell,
"My cup is running over."

His daily mercies like the dew,
Or angels, o'er me hover,
And soon in glory I shall sing,
"My cup is running over."

M. W.

The above simple lines have a peculiar interest; the writer of them, Mr. MACLEOD WYLIE, so much beloved and esteemed, having, since writing them, departed to be with Christ.

THE TRUE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES.

MARK the care of the heavenly husbandman: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." One who was labouring in the spirit of a slave would rather be impatient for the time to arrive when he should have finished his task and be relieved from farther fruit-bearing. But to one who is a branch of the true vine, the highest proof of God's favour, and the most blessed result of His care, must be that He may "bring forth more fruit." As to the method of the husbandman, "He purgeth it." There is a prevailing misapprehension which makes "purgeth" equivalent to "pruneth," and then understands it as affliction, chastisement, and painful discipline. Chastisement is not what we would expect as the consequence of faithfulness and fertility; and the word does not mean prune, but cleanse. We would not overlook the providential means which God graciously employs in the training of His people. But the great means of their sanctification and their preparation to bring forth fruit, is the word of truth, as is shown in the following verse: "Now ye are clean (purged) by the word which I have spoken unto you." They were now placed in the vine and prepared to bear fruit; and what remained was the continuation of that which was begun, in order to a still increasing fertility. Cleansing in such a connection must refer to the removal of all that would obstruct the flow of the life and fatness of the vine through the branch. The very fact of bearing fruit would promote its increased capacity; and we have in this an application of that great law of spiritual life, "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly."

Not unconnected with this view of their purification by the word as the means of their still increasing fertility, is the charge, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." This, then, is what makes the grand distinction between the fruit-bearing and the barren branches—abiding or not abiding in Him. This abiding in Him cannot refer to the essential oneness of believers with Christ; for that cannot be dissolved, and could not properly be the subject of an admonition or a warning; especially as Christ abiding in the believer is included in the charge. It can only be the subject of an admoni-

tion to us, as it implies the conscious occupation of the heart with Christ—a conscious and actual faith in Him which, so to speak, maintains the dependence of the branch upon the vine, and the circulation of the life and fatness of the vine in the branch. Accordingly, using another figure, the Lord says: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth (abideth) in Me, and I in him," which is but another expression for the continuous acting of faith in a crucified and risen Saviour, deriving life and the sustenance of life from Him. As believing in Him first of all is described as "coming" to Him, ("he that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst,") so the continued acting of faith is described as "abiding" in Him. We have another expression of the same thing in 1 John ii. 24: "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain (abide) in you, ye also shall continue (abide) in the Son, and in the Father." Abiding in Him is living communion with that which gave us salvation.

No figure could more forcibly express the complete dependence of the believer on Christ for all fruit-bearing than this: "A branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." In itself it has absolutely no resources, though in union with the vine it is pervaded with life. This is precisely the believer's condition: "Christ liveth in me." The branch bears the clusters, but it does not produce them. It bears what the vine produces; and so the result is expressed by the Apostle, "to me to live is Christ;" or again, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It is important that, in this respect, as well as with reference to righteousness before God, we should be brought to the end of self, with all its vain striving and efforts. And then there comes to us the assurance of unfailing resources in another.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." We have already anticipated much that might be said in exposition of this view of the relation of believers in Christ. But the special reason for introducing this formal statement of what is necessarily implied in the preceding verses seems to be, to meet the feeling of discouragement and despondency which might arise from a view of the futility of all our past resolutions and attempts, as well as from a review of the failure

of humanity in all the past history of the race. It is a feeling which lies in the way of all awakened souls in looking from the failure in which the past has resulted, out into the future in which they are called to glorify God. "Who is sufficient for these things?" This is met by the announcement, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." It is no longer a question of your sufficiency. Let your insufficiency be admitted as settled, once for all. You in yourself are no better than a branch severed from the vine—a dry, dead branch. But now the question is of my sufficiency. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The two-fold condition of this fertility must be noticed. It is not that the believer finds in Christ a place of rest and support, where he may go on to elaborate and mature his own fruit. This seems to be a too common mistake among those who make great use of the terms, "abiding in Christ;" and then we have only a repetition of self-complacent, self-glorifying experiences, which shows a soul occupied with anything rather than Christ. But in this true abiding in Christ there is added, "I in him"—Christ, the pervading life and vigour, as the branch in the natural vine is but a conduit through which flow the fruit-producing juices which have been elaborated in the vine, until that branch is honoured and adorned by the rich cluster which it bears, but could never produce.

This is an important practical matter—to know that "Christ is all and in all"—not only as to our standing before God and our ultimate perfection, but as to our present life to the glory of the Father. Men are to the very last prone to introduce something of their own, and to regard Him only as a helper; and so they would understand the words, "for without Me ye can do nothing," as though they should be read, "without some help from Me." But the Lord is still keeping the figure of a vine and its branches in view, and says, as it is given in the margin, "*Severed from Me, ye can do nothing.*" If we remember what is the meaning, the inspired definition, of "abiding in Him," then we may be satisfied that there is no more effectual way of becoming severed from Him—ceasing to abide in Him—than becoming occupied with ourselves, our fruit-bearing, or our fruit. Faith is nothing apart from its object, and is no longer in operation when it becomes occupied with itself. Love, too, is in exercise only as it is occupied with its object; and even in the relations

of common life, in no way would its sincerity be brought more into suspicion than if a person—say a husband or a child—should be constantly dwelling on the greatness of his love, and had scarcely a word to say of the object of such high professions. But when we go beyond all created relations, and love finds an object in Him who first loved us, scarcely anything could betray such ignorance of His perfections and such insensibility to the great love wherewith He hath loved us, as when a man begins to tell of the greatness of his love and the completeness of his consecration. Not that the case is improved by a habit of severe and ostentatious denial of any becoming response to the love of God; for that, too, may only be another form of morbid occupation with self. Still, there are times of self-judgment before the Lord; and no doubt, whenever the measure of our love is questioned, it can never be anything but an occasion of deep humiliation before Him, if indeed we know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

There is a disastrous delusion in this matter when, under the plea of witnessing for Christ and relating their experience, men are tempted to parade their own attainments, their love, joy, and peace, their zeal in service, their victory in conflict. And Satan has no more effectual method of severing the soul from Christ, and arresting the bringing forth of fruit to the glory of God, than when he can persuade Christians to feast on their fruit, instead of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. His first method generally is to occupy them with their sins instead of Christ; and when, through grace, they have been delivered from that snare, his next method is to occupy them with their graces and attainments, their services and victories. Of the two, the latter is by far the more subtle and dangerous. But it is demanded, Shall we not bear witness for Christ? Yes, verily; but let your testimony be of Him, not yourself. It is very well expressed by the exhortation of an aged minister to a company of Christians: "You need not tell us how you feel: tell us of Christ, and we shall all know how you feel." The great thing is, "Abide in Me, and I in you;" be occupied, not with the sins you would escape, the world you would conquer, the graces you would cultivate, the services you have rendered, the fruit you have borne, but with Christ. Walk in communion with Him, rest simply in Him, and find your all there; and you have His own word for it, "the same bringeth

forth much fruit." You may take His word for it without striving to accomplish it in the energy of the flesh, or pausing to watch self-complacently the production of the fruit.

The subject opens up beyond all present opportunity of discussion, and it must be left only superficially considered, with a remark upon the solemn warning, "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This man who "abides not in Me" is just the "branch in Me that beareth not fruit;" and we will not repeat here the reasons for concluding that the warning is addressed to believers. It could not be said of a man who had never come to Christ that he does not abide in Him. The reader will bear in mind that the allegory has reference to our relations in this world, and our bringing forth fruit here to the glory of God. If so, the casting out and taking away cannot be carried beyond the present time. This is made more apparent by the limitation in the passage itself; for, as if to guard against the supposition that the essential union of the believer with Christ could be dissolved, the Lord most expressly limits it: "He is cast forth *as a branch.*" So far as the relation which is illustrated by the vine and the branch is concerned, *that* is sundered by the divine Husbandman, whether it be that temporal death removes him, as in the case of those who "sin unto death," or whether it be that he is visibly cast aside as a withered branch, stripped of the gifts and the opportunities which he failed to improve, though left, it may be, for a time, as a sad warning to those to whom he might have been an example.

The strongest objection to this view will arise from the language in which, as we believe, the Lord designs to express the utter disqualification for fruit-bearing of one who is thus cast aside. "Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This language too readily connects itself in our minds with intimations of the future doom of the ungodly. Yet it will be observed that it is all spoken in the present tense, and in such a connection as describes what is done every day with the rejected and withered branches from earthly vineyards; it tells us very emphatically how completely a branch of the true vine may be cut off from all the great uses of a God-glorifying life here. It will thus more properly connect itself with such solemn warnings to disciples as, "Ye

are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot."

It ill becomes us to deal round among our fellows the judgments of God, and mark out those who have incurred them. Yet we may have seen those who, from places and opportunities of signal service, have been cast aside as withered branches, such as men gather for fuel, no longer capable of fruit-bearing. We may have seen salt that has lost its savour, and cannot be salted. At all events, we are met by the solemn warning of what may be, even though it may be said of him who fails to abide in Christ, as it is said of him whose work is burned up, "yet he himself shall be saved." Brethren, even if your salvation is not in question, you cannot be indifferent to the assurance, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And now, being instructed as to the only way in which you can bear fruit, we conclude in the loving words of the beloved John, "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

From this solemn warning we turn to the encouraging assurance, "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The words, "branch in Me," though clearly understood, are not expressed in the Greek; and this form, "every one"—that is, of the class of persons mentioned in the previous clause—strengthens the conclusion that, if believers are intended in the one case, they are in the other also. This might be as suitable a place as any other to inquire, What is the fruit which these branches bear? if any lengthened inquiry were necessary. Attention is too commonly directed to outward services and activities, or to the results of these activities, as the fruit here intended. And in this there is a two-fold evil. For, first, it is a source of self-deception to those who may do many things in the mere energy and will of the flesh; and such works, instead of being fruit borne by the branches, are the dead works referred to in the introduction, which are attached artificially to corrupt trees, whose natural fruit is only evil. And second, it is a source of discouragement to the children of God who, by old age, infirmity, or unfavourable circumstances, cannot engage in such activities, and who are taught to believe that they are

therefore barren and useless. We may say, in brief, that the fruit borne by the branches is precisely that which is produced by the vine; and what *that* is, may be best understood by looking at what He was as God's witness in the world. The fruit is Christ-like affections, dispositions, and graces, as well as the works in which they were displayed. We cannot undervalue

the work of faith and labour of love; but we would remember also that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and those who are prevented from engaging in the activities of Christian service, may often be in circumstances most favourable to the production of the fruit of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION NO. LXXXI.

Who is the hinderer mentioned in 2 Thess. ii. 7?

REPLY.

Many conjectures have been formed as to who shall be the Man of Sin or the Antichrist. Some say the Pope. Some said it was Napoleon III. When he died their theory fell to the ground, but only till restless wandering minds, ever seeking for something new and startling in the region of theology wherewith to tickle the ears and gratify the curiosity of the carnal, should fix upon another hero for their religious romance!

The teaching of this Scripture is most explicit. The "Man of Sin" cannot be revealed until a certain hinderer (with-holder or restrainer) be "out of the midst" (literally). The hinderer being away, then shall the "lawless one" be manifested in his own season.

This hinderer is spoken of in ver. 6 in the neuter gender, "Ye know WHAT withholdeth;" and in ver. 7 in the masculine, "HE who now letteth," &c. This applies to no other person than the Holy Spirit of God. He only is referred to in Scripture in these two ways. (See Rom. viii. 26; 1 John ii. 27; and compare John xvi. 13, &c.)

His present work in the earth is to take out from among both Jews and Gentiles a people for His name, and to baptize these into one body, uniting them not only as members one to the other, but all together as one body to the one Head in heaven. As the servant of Abraham was sent to select, and to win, and to

bring to Isaac, his only begotten and well-beloved son, a bride—so has the Holy Spirit been sent down from the Father to accomplish a mission of which that was but the shadow: even to gather and fit and bring to God a people who shall form the bride of His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Till this is accomplished the presence on earth of the Holy Spirit in the Church hinders the development of lawlessness.

The mystery of iniquity (or lawlessness) which shall yet culminate in the WICKED ONE (or the Lawless One) doth already work. The enlightened understanding can perceive the principles of lawlessness at work both in the political and the ecclesiastical spheres, which must yet ripen into apostasy, and form the element out of which the lawless one shall be developed.

But until the last member of that elect body, which shall form the bride of the Son of God, be gathered—the hinderer is here, the season for Antichrist's manifestation has not arrived, and conjectures as to who he may be are only devices of Satan to bring discredit upon prophetic truth.

But let the Church which is His body, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, be completed and caught up from earth to meet the Lord in the air—then shall the hinderer be out of the midst—then shall the "strong delusion" set in, which shall sweep away on its irresistible current the gospel rejectors of Apostate Christendom—then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming."

QUESTION NO. LXXXII.

Ought a believer to be in fellowship who is very deep in debt to the ungodly, and who has little or no prospect of paying it, yet seems careless about it?

REPLY.

There are many who contracted debt before they were converted to God, and when their conscience did not trouble them about it. It is a good evidence of true conversion when one so situated endeavours to pay up what is owing.

The effort to earn and to save money in a righteous way, in order to free oneself from debt, is evidence that the covetousness which would wrong another to benefit self is not in the heart.

But to be indifferent about debt, and to make no effort to render unto all their due, is a sure evidence of a covetous heart. Scripture is quite clear as to what should be done with such. (1 Cor. v. 11.)

QUESTION NO. LXXXIII.

Should a child of God who knowingly marries an unconverted person be put out of fellowship until the sin is confessed?

ALSO

Should a child of God who marries one who is a professor, but whom the Church has no confidence in, be put out of fellowship?

REPLY.

The first question includes the second. We think that a child of God who would, after conversion, become engaged to an unbeliever in the face of such Scriptures as 1 Cor. vii. 39; 2 Cor. vi. 14-16, must already for some time have been following the Lord "afar off." In a case like that supposed, such Scriptures as 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15; 1 Tim. v. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2, may guide; but we do not find authority in the Word for putting out of fellowship for such a cause only. We do well to remember that the place for discipline is in the Church, and that it should aim at restoration to fellowship in heart with the Lord and His people; not the getting rid of a troublesome or sickly member of the body of Christ.

The faithful carrying out of the above Scriptures would in all probability soon result either in restoration of soul to the Lord, or in the "going out" entirely of the sinning one from the fellowship of the assembly.

GATHERED FRAGMENTS FROM KIRKWALL MARKET-MEETINGS.

16th and 17th August, 1881.

SOME preachers say, "I am only an evangelist; I preach the Gospel, and nothing more." But is this God's will? See 1 Tim. ii. 4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and"—not only that, but—"to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

"You have no elders," said a clergyman lately to a brother. The reply was, "The elders among us are for the children of God, and not for the parish; consequently, it is not found necessary to label them. But if you look among us for men who answer to the description in the 3rd chapter of 1st Timothy, I trust you'd be able to find them."

Ardent young Christians, with a desire to work for God, have gone to college in order to "enter the ministry," not knowing that they were in it already.

1 Cor. iii. 4—When Christians begin to choose and dote on one of the Lord's gifted servants, to the exclusion of another, the principle is introduced which, when fully ripened, results in a congregation coming together and electing the "minister" who alone shall preach to them. When you are picking and choosing you are in a fair way to land in a sect, for already the sect has landed in you.

If I had a one pound-note, a shilling, and a penny, how foolish I'd be to throw away the penny because it could not buy a shilling's-worth; to throw away the shilling because I'd got a pound; and to say, "I am of the one pound-note." What, then, is it to reject the Lord's servant who can only speak in a little cottage-meeting, because we've got a man who can address a thousand people in a large hall?

The man who says "I am of Paul," says in effect, "The Lord has bestowed three gifts, but one is enough for me." On the other hand, saying "I am of Christ" means "I'VE GOT CHRIST, and whatever number of gifts there may be, I can do without them." Both are carnal.

A brother, with whom we were walking along the seashore yesterday, kicked a limpet off the rock. He

had to be quick about it to succeed; for if it had known that his foot was coming, he might have broken the shell, but he would not have displaced the limpet. Thus it is that Satan comes sometimes with something which we never heard about before, and which has a great appearance of spirituality; and if we are not watchful he shifts us off the written Word.

If it be possible to be scriptural; and yet not spiritual; it is clearly impossible to be spiritual, and yet unscriptural.

To speak broadly, there are three circles of fellowship—that of Life; that of Light; and that of Labour.

There is no Scripture for admitting to the Lord's table. That there has been a time when we did not see this, is no reason why we should not own it when we do see it.

If a single brother were to "put away" from the assembly, who would tolerate it? Or again, what single brother would dare to "restore" to his place in the assembly a person who had been "put away?" How, then, can it be right for a single brother, on his own responsibility, to bring any one to the Lord's table? In other words, to "receive," when he could not either "put away" nor "restore?"

"So-and-so is a very godly man. He spends four hours a-day on his knees in prayer." Then its a pity he let you know that he did so. A pity first, because it raises the question, how much of that praying was simply intended for the eye and ear of our Father, who seeth in secret. Again a pity, because you who work for your living have not four hours a-day to spend on your knees; and the knowledge of how so-and-so spends his hours may help to make you forget that you can be praying *twelve hours a-day* without being on your knees. A. P. M.

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A WORD TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

By JOHN RITCHIE.*

THIS gathering is one of many proofs that the Lord is awakening His people to see the importance of seeking the salvation of the young. A remarkable feature of the work of God during the last few years, is the large number of young persons who have been converted. Wherever you find the people of God assembled, one is struck with the large number of youthful, happy faces that present themselves. The assemblies of the saints are largely composed of such, and that mighty band who go forth to proclaim the message of God to a dark and guilty world is greatly enhanced by the number of earnest and devoted youthful workers. Large numbers of these have been brought to Christ, and equipped for His service through the efforts of the people of God in the Sunday School. Some of them, doubtless, are the children of Christian parents, who have had the unspeakable privilege of a godly training, and who have been Timothy-like instructed in the Scriptures from their earliest days; but many others have been dug from the lowest dens of ignorance and vice, and through the blessing of God on the patient faithful work of the Sunday School teacher, have been led to Jesus.

Thankful as one is for all this, it must be admitted that the salvation of the young has not been sought after and laboured for, with half the energy that the importance of the work demands. Effort of a kind there has been and still is, but a real downright longing and labouring for the conversion of the young, with the expectation of seeing it, is sadly a-lacking.

Some are *fatalists* on the subject: nothing need be expected therefore from them. They seem to think that a child is of so very little importance, and its soul of so little value, that it is unworthy of much attention; or that, because of its youth, it is unable to understand anything about so grave a subject as the love of Jesus and the salvation of the soul. Quite competent to battle with letters and figures, moods and tenses, to work out sums, solve problems, study languages, and to seek after knowledge and attainment for the life that now is; but utterly incapable of understanding or appreciating anything of the simplest and sweetest of all knowledge—the knowledge of Jesus, and the glories that surround His name! But we do not for one moment believe such miserable sophistry and carnal reasoning: we have a thousand proofs around us, moreover, that it is utterly untrue. It has been perfectly delightful to some of us to have the pleasure of speaking again and again to a class of these little ones. To see before us a row of chubby little faces, the sparkling bright eyes peering into ours, and all giving the deepest attention as we sought to tell them the grand old story of the cross of Christ. We can assure our friends that we have found less difficulty in securing and keeping their attention than with older people; and we have found again and again that our words were carried home, and re-iterated to their parents without a blunder; and better still, that many of the dear little ones have been truly converted to God, and are now walking in His ways, and adorning His doctrine. So, notwithstanding all the hindrances to, and difficulties in the work, here we are to-night to raise our *Ebenezer* to our faithful God, to encourage

* Being notes of an address given at a conference of teachers.

our own and each other's hearts in Him, and to strengthen one another's hands in the work of God in—

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

It has sometimes been asked, "Where have you any Scriptural command to have a Sunday School? We answer, in the same chapter and verse that we have for a gospel meeting. Mark xvi. 15, is conclusive as to both. And this defines, in a word, the prime object of the Sunday School. It is a place where we preach the gospel to the young, seeking their salvation. Of course it is not the only place or time when we do so, but this is its distinctive character. We ought to labour there, with this definite object before us—to see the children brought to Christ—and pray in faith expecting it

This has been greatly lost sight of. In many cases the Sunday School is looked upon as nothing more than a place of religious instruction, where the young are to be made ready to fill a place in the Church, as the day school instruction fits them to fill a place in the world. But this is far short of the mark; in fact where this is the only object in view, it will be a positive evil instead of a blessing; because the children will be made to believe that a religious education is all that is necessary in order to a place in God's family and His Church, whereas we see clearly from His Word that a child needs to be "born of God" before it can be in any such place. Children are sinners, and need a Saviour; they are *lost*, and need Christ. To see them saved ought therefore to be our object, and to show them their *ruin* and tell them of God's *remedy* our work. Persuaded that youth is the best and easiest time for them to receive Jesus, let us plead *with them* to receive Him as their personal Saviour, and plead *for* them before the throne of God, and that His power may rest on the word we speak. As fellow-labourers in this blessed work, we have met to-night with a sincere desire to help one another. A few practical hints and suggestions may assist some of our younger fellow-labourers. In order to condense them, I will divide them into three parts.

1. THE TEACHER. 2. THE SCHOLAR. 3. THE SCHOOL; or if you like, the worker—the work—and how the work may best be done.

1. THE TEACHER.

Much depends on him. If he be wrong, all will be wrong. The Sunday School teacher must be a

converted person—he must be "born of God." This is the first thing—one absolutely essential—and I think on this we are all agreed. We set our faces like a flint against the malpractice of admitting unregenerate religious young men and women into the ranks of our teachers. We could lend no countenance to the absurdity of a child of the devil attempting to point the way to Christ. This is quite common alas! in some Sunday Schools. We hold most firmly that a Sunday School teacher must be a Christian; and, moreover, a decided one, whose life and ways bear testimony that it is a reality. A worldly, carnal, light-headed professor ought not to be admitted as a teacher. Children are keen observers, and capital copyists; and they imitate what they see in their teachers. Parents will soon remove their children from a school where they find some giddy proud young man or woman set over them as a teacher, and they are right in doing so. How could they respect such a person? His influence would be most damaging to the young. But there are other qualifications needed. One may be a true and decided Christian, and yet have no real ability or heart for the work. It is a terrible mistake to suppose that any one or every one will do for a Sunday School teacher. Some who have tried it have found the opposite. One essential qualification, therefore, is A HEART FOR THE WORK. This is a very necessary thing. It is the back bone of a Sunday School teacher. We would strongly advise our friends who feel the lack of this not to attempt work among the young. It would be mere drudgery to you; and very likely you would soon lose your class and break down. It requires one who loves the children, and whose heart is really set upon the work, to bear all the rebuffs and discouragements, that a Sunday School teacher has to meet with. If any of you has been forced into the work by others, or if you have taken it up of yourselves as a sort of pastime, with no very definite object in view, I pity you, for I am sure you are unhappy in it. I would advise you to quit it, and make room for another, at your earliest convenience. It will be good for yourself, good for the children, and good for all concerned if you do so speedily.

Devotedness.—If you have got this work from God stick to it. Do not run hither and thither trying to do a great many things, else you'll very likely do none of them well. Make the work that God has given you your business, and do not leave it until He gives you

other work to do. A class of half-a-dozen children may seem a very small and unimportant affair, but if you have got that work from God you will not deem it so, nor will you be found neglecting it. It is truly lamentable to see the way some would-be teachers go about their work. At their class one Sunday, off somewhere the next; the children are left as sheep without a shepherd, then packed into a stranger's class who knows nothing about them, while teacher is away hearing Mr. ——— preach—or more likely “away at the coast,” or “on a holiday.” No wonder the children lose interest, cease coming, and so on. To be a successful Sunday School teacher we must give ourselves to the work, and stick to it.

Knowledge of God's Word.—It is necessary to be well acquainted with Scripture—able to quote it correctly, and speak of it to the children. Children are keen critics, and very soon see when a teacher is deficient in his information, and take their laugh at it. If he blunders, they will speedily detect it; if he comes up asking, “Where is the lesson to-day?” not having read it over perhaps, he need not wonder if his children leave him. The Scripture for the day ought to be prayed over, and meditated upon before he comes there at all.

Adaptation.—This is an important point. The bread of life must be broken small, and put into the children's mouths. Speak in the simplest way possible. Use parables, types, illustrations, anecdotes, in short, anything and everything that will help them to understand what we wish to convey to them. If a preacher who talks in a hum-drum way, cannot keep the attention of grown-up people, I am quite sure a Sunday School teacher will not. The children will sleep, fight, and play all sorts of tricks. I well remember a few of us playing at marbles in the Sunday School, while our teacher was discoursing from his “notes” in a most elaborate way. Across the passage, another teacher had his children gathered around him like bees on a flower, while he told them the same truth, but in a way adapted to them. Like Elisha when he went to raise the Shunamite's child, we must put our hands on their hands, our mouths on their mouths—in short, bring ourselves down to them, and be children again ourselves, if we would reach them.

Variety.—It is not necessary to be always speaking to them on John iii. or Rom. iii.; we can tell them

the same truth in various aspects. Types, such as the Brazen Serpent and the Passover; histories of “the Little Captive Maid,” “Samuel,” “the Raising of Jairus' Daughter,” will “tell the story,” and keep them interested too.

Punctuality.—Make a point of being there always in good time—there to welcome the children. It will help them to be punctual if you are. Some teachers forget this, come in late, and find a disorderly class, which has disturbed the whole school. *Be punctual*—a little decision will do it.

2. THE SUNDAY SCHOLAR.

He may either be a gutter Arab, or a well-trained child of Christian parents, or somewhere between the two. If the former, we should be all the more thankful; his case being the most needy, it has the first claim upon us. It is delightful to see a teacher coming in with a row of these neglected creatures behind her; perhaps she has had to fish them up out of the lowest hovels of the city; but there they are, and through the mercy of God many of them have been saved, and live to prove it. Others who may be in a better position *socially*, are equally destitute *spiritually*. Parents unconverted, they can only lead them on to hell; if *religiously* unconverted, they will make them hypocrites. How great the privilege then to get them under our care to hear the gospel! How often through the children have the parents been reached, and led to Christ! O then, dear fellow-workers, what a high privilege, what a deep responsibility is ours! Before you sits a row of children, week after week, hearing the words of life. Their hearts are yet tender, their ears are open to the truth. The world with its ambition, its follies, and its false religion, has not yet put its iron fetters around them. They may *now* be saved. Yes! Jesus says they may be saved. To you has been given the honour of bearing them the message. To you the Son of God has given the work of winning these youthful hearts for Him, as Abraham's servant won Rebekah's heart for Isaac. If they pass from your care unsaved, and go forth into the cold unfeeling world without Christ, there is but a small probability of their ever being saved at all. *Lay hold, then, of the present golden opportunity, and use it for God; it will soon be gone, never to return. Speak lovingly, faithfully, earnestly;*

speak of the realities of heaven and hell, of death and the judgment; besiege the conscience, and attract the youthful heart. Remember the word you speak is *God's*, and in His Spirit's hand capable of there and then converting the soul. Have faith in God; honour His Word. You shall see the results now, or at God's right hand.

Work patiently.—Do not throw up your work, or run from it, although your children are not all converted the first Sunday. "Ye have need of patience." Go on with God; the results will follow. Do not get down-hearted if the children seem careless, or even rebellious; the worst sinners are often the brightest saints. Look up, and labour on. Kind words do more than blows or threats; "kill the unruly ones with kindness." I remember a teacher who had a class of regular roughs: he tried hard to keep them quiet, but failed. As a last resource he invited them—I think two and two—to his house to tea, and to spend the evening. After that, a better and quieter class was not in the school. We must let children feel that we are interested in them. Christians walk far too much on stilts to do people, young or old, much good. Never pass your scholars on the street without recognising them; visit them at their homes if you can; and if absent on Sunday, look them up early in the week. You are a sort of parent, evangelist, pastor, and teacher to them. Encourage them by little gifts at a time. Don't be afraid to spend a shilling on them. I would say a word about LITERATURE. All sorts of stuff are sold for children, some of them most mischievous. Religious novels, and magazines, unsound in doctrine, are scattered broadcast, and once read, not soon forgotten by the young. Be careful what you circulate. Read it over before you give it. There are good sound Gospel Books and Magazines to be had, if people would take the trouble to seek them out.

Hymns.—It is amazing to hear the trashy hymns children are asked to sing. If it be wrong to teach bad doctrine, it is equally wrong to put a hymn book into a child's hand containing it, or to ask him to sing it. Hymns telling them to pray for salvation, to be good and go to heaven, and all sorts of nonsense, are used. Books containing such hymns ought to be carted out of our Sunday Schools. It is not enough that we do not sing them; there they are in the book, and within reach of the children to read them if they like.

3. THE SCHOOL.

No definite rule can be laid down as to how it may be ordered, still, *rule* and *order* are absolutely necessary for its welfare. Nothing is more unseemly than a disorderly Sunday School. There ought, we judge, to be a superintendent: that is, one who is a sort of overseer of the whole school. Not a despot, but a servant of servants—one in whom the teachers have confidence, and to whom they could refer in any difficulty. He should be a man of understanding, of some experience in the work, who can arrange classes, enforce punctuality, and many other things that need to be done. If superintendent and teachers could meet for prayer and conference at stated times, it would be well. An opportunity is thus afforded of encouraging one another, by telling what the Lord is doing; and of doing any business connected with the school; admitting new teachers, &c.

Classes should not be too large, nor unduly arranged in age or sex. Boys together—girls together—little ones in one class—elder ones in another. A most useful and fruitful class is often one for young converts—often a nursery for the assembly, and out of which new teachers are found. Some think it wrong to give prizes, but they can find no fault with *gifts* surely; children must be encouraged. They get prizes, tea parties, treats, &c., in the *world*, and we too ought to try and make the Sunday School attractive to them.

GOD BLESS THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, and make every teacher in it a *soul winner*. One short hour of labour, and our work shall be done;—the last soul won, the last sheaf gathered;—then "they that be wise (*margin, teachers*) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel xii. 3).

J. R.

THOUGHTS ON DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER V.

AND it is in this aspect of death to the law that Paul enlarges upon the deliverance that was his in Christ.

In the illustration, the woman that never could obey her husband is loosed from him, and, therefore, from all obedience to him, by his death; but when the Apostle applies this, he writes, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to

another" (Rom. vii. 4); and again, "But now we are delivered from the law (being dead to that, *margin*) wherein we were held" (ver. 6). Some have, however, been puzzled on this subject by Paul's words to the Corinthians being quoted to them as showing that he was under the law still; such persons very likely maintaining from them that, whilst Paul was not under the curse, still he was under the law as bound to listen to and obey it; or, as they might express it, "as his rule of life." "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, *as under the law.*" Now it is well to know that "not being myself under the law" should be inserted before reading to the close of the verse (see the Revised Version and other translations). Thus, when Paul was explaining how he sought to reach all by wise action toward them as they occupied one position or another, the Holy Ghost specially by this clause guards against the thought that Paul or any other Christian is in any sense whatever under the law.

Great distinctions are made by some as to one kind of law and another to help this teaching. "Moral law" and "ceremonial law" are expressions constantly heard, but we never read in the Scriptures such terms, and fail to find any such divisions made; on the contrary, we find the law given as one whole. All bound up together, even though the ten commandments were written separately on tables of stone. But to apply "moral law" to them as a whole is a misnomer, for in no possible way can the command as to the Sabbath be made a "moral" one. But this distinction is made in order that it may be shown that, whilst Christians are not in any sense under the curse of the law—Christ having borne that—yet that it remains as their rule of life. This assumes that it was the rule of life to Israel, but it would be exceedingly difficult to prove it. Apart from the ten commandments, they had many laws, the breaking of which was trespass, and save as they were forgiven, must have involved eternal judgment. This would apply to all the laws concerning the sacrifices and the Tabernacle; and if trespass could be committed, necessitating forgiveness, then it is clearly seen that all such laws formed a part of the "rule of life" which had been given to them. The breach of the law in touching the ark (2 Sam. vi.) was as worthy of death as the breach of the Sabbath (Num. xv. 35), or of any other of the ten commandments.

To suppose that Israel had to render obedience only

to the ten commandments is to throw away, or to lose sight of, the many precepts, all of which have to be included in their "rule of life." Take, for instance, the case of Nadab and Abihu. They took their censers, and went in before the Lord to offer incense thereon, but with strange fire, "which He commanded them not" (Lev. x. 1); immediately they were stricken in death. A command connected with sacrificial worship had been infringed—they had failed to make it the rule of their action, and judgment fell on them.

As one has said, "If Noah had confined his rule of life to that of Abel, he would have been lost in the flood. If Abraham had reverted to that of Noah, he never would have left Ur of the Chaldees." That is to say, it was for Noah to build an ark, not Abram; and for the latter simply to leave home and country at the call of God. And so with Israel: it was not the rule that had guided those just referred to, but all the law with its judgments and statutes God-given. But as Abram was not to walk by Noah's rule, so the Christian now is not to set up Israel's rule, but to take and seek to walk by that which God has given to him. What this is will be seen presently. Remember then that the saint of this dispensation is not to walk by the rule of the saint of the past dispensation. David, in going to war against God's enemies in his day, is no guide for us now. Let this be seen, and Christians will never uphold war, or the remaining in the army, because of the warlike actings of saints in Old Testament days, whose conduct was regulated by "rules of life" that have never been given to us, and compared with which ours are, in many respects, not only different, but strongly in contrast.

Let us turn again to the Epistle to the Galatians, which is so replete with information as to the law and as to our present position in Christ, in contrast to the being under law. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to THIS RULE, peace be on them" (Gal. vi. 15, 16). Could anything be simpler? And yet no room is left, nor even excuse given, for the assertion that "the law is our rule of life." For emphatically does the apostle say it is the law of "a new creature."

You cannot keep a Christian under the law as his rule of life without weakening in his soul and conscience the obligations of the law, which consciously he breaks continually. If he is justified, then he is

delivered from it. Thus Paul preached at Antioch: "And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by (*Greek*, "IN") the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 39). That is, as long as they were in the circle of the law of Moses, they could not be justified; but dying out from it they were justified. Think of bringing one who needed to die out of that circle ere he could be justified, into life again into it, in order to assert that the law is his rule of life! Scripture, on the other hand, clearly states that we have died, and live in Christ, therefore to Him—that we are a new creation. In Colossians iii., where union with Christ in life is the theme, the apostle exhorts to "put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth. Lie not one to another" (ver. 8, 9). Why? Because the law was their rule of life? Not so! But because they had "put off the old man with his deeds" (ver. 9), and had "put on the new man." Therefore, he again exhorts, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies," &c. (ver. 12.) How simple all this is—Christ our pattern, new creation our rule!

Fellowship with the mind of God, as expressed in Gen. ii. 17, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it," was Adam's sole rule of life, and so long as he withheld his hand he walked according to it, and peace was his. Noah, as we have seen, had another rule, walked by it, entered the ark, and was saved. Israel another rule again, a part of which consisted in treating God's enemies as theirs, and not sparing, but slaying all; and because Saul *would not* walk according to that rule (1 Sam. xv.) he lost the kingdom. And now, as saints, our rule is in new creation, and that as associated with a rejected Christ now in the heavens. When here He accepted the place of rejection, and walked therein to the end, and that was death. It is ours with joy to follow Him. First, to know Him and the power of His resurrection; then to be conformed to His will. Will any say that His will is not sufficient, or that it does not embrace all that we need to act in a way well pleasing to our Father?

He tells us that the first husband is not dead but living, for "the law is holy, just, and good," nevertheless we have died to it, and now live as married unto Him that is raised from the dead. Will any say that we need to bring the old husband (the law), with

his authority and rules, to help the new Husband (Christ) to draw from us the obedience that He requires?

Christ not enough, and the law is needed! Our Husband cannot without it rule His saints! God forbid. "Let no man, therefore, judge you" (Col. ii. 16) is the word that we need in our souls in this day of vain philosophy.

The *deeds* of the Nicolaitanes went on till they were taught as *doctrines* (see Rev. ii. 6, 15). And, in like manner, the wrong hazy notions of men were held and handed down, until they have become formulated in creeds of so-called Churches around us, and men who dare to abide by the written Word of God are branded as heretics.

And many are frightened by these Nicolaitanes, *i.e.*, "conquerors of the people," as with solemn tones they whisper, speaking of such, "They do not believe in the law;" or, "They teach that the law is done away with." Be not dissuaded or hindered from searching the Scriptures on these points, because some thus speak.

1. The law abides.
2. Christ died under its curse for the sinner who had broken it.
3. The believer died in Him, so that whilst the law remains, he is out from the circle of it by thus dying.
4. He lives in Christ, and Christ in Him. He is a new creature or creation, and that is his rule of life; not the law, much less a part of it, called by man "moral law," but never so spoken of in the Word of God.

The FIRST EPISTLE to the CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THAT which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Look at another passage in this connection—Gal. v. 16: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Then comes a list of the works of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." In accordance with this, we read in chap. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ." There is no Scripture which tells us to *crucify* the flesh: we are told to *mortify* the flesh. Each of the Scriptures which speaks of the crucifying of the flesh is in the past. Such as, "Knowing this, that our old

man was crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). "I have been crucified with Christ." So it is literally and correctly rendered in the New Revision. God reckons that we have been crucified in the person of Christ, and the death sentence has been written on the flesh with its affections and desires. Have you seen this? When you embraced Christ as God's salvation, then you wrote the sentence of death upon your flesh—the old corrupt nature. And are you trying to live both lives now? The difference between carnal and spiritual is, that in the one case there is the carrying out of the sentence of death on your corrupt nature—living and walking in the Spirit. In the other case, not owning the judgment of God on the flesh—walking in the flesh, pleasing and gratifying it, instead of mortifying it. Are we spiritual? Are we living the new life? Is it our daily business to mortify old self through the grace of God given to us? By God's reckoning and God's grace, we are to reckon ourselves as having been executed, and as having passed through God's judgment in the person of Christ; and yet, that old corrupt Adam nature exists in us, and is ready to rise up and manifest its presence. It is only by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us that we can carry into practical effect God's sentence on the corrupt nature.

If the Lord was to come now he could not take us as we are into heaven. We would require to be changed. Corruption could not inherit incorruption; mortality could not inherit immortality. That word "changed" is a word that almost has the signification of "exchanged." It is the same word that occurs in Heb. i. 12. Just as on Saturday a man puts off his working clothes, and puts on his best for the Sunday; he has changed or exchanged his clothes. So, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 52). What a difference, when we are taken up from the sphere where Satan has power and liberty to tempt and buffet us—and from the world with its entanglements and defilements—and out of the flesh with its sinful desires! That is the hope which is before us!

Now turn again with me to 1 Cor. iii. 3: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" There are two things I want you to notice about these carnal persons. First, he calls them carnal, but never calls in question that they are saved persons. Compare chap. vi. 9-11: "Such

were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified," &c. Also, look at the 19th verse of same chapter: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you," &c. Also, the 15th verse: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ."

"Ye are washed," but "ye are carnal;" "ye are justified," but "ye are carnal;" "your bodies are the members of Christ," but "ye are carnal;" "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," but "ye are carnal." What is the meaning of this? Instead of having mortified the old man, they were walking after the mind, thoughts and desires of the old Adam nature. Instead of the Spirit having been obeyed, the flesh had been gratified and the Spirit grieved.

The second thing I want you to notice is, that in the first chapter of this epistle we read of the Corinthian Church being richly endowed with gifts—such as the gift of prophecy, healing, working of miracles, &c.; and, moreover, they were "waiting for the coming of the Lord." Some who did not understand what it is to be carnal might have said to each other: "Go to the meeting at Corinth; there is such abundance of gift, such fine teaching." But what does the Apostle say? "Ye are carnal." How did he know? Because there was "*envy, strife, and division.*" There was not subjection to the Lord; there was not the binding together of love. They had knowledge indeed, but they were puffed up with pride. There was a want of lowliness and love one to another and therefore, the Apostle says, "Ye are carnal." He was not going to gratify their morbid love of knowledge. He would, therefore, minister to them that which would cut at the root of fleshly pride—"Christ crucified." It is, therefore, according to divine wisdom, that before he takes up the subject of the breaking of bread, or the exercise of gifts, &c., he deals with the *condition of their souls*: he shows them their carnal state. Is that not what we need? We who are professedly gathered to the Lord Jesus, and own His authority in the assembly of His redeemed ones, what is the condition of our souls? Is there subjection to Christ? Is there mortifying of our sinful corrupt nature? Is there true godliness and fervent love? Does our vanity and self-will stand a word of rebuke? Or do we resent and take offence at it? The Lord would deal with our individual condition of soul first, and then we shall be better fitted to learn His will concerning our responsibilities as members of His body, and as gathered to His name.

SEQUEL TO "DEBT."

"I HAVE read your little book on debt, and, to be frank with you, I think it's too severe; you don't make any difference between folks that have plenty to do with, and the like of me."

"Does God's Word make any difference?"

"No, I don't say it does; but you know fine there's a great difference between me and Mrs. Logan. What you said about her was true enough; I could tell you far worse things about her extravagance than you would think of, but it would do no good bringing them up now, and, besides, I don't feel quite right myself."

"What's wrong?"

"Well, you know the wages my man gets; there's Robert at farm service; I have only got eight shillings from him for three months; then Tom and Mary are at the school; and there's my old mother-in-law I've to keep and attend to. Now, it takes every penny just now to pay our way, and often it's not very easy."

"Yes, yes, I know all that well enough; with the small wage Andrew has, I often wonder how you manage so well; I hope you have not been running into debt?"

"No, sir, I am not owing anything just now; but I have been in debt since I was converted. But what I was going to say was this: it takes every penny to do just now; and if Andrew was laid up for a week or two, there would be nothing for it but take on where I could get it; we could not starve."

"Oh, Mrs. Currie; what about God? You don't seem to take Him into your calculations at all; can you trust the Lord with your soul, and not with your body?"

"Ah, sir, it's easy for you to speak like that; but I'll tell you plainly how I was placed when Andrew was on short time. I don't like to be using the Lord's name about these things; but He only knows how I was tried at that time. Now, I'll tell you, for I want your advice, for I may be placed the same way again, and I would like to do what's right. Well, after he had been getting ten shillings a week for seven weeks, my mother-in-law was about dead for want; you know she needs something extra; and none of us were half fed. Well, I prayed about it night and morning; but no help came, so I had just to go to Mr. Dickson, and tell him how I was placed, and promised to pay up as soon as I could, so he gave me what I wanted till I was in a pound with him."

"Now, stop, Mrs. Currie, you could go and tell the unsaved grocer that you were ill off; but you could not let the assembly know of it; you know there is a collection every Lord's-day for saints in need. Do you think that was showing the world that the Lord's children loved one another?"

"Well, sir, I did think on letting you know before I went to Mr. Dickson; but if you began to give to everybody that told you they were in need, it would ruin you."

"Quite true; I daresay there are those who, if they could get for the asking, would never seek to work a stroke; but any of us to whom God has given means are responsible to Him as to who we give help to. We must see that we do not go against 2 Thess. iii. 10, and keep up lazy folks who will not work; we are to be good stewards of God's gifts (1 Pet. iv. 10). But look at Elijah at Zarephath; if he had not told his need to the one appointed of God to keep him, he might have starved" (1 Kings xvii. 10, 11).

"Well, that's just what we would have come to if I had not gone to Dickson?"

"Never! I don't believe it. The Lord let you starve! Don't tell me that. I could tell you some cases where Christians were worse off than you, and would not go in debt, but looked to the Lord, and got their needs supplied in a way they never dreamed of. There's a man you know in D—; well, one night they had not a crust in the house; he did not go and "take on," but went where every child should go, to his Father. While he was praying, some one opened the door and put down a bag of potatoes, and went off; he does not know to this day who did it; but he knew who to thank for them. Some would not be content with "only potatoes;" he was, and his family too; and he got something better afterwards. You are looking very sober; I suppose you think the Lord would not do as much for you. Look here, 'my God shall supply all your need' (Phil. iv. 19). Happy man of faith. Then, 'How shall He not with Him freely give us all things' (Rom. viii. 32). That's better than "taking on" at Dickson's. What a God we have; how it pleases Him when we with child-like confidence trust everything to Him. Now, I must go; but you read Matt. vi. 24 to end of chapter."

"Yes, sir, I will read all these verses again. I believe I should not have gone to Mr. Dickson, but I did not see what else I could do; but, of course,

God could have supplied all my need, if I had only faith to trust Him."

Of course He could, and would; but how sad when we lean on a broken reed, rather than on the living God."

"You told me Mrs. Logan was a covetous woman, and should be * put out of the assembly. Would you have called me a covetous woman when I was in debt, and put me out for it?"

"Of course I can neither take in nor put out; that must be the action of the assembly; but I could not have said you were a covetous person; you were ill off, and could not help it; you went in debt for the necessaries of life; Mrs. Logan should never have been ill off; she went in debt for luxuries, just to gratify her lusts; a covetous woman; an idolater, whose God was her belly. Although debt is unscriptural in any case, it cannot always be dealt with in the same way. Have faith in God, Mrs. Currie. He never gives you a command you cannot obey; you may be sorely tried, but He knows how much you can stand, and will not try beyond what you are able to bear. Read the verses in Matt. vi. Good-bye."

J. W. A.

NOTES of Summer's GOSPEL WORK in the UNITED STATES and CANADA.

ORILLIA, ONTARIO, CANADA, Oct. 26, 1881.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,
I send, for the readers of the "NORTHERN WITNESS," a few jottings of season's "tent work" carried on during the past summer in some parts of this continent.

LAURENCE, MASSACHUSETTS.—Brothers John Martin and Wm. P. Douglas pitched a tent on the 11th of June in the town of Laurence, forty miles north of the city of Boston. At the beginning of the meetings, much opposition was manifested to the preaching, but God graciously overruled by owning the testimony, and blessing the labours of the brethren.

The attendance, though not large, was encouraging, and souls were plucked from the enemy's grasp, amongst whom were three persons from the city of Glasgow—who now are in fellowship with Christians gathered to the name of the Lord in Laurence.

* Mrs. L— has been put out. We trust she is a Christian. Pray for her restoration.

After preaching for six weeks, tent was removed to Lowell, a city ten miles distant, with a population of 60,000. For five weeks the gospel was told out in its freshness, fulness, and freeness, to considerably larger audiences than at Laurence, and with more encouragement.

Some professed conversion; others obtained liberty and blessing through the truth proclaimed, and a few now gather on Lord's-day to remember *His* dying love.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN.—Detroit is a large and important city of 120,000 inhabitants in the state of Michigan, separated from Canada by the river St. Clair. A few believers have, for some time, been seeking to act out the truth that God has taught them as to separation from the world, worship, ministry, &c. Though few in numbers, and not much gift amongst them, they endeavoured to tell out the old, old story to poor hell-deserving sinners rushing on to destruction. Brother T. D. W. Muir has for some time been much interested in Detroit, and in the spring of the present year began gospel meetings there, and some were saved.

In the beginning of July, he secured the tent that was used in New York last season, and in conjunction with Brother John Bain, conducted services for more than two months in it.

I believe it was up-hill work, and not much fruit was apparent, though some professed conversion. Others will doubtless reap what they have sown.

GALESBURG, ILLINOIS.—Galesburg is a religious western city with colleges, literary institutions, and ecclesiastical edifices in abundance. The *simple* and glorious gospel of the grace of God is, however, we fear, little and seldom preached.

Our brethren, John M. Carnie and Charles Ross (Mr. Ross's youngest son), got "under canvas" in Galesburg in June. From the commencement to the close of the meetings the attendance was all that could be desired. On week evenings the tent was usually full, and on Lord's-day many were unable to obtain admission.

At the beginning of the work the patience of the labourers was much tried by terrific thunderstorms which swept over miles of unbroken prairie with tremendous force; and the only way of saving the tent was to lower it on the approach of the appearance of a storm.

Mr. Ross spent ten days with the brethren, and they were much cheered by his presence, sympathy,

and co operation. As he dwelt on the realities of death, judgment, and eternity—and expatiated on God's wondrous and boundless love to sinners—it brought to their recollection the grand old times in the north of Scotland when whole districts were awakened by the Holy Ghost to see their lost condition, and led to cry out from the inmost depths of the soul, "What must I do to be saved?"

As to fruit of the labours put forth, Brother Carnie writes: "Results in Galesburg were far from what we expected after such good meetings (numerically); still, quite a few professed to be saved, and a little company are gathered to *the Name*. They have just secured a hall, and (D.V.) we hope to see the summer's sowing followed by some *experienced* reaper."

AURORA, ILLINOIS.—Tent on being removed from Galesburg was pitched in Aurora, a town on the same line of railway, forty miles distant from Chicago. Owing to the fearful weather, the tent could only be used for ten days, and a hall could not be secured to continue our meetings in.

LOWELL, INDIANA.—Brothers Donald Ross and William M'Arthur went to Lowell, in the month of May, and hired a "dancing tent," and for some time preached the gospel in it nightly. Subsequently it was destroyed by a hurricane. The work was followed up in an old meeting-house that was secured for the purpose, and souls were saved.

NEBRASKA.—Two young brethren, Wm. Faulkner and Emmanuel Rushbrook are now unfurling the banner in this Western State, and God is encouraging their hearts and strengthening their hands by giving them the joy of seeing sinners rescued from eternal perdition.

IOWA.—Mr. Ross spent some time in the summer preaching in this state, and speaks of the condition of things there as anything but satisfactory.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.—The work steadily progresses in this great and ungodly city. About a dozen local brethren have been gospeling during the summer months in the open air. God has been with them, and has given tokens of His approval. Brothers John Smith, John M. Carnie, John MacEwen, Mr. Ross and Charles Ross, are at present labouring in various parts of this city, but in a short time there will be a scattering.

CANADIAN TENT.

ORILLIA, ONTARIO.—Tent was pitched in Orillia,

on the shores of Lake Couchiching, ninety miles north of Toronto, at the end of May. Brother W. P. Charles and I have been having gospel services in the town previously for a considerable time, and we thought it would be well to continue them in the tent for a short season. For three weeks meetings were held in it, and at the end of that period the tent was removed to a Roman Catholic village seven miles west of Orillia, named Warminster.

The prospects in this place at first were far from encouraging. Threats were made that the tent would be burned, and the ropes cut; and *whilst we were preaching* men would curse and swear, scream and yell, in a most fearful manner. After preaching for about three weeks, sinners got aroused from their slumber of death, the tent was filled, and the open opposition ceased. Meetings were continued for four months, and the Lord gave much blessing. A goodly number professed conversion, some of whom reside in districts six, eight, and ten miles distant. Nearly sixty have been baptized, and between forty and fifty have already been gathered to the name of the Lord. When the tent was taken down in September, the Christians, though poor, resolved that they would build a hall, as no place large enough in the village could be got for the continuance of the work. Some promised timber; others that they would cut down timber; some to help to put up the building; and others to give what they could in money. The result is, that on Thanksgiving Day (Oct. 20th)—scarcely four weeks after operations began—a hall capable of holding two hundred persons was opened.

During the tent season, and since then, Brothers D. F. Hughes, Richard, Irving, W. P. Charles, and myself took up districts where God had opened doors, and amongst such places meetings have been held in Coldwater, Uthoff, Satterthwaite, Sparrow Lake, Creighton, Miller's Settlement, Orillia, Severn Bridge (Muskoka). In the last mentioned place between twenty and thirty have been gathered out through the gospel preached. Brother Charles and his wife and family have removed to Orillia. Before the gospel meetings commenced in Orillia, there was no assembly meeting simply in the name of the Lord; now there are between seventy and eighty in fellowship.

There is one thing that is very noticeable about the work that has been carried on in Canada during the past few years, and that is: most of the assemblies

are in country districts, and few in the large centres of population; with two exceptions, Toronto and Hamilton, the gatherings in the cities and large towns are few in number and weak in their testimony.

People are more easily reached in agricultural districts, the meetings are larger, and there is generally more blessing; but it is of vast importance that sustained aggressive work should be carried on in the towns and cities. Difficulties there are, I freely admit, and one of the greatest is that of securing suitable halls unless at great expense.

In Montreal, the largest city in the Dominion of Canada, the Christians composing the assembly don't exceed a dozen. There is a grand field for work here, and if the Lord sent the means, and a couple of evangelists took a theatre for Lord's-day evening, and a good hall in a central position for week nights, a harvest of souls might be reaped. Such cities can only be reached by special and extraordinary means.

One of the best centres for gospel work on this continent is the city of Winnipeg, in the province of Manitoba, 1300 miles north-west of Toronto. Manitoba has, during the last decade, increased 41.5 per cent. in population. A few years ago, Winnipeg was a small village, and now it is a city of considerable size, and is making rapid strides. It is thought that, in the course of time, it will be the largest city in Canada. Hundreds of farmers are selling out in Quebec, Ontario, and the maritime provinces, and

settling in the north-west. No adequate estimate can be formed of the enormous resources and extent of the "North-West Territory." Great Britain and Ireland have an area of 122,518 square miles. The "North-West Territory," called the "fertile belt," covers an area of 2,750,000 square miles. The denominations seem to be outrivalling one another in planting churches on the new settled districts, and, no doubt, by-and-bye there will be lots of "members" and "adherents." Here is a great field for pioneering work. I trust that the Lord will thrust forth labourers willing to endure hardness, and go into these regions and tell out the story of God's love to sinners, and teach young converts the truth as revealed in the Word.

Wise, gracious, and godly brethren, gifted to teach or exhort saints, are much needed to minister in the various assemblies scattered here and there on this great continent. If brethren in Britain accustomed to this work were crossing the Atlantic, they would find a large sphere of usefulness. In some gatherings there is very little gift, and it is not at all an unusual thing that they should be alone for one or two years without having a visit from one fitted to minister the Word.

Asking the continued prayers of the readers of the "NORTHERN WITNESS" on behalf of the Lord's work in Canada and the United States—I am, truly yours in the Lord Jesus Christ, ALEX. MARSHALL.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION NO. LXXXVII.

What is the exact meaning of the words "In like manner" (Acts i. 2)?

REPLY.

These words are very explicit. They are addressed to the disciples as "men of Galilee," and do not refer to that *mystery* fully revealed through the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xv. 51 and 1 Thess. iv. 15-17). The reference

here is to the coming of the Lord with his saints to the earth, not to His coming for His saints to the air. Compare Zech. xiv. 4, 5. In this passage it is seen that the same Person who was valued at thirty pieces of silver (Zech. xi. 12), and whose hands were wounded, and who bore, as the Shepherd of Israel, the stroke of Jehovah's sword (xiii. 6, 7), will stand again on the Mount of Olives; possibly the same place from which He ascended in the sight of His chosen witnesses.

QUESTION No. LXXXIV.

Is it right to ask a Christian to "break bread," and afterwards to see if he or she is a fit person for fellowship?

REPLY.

There are some who regard the bringing in of a person "to break bread" as distinct from receiving into fellowship. We know of no Scripture warrant for such a distinction. The circumstance referred to in this question could only occur where the right of individuals, on their own responsibility, to bring Christian friends to the Lord's table is admitted.

We believe this practice to be without Scripture precedent, and to have been productive of much evil.

1. It sets aside those who have the oversight, and are in responsibility to the Lord as to the guidance of the assembly.

2. It weakens the sense of responsibility which ought to rest upon every member as to who is and who is not admitted into fellowship. I cannot at one time urge upon the believers the duty of taking a hearty interest in those proposed for fellowship, and at another bring in one known only to myself, or even to one or two more, without the assembly having opportunity to hear the testimony of those who know them, and to exercise care and discernment. The assembly in such a case is unable either to receive or reject intelligently.

3. If *one* exercises this supposed privilege of bringing in a person to the breaking of bread on his own individual responsibility, whom he believes to be a Christian, then others will do the same, and either godly oversight is entirely set aside, or else this liberty is granted to some and denied to others, thus raising most invidious and unscriptural distinctions.

4. The result of this independent action is to constitute two circles of fellowship, plainly called in some cases "permanent" and "occasional." Or if the unscripturalness of such a distinction be seen, and all who are brought "to break bread" are regarded as in fellowship, then there are those "in fellowship" of whom the assembly generally knows nothing—concerning whom those having oversight have exercised no care and no discernment, and who, in most cases, are allowed to come and go as they please; a constant source of weakness and stumbling to those who are truly exercised before God.

QUESTION No. LXXXV.

"The pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). To whom or to what does this apply?

REPLY.

In both the Old and the New Testaments, the word pillar is used frequently in the sense of a monument rather than a support. We think this is the sense in which it is to be taken here. "The Church of the living God" implies no mere human organization called "a Church," but every living child of God—"the Church which is His body" (Eph. i. 22, 23).

This Church was intended by God to be in the earth a magnificent monument of the truth. As the Lord Jesus said, "I am the truth," so, in a subordinate sense, ought "the truth" to have been embodied and displayed in the living organism of "the Church of the living God.

So also was it the design of God that the Church should be the "ground," or "firm foundation" of the truth. Cleaving to it, contending earnestly for it, faithfully maintaining it in doctrine and in practice amid all the onslaughts of the adversary—both monument and foundation immovable as the Rock upon which it is built.

But the Church, as entrusted to human responsibility, has failed. Broken, corrupted, marred, led away by the error of the wicked, it has fallen from its steadfastness (2 Peter iii. 17).

Nevertheless, whatever of the truth is displayed or maintained in the earth is still to be found only among the elect of God. Were it not for "the Church of the living God," indwelt by the Holy Ghost, broken and marred and divided as it is, neither manuscripts nor Bibles, nor creeds nor confessions of faith, would stand against the mighty current of error and infidelity.

N. B.—Referring to Question No. L., we take this opportunity, ere the Volume closes, of stating that grave exception has been taken to the latter part of our Reply, and we think it well to withdraw all but the first sentence, viz.: "It seems to us that the words 'Except it be for fornication' explicitly clear from the charge of adultery, the person who acts as this question supposes."