

THE
NORTHERN WITNESS:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

OF

Biblical Literature, Notes of Addresses, Questions and Answers, &c.

EDITED BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL.

VOL. XVI.

GLASGOW:
THE PUBLISHING OFFICE, 180 BUCHANAN STREET.

LONDON:
JAMES E. HAWKINS, 17 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C., AND 36 BAKER STREET, W.

DUBLIN: DUBLIN TRACT REPOSITORY, 10 D'OLIER STREET.

1886.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE.

THIS VOLUME will complete "THE NORTHERN WITNESS" in its present style and size. Next year (D.V.) the following alterations will be made:—

THE TITLE will henceforth be "*The Witness*" only, dropping the word "*Northern*," as our Magazine now circulates in all parts of the world.

THE SIZE will be *slightly reduced*, so as to make it more easily handled, both in numbers and volumes.

THE TYPE will be *new*, a clear old-faced letter, as used in most of the Magazines of the present day.

THE PAPER will be *white*, of good quality, and specially made for our Magazine.

DIAGRAMS AND CHARTS, illustrative of Prophetic and other Scriptures, with explanatory matter, will be introduced at intervals.

THE MATTER.—An endeavour will be made to have a little more variety—including select *Short* Articles, Bible Readings, Gleanings, &c.

THE PRICE AND OTHER ITEMS CONTINUE AS BEFORE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
A Single Eye,	66	Luke XV.; by T. C.,	139
Affliction's Blessing; by B.,	188	Lord's Second Coming in Two Aspects; by F. A. B.,	76
An Appeal on behalf of Spain; by J. C. H.,	140	Ministry; by G. A.,	116, 131
Are the Living Waters flowing through you? by T. H.,	184	"Macedonian Cry" from India,	175
Authority and Subjection; by J. R. C.,	59	Notes on the Proverbs; by A. O. M.,	68, 86, 100, 118 136, 153, 166, 183
A Letter; by D. M. L.,	46	Nazarite,	13, 28
A Letter from China,	63	On Hebrews,	6, 93
Bread which we Break; by H. D.,	150	Precept and Promise; by W. M.,	15
Backsliding,	60	Pointless Preaching,	96
Burnt Offering,	142, 156	Priestly Service; by J. R.,	161
Corinthians, First Epistle to the; by J. R. C., 9, 24, 34, 88, 147, 162, 177		Parenthesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews,	42
Christ, or World Reformation; by J. R. C.,	81	Parable of the Ten Virgins; by A. P. M.,	70
Chronicles; by S. B.,	109	Priesthood and Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ; by A. S.,	145
Closing Days,	191	Questions and Answers, 16, 31, 47, 63, 79, 96, 111, 128, 144, 159, 176, 191	
Contrast between Genesis and Revelation,	164	Question cccxxxix,	191
Cup of Blessing which we Bless; by H. D.,	168	Redemption; by A. Stewart,	97
Christ IS Coming; by J. D. S.,	173	Second Thessalonians; by T. C.,	90
Divine Delight in Grace,	41	Seeking Knowledge,	42
Ezekiel,	41	Summer Work among the Villages,	111
Euodias and Syntycha; by F. A. B.,	62	Salvation, Service, and Rest; by F. A. B.,	165, 189
Feast of Remembrance and Testimony; by F. A. B.,	74	Sanctification,	188
Five Golden Rules for Bible Readers; by J. M.,	138	Thessalonians, the First Epistle to, Notes of Address; by J. R. C.,	1, 17, 50, 65, 113, 129
Faith, Obedience, and Power,	120	Thoughts for Preachers,	96
First Chronicles,	125	The Power of His Resurrection,	102
First Thessalonians III.; by J. H.,		Warning in the Tenth of Hebrews; by A. P. M.,	110, 127
Following up the Work; by G. A.,	180	Will the Church Escape the Great Tribulation? by F. A. B.,	49
God's Remedy for Indwelling Sin; by G. A.,	33		
God's Provision against the Power of Indwelling Sin; by G. A.,	72		
God the Holy Spirit; by R. S.,	91		
God's Remedy against the Pollution of Sin; by G. A.,	55		
Gleanings from Glasgow Conference,	174		
Isaiah,	31		
John's Third Epistle; by F. A. B.,	11, 26, 37, 57		
Jeremiah,	40		
John, The Gospel of; by W. L., 7, 21, 35, 52, 66, 83, 105, 121, 134, 157, 170, 186			
Judgment Seat of Christ; by F. A. B.,	94, 107, 123		
Lord and Christ; by W. H. H.,	3, 19		
Law and Grace,	31		

POETRY.

The Night and the Sea; by A. P. M.,	39
The Race,	69
Shall I take the Thorn away?	86
Love Divine,	108
Isaac and Rebekah,	125
One Thing Desired,	182
Spring Time in the Soul,	136
God's Pleasure—My Pleasure,	155
Talents,	156

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CCXIV.
Please explain 1 Cor. xv. 2. See also margin "hold fast." But suppose they do not hold fast, what then? 16

CCXV.
Is it right for a Christian to remain in a situation where she can only get to "the breaking of bread" "every second Lord's-day?" 16

CCXVI.
1 John ii. 9-11., also iii. 15. Do these verses refer to unsaved professors or to those who are born of God? 16

CCXVII.
Please explain Acts ix. 7 and xxii. 9, so as to reconcile what appears to be a discrepancy. 16

CCXVIII.
Why are so many Christians in poverty and in debt? 31

CCXIX.
How should an assembly recognise (not appoint) those in their midst whom they know to be God-appointed overseers? In keeping with 1 Thess. v. 12, should they not acknowledge them by name, in order to prevent others from taking the place for which they are manifestly unfitted? 47

CCXX.
Is it right for believers to have their children taught dancing? 47

CCXXI.
Are we to gather from Rom. xi. 13-22, that a Gentile once saved can be lost again? 48

CCXXII.
Has 2 Cor. v. 20 any reference to the unsaved? 63

CCXXIII.
How does owning Jesus as Lord affect our daily life? What difference does it make to us who are gathered out unto the Name of Jesus from those who, amongst the various sects, are the Lord's people? 64

CCXXIV.
Can you make out from Scripture that there are two distinct raptures of the saints prior to the Millennium—one, the first fruits; and the other, those who believe during the tribulation? 79

CCXXV.
Is it right, at the Lord's Supper, to break the bread and give thanks before it leaves the table, or should it be handed round unbroken, and without the giving of thanks? 80

CCXXVI.
Is the individual who cuts himself off from the assembly in the same position as one who has righteously been "put away?" 96

CCXXVII.
What is the meaning of the words in Romans viii. 24, "We are saved by hope?" 96

CCXXVIII.
Was John the Baptist the Elijah of the Book of Kings, or was he another person in the spirit and power of Elias? 111

CCXXIX.
Acts xxii. 10. Does the Lord as distinctly answer the questions of His people in these days, and, if so, in what way? 112

CCXXX.
What is the teaching of Col. i. 21-23? 128

CCXXXI.
How is it that God told His people not to eat that which dieth of itself, but they could give it to strangers, or sell it to the alien? (Deut. xiv. 21.) 128

CCXXXII.
Please explain Rev. xx. 7-9. Will the people, here referred to, be in the four quarters of the earth during the 1000 years of the reign of Christ? 144

CCXXXIII.
Did Christ suffer for righteousness or for sin, and was His whole life a suffering for sin? 144

CCXXXIV.
Can you explain how it is that the "peace-offering" is not mentioned in Lev. xiv. 10-20? 159

CCXXXV.
Is it scriptural or even prudent for a brother who has sinned publicly, and that seriously, and been under discipline several times, to take active part in ministry and oversight in the assembly, under the plea of zeal for the truth? 159

CCXXXVI.
Who are the elect of Rom. xi. 5? 160

CCXXXVII.
What ought a believer to do who is residing in a place where there is no assembly gathered according to the Word of the Lord? Would it be right to remain away altogether from public worship? 160

CCXXXVIII.
Does 2 Cor. iii. 1, or Acts xviii. 27, afford any ground for refusing to admit a stranger to the breaking of bread who has not brought with him a letter of commendation? 175

CCXXXIX.
Into how many parts is the law of Moses divided? and to which part are we, as believers, subject? 176

CCXL.
In giving money to labourers in the Gospel abroad, or to the poor around us, is it not more acceptable to the Lord that such gifts should come from the collective offerings of the whole gathering than from an individual who may be favoured with more of this world's goods than his brethren? and, in giving to individuals unknown to the gathering, is it not better to send it anonymously, that the thanksgiving may be to God, the real sender, alone? 191

CCXLI.
What "quickenings" is referred to in Rom. viii. 11? 192

THE NORTHERN WITNESS.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY J. R. C.

Introduction of the Gospel into Thessalonica.

IT might be interesting to us, before we enter upon the consideration of this epistle, to look at the account given us in Acts xvii. of the introduction of the Gospel into Thessalonica.

Verse 1.—“Now when they (Paul and Silas) had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.”

When the Lord Jesus, after His resurrection, commissioned His disciples to go in His name among all nations and preach the Gospel, He told them to begin at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 46-48); therefore, the Apostle who was in sympathy with the heart of Christ, made it his first business when he entered a city to seek out the Jewish synagogue there to reason with his brethren in the flesh, out of the scriptures. We see from the following verses that this is what he did in Thessalonica. “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ,” (verse 2-3).

The Old Testament Scriptures became the basis of all his teaching, because the Jews believed in them, and held them in the highest esteem; but, when dealing with the Gentiles who knew not the Scriptures, he goes on a different line. This we see from his address to the Athenians, which we have in the latter part of the same chapter, (verse 22-34).

Paul went into the synagogue three sabbath days and reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. That was the seventh day of the week, which the Jews continued to hold. Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and we read in Acts xx. 7, that the disciples met on the first day of the week to break

bread. The Jews were accustomed to meet every sabbath day in their synagogue and there was an opportunity for any one able to teach to take the Scriptures and read them. Our Lord did so in the synagogue of Nazareth. Paul also availed himself of this liberty.

Paul showed them from the Old Testament that God's anointed was not merely a reigning Christ, but a Christ who had first to suffer and die, and then rise from the dead. That was the foundation of all his teaching. He proved to them from the very Scriptures that were read in their synagogue every sabbath day, that Jesus of Nazareth whom they looked upon as an imposter, whom they hated, blasphemed, and put to death on the cross, that that same Jesus was the very Christ of God.

Verse 4.—“And some of them believed.” This is the result of Gospel testimony. This was the result of Paul's testimony at Corinth also; but, the opposition was so great there that he was well nigh leaving the work altogether, but the Lord appeared to him in a vision by night and said unto him, “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” (Acts xviii. 7-11). As the Lord looked down on that city of poor deluded idolators, He saw amongst them those that were yet to be His own, and monuments of His saving grace and power.

Verse 4.—“They consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” They, as it were, drew to them and cast in their lot with them. They found that they had something in common. They were all partakers of the common salvation; and trusted in the One at the right hand of God, whom man had rejected, but whom God had raised up and crowned with glory and honour. Paul and Silas and those Thessalonian converts were bound together by a tie that none could sever. How blessed was the fellowship that was thus brought about through the knowledge of the Son of

God, who had saved and united them to Himself for ever!

“The devout Greeks.”—These probably were not of the stock of Abraham, but Grecians who had accepted the Scriptures of the Jews—elsewhere called “proselytes.” They were Grecians by birth, but Jews by religion. You see here the advantage of knowing at least the letter of the Scriptures; this accounts for the great power and speedy progress made by this young church at Thessalonica. Scotland possesses no greater privilege than this, that children from their infancy have been taught the Scriptures.

“And of the chief women not a few.” We see how remarkably the Lord owned the testimony of His servant, Paul. In three weeks after going to this place a church was gathered out from among self-righteous Jews and superstitious idolators. He went as a stranger to a strange city, without any intimation or influential friends, but God was with him and wrought by him. This shows us what a mighty work God can do in a very short time, if He is trusted in to do it. God carries on His own work in His own way, and by instruments fitted and approved by Himself. There is little machinery needed when God works, but there is much power.

Verse 5.—“The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company and set all the city in an uproar, &c.” We see here Satan’s gathering in opposition to Christ’s gathering. Wherever there is the mighty power of God’s Spirit put forth, depend upon it Satan, the adversary, will seek to put forth his power to oppose God’s work. Those unbelieving Jews, filled with envy, got wicked men of the lowest class—immoral persons having no conscience—to do the work for them which they were ashamed to do themselves.

Verse 5-7.—“They assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying there is another king, one Jesus.” We get here a remarkable side light upon the Gospel that the apostle preached. One might attend many of our Gospel meetings Sunday after Sunday for more than

three Lord’s-days and never hear a syllable concerning Jesus, the King! They would hear, no doubt, of Jesus as the Saviour, and the Sacrifice. But the claims of Christ as king evidently formed a part of the Apostle’s testimony. In his ministry amongst them he had been showing from the Scriptures of the Old Testament that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, God’s anointed king; not merely to reign over a province, or country, but to wield universal dominion.

So matter of fact was Paul’s preaching that they said, “He teaches that there is another king than Cæsar.” Paul taught them to be “subject unto the higher powers” (Romans xiii. 1), and to “fear God and honour the king” (1 Peter ii. 13-17). Nevertheless, it ought to be our testimony that the rejected One of Nazareth has been received up into glory, and is waiting at the right hand of God until the moment comes, appointed by the Father, when He shall make His enemies His footstool, and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Verses 10-11.—“The brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea; who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scripture daily whether these things were so.” This is real nobility in God’s sight. These people brought what they had heard to the test of Scripture. They had not the Bible in their pockets as we have. Probably they could only see the Scriptures on the parchment roll attached to the desk in the synagogue, and there they would go and listen to the apostle, and then search to see if these things were so. That is how we ought to put to the test all the doctrine that we may hear or read from the lips or pen of any servant of the Lord. If it stands the test of Scripture then receive it. “Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her, for she is thy life” (Prov. iv. 13.) But if it won’t bear the test of Scriptures then reject it altogether.

Verse 12.—“Therefore many of them believed also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few.” This was the blessed result of the testimony of Paul and Silas. God owned His servants’ testimony. “He gave testimony to the Word of His grace.”

We see how God sustained His servants in all their labours; and what manner of men they were for the

sake of those among whom they laboured. What self-denial, what reproach, what suffering and persecution they endured in order that they might reach those people with the Gospel! How very little we know, in these days in which we live, of the hardships, persecutions, and trials that those servants passed through, whilst doing the will of Christ in carrying the Gospel message to those poor benighted sinners. How very little we know of going into the very heart of the enemy's camp with the Gospel of the grace of God. Nothing will enable us to do this but the mighty sustaining grace of God. The Apostle Paul could say, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was in me" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

1 THESS. I., 1.


Having thus glanced at the historic record of the beginning of the Thessalonian Church, let us turn now to 1 Thess. i. 1. "Paul and Silvanus (or Silas), and Timotheus unto the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." What a magnificent description of the Church! Oh how secure! Such a description could only apply to those who were redeemed by the precious blood; believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those epistles were not addressed to "churches" such as we see around us now, generally composed of a very few believers, and a great many unbelievers, mixed up together. How could it be said of such a "church" that it was "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ?" Yet this is exactly what applies to an assembly composed of believers gathered unto the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. What a blessed and secure position for a Church to be in! "*In God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ!*" Jesus, the Saviour, Christ the anointed, and Jesus Christ, the Lord; the One who alone has a right to them, Who is the Head and Lord of His household; the One that they were to look to and appeal to in everything. The Apostle Paul, who had been amongst them as the Lord's servant, ministering to them the Grace of God, and instructing them in the will of the Lord, he, as it were, retires out of sight, and says to them, "You are just a little company gathered in

weakness, and surrounded by enemies; but you are in God the Father, and He is your sun and shield. You are in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him you are to love, serve, and obey." You see there is a Divine meaning and order in all these names which are applied to God and the Son.

How blessed their position, surrounded as they were by the malice of the enemy—they were in God the Father; a Father's heart, a Father's arm, and a Father's love were all engaged on behalf of that little Church; and it is our privilege, as those separated from the world unto Himself, to count upon every word of that being true to us who are gathered unto the blessed Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let nothing wile us away from the place of simple dependence on God and the Word of His grace.

"Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the salutation with which the apostle opens nearly all his epistles. Beautiful salutation—"grace and peace!" It is not a message of judgment, but a loving, gracious salutation. That was the message brought to us in the Gospel at the first. Mark the order—first grace, then peace. There is no peace apart from grace. It is the grace of God that has brought salvation to us, through the blood of Jesus, which has made peace for us.

"LORD AND CHRIST."

HE rare cases in Scripture in which the Holy Spirit has stayed on His course of revelation, instruction, or exhortation, to more particularly define the meaning of that which had just been breathed by Him, are—by such action—emphasised and marked as of special import, claiming special consideration and attention. It is, in fact, as when a correspondent draws the pen beneath the words of one of his sentences, and thereby asks the particular attention of the one whom he addresses to the thought to which expression is given by such underlined words.

An *exemplary case* of this kind is to be found in Heb. xiii. 15, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; **THAT IS**"—he carries to say—"the fruit of our lips *confessing* His Name."

Hidden beneath the compound Greek word here rendered "confessing" is a Divine treasure competent to enrich him who searches for and finds it, for all the

eternity of God. The primary meaning of the word is the "speaking like" unto another. The fact that it brings out is, that the man whose "speaking" of Jesus, is "like" unto the Father's speaking of Him is a man whose lips—to God—drop as the honeycomb, under whose tongue are honey and milk, and whose mouth bears all manner of pleasant fruits; a man who continually offers a sacrifice of praise to God, in which He takes a delight which He never had in the holocausts of the altar of Israel's best and brightest days.

To speak of Him like unto God, it is essential that heart and mind should be stored with God's thoughts concerning Him and His Name.

As a little help to this end, it is proposed here to make some effort to elucidate *the significance of the titles* by which the Holy Ghost, through Peter, revealed God's thoughts as to that same Jesus whom the house of Israel had rejected and had crucified, but whom God had made "both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). The word "MADE" is important—it is not that God called Him by these titles, bestowing them upon Him as a gift; but, just as He was "made of a woman, made under the law," so was He *made* Lord and Christ, the titles becoming part of His great Name, such Name being not merely an appellation whereby He may be known from others, but that which sets forth His personality, His character, and His place—which is indeed the most frequent sense in which the word "name" is employed in Scripture.*

Seeking, then, to grasp *the distinction of meaning*, (the difference of the revelation, conveyed by the term LORD, which comes first in order, and by the title CHRIST, which has the second place), it is well to ask at the outset what meaning the words themselves conveyed to a conscience-stricken Jew, who was instructed in the "oracles of God," which had been committed to his nation, and who had been "pricked in the heart" that day by the power of the Spirit of God. To this

* It is necessary to observe here that the word "hath" in the R.V. is a translator's interpolation, and has no foundation in the original. The tense in the Greek verb which is used here has been well defined by a great scholar as "marking a point in the expanse of time;" and the declaration is, that at a point in the past, God made Jesus both Lord and Christ. God did it and completed it; "and I know" (says the man in Ecclesiastes) "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it."

a direct answer is given by the Scriptures quoted in the words which immediately precede, the conjunction, "therefore," making the connection between the first verse of Psalm cx. and the word LORD unmistakable. But here one must pause to draw once more the oft-drawn and necessary distinction between the two words in the Hebrew tongue which are both translated "Lord" in the English version of that verse. The amending of the translation by reading the opening sentence, "Jehovah said unto my Master," is perhaps the simplest mode of making the distinction; Jehovah being the name which declares the self-existence of our God and the unchangeability of His character, while the word rendered Master has for its root-thought that of possession—not a master who is served by others for the sake of the hire which he gives them, so much wages for so much work, whose connection with his servants and whose authority over them may at any time be broken by one party or another; but a master who is served by others because these others are his absolute property—whether bought with a price by him or received as a gift from another; who neither are themselves their own, nor have anything of their own; who cannot by any means break the connection between themselves and their master; who are, in short, subject in every way to his sole and absolute authority. All this is contained in the word quoted from the Psalms, and is, further, the exact meaning of the Greek word translated "Lord" in the phrase under consideration—the Old Testament* type and foreshadowing being found in the first man Adam, who was made a living soul, "but little lower than God" (Ps. viii. 5, R.V.), and made for the purpose of having dominion over the works of God's hands, such works being given over to him, put under his feet, made subject to his authority.

To the instructed Israelite, therefore, the declaration that God made that same Jesus, to him hitherto but an outcast man, a crucified Nazarene, LORD, conveyed the knowledge, that God had put Him, with regard to himself and to all that he saw around him, in the place of the master of the slaves, the holder of an AUTHORITY as absolute as it was without bound or limit. A fitting title truly for the One who, Himself, had said, shortly before, "All authority has been given unto Me, in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

Turning now to the second term, CHRIST, we have

no difficulty in arriving at a distinct understanding of the significance it bore to the hearers on that day of Pentecost. Twice Peter used the word in connection with the prophetic Scriptures he quoted, knowing that those who heard him had themselves the expectation of the appearing of the ANOINTED of God, the MESSIAH of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the CHRIST of those in the Greek tongue.

In connection with that Anointed One, their thoughts would turn to their great king of earlier and happier days: their David, whom God took from the sheep-folds, anointed in the midst of his brethren, and placed in the front of His people; their head, their shepherd, and their guide—in the very act of anointing, at once setting him apart for a special work, and endowing him with the *power* required for its accomplishment; for the anointings of the olden time, whether of priest, prophet, or king, were ever typical of the Holy Ghost's operation in separating unto God, and of the power of God, as specially given to the separated one.

To the instructed Israelite again, therefore, the mighty title CHRIST, which must have awed the man of the emptiest head and most frivolous heart in all the throng, conveyed the thought of POWER, and especially in connection with headship and guidance.

Force is added and confirmation given to this by the remembrance of Peter's testimony in the house of Cornelius, that "God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and *with power*" (Acts x. 38); and of Paul's words in 1 Cor. i, 24, "CHRIST, the *power* of God and the wisdom of God."

In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, both the terms LORD and CHRIST, themselves, and their order, acquire a *newer and deeper significance*.

We have referred, in passing, to the place of authority over the works of His hands that God put Adam into (the binding together of Psalm viii. and Hebrews ii., making the typical character of his place of dominion or lordship most vivid), but without considering his rapid fall from the place of authority given to him, his irreparable loss of the dominion entrusted to him; and it is needful for us to linger at this point, to refresh our remembrance as to the alteration of circumstances brought about by Adam's sin, though not necessary to enter into details of that which is so well known and so unutterably sad.

Adam derived his lordship and his authority from

God direct, and could only be maintained in that God-given place by God-given power. His sin against God was instantly followed by separation from God, and separation from God involved, necessarily, loss of all Divine power. The man was utterly helpless; his enemy came in like a flood, and he who was made a lord became a slave. Sin entered, and first "in death," and afterwards (the Law having been given) directly, reigned over Adam and Adam's race, bringing all under its dominion. "Ye were the slaves of sin," toiling under its yoke and receiving its guerdon, for "the wages of sin is death," with a certain prospect of an after-death judgment, as eternal as the God whose justice decreed it, and as full of hopeless horror and of hatred as the glory of God is full of light and love.

Such was our place and such were we, when the Only-begotten of the Father came from that Father's bosom for our deliverance and our redemption.

Not only man's utter ruin, but man's absolute helplessness, had been demonstrated. The Law itself, holy as it was, had but served to the abounding of sin, and all—whether the Jew inside or the Gentile outside of that Law's pale—all were proved to be "under sin," all subject to death; then, in the fulness of the time, Jesus, the Nazarene, the Son of the living God, passed into the midst of the sin-enthralled, death-stricken race. It was soon made manifest to the hosts of heaven and of hell, and, in a feeble measure, to a few obscure and dim-sighted men, that in Him there was a man "apart from sin," in Whom sin was not, and over Whom sin had no dominion, from Whom Satan (who wields its power) fled, baffled and defeated, only to return and find, to the last, *nothing* in Him that his strength, with all its "roaring lion" vastness or his craft, with all its "old serpent" subtlety, could fasten upon or lay hold of. Yet He who was without sin died to sin and for sin.

To the heart of the believer the marvel of this increases as months melt into years, and years into decades, in his faith-walk on earth with God, and to that believer the marvel will increase still more greatly in each succeeding cycle of eternal glory.

"Died to sin," that from its dominion and its authority He might redeem the bond-slaves who were held in thrall by its might; "died for sins," that God might in righteousness forgive the sinners for

whom the ever-unsatisfied death and destruction waited; and died as a man, as the last Adam, rendering to God an obedience so perfect that His Divine requirements could ask no more.

Because of this, God has highly exalted Him: has given Him a Name of Lordship; a place of authority, such as the first Adam—the Adam of nature and of type—could by no possibility have borne or filled, and raising Him to His own throne has put all things under His feet, whether past, present, or to come; whether upon the earth, above the earth, or under the earth.

Now comes in *one of the anomalies of this wonderful age*, or though God has put all things under His feet, as yet we see not all things under Him. Divine forbearance and long-suffering withholds Divine judgment; the human heart is unchanged, and so the controversy between God and man yet continues, only the subject-matter has become different. Formerly as to sin, it is now about God's Son and His place—to God He is everything, to man nothing; to God He is the first to be considered in all that is done or left undone, to man He is the last.

Here the matter hitherto general becomes particular—that is, *personal* to every believer upon the earth.

God sent His Son into the world, that the world through Him might be saved; yet the world is not saved, because its children reject, in their unbelief, the salvation provided for them, nevertheless we who deal with these matters to-day are assured of salvation, and are possessed of eternal life. Why? Because in the world-wide "whosoever" of the Gospel we have found a place for ourselves as individual children of Adam, in saving grace and Divine love; and a place, too, so exactly suited to each one of us that it would be, in the highest degree, the individual unbelief which makes God a liar to refuse to take it.

Exactly as God speaks of "saving grace" "manifested to *all*," and of His love to a whole world shown in the gift of His Son, so does God speak of *all things* being put under the feet of that Son; and as simple faith individualizes the one, saying, it is for *me* because it is for *all*, so does the same simple faith individualize the other, and say, if all things are put under His feet, surely I; and if He is Lord of all, surely of me and of my life.

There is a depth of grace still deeper, and a height of love still higher than this.

The man who has found a place in God's love and salvation as one out of the world to which that love had been revealed, as an individual member of a race to which that salvation had been brought, is not left in the position of one out of many only, revelation is added to revelation, mercy superimposed upon mercy, and the believer who is taught of God learns with a new amazement that Divine love, omniscient and almighty as well as eternal, had regarded him in his own person; that sovereign grace had sought and found a way by which *he* might be saved, and that his part in the purposes of God and in the death of God's Saviour-Son is so direct and so personal that he can delight himself in the knowledge that those purposes separated him from his mother's womb, and can bless the Son of God who loved *him* and gave Himself for *him*, as though there had not been another sinner in the world.

The point of all this in connection with the present subject is that it makes the place of Jesus as Lord (and that in the deeper sense of one whose claim to possession and authority is based upon the fact that He has redeemed from a former bondage as hopeless as it was cruel) a matter of personal relationship to every believer who is justified by His blood—that is to say that when God made Him Lord He made Him Lord over *me* individually—over me whom He had loved, whom He had chosen, and to save whom He had sent His Son; that He put *me* under His feet, and subjected *me* to His absolute authority; and that He calls *me* to yield to this an implicit and unquestioning obedience, not only in spirit and in soul, but also in body, for "the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." This is in all things overt and practical; and it is indeed a fitting thing that the very first step in the path of discipleship and of the acknowledgment of the place which Jesus holds in the life is the submitting of the *body* to the pride-humbling, death-to-self-proclaiming ordinance of Baptism, which comes to the man whom God has loved as a commandment "in the name of the Lord" (Acts x. 48).

"Into Thy death baptized, we own with Thee we died;
With Thee our life, are risen, and in Thee glorified.
From sin, the world, and Satan, we're ransomed by Thy
blood,
And now would walk as strangers alive with Thee to
God."

This principle of personal obedience to personal autho-

riety, carried on and carried out, brings believers in Jesus together, and brings them into one, because unto One. All necessity for elaborate system framed by art and man's devices lapses; part in such becomes an anachronism for a saved man, before whom "newness of life" (that is, life with Jesus as Lord in it) is set. The will of the Lord is unchanging, His way is unalterable: "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and He being one, His will and His way are necessarily one also—one in apostolic times, one now. In those days believers were simply "added to the Lord"—multitudes of them there were, both of men and women—yet each, as an individual, was saved through grace, and each learned that God had given Jesus all authority, had made Him Lord; hence all were together as a matter of course, and being thus gathered together, they found the Lord in their midst, and found, too, that in Him there was an ample sufficiency for *all* their needs, whether spiritual or temporal.


Those who put Him to the proof to-day will find that in this also He is as unchanged and unchanging as in His claims and in His will. Oh! the misery of the place of the God-loved believer in human sect and system, that has its very foundation in the virtual denial of this all-reaching and all-sufficient Lordship of Jesus.

W. H. H.

(To be continued).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER VI.

ND Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples." A beautiful picture of what He is doing now. "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Why ask Philip this? Because, I presume, He loves to test us, and will test us. Some would have been able to have answered the question happily, satisfactorily, holily; but Philip not so. Which way are we? "And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of

them may take a little." What a meagre answer! Any one could have answered as well as that. Is that the answer you would have given? "One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" Then we have the answer in the other gospels, "Bring them hither to Me." And so it is with us in our difficulties and trials. "To Me!" The very Person that we are so particularly prone to leave out. What are the five barley loaves and the two small fishes if we bring them to the Lord? What are the five barley loaves if we leave out the Lord? All depends upon our bringing in or leaving out the Lord. And what are we doing? Thus the Lord tests us. "And Jesus said, Make the men sit down." The word here rendered "men" in the original means "men" in an exclusive sense; so I take it that there were at least (20,000 present in all.) And then it must have been a very beautiful action—the Lord breaking the bread and dividing the fishes, and giving to each of His disciples sufficient for fifty or a hundred people. And is not that what the Lord is doing now? Feeding five thousand, twenty thousand—yea, twenty million; and feeding them ever so easily, ever so plentifully, ever so continuously. Oh to trust the Lord! "When they were filled He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." He would not have us waste, even though we have plenty. God never wastes. I solemnly believe that there is no waste in the cross of our Lord Jesus; and that in what it cost God and Christ to redeem our souls there was no waste. Now what God does we are to copy, and if we waste it is through want of faith.

There is no question that this miracle is a pattern of how the Lord fed His people in the wilderness, because it is the only miracle which is found in each of the four gospels; and therefore it is held, and properly, that there was some reason why it was inserted in this special manner; and the answer given is that it reveals the Lord's way with His people when in the wilderness. How He fed them for forty years as a nursing Father, and took care of them till He brought them home. And is it not also a specimen of how He is taking care of us still, as a nursing Father, to bring us home to where we are to be?

And then we find Him upon the mountain-top,

alone in prayer, and his disciples (picture of ourselves) in a little bark tossed with the winds and the waves. Ah, but you know these beautiful words in the gospel of Mark—only found there in the picture of the servant—"When Jesus saw them toiling in rowing." There was one eye that followed them, one eye that marked all their course amid those raging billows, and Mark tells us it was the eye of Jesus.

Hitherto we have been looking at the grace of Christ, but what I would particularly invite attention to is His majesty. Most of us are aware of the teaching of this miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and therefore I hurry, rather, through it. But now comes a picture of His majesty; and with that we are not so familiar. "And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." As if He were the proper Person to help them. "And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So, when they had rowed about five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea." Now turn to Job ix. 8: "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea." So here was the very One who could do it. "And treadeth upon the waves of the sea." They saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh to the ship. And pray notice the context of that passage in Job—"Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and seaeth up the stars. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." I suppose every boy knows the star Arcturus. Orion is not so easily identified from the word in Scripture; but it is a singular fact that in the Pleiades, which count about seven to ten to an unpractised eye, but by scores through a telescope, there is a central star which holds the others together. Astronomers call it Alcyon. But the point I urge is this: That He who trod the waves of the sea; He who could put His foot down upon winds and waves without a tremble, and without their giving way to His tread, was the very Being who made that star Alcyon; and every night in your life brings out the Pleiades. Have you reflected upon the majesty of that act of His? By-and-by it will be true that He will command the sun, and it will rise not: when the earth shall flee away, and there shall be found no place for it. And that blue sky, which appears solid and spread out as a curtain, but whose limit could never be reached,

somewhere in that heaven Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. And the Being who does all this spreading out the heavens and sealing up the stars—who is He? What is His name? if thou canst tell. It is Jesus; and Jesus has been here, in this world of ours. He put His foot first upon that mountain-top, and then, seeing His disciples in trouble, descended from that mountain and trod the crest of the raging waves. "They see Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh to the ship." And He has said, "I will come again and receive you unto myself." And whether He be away one century or eighteen, He is fulfilling that word; and it is that frail bark which concentrates His thoughts as He sees it tossed with the angry waves, and His first thought will be to draw nigh to that ship. This world is very wicked, and ripening for judgment; but it is not this wicked world, but that tossed bark, which is the object of the attention of Him who called Alcyon and the Pleiades into being and sends them upon their nightly course. I do not think, for myself, that our minds are sufficiently occupied with this,—that it is this almighty One whose hands were nailed to the cross. That He who brings out these countless stars, to the naked eye appearing in their thousands, but when looked at through a powerful telescope, in "millions," and "billions"—that He, I say, is the One who hung upon the cross for you and for me, and the One who is coming again to receive us unto Himself.

But they want to see a sign direct from heaven. They had seen Him feeding the multitude, and they had seen Him walking on the sea; they had seen His mercy and His majesty. So the Lord answers, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." The point is that He is standing up for the honour of His Father. Then several times over He repeats, "I am the Bread of life." Then from verses 35 and 37 we see that if we come to Christ it is because we are drawn to Him—because we have been given to Him by the Father. And then He utters those words, since repeated to Him hundreds of times in secret, "And him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." He explains those words as to our being given of the Father and coming to the Son in three ways. First, that He came down from heaven to do the Father's will; as if that, of all things, would ever be the first with

Christ. And I am very much impressed, too, with the words, "I came down from heaven." There is something so grand in them, and they are so oft repeated in this gospel; as if here He were indeed a heavenly stranger. And three times over we read of the will of God, and each time put in different language; so that it is no fault with the Lord if it is not understood. It was not to create worlds, but to love you. Then He explains, in the second place, what this will is. He seems to know all about it so well. A saint who had known God fifty years could not talk about it like this; but He knew *all* about it, because He had been with the Father (verse 46 tells us so). "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And I want you to hold fast to all God's Word, and not allow the doctrine of election to be slurred over. People will talk of anything rather than election; but do not allow it. Then, thirdly, "And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." These verses seem to me to be like a piece of paper with very indistinct writing upon it, and we take a glass and read it a little better, and then a stronger glass, and it becomes very plain to us. I am sure we should not understand verse 38 by itself much, but that verse 39 helps us a little, and verse 40 makes it very plain. People may be frightened at election if they do not understand it much; but none can question the looking at Christ, believing, and having everlasting life.

Again, the Jews object, and say, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that He saith, I came down from heaven?" To which the Lord replies, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets," as if the whole book of the prophets were spread open before Him and He knew them all, "and they shall be all taught of God." I do not quite know why the Lord left out a part of the prophecy, and then put something in. It is a singular thing that Isaiah said, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." The Lord says, "They shall be all taught

of God, and shall come to Me." A nice explanation of Isaiah liv.

Then how many times this assurance occurs in this chapter, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." How thankful we ought to be for these Divine assurances. If they were not in Scripture we might be ready to give worlds for one and could not get it, and here they are strewn about this John vi. in profusion.—*Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln communicated by J. S. H.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. x. 13.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.



WE here learn that temptations are common to men. We are apt to think that our temptations and trials are worse than other people's. How often it is said, "Surely nobody is so tried as I am, there is a peculiarity in my case which no one can enter into," and thus excuse is found for a murmuring spirit, and for giving way to sin.

But immediately we are shown the resource of the tempted and tried, "GOD IS FAITHFUL."

In connection with this, turn to a passage in Heb. iv. 14, 16. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Mark there that our eye is directed to the High Priest, God manifested in the person of His Son. And the character of God, the wise, almighty, and infinitely loving One, is as it were centered in the high priest. If Jehovah of the old Covenant was to Israel a mighty deliverer, continually caring for them, as they journeyed through the wilderness, how much more the One who was made flesh, who passed through the temptations of Satan in the wilderness,—how much more is He able to succour us. We are called to look up to the Man at the right hand of God.

A bad temper is not infirmity, but the outcome of our weak and sinful nature. The Lord Jesus knows our infirmities. In connection with that, remember how the Apostle speaks of his infirmity. We do not know what it was, but the Lord knew. He calls it in Galatians iv. 14, "My temptation which was in my flesh." That infirmity which he felt to be a hindrance was by the grace of God a blessing to Him. It was "a messenger of Satan to buffet him," but the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Thus speaks the Great High Priest; the Man on the throne who has all power. It is a life long temptation, but day-by-day the suffering tempted one gets grace for the trial. At the end of his journey he can say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which Christ the righteous judge shall give to me," &c. (2 Tim. iv. 18). He took no glory to Himself, he says, "not I, but the grace of God that was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10). He overcame in the helplessness of dependence upon almighty grace. He could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv). "Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried," *i.e.*, when God's trial of him is passed, "he shall receive the crown of life" (James i. 12).

Thus we are cast upon God for His grace; if we are tempted then we have a faithful God to undertake for us. And, as we see in Heb. ii. 17, 18, our Lord is "able to succour them that are tempted," for He knows our infirmities, and hath, Himself suffered being tempted.

Notice these words—"Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." That implies that both the temptation and the way of escape are made by God. For illustration I refer you to the case of Abraham, in Genesis, xxii. 1, "It came to pass . . . that God did tempt Abraham," &c. The way of escape was the voice from heaven and the ram caught in the thicket. Abraham did not anticipate such a way, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from which also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 19). We also are to count upon death and

resurrection. Peter was warned of the coming assault of the adversary, and had he taken the warning and sought the grace that was able to keep him from falling, he might have been saved the sin of denying his Lord—but even after he fell, and was, as it were, deep in Satan's snare—even then a way of escape was provided for him. His bitter tears—his godly repentance and contrition of heart formed the way of escape for Peter. But how clearly his fall, shews that if we go to meet temptation in our strength we shall certainly fail.

Precipitate flight, was the only way of escape for Joseph (Genesis xxxix. 12), and in many such cases it is the only way still—see 1 Cor. vi. 18; x. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22.

Often has my counsel been asked in the case of persons converted to God who previously were engaged to be married. The one is saved the other is not. They say, "What am I to do? Am I to break off my engagement at once? or am I to go on to the consummation of the unequal yoke?" My answer is "God is faithful"—and He has promised that He will make a "way of escape." Beloved, be you fixed in heart at all costs to be faithful to God and He will not fail you in the trial. Sometimes His way of escape has been the conversion of the other also. Sometimes it has been by the unsaved one, finding the company of the child of God not what it was, asking to be relieved from the engagement. Thus by patient steadfast waiting upon God, grace and deliverance are obtained in such a way as brings glory to His name.

Look at the case of Daniel and the three Hebrew youths as recorded in Daniel i. "The king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and the wine which he drank. . . . But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Thus he purposed in his heart that he would not disobey God, and then he makes request of the prince of the eunuchs. "God brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs, and he granted him his request." That was the way of escape for Daniel and his companions.

God that sent a mighty tempest on the ship in which Jonah sought to flee from the presence of the

Lord, was He who prepared "a great fish" which brought him to land when God's purpose in his affliction was accomplished.

The one thing we need is fixedness of heart to obey God. "He is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." God knows how much we can bear; He has measured our strength. Beloved, make up your mind for suffering—count the cost. If you are fixed in heart to obey God, whatever it cost you, you will find that all your trials will lead you to God, and there you will find the sympathy of the Great High Priest, who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Every step we take in the path laid down for us in His Word is met by a league of opposition—the world, the flesh, and the devil, all are prepared to oppose us at every step. But, beloved, fear not, be true to God and all will be well. He will give us the victory over all our enemies.

We hear a great deal of holiness by faith, as if there was just one step of faith into the region of eternal calm, where opposition, conflict, and temptation for ever cease. You will find nothing of that in Scripture. It is a delusion. The devil may lead you into a region of calm, leading you to think that you are perfect, when you are disobeying God's Word.

We need not expect to overcome any temptation unless we take heed to God. We need to have on the whole armour that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We must therefore search and feed upon the Word day-by-day.

Again and again we are exhorted in the Scriptures to watch and to pray. There must be the prayer of dependence—looking up to God, and watching the enemy. The life of the Lord Jesus was one of constant dependence on His Father, and in this He is our great example.

Our Great High Priest is in the presence of God for us, we are therefore exhorted to come with boldness to a throne of grace. There is no overcoming temptation without going to a throne of grace. Temptation drives us right into the presence of God to have communion with Him. Herein lies the secret of our power to overcome temptation. We may thank God for the trials that bring us to Himself, to have real dealings with Him.

"God is faithful." Paul knew it, he had experienced the faithfulness of God. He knew what it was to realize the power of the living God in the midst of trial sustaining, upholding him, and causing him to triumph over all the opposition and temptation of the enemy.

JOHN'S THIRD EPISTLE.

BY F. A. B.

THE meaning of the name "John" is interesting, signifying "grace," or "whom the Lord graciously gave."

His surname, "Boanerges," divinely given (Mark iii. 17), means "a son of thunder." So that in his entire name we have the expression, "grace and truth," beautifully exemplified.

These principles, or divine attributes, are minutely interwoven, and should never be detached one from the other.

Too often we are creatures of extremes, and hence the heaven-given equilibrium of "grace and truth" is sadly disturbed. When we remember that John's Gospel, his Epistles, and finally the "Revelation" which he penned, were written subsequently to all other inspired writings, and after evils of every kind had been introduced by Satan, we see additional force and beauty in the meaning of his name, "whom the Lord graciously gave."

He gave him as a special messenger to His people so that when love waxed cold, we might be urged to diligent repentance; and when evil should abound, our feet, so prone to err, might afresh be guided into the track of faithful obedience to Him, "who liveth, and was dead."

The first glimpse we have of this apostle is in conjunction with Peter, as the attached disciple of "John the Baptist."

He was following the light from heaven, as far as it was then revealed; but when the splendour and attractiveness of the greater light shone across his path, he forsook "the Baptist," and followed Jesus.

Nor was his intimacy with the Son of God that of a cold or calculating friendship; it was warm, ardent, and intense.

To him the bosom of Jesus was as a familiar pillow where, when oppressed and wearied with the cares of earth, he might rest in undisturbed repose.

Characterized by a steadfast and unobtrusive love, forgetful of all personal danger, we find him standing beside the Cross, clinging to the Lord in the hour of His deepest woe. Peter, whose profession of love and loyalty was so vehement, may, in the hour of trial, succumb to surrounding influences; but with John it was different. He made no ostentatious display of his affection, but he had (when reclining on the bosom of Jesus), drawn out a power which enabled him to be true-hearted to the last.

And he had his reward, for he alone of all the apostles heard his Master's voice from the very Cross when He, in filial and touching tenderness, committed His mother to the care of John just ere he expired on the Tree. And when, three days later, "Mary Magdalene" sought him and Peter, and spoke of the empty tomb, with what alacrity did he hasten thither!

Peter may run hurriedly to that grave, but John's deeper and more constant love shall make his feet go faster still! And to John belongs the greatest of all honours, in that he was the first to understand and believe the mystery of the Lord's resurrection (John xx. 8).

Such are some of the gleams of light in the character of John, shining out so visibly and so brightly in the earlier years of his discipleship; but, when we come to the date of his epistle to Gaius, he is an old man, and soon to pass into the presence of Him he had loved with such surpassing affection.

Here it is, he calls himself "the Elder," and it is because he writes as such that his words are worthy of our closest and most prayerful attention.

The epistle is to an individual named "Gaius" (joy or gladness), and was probably written to encourage and guide him in a time of special trouble in the church with which he was identified.

It is our purpose, with the Lord's help, to refer to the leading features of this epistle, believing they are specially applicable to the saints of God in the present time of difficulty.

Gaius is called the "well-beloved," a stronger expression than "beloved," denoting the esteem, and also the measure of the esteem, in which he was held by the brethren.

Now, it is clear he had earned this regard by the manner of his life and testimony: and we can conceive no higher ambition (next to pleasing the Lord)

than to be "beloved" and, "well-beloved" by the children of God with whom we come in contact.

This is the key to all fruitful testimony, and it is the absence of this beautiful affection which so frequently mars the public ministrations of the Lord's servants.

Only let the saints be convinced that they "are in our hearts to die and live with them," and this will beget a corresponding love, and cause all feelings of distrust and suspicion to quickly vanish.

And now, let us look at the character of John's love for Gaius—"Whom I love in the truth."

There is a something mistaken for Christian love, which is hollow and spurious, which consists of mere sentiment and talk.

Such, however, was not the love of the great Apostle John, his was a sanctified and purifying love in the truth. By which we mean that he loved the children of God so much that he sought to help them to understand and do the will of Christ.

His prayer for Gaius too, is very instructive, and embraces principles we are apt to forget.

The one desire relates to secular prosperity, and the other to the health of the body. But then, Gaius was a person for whom these things could be safely and profitably asked, the prosperity of his soul (his inner spiritual life) was already in the ascendancy, and therefore the apostle knew that increased prosperity and increased strength of body would alike be consecrated to his Redeemer.

We all know that reverses in business, and impaired health, are at times the chastisements of our Father on account of our low spiritual condition.

Were He to bestow increasing wealth and robust health of body upon us in that state, they would be curses instead of blessings.

His love is a jealous love, and He claims the first place in our hearts.

A spirit of worldly ambition is one of the characteristics of the age, and, alas! some of our spirits even as Christians are imbued with it.

"They *that will* be rich fall into temptation, and a snare," is an apostolic motto sadly forgotten.

Many are discontented with their lot in life, and aspire to higher things simply from a grasping and covetous spirit. Domestic servants will, for a paltry pound or two, give up their situations, and go into places where they are unable to assemble with the saints to

"break bread" on the first day of the week, or attend an ordinary meeting. Others, in good employment, and living in comparative comfort, will, for the sake of being their own masters, and having a little more of this world's respectability, put themselves into a position which hinders their presence at "the Bible reading" and "the prayer meeting"; which, worse than all, so occupies their time that they can scarcely find a moment for Scripture-reading and meditation.

These instances do not exhaust the forms of covetousness and worldliness among us, but they and similar things lie at the root of the death-like condition of many assemblies.

Ecclesiastical separation is not sufficient to maintain the power of assembly life, it needs to be maintained by a godly and consistent walk in the privacy of our individual and daily lives.

(To be Continued.)

THE NAZARITE.

NUMBERS VI.

ISRAEL, as a nation, separated unto God, was a type of the Lord Jesus; hence we find many expressions in the Old Testament which, though they were primarily spoken of the nation, referred with a much fuller meaning to the Lord, who was finally to become their Representative and Head, as in Isa. xlix. 3, "O, Israel, in whom I will be glorified!" and that remarkable passage quoted from Hosea xi. 1, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. ii. 15), which was again a prophecy of the time when the Son, rejected from this world, another Egypt, was "taken up" into heaven, "Whom the heavens *must* receive until the times of restitution of all things."

But not only was the nation, as such, typical of the Lord Jesus, but the various parts into which Israel was divided by Divine arrangement contained in type the manifold characteristics of our Lord in resurrection. And as we stand in Him, our risen Head, these various aspects of separation apply to us also, and so contain practical lessons for us, as to our high calling in Christ Jesus, "that we might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing."

The warrior, the Levite, the priest, and the king, each type finds its counterpart, or rather, I might say, its perfect fulfilment in Him,

"In Whom the shadows of the Law
Are all fulfilled, and now withdraw."

But the separation of the Nazarite in Israel had the peculiarity of being *voluntary*. All the others were matters of inheritance or age, but this depended wholly on the *will* of the Nazarite, and might be for a longer or shorter time, according to the "vow."

In the Nazarite we see a type of the Lord Jesus, in this present dispensation, as the One who is separated from among His brethren. When the Lord Jesus came to earth, the shepherds announced Him as "The King of the Jews." John the Baptist came preaching the "Gospel of the kingdom," and the Lord Jesus followed preaching the same. At the close of His ministry, He rides into Jerusalem as the King—"Behold, your King cometh." But, though the children took up the response, the rulers murmured, and the Lord's words then plainly tell them that they had seen Him among them, as their promised King, for the last time, till they shall carry on the "Hosanna" (Save now) of the children, and say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Ps. cxviii. 25, 26).

But, in His last loving words to His disciples, He comforts them by telling them of a better home, adding, "that where I am, there ye may be also." True, the nation had refused their King, and so their prospects of the kingdom were for the moment shattered; but He was going to His Father, and His home and His portion were to be theirs. "Not of the world," they were to hold the same separated position as He. United to Him, they were to share His rejection, outside the world now, and to be sharers of His glory hereafter. A time would come when the world would recognize Him as the Sent One, and see in them the trophies of His love; but it was not yet (John xiv., xvii.). In the interval, letting go all earthly glory, He voluntarily becomes the Nazarite, or separated One. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19).

Joseph's history presents to us, as in a picture, this aspect of the Lord's rejection. Cast out by his brethren, for many years Joseph is lost to their sight and knowledge. But, in the interval, God carries out His own purposes for blessing in him and through him. He exalts him to glory and honour, and from a people who knew him not gives him a bride and family, and finally makes him the means of life and blessing to his brethren. And when Jacob (Gen. xlix.

26) blesses Joseph, as the typical "shepherd and stone of Israel," he pronounces the blessing on "the crown of the head of him that was 'a Nazarite' from his brethren."

Moses gives him the same title (Deut. xxxiii. 16).

In the sixth of Numbers we are given all the conditions of Naziritism.

The first was that it was to be a *voluntary* "Naziritism" *unto the Lord* (verse 2).

The word "Nazarite" means a "*separated one*;" and wherever the words "separated," "to separate," "separation," or "*consecration*," occur throughout this chapter, they are only different forms of the word "Nazarite." It was, therefore, a voluntary "separation" unto the Lord. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God . . . by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all" (Heb. x. 9, 10).

But separation *to the Lord* always involves separation *from* something also, and in this case three distinct things are mentioned—

First, "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernel even to the husk" (Num. vi. verses 3, 4).

Wine in Scripture is typical of earthly joy, pleasure, or prosperity (Judges ix. 13, Ps. civ. 15, Prov. xxxi. 6, Zech. x. 7). But to the Lord the only fruit that this world yielded were the wild grapes of the hatred of unregenerate hearts. Even Judah, his "pleasant plant," afforded Him nothing better (Isa. v. 5). "How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?" (Jer. ii. 21).

And, therefore, so to speak, at the last Passover, He takes upon Himself the Nazarite vow, in the words, "I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until *that day* when I drink it *new* with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29).

And has this world anything better to yield now to us than it had to Him then? Have the "grapes of gall" (Deut. xxxii. 32) changed their character for us? Or are any of us still trying to satisfy ourselves with the wild grapes of an unregenerate world? Or have we found out that here "the eye is not satisfied

with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing?" (Eccl. i. 8). "My people," says God, "shall be *satisfied* with My goodness" (Jer. xxxi. 14). "Satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 23). Here the Nazarite's heart finds rest. "*Thy love is better than wine*" (Cant. i. 2).

In Numb. vi. 3, 4, the fruit of the vine is described in seven different ways, as though God would warn us against seeking to satisfy our hearts with anything here. He would not have us drink either of the wine of its pleasures, or of the bitter vinegar of its disappointments, nor feed our souls with anything of it, from the kernel to the husk. "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. 16).

"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one (R.V.). And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true; and we are *in Him that is true*, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John v. 19, 20). Do we really understand and appreciate that we are *in Him*, and no longer in the "wicked one?" Do we realise that *in Him*, then, we are separated unto God—"nazarited?" Then let us seek to carry out its conditions in fellowship with Him. "He is not here: He is risen." Then, fellow-believer, what has this world without Christ got for you and for me?

The second condition was that the Nazarite was to allow the "locks of His hair to grow." In verse 7, it is called the "Naziritism of God upon His head;" and in the 18th verse, "the hair of the head of His Naziritism." In 1 Cor. xi. 14, 15, Paul says, "Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him? but if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." The hair, then, was the outward sign of weakness, involving subjection and dependence. The Nazarite, as he stood among men, was as one who, *evidently*, in separation to his God, had laid aside all dependence upon his own powers as a natural man, and lived in dependence upon God's strength only. And here again we have a beautiful type of Him who, "being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped (R.V. marg.)—to be on an equality with God, but *emptied Himself*

(R.V.) . . . becoming obedient *even unto death*, yea the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8). "He was crucified *through weakness*, yet He liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). Has earth ever seen such a spectacle of weakness as when the Son of God, who "upholdeth all things by the word of His power," seemed powerless in "the wicked hands" of those by whom He was "crucified and slain?" As the prophet in wondering language describes Him, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. liii. 7).

His words before Pilate tell of how entirely independent He was of human power: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36). Yet He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*" (Rom. i. 4). And in that resurrection power lies the secret of our strength also. Therefore the apostle prays that we may know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead. . . ." (Eph. i. 19, 20). But how do we learn experimentally this "exceeding greatness of His power?" Just where Paul learned it—at the cross, "where no flesh can glory in His presence," "being made conformable unto His death." "I am crucified with Christ," writes the same apostle; "nevertheless I live—*yet not I*, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). "My strength is made perfect in weakness," is God's message to His servant, who lays hold of the promise with the glad response, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

(To be continued).

PRECEPT AND PROMISE.



WOULD it not be well at the beginning of another year, to remind ourselves how intimately connected are the "precepts" and "promises" of Scripture?

One of the errors of the present day is seen in the

desire of men to enjoy the promises of God while heedless of His precepts, and it may be *many of us* have fallen into this snare.

Daniel, Nehemiah, and others, in their confessions to Jehovah, humbly owned departure from the Lord's "precepts," and have therein left us a wholesome example.

We must not forget that in keeping them *there is great reward* (Psa. xix. 11), whereas a negligence in this respect is productive of most of our trials and difficulties.

Precept and promise are in matters of obedience inseparable; for instance—

"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppression, &c. (precept); he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure" (promise)—(Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. Compare also Psa. xxxvii. 25, Isa. i. 19).

Again in Matt. vi., 31—"Seek ye first," &c. (precept), "and all these things—food and raiment—shall be added" (promise).

The same principle is in Matt. xi., 28-30, and has a double application—

To the sinner oppressed with guilt, "Come unto Me," etc. (precept) "and I will give you rest" (promise).

To the saint anxious to be obedient, "Take my yoke upon you," &c. (precept), and ye shall find rest unto your soul" (promise).

Again in 2 Cor. vi., "Come out from among them" (precept), "and I will receive you," &c. (promise).

These instances might be indefinitely multiplied, and it should be our anxious desire not to separate what God has joined. May the Lord enable us, as we begin a fresh year, to be obedient to His precepts, that we may experience the joy of His promises.

Can we each truly say, "I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right"? There can be no doubt that many of our trials—"church trials," "family trials," "business trials," &c., &c., flow out of setting aside the precepts of Christ.

We need to be obedient in all things, and sustained in all things by constant fellowship with God. May our souls be exercised in His presence, that we may be able to exclaim, "I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil."

W. 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 ccxiv.

Please explain 1 Cor. xv. 2. See also margin “hold fast.” But suppose they do not hold fast, what then?

REPLY.

This chapter contemplates a letting go of the very foundation truth of the Gospel viz., *resurrection*.

The line of argument throughout is, “Has Christ been raised?” That is the great question—by the answer to this all resurrection hope stands or falls; by this the truth of the Gospel and the verity of our faith is established or shattered. “If Christ be not risen your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

This is that truth which every genuine believer will hold fast to the end. The letting go of this would show that whatever knowledge or profession had existed it was all merely intellectual—there had been no genuine faith.

As to the expression, “unless ye have believed in vain,” that is—supposing, for the sake of argument, that Christ was not risen. Compare ver. 17—which corresponds to this clause in ver. 2—with ver. 20, which answers it all triumphantly.

QUESTION ccxv.

Is it right for a Christian to remain in a situation where she can only get to “the breaking of bread” “every second Lord’s-day?”

REPLY.

There are many positions lawful and right in which this is the only feasible arrangement. It may be so with husband and wife whose very young or ailing children require constant attention. It is very generally so with servants where there is a large household requiring that *some* of the servants be always on the spot. And in farm service, and on board steamers, and many other situations, no other equitable arrangement is possible.

Whilst setting very high value on the privilege of getting to the gathering of Saints around the Lord’s table every Lord’s-day, we should not deem *this alone* to be sufficient warrant for leaving a situation if in

all other respects it seemed to be the place the Lord had provided.

QUESTION ccxvi.

1 John ii. 9-11., also iii. 15. Do these verses refer to unsaved professors or to those who are born of God?

REPLY.

In this epistle *profession* is tested by the fruit of love or hatred, righteousness or sin, truth or error. Hence the expression “He that saith” so often occurring. The development of Satan’s last and deepest device to overthrow the authority of Christ comes into view. It is not open opposition—that is hardly contemplated throughout the whole epistle—but first the profession of Christianity—the outward form of godliness—identification with the assembly of God then mischief wrought within—error held and taught, and, finally, a going out from the gathered saints, (see ii. 19), evidencing their error, unrighteousness, hatred, and proving that they had never been born again, and that notwithstanding all their profession they were the offspring of Cain and in darkness even until now.

QUESTION ccxvii.

Please explain Acts ix. 7 and xxii. 9, so as to reconcile what appears to be a discrepancy.

REPLY.

In chap. ix. 7 the words are “hearing a voice”—in xxii. 9, “they heard not *the voice of Him that spake to me.*”

It is quite consistent to suppose that “a voice” was heard, as in John xii. 29, which in the ears of the people sounded only as thunder. The dazzling brightness of the presence of the Lord—which was visible to those who accompanied Saul—was not improbably accompanied by a heavenly voice of such a character.

But the human voice, in Hebrew accents, speaking directly and personally to Saul, and to him alone, no other ear discerned.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER i. 2-4.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY J. R. C.



VERSE 2. — “We give thanks to God always for you all.” He knew every one of them, and that they were *all* believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is no reproach for any one to be a Christian in these days, but rather the reverse. But the moment these Thessalonians confessed Christ they were branded as the offscourings of the earth, and cut off from their relations and friends. Nothing but faith in the living God could enable them to endure this trial.

“Making mention of you in our prayers.” Whatever the apostle’s prayers in public may have been, if we judge from the number and variety of requests which he mentions in his various epistles, his prayers in private must indeed have been long ones. If you examine the apostle’s letters to the various Churches, you will see the important place that prayer had in his mind. How many places, persons, and services he mentions in his prayers. The sad lack of the spirit of real prayer in our assemblies is the cause of much of our lack of power, grace, godliness, and true heart-searching ministry. May the Lord touch our hearts about this one matter. There is much time and energy spent by many of the Lord’s servants in His service, whilst real secret dealing with God in prayer is often neglected. Satan ever seeks to get the Lord’s servants more occupied with their service than with the Lord. If we would have power with men we must have it with God first. How very few there are of God’s children whose path has been as that of the just, “shining more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. iv. 18). How few have gone on in their service shining brighter and brighter, and growing stronger and stronger, like those spoken of in Psalm xcii. 14, “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.” There may be much activity in the Lord’s service whilst there is little communion with God; secret, hearty, real dealing with God having ceased. When this is the case such are on the high road to an open fall, and sooner or later, there will surely be a sad break down, which will bring dishonour on the name

B

of God, and misery to their own souls. May we all learn a lesson from Paul in this matter, and seek day-by-day to have close dealings with God in the secret of His presence as to our walk and service before the world and in the Church.

Verse 3.—“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.” We have three things mentioned here, viz., “work of faith,” “labour of love,” and “patience of hope.” We may be doing much work, but is it work of faith? There may be much labour, but is it labour of love? And we may show much patience, but is it the patience of hope? The apostle’s work was indeed a work of faith, for he never engaged in his work unless he could count upon the Lord being with him in it. His labours were labours of love, for he went on ministering to the saints in the midst of opposition, indifference, and misrepresentation. He could say to the saints at Corinth, “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved” (2 Cor. xii. 15). And as he laboured on he had patience in it all; and it was the patience of hope. Although he knew that nothing but poverty, suffering, and even death, awaited him, he went on in the midst of it all assured that the Lord was with him, and that at His coming he would receive a crown of righteousness for faithfulness to Him. And as he looks on those Thessalonian saints, and sees them going on after the same pattern, and in the same spirit, he gives thanks on their behalf.

Turn with me to Rev. ii. 2, 4, in connection with this subject. “I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience. . . . Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love.” There you find the same three words, “works,” “labour,” “patience.”

What was it that gave value to the work done by these Thessalonian saints? It was faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What gave value to their labour? Love to the Lord Jesus. What gave value to their patience? In the midst of all their labours they held stedfastly to the hope that their Lord was coming soon for them; and they desired to win His commendation.

The Lord can find no pleasure in anything that we do for Him except it is done in faith. We may labour on day-by-day, but if we are not constrained

by love to Him our Lord finds no delight in it. We may be Scripturally correct as to the way in which we serve Him, but if *love* be not the motive power by which we do it, it cannot be acceptable to Him, and therefore it will be labour in vain. The Lord knew the works, labour, and patience of the Church at Ephesus, but the faith, hope, and love which gave value to all, had declined.

The Lord looks down into our hearts for these three things, viz., faith, hope, and love; and if He cannot find them there is nothing there to give joy to His heart—nothing that he can, so to speak, eat as pleasant fruit. It is like going into a garden to feast on its fruit, and finding nothing but leaves—no fruit to satisfy; or, going to a well thirsty and weary, and finding it empty and dry.

Let these things test us, and may we each examine our hearts to see what faith, love, and patience are there—to see if there be in us that which gives joy to the Lord Jesus Christ. Better far that there was less labour and more love, less activity in service and more of the fruit of the Spirit.

Beloved, are we keeping in memory His last words—“Behold I come quickly?” Has that blessed hope its true place in our hearts? or have we descended to earthly hopes and prospects? Have we forgotten His promise? “I am coming again to take you to be with Myself.” “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.”

Verse 4.—“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

Look, in connection with this, to 2 Thess. ii. 13. “We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” This passage is similar to the verse (4) just read, in which the two truths of God’s love and electing grace are brought together. That expression, “your election,” means that God, according to His sovereign will, has chosen us. It is put very pointedly in 2 Thess. ii.—“Chosen from the beginning.” That agrees with Eph. i. 4: “He hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world.” This is God’s sovereign will in Christ, but the purpose of God was given effect to by the “sanctification (or

setting apart) of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” While this is blessedly true, that God has chosen us in Christ before the world was, it is also equally true that God loves all men, and that Christ gave Himself a ransom for *all*; and that God our Saviour “will have all men to be saved” (1 Tim. ii. 4, 6).

Many are afraid of the doctrine of election as found in the Scriptures; they try to explain it away because it seems to them to conflict with the truth of God’s universal love to a guilty world. Remember this, beloved, we must be content to leave a great many things in God’s word just as He has revealed them to us, accepting them simply as little children, even though we cannot understand them.

A little child in the A. B. C. class cannot be expected to solve a problem in Algebra. We are just like little children in this respect, we cannot understand or reconcile many of the deep things that are in the Word of God; but it is our happy privilege to leave them with the Lord, and to accept them just as God has revealed them to us. When Paul went to Thessalonica, he delivered to them the Gospel as God had given it to him; and when God gave testimony to the Word of His grace by saving them, Paul looked at them and said: “you were chosen of God,” and rejoices in them as those set apart by the Holy Spirit. They received the truth as the result of God having from the beginning, chosen them to salvation. You may call that “Calvinism,” but it is God’s truth, and it is our privilege to accept it as such. How blessed to see those Thessalonian converts saved by the sovereign grace of God, as the result of the Gospel of God’s grace ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in fulfilment of God’s eternal purpose. If the Apostle had looked at these Thessalonians, sunk as they were in idolatry apart from God’s power and grace, his heart might, indeed, have sunk within him in despair. But he knew that God was able to save them; and he therefore laboured in faith, assured that God would accomplish His own ends by His own appointed means.

The Lord Jesus could say: “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me” (John vi. 37). Whilst we hold that side of God’s truth firmly—because God has revealed it to us in His Word—do not let us pull down the other side, viz., that in the Gospel salvation is offered to all, and that “whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting

life." In the Gospel message we have a proclamation issuing from the very throne of God to every creature, of pardon to the guilty, life to the dead, cleansing to the defiled; it is *to* all, and *for* all, "whosoever will" is the one grand condition. If you want to reconcile these two divine truths, I cannot help you: I am perfectly contented to have the two in God's Word and believe them both. With confidence I can proclaim that God loves the sinner, and that there is pardon for him in Christ if he will have it; at the same time, as I look into the Word, I see that every child of God is chosen from the beginning unto salvation. Every effort to reconcile these counter-truths by paring them down to meet the finite thoughts of man, has only ended in failure.

I might say to any who would cavil at these statements,—what is the reason that you and I are here with the Gospel sounding in our ears, and in the full blaze of New Testament truth, while others have not heard even the name of Jesus, the Saviour? Is that not election? Has not God chosen to put us in these circumstances? and does not that alone show that God is a Sovereign? As we have it in Romans ix. 20, 21: "O man, who art thou that repliest (margin 'disputest') against God? shall the thing formed say unto him who formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

Beloved, let us accept these two divine truths as God has put them in His Word. One may say: "Oh, you are a Calvinist;" or, another may say: "You are an Arminian," I cannot help it; I must abide by the Word of the Lord. Both truths are in God's Word, and I rejoice to receive and to believe in both,—God's eternal choice, and His love to all men.

Keep no secrets from God. If we are withholding anything that we cannot take to the Lord and ask Him what He thinks of it, there can be no communion between the soul and God.

When I have ascertained the will of God respecting my path, through meditation on *His* word, by prayer, self-examination, &c., then let me give myself to prayer that I may do the thing in a right way. We often bring discredit on a good thing by executing it in a bad way.

"LORD AND CHRIST."

(Continued from page 9.)

RASSING on now to consider, with all brevity, *the deeper and richer significance* which the second title, CHRIST, acquires in the New Testament Scriptures of post-resurrection date, the observation must needs be made that still, as of old, the title bears with it the thought of power, Divine power; to him who is born from above, Christ is indeed the "power of God," and that *for him* as directly and individually as He is Lord over him. It was a godly instinct that prompted the lines—

"Oh, CHRIST, thou heavenly Lamb!
Joy of the Father's heart:
Now let Thy love my soul inflame,
Fresh power to me impart."

Further than this it will be noticed that the word, Christ, is used in two new and distinct senses (the second, indeed, growing out of the first) in the Pauline Epistles, a special revelation as to this having been given to the Apostle of the Gentiles.

In the first place it is used as descriptive of the place of the glorified Son of God in His relationship to the Church of God—CHRIST is the Head of that Church, and it is His Body; and, in the second place, as descriptive of the whole of that Body—Head, members, and all complete. In the one case it is *definitive*, it is CHRIST in the midst and over the Church; in the other it is *comprehensive*, the association is so complete, the unity so perfect, that all is lost in Him; the one title fittingly describes the whole.*

Further, the power of God, which ever centres in Christ, is in the first place *for* the saints, because Christ, as Head and guide and director, assumed the whole responsibility for those whose path throughout this life is ordered by Him alone; God in Him and through Him undertaking the supply of every need, the deliverance from every peril, and the solution of every difficulty; and, in the second place, the power is *through* the saints, because of the place which God

* Instances of this double use of the one term are not wanting in Scripture; the description of the candlestick of gold in Ex. xxvi. and the parable of the vine in John xv. are suggested as in point. Students of the Word of God will not fail to notice that the typical and parabolic teaching in these two cases point directly to the truth which is being considered here.

has given to them in the unity which He has named CHRIST.

In these days of increasing scepticism and abounding error, in which the difficulties in the path of those who seek to serve God on earth thicken year by year, there is heard continually *a longing cry from earnest men* in almost all parts of the habitable earth for power, more power; and while this is of itself an occasion for thankfulness and praise to God, as evidencing felt need among His people, how much it is to be desired that it were known with assurance far and wide that there is one way, and one way only, in which the power so much desired may be obtained in reality and from God. That way is *not* the passage of the mind through some ecstatic or other emotion, more or less violent; through some "crisis" experience in which a "full surrender" of self is thought to be made; through some experience which seems to resemble (as far as it can be judged by one who has never trod the path) a feat of spiritual gymnastics, and furnishing in its emotional excitement a positive temptation to Satan to present delusions when the mind is least able to descry or resist them. No; the God who glorified His Son Jesus made that same Jesus both LORD and CHRIST: as Lord He has all authority, and as Christ He is the very power of God; and that power is for the man whose heart yields itself entirely, and submits itself wholly, to His perfect authority, not by the passage of some rhapsodical experience in which sentiment is the qualifying element, but by the humble and steadfast keeping of the word of Him who is owned as Lord. For *the path of obedience is the only path of power*, and power, too, not ephemeral or evanescent, like the spurious offspring of a changeable emotion, but living and eternal—that which will wear, but not wear out; that which may be used, but never used up; and that which will provide the pilgrim with strength for the journey, the warrior with might for the battle, and the servant with sufficiency for the work.

There is a further distinction between the titles Lord and Christ, as used in New Testament Scripture, that may be pointed out in a few closing sentences.

It has reference to the gathering together of those who have received grace from God to regard the Name of Jesus as an all-sufficient centre for any assembly of saints.

The more public meetings of such may be divided into two principal classes, according as the part

taken in bringing about the meetings by those who compose them is passive or active—that is to say, according as the initiative is taken by God Himself acting upon the believer's heart by His Spirit in direct commandment (in which case one has part in the meeting as being *gathered TO or IN* the Name of Jesus), or by the believer acting in accordance with that which he knows (through the revelation which God has given of Himself) to be pleasing to God, but for which there is no direct and definite mandate: one's part, then, being that of one who had *assembled himself* in accordance with arrangements previously made with others, or in response to some invitation from the brethren.

It is important to remember that there is no *authoritative* leading of the Holy Spirit, except through the pages of the Word of God: hence when He gathers authoritatively, He gathers according to the commandment of God previously given; and those who yield themselves in obedience to such commandment find, according to the promise, the LORD in their midst, and all that is done in and by a company thus gathered, ought to be done by virtue of the presence and under the authority of the LORD; then action taken on earth is owned and acknowledged in heaven, because of the divine recognition of that presence; the promise of Matt. xviii. 18 is still verified, and God still owns and maintains in His omnipotence the action of His people when carried out as with the LORD in the midst. Through this consideration, the putting away from the fellowship of the assembly can only take place at times when believers are, by the Holy Spirit, gathered to the Name of the Lord (see 1 Cor. v. 5), and we judge that receiving into or restoration to fellowship are of the same character—the "binding" and "loosing" of Mat, xviii, 18 being upon the same footing as to authority.

When, on the other hand, Christians are brought together by arrangement among themselves or some one of themselves, without that which we have termed the *authoritative* leading of the Spirit (though certainly not without the mighty influence which He exercises over the mind and the judgment of true disciples, in which He so teaches of the ways and of the character of God that no room is left for doubt as to whether that which is being done is pleasing to Him), it is futile to talk of the Holy Spirit having gathered them together, and equally to claim any knowledge of the special presence of Jesus as LORD in the midst.

High-sounding words are sometimes uttered about this, but there is no difficulty in pouring out high-sounding words about anything. The pity is that by such, thoughtless minds are easily carried away. In this case their vanity is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that no one can or does claim for such a meeting the authority or the power to *act* in the name of the Lord in any single particular.

One of Sir Isaac Newton's "Laws of Nature" is sometimes rendered, "Action and reaction are always equal and contrary." That law appears to obtain to a great measure in things spiritual. There is always a danger of flying from one extreme to another. Such danger is met in this particular matter in this way. When the mind is enabled to grasp the difference of principle between the authoritatively-gathered meeting and that gathered by human instrumentality the thought is very likely to arise that since human arrangement has convened the meeting, surely human arrangement must provide for its wants, must nominate speakers, and provide a programme for their guidance. It cannot be said that there is *no* occasion on which this would be the right course to take; but dealing for the moment more particularly with the assemblings of ourselves together in what are commonly known as "conferences," there is certainly a more excellent way, which has for its centre and its operative power once again the precious title CHRIST.

He who is the Head of His people, in Whom is the direction of their affairs and the power of their meetings, is still truly "among" (See Col. i. 27, marginal reading) the "saints and faithful brethren" (Col. i. 2) at such times; and though they may not act in authority from Him, as though they were gathered to Him as Lord, yet they may (and they do) know His power and His sufficiency for all their needs.

It befits, therefore, those who have part in the convening of meetings of God's saints to give themselves to prayer in their work, that God may avert the entrance of the thin edge of the wedge of unbelief, and to give all, while distinguishing between such gatherings and those wherein we have the direct authority of the LORD, an understanding of and faith in the fulness of the sufficiency of CHRIST as Head to direct His members and to order Himself, at such times, the ministry of those whom He has fitted for this particular service and has given to His people for their help and their cheer.

W. H. H.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER VI.

THE rest of this chapter is occupied in showing us how we get this eternal life —by feeding upon Christ. Now, Christ is here presented to us in three ways.

He is presented in humiliation as the manna; as crucified, with His flesh eaten and His blood drunk; and glorified, in the closing verses, referring to His incarnation, His death, and His resurrection. He was the Son of God in humiliation, even when He trod this earth, with His feet literally upon the seas, or among the streets of Nazareth. He was the Son of God, and to know Him, to discover His true glory beneath that veil of humiliation, even then, was to have eternal life. Christ is the eternal life, the bread which cometh down from heaven, of which a man may eat thereof and not die. And notice particularly too that He explains that He had seen the Father, and that none else had. He gives us a glimpse of His ineffable glory. God grant we may ever have a true, full, adequate conception of Christ in His infinite humiliation; that it was Christ who made every angel, every star, every man that was there in that street, and in that tiny cottage. It is so difficult to grasp.

"Wondrous was Thy love in giving
Jesus for our sins to die;
Wondrous was His grace in leaving,
For our sakes, His home on high."

I ask your attention to these facts about the manna; and bear this in mind, that always it is to be taken into the soul for strength to live it out. If saved men we are called to follow Christ—to rough it as He did. The manna of which we read was small. He who fills heaven, in the world was small, despised, was of no reputation. Dare you be willing to be despised, if you are a true believer? Yes; if you take it into your soul that "He loved me and gave Himself for me," you will not mind it; if you do not you will be wanting to go to heaven in a coach and six, and to be spared the opposition you must encounter. It was white and sweet to show that He who thus loved was One utterly different to what we are by nature. It was on the ground, referring to His extreme degradation, "Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death." Christ humbled Himself, so

that the sinner could touch Him, and say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." It was round; it had no points. Christ had no character, no prominent feature, nothing marked in Him. His love never transcended His holiness, or His holiness His love; but He was like the fine flour of the meat offering. It was free; there it was, only to be picked up. Christ is being preached now, and all the sinner has to do is to take Christ for himself. Any one may appropriate this text, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." It was ample: we have got it; but there is plenty for others. It was close to them; it dropped about their habitations; they had not a long way to go for it. There is no need to run twenty miles nor wait twenty years to find Christ—"The Word is nigh thee;" God is sincere in pressing salvation on unsaved souls. It was gathered in the morning as early as they could get it. God would not have us delay an hour in taking Christ. It fell in the darkness. I cannot see, nor you, on what souls this precious truth of Christ is falling now. God can; darkness and light are both alike to Him. Some souls are taking it in, and some, it may be, are loathing it. Some may not see the operation, and may laugh at it; others are saying, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me." It fell by miracle. Persons have travelled this wilderness since, and no manna is there now; and if this Word is brought nigh to us, it is only by a miracle of grace. They had to stoop to pick it up. Have you dared to come down from any self-esteem or self-righteousness and just taken Christ and His salvation all for nothing? Are you content to be nobody but a poor lost, saved sinner? and then, are you content to be derided by the world? You will be the moment you take it into your soul, and dare to live it out. There was none gathered on the Sabbath. There are two meanings to the Sabbath in antitype—God's rest and God's millenium. And when Christ comes there will be no hope for the unsaved; no salvation when once Christ has come down, but strong delusion. When He comes in glory it will be the time to be identified with Him in glory; it is the time now to be identified with Him in suffering. You would be content to be called anything when you see Christ in glory. Ah! but there was none fell on the Sabbath. It was adapted to the circumstances of every day life; whether wanted as food for the strong man or the

child, it was adapted for all. And there is not one here this precious word ("He loved me and gave Himself for me") will not suit. It will do for you; if you have a great many cares it will buoy you up; if you have enemies it will enable you to brave such, and to meet them placidly. The manna, despised as it was upon earth, was laid up in the Tabernacle before God, as we read in Exodus xvi.; though there was none in the Temple, as we read in 2 Kings viii. It signifies, that whilst we are in the wilderness feeding on Christ down here, God Himself is feeding upon Christ up there. Whilst we are saying, "Christ loved me and gave Himself for me," our God Himself is having communion with the Son about all this path of degradation and service unto death; and every time a sinner is saved or a soul restored, it is evidence of the communion of God with His Christ. I have said it was the bread of the mighty; the way for any poor, timid soul to become strong—a mighty man of valour—is this, "The son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is a striking fact that those wretched souls with David in the cave Adullam, as we read in Samuel, through being companions of David, became so mighty; feeding on Christ makes the weakest strong. It fell with the dew round about the camp. If the Word is preached here, rest assured there is the dew of blessing; and unwise are you indeed if you do not let it have its blessed way in your soul: eat it, my brother, even that precious Christ of Galatians ii. Supposing you do not; that which was not eaten bred worms and stank. I believe, in our preaching places where the Word is preached, many understand the gospel and the way in which it should be put as well as the preacher himself, but they have never eaten it, they are gospel hardened; that is the effect. If the Word does not do you good it does you harm; that is a solemn thing. The manna falls as the Word is preached, and if you go on learning theoretically, and do not say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," it were better you had never heard it. "But I do," you say. Do you? Are you getting stronger? A solemn thing in the light of eternity;—either you are getting stronger, or it is getting to breed worms and stink. Where does it fall? Just round about the camp and nowhere else. Wherever Christ is not preached there is no manna; but where the Word is preached there it is falling. And it is falling, falling now close by

you, and it is yours to make your choice, and eat and become strong, or to loathe it and it will stink. Thousands of places there are where God is little known: the Word is close to thee; lay hold of it. And it fell daily. You must have fresh food every day—the old food fresh every day.

Then follows, in the second place, Christ as the slain lamb of the Passover; for, of course, when the Lord speaks of His humiliation He is sure to go on to the depths of it—the cross. “The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” This reminds me of a point we must never forget—that God’s way with those who reject any of His truth is to make that truth more difficult to their minds. Then Jesus said to them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” This must have been peculiarly obnoxious to a serious Jew, who was forbidden to touch blood. He puts it in diverse ways in verses 54-56. Eating His flesh, appropriation; drinking His blood, salvation and communion. Thus has God sent Him, “the propitiation for our sins;” and thus are we to eat His flesh and drink His blood. We cannot read Isaiah liii. in faith without so doing. And I should think that there is some little difference between the two, as the Lord so distinctly separates the two Himself, and I give what I believe to be the distinction. You are to eat the flesh, to have to do with Him as a Saviour, to be at His feet and enjoy being there, glad to have found your true place of worship. How many religious people there are who know positively nothing about a crucified Christ; because, of course, it means knowing Him personally, actually, really, so well as to eat His flesh. Then, in the drinking of the blood, salvation is the first thought.

“Oh precious blood, oh glorious death,
By which the sinner lives.”

But a deal more, for we get everything through drinking His blood. And you remember that the children of Israel were to be feasting at the very moment the angel was executing judgment. That on which they feasted was the Lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the door posts. A Christian is sheltered by the blood of the Lamb, and lives in Christ as His Saviour. “Christ our Passover is slain for us.” Israel celebrated that Passover so long as they feared God. So with us at the Lord’s table; we, sheltered by the

blood can feast on Christ as God’s sacrifice; and as we eat the bread and drink the wine it is in celebration of a past sacrifice, and of deliverance which we got in Christ 1800 years ago.

Then the Lord says again in verse 58, as in 51, “This is that bread which came down from heaven.” He presses upon us intently and intensely that He came down from heaven, that His home was on the other side of the stars; and He came down from that dizzy height in love to you and to me. I sometimes think that we ought when we worship God almost to shout for joy, yet sometimes almost to weep, but not to sit so still and passive and to be so hardly moved.

Now we come to the third, the climax, the old corn of the land. This is the best of the three, for it is a whisper of glory. Only observe God’s order; it is the manna first. Pray note it, for how many are willing to hear of crowns and rewards, while it never enters their heads that Christ calls them to take up the Cross, and get strong and valiant, doing exploits. The crown is upon their lips, but the cross is not upon their brow; the world is theirs, and no cross. We have seen Christ in humiliation, and heard Christ upon the cross; but God does not stop there, and never will, though He appears to pause there now, because He is showing patience with the world. “What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?” He came down from a dizzy height, and He has gone back to a dizzy height. And you will notice a singularity in the expression prone to be omitted—that He went up to exactly where He came from, that is, He could not get any higher. Other scriptures say exactly the same thing. “Glorify thou Me, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” So in Heb. i.—“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” He was infinitely greater than angels originally, and God has made Him who dwelt in a little place like Nazareth just as great again. Before it was His own glory; now it is acquired glory, and it is this acquired glory He shares with us. “The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.” Only One Being has been in this world who was in heaven before He came to this world—the Man of Isaiah liii. He was despised and rejected of men, the Being who created all things, Who sustains all things. “He was in the world, and the world

knew Him not," though the world was made by Him. Then He is like a lamb for the sacrifice. The world was made by Him—the old corn of the land; the world knew Him not—the Manna, suffering shame and rejection for the Father's sake. The old corn is what Christ was before there was a creature, for ever and for ever, in God's account; and what He will be for ever and for ever in God's account. Now, if thou takest this into thy soul, "He loved me and gave Himself for me," thou mayest appropriate all Christ is and call it thine. I will just quote a scripture or two. Turn to Ephesians i. 6. (for Ephesians is full about the old corn). God loves millions, but One in such a way that the Holy Spirit could write and say "the Beloved One;" and then see that we are loved like Christ, "wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved One." There is the clue to why God loved me so; He has looked at me in Christ. No wonder I am to expect such a deal from God, I am taken into favour in the Beloved One. Not "in Christ," or "in God's Son," but "in the Beloved One." This is old corn. He did not love Christ first when He hung upon the cross, nor even ourselves, because He loved us so as to give His Son to die. Then eat it, rejoice in it. But read on. "In whom." Who does it mean? In Christ? No: "in the Beloved One"—"we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." God forgave us in no stinted way, but in the Beloved One. According to my requests? No. My need? No, never. Observe how, "according to the riches of His grace." He hath graced us in Christ, in the Beloved One, and we have got forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. There is a meal such as no voluptuary, no epicure of delicate appetite, no pampered man ever tasted. First take into your soul, that you are sheltered by the blood, keeping the feast and remembering it, and daring to live out what Christ has formed in you, and know that all Christ is to God is for thee.


Thus have we these three here given us in their blessed antitype. The feast of the passover: Christ on the cross, Christ slain, and we eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The manna: giving us all the path of Christ in humiliation. The old corn of the land: all He is in glory. And we have to feed on Christ in all these three ways. We begin with the passover—the death of Christ, not with the life

of Christ on earth before death, for until we have looked to the death and blood-shedding we are yet in our sins. But after this, we are to think of all His path of shame and degradation, to feed upon it, and so become strong and holy men and women. And, then, in the future, we are to find in the uncreated, eternal Son of God, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever."—*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. x. 15-21.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

“ SPEAK as unto wise men; judge ye what I say” (verse 15). To the one whose understanding has been enlightened by the Spirit of God there is a reasonableness in all that is in the Scriptures. There is nothing irrational about any of God's teachings. The world does not think so; being blind, it cannot understand the Word of God. But in addressing the saints, the Apostle expects to find that they recognise the reasonableness of what he says. As we search the Scriptures, do we not find that all the instructions of the Lord commend themselves to us as right? They are “holy, just, and good;” and even though in much they are above and beyond our finite reason, yet are they never inconsistent therewith. Man's science may profess to find Scripture to be opposed to reason; but we are taught by God that science, in its true sense, will confirm Scripture, and that all such are “oppositions of science *falsely so called*” (1 Tim. vi. 20).

16th verse—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

It is evident, at a glance, that the drinking of the cup and the eating of the bread was a continual habit of the Church.

We see from Acts xx. 7, “that the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread.” It was their habit to do so.

We see from Acts ii. 42 that the disciples, from the time of their conversion, “continued stedfastly in the

Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." "Continuing stedfastly" implies that such was the regular practice and habit of the early Church.

In Heb. x. 25, I believe, we get a reference to the very same thing—"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is," &c. The breaking of bread is not here mentioned; but it is evident from other scriptures that this was the central object of the weekly gathering of the disciples. All Christendom acknowledges a weekly gathering of *some sort*. We challenge any one to show in Scripture a weekly gathering that did not include the "breaking of bread."

We find that it was *the disciples* who came together to break bread. This must surely exclude the unregenerate—those not born again. None but the children of God could continue in these things. "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them" (Acts v. 13).

That word "communion" is the same word that we find elsewhere rendered "fellowship," and signifies partnership or joint-participation. If two or three are in business together, and share the profits, that is fellowship. If two or three are invited to a friendly party, and they sit at the same table and eat of the same bread happily together, they are having fellowship. And so apply it to every department of our life, it is joint-participation.

Turn to 1 Cor. 9—"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ." We are called unto the fellowship of His Son—to be sharers with Him in His life, love, and glory; to share His place in the Father's affections and house for ever; and His path of humility, rejection, separation, suffering, and reproach down here. This is brought out in Rom. viii. 17—"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." We are inheritors together of what the Father has bestowed upon His Son. It has pleased God, in the riches of His grace, to constitute redeemed sinners joint-heirs—partners with His Son.

The same word occurs in the 18th verse—"Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" That word "partakers" is the same word as "fellowship."

It is, "Have they not fellowship with the altar?" Throughout the Old Testament, almost invariably, wherever you find the word "sacrifice," it refers specially to the peace offering. It is the peace offering of Israel after the flesh, referred to in the Book of Leviticus, which is here used as an illustration.

Those who partook of the sacrifice partook of the altar. In connection with this, turn to Leviticus iii. 6—"If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering unto the Lord be of the flock; male or female, he shall offer it without blemish." It must be without blemish to suit the character of God.

Before reading further, turn to Malachi i. 8—"And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? Offer it now unto the governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of Hosts." Whatever was offered on the altar must be in character consistent with God's holiness.

Turn to Leviticus xxii. 21—"It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein."

We thus learn how important it was that the Lord Jesus should be in the world for thirty-three years manifesting the perfectness of His character.

We could suppose God sending forth His Son into the world ready to die on the Cross. God was pleased not to do so. The Lord Jesus grew up and lived and moved among men. He was tried in all points as we are, yet without sin. He was tempted of the devil and opposed by the world, in order that His perfectness might be made manifest. His perfectness was witnessed to not only by God, but devils said, "we know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Pilate said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person." The Centurion who stood by His cross and witnessed all that had been done, said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Judas said, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." On all hands we have testimony to Him as the perfect One. He was in all respects such as befitted the holy character of God.

Turn again to Leviticus iii. 9, 11,—“And he shall offer of the sacrifice of peace offering an offering made by fire unto the Lord, the fat thereof,” &c. “The priest shall burn it upon the altar; it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord.” Look in connection with this to Numbers xxviii. 1-2. “And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, command the children of Israel and say unto them, My offering and

My bread for My sacrifice made by fire for a sweet savour unto Me shall ye observe to offer unto Me in their due season." Observe these words, "My Bread," also in Leviticus iii. 2, "The food of the offering." Turn now to Malachi i. 7, "Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar, and ye say wherein have we polluted Thee? In that ye say the table of the Lord is contemptible." They were offering the blind, the lame, and the sick, and these were laid upon God's altar as God's food. It was treating Jehovah with contempt. The altar was not the table. It is a terrible mistake to turn the Lord's table into an altar. There was a table furnished by the Lord from the altar, and that is the point I wish you to look at. We saw from Leviticus iii. God's portion laid upon the altar; He calls it "My food," "My bread."

Turn now to Leviticus vii. 31-32, "And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar; but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons', and the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings."

While all the fat was the Lord's, the breast and the right shoulder were given to Aaron and his sons; the rest the offerer had as his portion. First, there is the altar on which all the fat of the offering is laid, that is God's portion. Then the priest sits down with the breast and shoulder, and he and his family feed upon that, and finally the offerer sits down at his table with the rest of the sacrifice.

What is shewn forth in the peace offering is fellowship with the Father and the Son, just as we have in 1 John i. 3. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." It is a partaking with God.

Look at a word in Leviticus vii. 15. It is an interesting point. "And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning." God would have His fellowship feast on the same day as the slaying of the sacrifice. We are not to feast on a past experience. Each time we surround the table of communion with God—our thanksgiving (or Eucharist) service—it should be the same to us as if the Lamb had just been slain. It is the shewing forth anew of the Lord's death—discerning anew the breaking of His body, the shedding of His

blood. To God it is ever so, the Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne as if it had just been slain, and our entrance within the veil is by "a newly slain and living way."—(See Newberry's).

Mark that expression in John vi. 33, "The Bread of God." God has given us to feed upon *His own bread* and to eat of that which has satisfied Him. What has satisfied God? Nothing but Jesus. What life has glorified God? The life of Jesus. What death has vindicated God's righteousness? The death of Jesus. He is well pleased with His Son. In the sacrifice of His Son He found a savour of rest. It is only there that He could find satisfaction and rest. God is perfectly satisfied with Christ, and He would have us to be satisfied with His Son even as He is. He is the Bread of God, and the Bread of life for you and me. We are called to have fellowship with the Father over the offering of the body of Jesus. Let us never forget that God is present in Spirit at the feast, and rejoices as He contemplates that finished work. God by the Holy Spirit would bring us into fellowship with Him in the joy He has in His blessed Son.

JOHN'S THIRD EPISTLE.

BY F. A. B.

(Continued from page 13.)



WE shall now consider the joy of the apostle in regard to Gaius—"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Of course, "The Truth" is a very comprehensive expression, and, speaking generally, it refers to the whole will of God.

There are two principles, however, affecting this general rule which must ever be kept in mind—

- 1st. Truth has various complexions or dispensational distinctions, as indicated by the terms "The Truth as it is in Jesus," and "The present Truth."
- 2nd. The context of any passage or phrase determines its special import or meaning; hence we should humbly pray for discernment to know what is the mind of the Spirit.

The errors of Diotrephes (one *nourished* by a false god) were associated with the assembly, and as the conduct of Gaius was exactly opposite to his, we may

infer that the apostolic commendation given to him relates chiefly to "The Truth" in its ecclesiastical aspect.

The conversion of a sinner is accompanied with an outburst of joy in the presence of the angels of God; and our joy, as saints on earth, over a sinner saved, is but the faintest reflection of the joy and gladness in heaven.

Think of the blessed Lord at the well in Samaria. Wearied and oppressed by a tedious journey, hungry and thirsty, yet He forgot His personal requirements in the soul-absorbing work of bringing a poor outcast unto a knowledge of Himself.

And when this had been accomplished, and the woman had fled into the city to bring others to Him, His joy over her salvation was so intense that He cared neither to eat or drink.

The disciples open their basket and spread out the food they had bought in the city; the woman's forgotten water pot is there ready for use, but to their pathetic appeal, "Master, eat!" He calmly answered, "I have meat to eat ye know not of." Thank God! "Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and that scene at the well gives us a glimpse of His joy when any poor sinner takes shelter under the covering wings of His salvation.

But if John had joy as he beheld the children of God walking in the Truth, think you, my reader, that John's Master is indifferent in this matter?

It must be a joy to the heart of Christ when He beholds one who has believed in Him going down into the water to be baptised, and not less when that one, with others, is gathered on the first day of the week to shew forth His death.

Nor can it be other than a joy to Him when He sees any of His flock gladly own His Shepherd-Lordship, and submit to be guided by His Spirit in worship or ministry.

Some evangelists appear to be content when men become the children of God, and tell us that their personal responsibility has ceased with the conversion of souls. But we can only regard such conduct as deplorable and reprehensible. An evangelist may not be a teacher, but is he relieved from the responsibility of pointing out to those converted what he knows to be the right course because the gift of a teacher may not specially be his? We know of no scripture which justifies the absolute separation of the

gospel from the declaration of the subsequent acts of obedience which should follow the salvation of the soul. Is it nothing to an evangelist that the young convert should be immediately ensnared into a position where He cannot obey his Lord, and where his spiritual growth must be dwarfed?

Our observations apply to preachers of the gospel who gather with fellow-saints to the Name of the Lord; and it must not be forgotten that our assembly existence is a schism and a sin *unless* there is a sufficient cause to justify our separation from the various sects around us,

We suppose the reason why we are not found gathering with the sects is very simply stated—"We find it impossible, in such associations, to fully obey the will of the Lord."

Well then, if such be the case, why go to preach the gospel under conditions and circumstances where your ministry cannot be followed up with the further declaration of the will of the Lord, but as a necessary result the young converts will go to swell the ranks of sectarianism? Why allow your gift, as an evangelist, to be utilised for the inconsistent purpose of putting fresh blood into the veins of that which, as a system, you have avowedly left?

The Master has set before you an open door; it is the field of the world, and it is yours to gather out the lost, not only to realise His saving love, but also to own the authority of Christ as Lord (2 Cor. iv. 5, R.V.). Avow this to be your purpose, carry out in your measure the divine commission (Matt. xxviii. 20), and rest assured, your co-operation will never be sought by those with whom you would be fettered or hindered.

But count the cost, for unpopularity will ensue; in all probability your meetings will be smaller, and as for newspapers, you will be too contemptible for their notice! By-and-by, however, the King will call His ambassadors to court, and lavish upon the faithful smiles of recognition and never-fading crowns. Brother, keep that time before you, and remember the Master has left on record, "The word that I speak, the same shall judge you in the last day."

Satan will seek to oppose, for there is nothing he so constantly aims at as to undermine loyalty of heart to Christ.

Quite recently, in a certain town, when, as the result of a prayerful perusal of their Bibles, two young

men discovered they should be baptised, take no designation but that of Christian, and break bread on the first day of the week, they experienced somewhat of the ways of Satan. One was threatened with the loss of his situation, but remaining stedfast, was obliged to leave; the other was offered a deaconship, if he would stop where he was, but had grace to obey the Lord in preference to bartering away his conscience for a position, regarded by some, as honourable and important.

Alienation from relatives, the sneer of the worldly-wise, and frequently loss of business are connected with taking up our Cross and following Jesus, and some may ask—"Is it worth while?" Well, as to time, it brings *great peace*; and as to eternity, tangible emblems of the Lord's approval. Aye! *it is worth while* to walk in the Truth, and grace enabling us we will, individually, exclaim—

Alone with Thee, O! Master, where
The light of earthly glory dies
Misunderstood by all, I dare
To do what Thine own heart will prize

THE NAZARITE.

NUMBERS VI.

(Continued from page 15.)



AMSON'S words to Delliiah tell just what makes the difference between the Christian walking in dependence upon God and others. "For I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb. If I be shaven, *then* my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be *like any other man*." And truly independence of God leaves us just "*like any other man*." An "arm of flesh" is an "arm of flesh," and can be nothing more, no matter who it may belong to.

And alas! how often does it appear, too, that the child of God, forgetting that in separation to God and dependence upon Him lies his strength, even *covets* to be "*like other men*." How often might it still be said of many of God's children, Nazarites by divine birth, "Her Nazarites . . . they are not known in the streets." They have outwardly become "*like other men*."

The third condition was, "All the days that he separateth himself he shall come at no dead body" (6th verse).

Once did the "Prince of Life" go down into the power of death; and there, in his own dominion, He destroyed "him that had the power of death," and now "death hath no more dominion over Him; for in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. *Likewise* reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. vi. 10, 11). The link between Him and death is gone for ever, and we stand in Him on resurrection ground. "You hath He quickened, who *were dead in trespasses and sins*" (Eph. ii. 1). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned *sin in the flesh*" (Rom. viii. 3). Spiritually dead by nature, we have passed from "death unto life." But we stand in this world as the living among the dead. The world around us is still "dead in trespasses and sins," and the flesh in us is a corrupt thing, condemned on the cross of Christ. If we go back and walk in the flesh, we have touched the "dead body." Fellowship with those "dead in trespasses and sins" involves touching the dead. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and *touch not the unclean thing*; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18, vii. 1).

In Num. vi. 1, the Lord shows us that the dearest family ties were not to be used as a plea for breaking this law of the Nazarite. The epistle to the Ephesians teaches us how the Christian, "seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus," can so live on earth as to carry out all the responsibilities of family and social relationships, but so "in the Lord" and "unto the Lord" as yet to have no fellowship with "the unfruitful works of darkness." But how often are these family ties used as a plea for fellowship in the flesh, and those who have stood faithful to their God in the outer world fall victims at the family shrine.

The following verses (Num. vi. 8-12) show us with how much compassion God considers the difficulties of His people's path in this scene of moral death. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth o^u

frame; He remembreth that we are dust" (Ps. ciii. 13, 14). Still our gracious God is a righteous God, and defilement, conscious or not on our part, needs sacrificial cleansing. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. . . . If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. 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. 5, 7, 9).

If defiled, the Nazarite must shave his head, and "the days that were before shall be lost" (12). God would not have His children in their hours of failure fall back upon past experience of strength received in dependence upon Him. Personal weakness and "grace to help in time of need" must be ever-present experiences. We must learn them daily where we first learned them, in a crucified and risen Christ.

We have seen that the Nazarite was not always to be a Nazarite. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). But the length of time is left undefined. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. xxiv. 36).

And our Nazariteship, as it begins in His, ends in His. "When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

"This is not my rest, Lord—
A pilgrim confest, Lord,
I wait to be blest,
At Thy coming again."

When the Nazarite has fulfilled his days of separation, he comes before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and sacrifices are offered. It must be always borne in mind that in every case of separation to God there was always some root cause of sin which necessitated such a separation. Idolatry in his home and country caused Abraham to be called out of Ur of the Chaldees (Josh. xxiv. 1, 2). The sin of Egypt and the bitter bondage in which they held Israel was the ultimate cause of the people's outcall. The sin of the golden calf separated Levi unto God, and established a separate priesthood. And it was when Israel's sin had reached its climax, in the days of the Judges, that God called out His Nazarite Samson, single-handed, as a deliverer for His people from the Philistines. And finally, it was

the sin of unbelief and the rejection of their Messiah which resulted in the Lord becoming a "Nazarite from His brethren." When Israel shall say "We are verily guilty concerning our brethren," and when in their hour of distress they "look upon Him whom they pierced" "and mourn," then shall they, too, find the value of the Sacrifice so long despised. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1). They will recognise in Him then their burnt-offering, sin-offering, and peace-offering. The sacrifices at the close of the Nazarite's vow, I believe, therefore typify the value of the blood of the Lord Jesus, as applied to repentant Israel.

"And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offering" (verse 18).

The peace-offering went up as a sweet savour to God (Lev. iii. 16). The hair being burnt with it must have gone up in the sweet savour unto God. As we have seen that the long hair typified the Lord's self-emptied condition, when He laid aside His glory to be "crucified through weakness" and for the time being not assuming His regal claims, so in the Nazarite with his shaven head "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" we see Him as the Lord of glory, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," when the "kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15). He is as much to God's glory then as in the time of His weakness. "To (R.V.) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." But is all that the long hair typified, then, forgotten in this hour of triumph? The weakness, the obedience unto death, the humiliation—is all lost sight of? Are Gethsemane's tears and Calvary's hours of darkness things of the past, to be remembered no more? No! While the Nazarite stands with shaven head "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation," the sweet-smelling savour of the peace offering is ascending to God, bearing with it in type the memorial of those hours

of pain too precious to the heart of God to be ever forgotten. "Thou tellest my wanderings; put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are *they not in Thy book?*" (Ps. lvi. 8.) When "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" is proclaimed as "worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof," He is seen standing in the midst of the throne, "a Lamb, as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 5, 6). And how precious, too, in God's sight, are "the fellowship of His sufferings," as manifested in His Nazarites now! Unto God "a sweet savour of Christ," and when our "sorrow shall be turned into joy" we shall be found unto His "praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." . . . "And after that, the Nazarite may drink wine" (20). According to the Lord's own promise to His disciples, "When I drink it *NEW with you* in my Father's kingdom." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5).

"Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore O God (marg.) thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps. xlv. 7). And "where I am" will still be His people's portion. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; and at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). It is noteworthy that when the Nazarite's vow is fulfilled there is no allusion to the third condition. He "dieth no more;" and we from His empty grave can say, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

At the 22nd verse of this chapter the subject seems broken off, and the following verses have apparently no connection with either what precedes or follows. But this is not really so; the connection is very beautiful when we consider that it is just at the moment of the Lord's return to His people Israel, no longer "separated from His brethren," that He comes as the "Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2). "The Lord will bless His people with peace" then (Ps. xxix. 11) when He stands among them as their Priest and King. "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them" (27). "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxxiii. 16).

There is a remarkable connection between the type of the Nazarite and the High Priest in Israel. In Exodus xix. 6, and xxxix. 30, and in Lev. viii. 9 the holy "crown" upon the mitre is called the "Nezer" (another form of the word Nazarite); and in Lev. xxi. 12 we find the same word used. "The 'Nezer' (crown) of the anointing oil of his God is upon him." This passage brings before us another connection. Like the Nazarite, the High Priest might not defile himself by contact with any dead body (Lev. xxi. 11-12)—in the Nazarite's case because "the 'Nezer' of his God is upon his head" (referring to his hair), which sanctified him to his God (Num. vi. 5), and in the High Priest's case because "the 'Nezer' of the anointing oil was upon his head." Moreover, the priests were to abstain from wine or strong drink when "they went into the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. x. 9), as the Nazarite was to abstain all the days of his Nazariteship.

These various points of connection of the High Priest with the Nazarite are interesting, uniting as they do typically in the person of the Lord Jesus in resurrection. By His death He enters *simultaneously* upon His High Priesthood and Nazariteship (Heb. ix. 11). The "Nezer" of His God being upon His head.

The Kingly "crown" is also called a "Nezer" (2 Sam., i. 10; 2 Kings, xi. 12; 2 Chron., xxiii. 11; and Ps. cxxxii. 18). "But upon Himself shall His 'crown' flourish." This further connection points on to the Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ—"The Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13). There is this great difference, however, between the type of the Nazarite and of the High Priest. The Nazarite condition is characteristic of the Lord, *only for a time*; the Royal Priesthood abides for ever. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. cx. 4).

And we being one with Him, our Nazariteship will come to an end in His; but our royal priesthood, like His, abides for ever. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father—to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

J. M.

Christ in heaven is my standing before God;
Christ on earth is my pattern.

ISAIAH.

ISAIAH, whose name signifies "salvation of Jehovah," prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and his prophetic ministrations must have embraced a period of nearly fifty years, if not more. His prophetic writings, though not the earliest, are the largest, and appear the most sublime and comprehensive in the treatment of its subjects.

This book is divided into two great parts. Part 1, comprising chapters i., xxxv.; part 2, chapters xl., lxvi. Chapters xxxvi., xxxix., form a parenthesis and are historical, narrating Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and his overthrow.

Chapters i., xxxv.—In this section of the book we have the moral condition of Israel and Jerusalem described with promises of restoration and the millennium and judgments of the surrounding nations, beginning with Babylon, Immanuel as Israel's only hope and securer of the land, their connection with Him, and the destruction of the Assyrian, Israel's latter day enemy. Chapter 13 of the section opens with judgments and closes with worship.

The last chapter (xxxv.), gives us a prophetic future when Israel shall be restored, established and blessed in the land of which Zion will be the centre. Shebna may be typical of anti-Christ; Eliakim of the Messiah,—see chap. xxii., xv., xxv.

Chapters xxxvi., xxxix., give the overthrow of the Assyrians and Israel's deliverance. In Hezekiah's restoration we have a type of the Jew, also a figure of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second part of the book, chapters xl., xlvi., record God's controversy and earnest expostulation with His rebellious people. First, because of their idolatry; secondly, because of their determined and wilful rejection of the Messiah.

In chapters xli., xlvi., Israel is looked at as a servant. Chapters xlii., xlix., 1., Christ as the perfect servant; then chapter lxx., the remnant in the last days take the place of a servant. In this section of the book we have millennial blessing and millennial judgments, and the call of the Gentiles. S. B.

LAW AND GRACE.

LAW differs from GRACE, as much as *wages* are unlike *gift*. The *law* proved what was in man,—“by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. iii. 20). *Grace* reveals the fact that God is rich in mercy to us, even when we were dead in sins (Eph. ii. 4, 5). These two truths run almost throughout the Scriptures, preserving their distinctiveness and contrast. Hence we read, “The *law* was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17). The *law* entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound.” (Rom. v. 20.) “Ye are not under the *law*, but under *grace*.” (Rom. vi. 14, &c.) These, and such like Scriptures, refer to the two covenants; the old covenant, in which man undertook to come up to God's standard, and to live thereby; and the new or everlasting covenant, which richly displays the eternal purpose, wisdom, power, love, faithfulness, and grace of God, in quickening the dead in sins, and justifying the ungodly by faith.

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 CCXVIII.

Why are so many Christians in poverty and in debt?

REPLY.

Poverty is one thing; debt is another. In many minds the two things are almost indistinguishable,

so common is the thought that debt is the necessary and only resource of the poor. Yet in the Word of God we are taught that there is a special blessing for the poor, whilst debt is sin.

“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?” (James ii. 5). There are lessons to be

learned, amid straits and need, so precious that those who have learned them count themselves more than recompensed for all they suffered. Through painful discipline they are enriched by fresh experiences of the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord and by fresh insight into the deceitfulness and unbelief of their own hearts.

Such is the proper fruit of this kind of discipline. It was so in the case of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. It was so in the experience of David—"this poor man cried and the Lord heard him" (Ps. xxxiv. 6). The Lord Himself was of the poor of this world as we see by the offering in Luke ii. 24—"a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons"—which, according to Lev. xii. 8, was prescribed for those who were "not able to bring a lamb," and doubtless many a lesson of simple trust was learned in that lowly home at Nazareth. The Apostle Paul could say—"I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound! Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 12, 13).

Deep were the privations he endured, and yet, so fully had he proved the faithfulness of God, that he could add—"My God shall supply all your need," "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. ix. 8).

And out of an experience of no ordinary testing, he could boldly write—"Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8). He never could have so commanded the saints if he himself had left unpaid accounts behind him in the scenes of his trials.

Poverty is not unfrequently the result of sickness long continued; sometimes the cause is the long continued lack of employment; sometimes, as in India and China, it is the direct result of famine and sometimes of war. But in all such cases the poor believer has a special claim on the mercy of a faithful promise-keeping God, and many a record is treasured up of faith that obtained the promises, and

prayers that were all but miraculously answered. Our God is the living God still and waits to honour the faith that honours Him.

But there are many cases also where poverty is the result of improvidence and an entire absence of that prudent foresight which is inculcated in Scripture. The same wisdom that points to the lily as a lesson of simple unwavering trust in our Heavenly Father's care, points to the ant as a lesson of diligence and foresight (Prov. vi. 6-8). The responsibility of the parent to lay up for the children is fully owned in 2 Cor. xii. 14, and we have no hesitation in saying that it is a false view of faith that leads the head of a household so to order his affairs that his helpless family is destitute if he be a few weeks out of employment or sick.

The economy that gathers up the fragments must be practised in the time of abundance, in order that there may be sufficiency in the time of dearth.

But, are there not those who, failing to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, are too proud to make known their needs to those who have the stewardship of a church's funds—and yet are not too proud to run up debts to unconverted shopkeepers, which they have no reasonable expectation of being able to pay?

Humbling it must have been to Elijah to have to ask a share of the widow's failing store; yet it was the very discipline the Lord designed for him, and richly was it blessed.

On the other hand, how many are there of God's children now who know the joy of giving liberally to the poor? The poor we have always with us, and well it is so. What can surpass the grace that thus consents to be served by us? Though seated on the throne of God, yet in His members the Lord of Glory permits us thus to minister to Him. Were this more fully realized by the Lord's stewards, how many more friends would be made by the Mammon of unrighteousness! Would not every case of real need be quickly met, and many an aching heart be made to sing for joy?

A stranger in a strange land is easily known. He often speaks of home. And it is so with the child of God. Here he has no abiding city. His citizenship is in heaven. He often speaks of home.

GOD'S REMEDY FOR INDWELLING SIN.

I.



HE doctrine or fact is stated in 1 John i. 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." This is true alike of "fathers," "young men," and "little children" (Chap. ii. 13).

The fact that sin still dwells in the believer, is implied in such passages as Eph. iv. 22, and following verses, where those who have been "quickened," "raised up," and "seated together," with and in Christ Jesus, are enjoined not to tell lies, nor steal, nor yield to the power of sin in its more subtle forms, manifested in the state of the heart and use of the tongue. Also in 1 Peter, where believers are called an "holy priesthood," and "a royal priesthood;" they are exhorted not to "suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other mens' matters" (Chap. iv. 15). These and many other Scriptures clearly prove, that, as long as believers are in this body they will have the law of sin in their members warring against the law of their minds (Rom. vii. 23).

There are some Scriptures, which, when taken out of their connection, would seem to imply that a Christian may arrive at a state of sinlessness: but those Scriptures which speak expressly on that point, as well as the general scope of the Scriptures, are entirely opposed to such a theory.

The question then comes to be, if we are to have this principle in us as long as we are in this mortal body, what is God's provision against it? Wherever sin is there is *guilt*. Wherever sin is there is *pollution*. And wherever sin is there is a power that will *enslave* if it is allowed. What then is the remedy which God has provided in the Gospel for sin, in this its threefold aspect? Mark, we are not speaking of *sins*, but of *sin*. Not of the fruits, but of the root. Not of *sinful* conduct, but of the nature that produces it. Many a dear soul who has got rest as to sins, knows little or nothing of how God deals with sin, as a living principle in the believer. Well then, what saith the Scripture as to the guilt of sin? "Knowing this, that our old man *was* crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin" (Rom. vi. 6-7, *R.V.*).

Here then is the doctrine of how God has dealt with the guilt of our nature. He has put the believer to death *with* Christ. Nothing can ever meet the guilt of sin before God but death. Again, "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live" (Gal. ii. 20, *R.V.*). In Col. ii. 11-12, believers are said to have been killed, buried, and risen in or with Christ; circumcision there meaning crucifixion. This is how God reckons: in His estimate every believer has been crucified, buried, and raised again with Christ. Hence we are enjoined to "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 11). We are nowhere told to reckon sin dead, but ourselves dead to it.

The expression of "keeping the flesh in the place of death" is not a Scriptural one. Scripture nowhere speaks of the flesh in a believer as having been crucified, except in Gal. v. 24. There it is, not what God has done, but what believers themselves do when they accept of, or endorse God's judgment of what sin deserves. We cannot be too clear as to the difference between reckoning the flesh in us dead, and reckoning *ourselves* as children of Adam to have died in the death of Christ.

Paul does not say *sin as a principle in me* was crucified, but "I have been crucified." It is mainly for want of a clear understanding of this truth that there is such a shallow conception of holiness in these days, and such flippant talk about perfection. It is also for want of a clear apprehension of this doctrine, that many who are sound as to Scriptural holiness have such unrest of conscience.

The sinner's Gospel is "Christ died for us." The saint's Gospel is "we died with Him."

God tells sinners of "the forgiveness of sins," and of justification "from *all things*," which the law of Moses could never give (Acts xiii. 38-39). But He tells saints that the persons who committed the sins "were crucified with Christ," and as a consequence "*He that hath died is justified from sin*" (Rom. vi. 7).

The law can lay hold of a living man and put him to death, but it has no power to kill a man who has died already. This is how the Scriptures speak of believers, as dead, buried, and risen with Christ. There can be no godly rest to the conscience till this doctrine is apprehended and received in its fulness. There is a spurious rest which many have, arising from shallow conceptions of what sin is. But those who

have learnt in any measure the awful guilt of a *nature* which is "enmity against God," can never have a "perfect conscience," except they discern by faith how completely God has judged and punished the guilt of that nature in the cross of Christ.

We have enlarged on this point, because it is of such vital importance. In no other way can one keep a tender conscience and at the same time have a conscience at rest, regarding the guilt of that principle which Scripture says "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22). Then, in one word, God's remedy for, and faith's deliverance from, the *guilt* of indwelling sin, is the "Cross of Christ."

Thus the believer viewing the Cross can not only say "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body, on the tree," but surely believers can also say "I have been crucified with Christ," and having been put to death with Him, every believer has also been "buried with Him," "quicken together with Him," raised together with Him," and thus while every godly believer will often have to groan on account of the power and pollution "of sin that dwelleth" in them, they can also look back to the Cross, and there see that its power to *condemn* was for ever extinguished.

G. A.

(To be Continued.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. x. 17-21.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

LET us look at the idea of *oneness*, as given in ver. 27. "For we, being many, are one bread (or "one loaf") and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." It is a fellowship feast. It is not like people in a restaurant, where each one partakes of his own dinner; they have no fellowship, in such a case, one with another. But, as already remarked, when gathered at one table on a footing of friendship, all have fellowship together, and this was, and still is, much more fully recognized in the East than it is in these parts.

It was to this thought the Psalmist referred, when he said, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

Thus, the Feast of the Lord is expressive of intimate communion one with another, as well as with Himself; so much so, that in all partaking of the bread—all eating of the one loaf, the essential oneness of the body of Christ is implied. The ground of our fellowship is Christ. It is He that has drawn us together. He is the Head of the body, the Centre of the assembly, the Substance of the feast. The essence of the fellowship is joint-participation in Christ. He is precious to each one. He is the bread that nourishes and strengthens our souls, as well as the life and joy of each heart. Had we not known Christ, we never should have been together.

And all this shews how essential to blessing at the table of the Lord is a spirit of love and unity. How fellowship is marred by envying and strife, by bitterness and wrath, by evil speakings and tale-bearings! These are the things that defile, and by which the feast is oftentimes marred. Thus the Holy Spirit is grieved, and the hearts of the guests are sore and comfortless.

"What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils (demons) and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils (demons)." (Verses 20 and 21.)

We see here that the devil is at the back of all idol worship. The thoughts that issue in the monstrous idols of heathendom are all of Satanic origin. See the same teaching in Lev. xvii. 7, Deut. xxxii. 16, 17, 2 Chron. xi. 15, Psalm cvi. 35-40, Rev. ix. 20. When worship is offered to idols, it is in reality demons who receive the homage due to God.*

How, then, could they drink at one time the cup of the Lord, and at another the cup of demons? How could they at one time partake of the Lord's table, and at another of the table of demons? Thus are they summoned to entire separation to the Lord. Feeding upon the body and blood of Christ, they are His alone.

* There is only one *devil* in Scripture. The word is never found in the plural, except in three cases, where the characteristics of the devil are applied to men, and in which instances it is rendered "slanderers," or "false accusers." In every passage where the word "devil" is found in the plural, it is, in the original, an entirely different word, and should be rendered "demons." That these are Satan's emissaries is proved by Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

It is here called "the Lord's table." We see Him not with the natural eye, but, nevertheless, to faith He is present; as He said, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst." Thus, we take our place at the Lord's table as His invited guests. It is not the part of invited guests to order the feast; all is ordered according to the will of the host. It is nothing less than presumption to interfere with, or alter in any way, any of the Lord's ordinances.

Notice, it is "the cup which *we* bless." The meaning of the word "bless" here is to "*speak well of.*" When we "bless" God, we "*speak well of*" God. When we bless the cup, it is no sacramental, priestly ceremony that is referred to, but all the partakers uniting to *speak well of it.*

And well we may! It is a cup of blessing, a cup of salvation, a cup of rejoicing!

Again, it is "the bread which *we* break." Not the bread which is broken by one, and "dispensed" to the rest. There is no such idea in Scripture. Each one breaks it: each one takes it, and eats it, and gives thanks for it.

It is a mistake to suppose that he who goes to the table, breaks the bread, and hands it to the others, is doing a clerical or priestly act, in which he, for the time being, personates the Lord. He only does what each one does who breaks it and hands it to his neighbour. Nevertheless, it is a prominent act, and as such it is important that it be done only by those in whom the assembly has confidence, and whose ministry is acceptable.

So also in the giving of thanks. He who leads the assembly in thanksgiving no more gives thanks than he who follows in spirit and says, "Amen."

The leading of the thanksgiving ought to be by one whose heart is full of gratitude to God, and who is stirred up to it by the Spirit of God.

It is a serious error, held by nearly all denominations of Christendom, that only an ordained man can "administer the Sacrament" or "dispense the Lord's Supper."

The thought is entirely opposed to Scripture.

We gather together simply as believers, who, in obedience to the will of their Lord, desire to remember Him and show forth His death till He come.

As we meditate upon His love our hearts are stirred up to praise and worship Him. The ministry of the

Word at such a time, as far as it directs the heart to Christ and unfolds His love, is always helpful. But if the object of the assembly be not kept in view, ministry may hinder worship rather than help.

Being thus brought into fellowship with the love of the Father to the Son, we are separated from the world that cast Him out and hates Him. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." May God draw us by His Spirit into deeper sympathy with the love which He bears to His beloved Son.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER VII.

THIS chapter is the close of a section of this Gospel. Chapters i. and ii. are a sort of epitome of the whole, and introductory; while chapters iii. to vii. are one section, presenting Christ as the Life. Then in chapter viii. we have Christ as the Light. In chapter iii. it is the new birth, in iv. we see that through life follows worship; in chapter v. we have Christ giving life to whomsoever He will, in vi. the food for the new life, and in vii. drink for the new life. Also, in v., vi., and vii., the Son of God is contrasted with the feasts of the Jews; in v. 1, we are told "there was a feast of the Jews," in vi. it is the feast of the Passover, in vii. the feast of the Tabernacles.

Now this chapter may be subdivided into three; the Son of God's refusal to go up to the feast at once, because His time had not yet come; His journey thither privately in the middle of the feast; then specially, what He said upon the last and great day of the feast.

First, His brethren after the flesh proposed that He should go up and manifest Himself to the world. They thought it a pity that He did not seek to get popularity and fame, and imagined, no doubt, that they ought also to profit by it. But we are told that they did not believe on Him—not as to His power to work miracles, but they had no sense of His glory, no sense of how thoroughly the world was opposed to Him, how far gone from God. What a change must have passed upon them, James in particular, who presently could write: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons," and here we see that he had

so wretched a conception of what He was. How grace had changed the man! How grace has changed us! And what an affecting reply the Lord gives to their proposal. See what it amounts to (verse 7): "I do not think a fuller revelation of Myself will provoke the world to love Me more; the more I tell out of Myself, and of God, the more do I draw out the world's hate." What an affecting statement! And it is true. God is telling out the love and worth of His Son in this dispensation and in these last days in the most emphatic way, and rest assured that the world's hate is the more drawn out thereby. May we not be deceived by its specious pretensions. It is more affecting still, because there is no question that Christ had the power. Look at these two points. One, that Christ delayed to go up to the feast, not because He had not the power, but because His time had not come. How like God. It is significant of the ways of God not to be in a hurry, and we do well not to overlook it. God has eternity to work in, therefore He takes ample time in much of what He does. How slow is He to execute judgment, though it must be executed however long He lingers. Another feature I remark, that His greater works at last are done suddenly; they may be delayed, but when at last He begins they are done at once. As, for instance, the work of Christ—the gift of the Spirit—the rapture of the church; delayed until the proper moment arrives, then not a moment longer. Therefore, I feel that we have here evidence of God being present; it is so like God. Like as in chapter v. we see no waste though there is profusion; so in nature, in all the works of God, there is no waste. Then next, we have a feature too, as of God, so of the brethren. Man's time is now, he cannot afford to wait. Man by nature loves the present, it is a sign of the restlessness of man in contrast with the apparent slowness of the works of God; and it may be that God appeals to man, so fond of the present when He says: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

But when He says that His time had not yet come, to what does He refer? Bear in mind, please, that this feast was the feast of Tabernacles—the grandest of all the feasts of the Jews, the climax of all—because the antitype is God dwelling upon earth amongst His people. Bear in mind this, also, in order to understand this and all the rest of the

chapter, that chapter vii. contains symbolic action like as does chapter viii., where He writes on the ground, and whilst the accusers are accusing appears to heed them not, but flashes His light upon the accusers, and not on the accused. Then when He has finished His work in the dust, He acquits the woman because He can do so righteously. So here in the feast of Tabernacles. Now, we find from Leviticus xxiii., that this feast had what no other feast had, it had an eighth day: "on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath" (ver. 39). It followed the harvest and the vintage, and, as representing God dwelling among men, will be after the harvest—the gathering into their places of all the saints, and after the vintage—the judgment upon the wicked, the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God. The object of the feast in the past was to celebrate the time when Israel dwelt in tabernacles, having come out of Egypt, and therefore had a retrospective as well as a prospective aspect. Now it is a remarkable fact, that this best feast of all was never kept from the time of Joshua, until the time of Nehemiah; in other words, when they got into the land they forgot God their Saviour, and they forgot the wilderness. God grant that we, raised and seated with Christ in the heavenlies, may never forget the wilderness or Egypt from which we have been delivered. Now, what do we find when God's purposes are complete? In Rev. xxi. 1-8, we have a picture of the eternal state. Read verse 3: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." By the "tabernacle of God," I understand the church. In the millenium He will reign over the earth, in eternity He will dwell with men in His tabernacle, the church. There is a picture of what God is going to do. Now the eternal state is represented by the eighth day, the millenium is the seventh day, we are at the end of the sixth. Now both the third and the eighth are resurrection numbers, but with this difference, that the third rather refers to Christ and the church; for God will give us resurrection at once along with Christ. But still there are vaster purposes of God, and so there is an eighth day, when God in Christ, through the church, will dwell among men. "Now," says Christ, "My

time is not fully come." And to understand the drift of any passage of the gospels, we must always call to mind in what gospel it occurs; this we have in the Gospel of the Son of God.

But see, in the second place, what He does do. "Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught." Precisely what He was doing. In between the eternal state and the time of the creation of man, Jesus stood in the midst of the Jews and taught them. And then, when the Jews cavil as to circumcision, and the Sabbath day, He shows that His eye is clear, and that He perfectly understands what will be the end of His mission. Though He came from God, He was not seeking His own but God's glory. He sees the state of the world to be antagonistic to God; that no blessing can get to man except in that way, and that there is no limit to man's hate except His death. So He says in verse 34: "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

That leads me to the last day, the eighth; for this directs us to the great passage of the chapter. Notice this point: mark how the Lord with omniscient, yet loving gaze, looked on all the ritual of the Jews with unmingled sorrow. You can see the spirit with which He said: "If any man thirst." You may perhaps know that it is said that the High Priest and the priests on this occasion went in procession to fetch the water of Siloam; and Jesus marked how that they were all without getting any real joy from their mode of keeping the feast; they were clutching the shell and losing the kernel. Picture the Lord looking out upon Christendom, still content with the shell. And let us not think that drinking wine and breaking bread have any good, except there be the appropriation of the love of Christ and God. We may so cling to the principle, and yet not get beyond to what the principle is designed to convey, as to hear Him speaking thus even to us. God forbid that I should speak against principles, but we want a living Christ. So, as He marked that ritual He said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." And so He marks the condemnation of it all, and says: "Is there one of you all that wants the real thing? Let him come unto Me."—(*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

JOHN'S THIRD EPISTLE.

BY F. A. B.

(Continued from page 28.)



HE next point that calls for comment is the *commendation*, accorded by the apostle to Gaius, for his faithfulness in regard to accredited itinerant evangelists.

Accredited, because commended by the personal authority of John, and manifestly recognised in that capacity by the Church, from which they started on their preaching tour (verses 6 and 9).

Itinerant, because they had "gone forth," and were so circumstanced, that they could go anywhere their Master, by His Spirit, directed them. Compare 2 Cor. viii. 18, where it is said of one "whose praise is in the Gospel throughout *all the churches*." He did not on account of his acknowledged merit and ability receive from rival Churches, a call to settle down in comparative comfort and ease in any locality, but carrying out the Lord's commission, went everywhere preaching the Word.

This was an almost universal rule of preaching in Apostolic times, so far as an evangelist was concerned, although, as in Timothy's case at Ephesus, a sojourn of a more or less protracted length of time in any locality may be alike desirable and imperative. Another important thing to be remembered is, that evangelists laboured in practical sympathy and cordial fellowship with the assembly, where such existed. This is clear from the expression "I wrote unto the Church," relating as it does to the reception of these servants of God. Rejected by the lordly arrogance of Diotrephes, Gaius received them, shewed them much kindness, and aided them in every way possible. And what could be more beautiful than that these brethren, returning to the assembly with which they were more immediately identified, should gratefully and publicly acknowledge their indebtedness to Gaius for his love and hospitality. Methinks this were a good precedent for our own times, as it could not fail to draw saints closer together, produce much thanksgiving to God, and cause a spirit of prayer and supplication. Isolation and independency are the fruits of pride and sin; we need to be knit together in heart, though severed bodily, and the grateful recognition of a brother's loving aid, albeit he may be unknown by face to many, is one way to bring this about.

Some may think that this course has its dangers, such as leading brethren to acts of service from unworthy motives; but it need not do so, nor did the Apostle think his commendation of Gaius would lead to his being puffed up, or to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. It was a dark and trying day, and while failure in others called for the severest censure, this fruit of grace in Gaius received for his encouragement, a well merited expression of apostolic praise.

Commending Phebe to the saints of Rome, Paul gracefully says, "she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also," and referring to this very Gaius in the same epistle (sending his greeting), he plainly designates him "mine host." Other instances might be given, but these are sufficient for our purpose. We should never blazon abroad our personal endeavours to serve Christ, for that were evidence of pride and self-seeking, but we should gladly recognize this grace in others, and speak gratefully of them at suitable times that God may be glorified (compare 2 Tim. i. 16-18).

In addition to being commended by the Apostle, there were personal reasons why these particular preachers should be received and helped on their way in a manner worthy of God.

1st. The *motive* or constraining element in their service was love to "the Name," *R.V.*

Out of sincere affection to their despised Lord, they voluntarily surrendered the comforts of home life, and domestic felicity, and went forth to bear His reproach and suffer for His name. They longed to see that worthy Name acknowledged and honoured by men, and certain am I of this, they would so preach and teach as to keep themselves in the back ground and Christ to the front.

No man actuated by so pure a motive would even dream of permitting those converted by his ministry to assume his name (even for distinction, as it is called); and, wherever this is done, it is a degradation to Christ. Why, Paul appears to be *horror-struck* when he learnt that some of the Corinthians were calling themselves after him. Read 1 Cor. ii. 1-5. Reviewing his ministry there, he begs them to recollect how studiously he avoided any and everything that would be calculated to produce such a terrible result. "I"—four times repeated, almost in the same breath, bringing his sojourn among them so vividly

before their gaze—"I did my very utmost to appear personally insignificant, in order to avoid the very snare into which Satan has now entrapped you." Reader, behold his grief of heart at this! and remember he was too loyal to his Master, and too faithful to his Master's will, to permit such a glaring dishonour to Christ to pass without censure. Instead of feeling flattered (as all who seek to exalt self would), he is humbled to the very dust.

Had all the Lord's servants been as true and humble as he, we should not in our day have to deplore the innumerable sects and sectarian designations which, alas! exist.

No! "THE NAME," with all its excellent glories, would have been enough, and that of Christian would have contented us. But why does John speak of "THE NAME" (*R.V.*), without specifying whom and what he meant?

Ah! therein is something which well deserves our attention. *Christ filled his heart and vision*; and, although he could no longer lean on His blessed bosom, his faith could penetrate through the clouds, and he could dwell in the very atmosphere of His love.

Mention whose Name he meant? It were superfluous! Spiritual instinct would know at a glance! and "THE NAME" would touch a chord in the heart of Gaius, the vibrations of which would affect all his ways, especially at a time when one like Diotrephes was seeking to exalt his own.

May God preserve us from being eyes the unconscious instruments in the hands of Satan in dishonouring that *Name* which all Heaven owns, and which presently will be universally acknowledged.

Should we not be zealous in its present exaltation? Let others, if they will, labour to exalt the name of this sect or that, be it ours to teach those who form the Bride of Jesus, neither to take a name, nor permit others to attach it to them without remonstrance—that of our heavenly Bridegroom being heaven-given and ample.

2nd. They received nothing of the Gentiles or nations, *i.e.*, they would not receive any pecuniary assistance from the unregenerate in aid of their evangelistic work. This is an important principle, and would, if adhered to, alike destroy "state aid," collections from the unconverted, and all similar things. "They that are in the flesh cannot please

God," and even the most liberal donor (unconverted) would hardly continue to give if he were told that God did not regard his gift. We fear many Christians are unwittingly smoothing some mens' paths to hell: they take their money, and give them the impression that they are performing some meritorious deed; whereas, if the clear lines of demarcation—life and death, spirit and flesh—were faithfully drawn and maintained, the very consciousness that he had neither part nor lot in this matter might make the unsaved one ponder his condition. To allow such to co-operate in the work of God is no kindness to them and may be fraught with deadly consequences to their precious souls. Acts xxviii. 1 to 10 is sometimes quoted to justify that which we are condemning, but the most casual observer will scarcely admit its application if he considers the circumstances. There, a barbarous people, prompted by feelings of humanity chiefly, show much kindness to the shipwrecked, Paul and other prisoners included, but it was not to *Paul* on account of his being a servant of God or because they desired to assist him in that capacity.

We are always sorry to see a box so fixed in the halls where saints are wont to assemble, that at a *gospel meeting* opportunity is afforded to unsaved persons to contribute. We may not intend it for the purpose, but it is practically a request that they would do so, and often when the word preached has pricked the conscience in measure, a donation has been freely bestowed, and the deluded one goes home feeling some satisfaction that he has (as he imagines) helped on a good cause.

And what shall we say of the shocking profanity of the Gospel preached by some in our streets? A few words are spoken, and then in some cases a hat is handed round for a collection. The following incident occurred lately in G—:—

"Now friends," said the preacher, "we are seeking your good and must have money." A hat was sent round and ninepence half-penny was collected. At this the man began again, "We must have *even money*, who will give the twopence half-penny to make the shilling?" A second time the hat was sent round, and the total came to one shilling and a penny half-penny. Then commenced an ungodly rigmarole about the desirability of getting it up to one shilling and sixpence! The scene was worthy of a "cheap jack,"

and would be too contemptible to name *were it not professedly done in the name of God.*

The Lord can sustain His own cause, and it is impious in the extreme to beg assistance from his enemies. May God stir up His children to recognize their responsibility! The devil and the devil's children do not spare expense to bring their allurements before men (behold their costly advertisements on our walls), and shall we grudge the use or expenditure of that which, as the Lord's stewards, we are to employ for His glory?

THE NIGHT AND THE SEA.



LOVE the night—the night!
The Southern summer night!
When the myriad stars above me gleam
With the palest, purest light;
And the distant Alpine aiguilles* seem
Like the phantom forms in a silver stream.

I love the night—the night!
The winter night in the North!
When the peak and plain are arrayed in white,
And alone I wander forth;
Where the Northern streamers ebb and flow
O'er the wide-spread waste of stainless snow.

I love the sea—the sea!
The smiling Southern sea!
When the sunset's molten golden glow
Is a silent mystery,
And the white-winged ships to the distance go
With the blue above and the blue below.

I love the sea—the sea!
The stormy sea in the North!
From its crested waves let the spindrift flee
When the warring winds go forth—
When it sends its tempest tones abroad,
And its hands are lifted up to God!

Yet mystery of night
And ocean's majesty
Are but passing things, to be lost in light
Of a glad eternity;
And I know God lays no good thing past,
But a better thing is revealed at last.

No darkening shades of night,
No salt expanse of sea,
Shall be there to veil the wondrous sight
That the pure in heart shall see,
Or to come between the souls that cleave
And the hands that clasp where no partings grieve.

On thro' the starlit night,
Across the heaving sea,
With an eagle's speed be my vessel's flight
To the home where I would be,
Till the morning dawn of deathless day,
And the storms and shadows flee away!

AIGLE, SWITZERLAND,
1st January, 1886.

A. P. M.

* The sharp needle-like rocky peaks.

JEREMIAH.



EREMIAH was of priestly descent, a native of Anathoth, in the tribe of Benjamin. He was called to the prophetic office when very young, and began his prophetic ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah, the last godly king of Judah, exercising it faithfully and zealously for about forty years. His prophetic mission was chiefly that of denunciation and judgment to the Jews and Gentiles, interspersed with bright promises of restoration and deliverances in the coming millennial blessedness of Israel's future history. Jeremiah's style is exquisitely plaintive.

The book may be divided into two parts Part I., including chapters i. xxiv ; part ii., chapter xxv. to the end of the book.

Chapter i. gives us the special call and establishment of Jeremiah to his prophetic office. Illustrative of the election of God to any special definite work. In connection with verse 5, read Psalm cxxxix. 16; Eph. i. 4, 5; Gal. i. 1-15, 16. The symbolic lesson, the "almond tree" representing the speedy performance of God's work, the "seething pot" of the commotion and evil brewing against Jerusalem and Judah by the descent of the Chaldean army, as a chastisement for the abominable idolatries and sin of that guilty nation, Very illustrative of the Holy Ghost instructing, teaching, and speaking through His servants, by pulling down that which is idolatrous and false, and building up that which is true and scriptural; God promising protection and deliverance if faithful. Gal. iii, 1-3; Acts xx. 24; Dan. iii. 17.

Chapters ii. v, contain the opening charge of the prophet, and his earnest and touching expostulation to the people, priests, and prophets, who alike had forgotten their first love. Nevertheless if they repented there was a gracious promise of deliverance, pardon, and healing; as well as future blessing in the land when Judah and Israel will be re-united, never more to be separated.

Chapters vii. x.—Jehovah's honour becomes profaned by their mingling idolatrous worship with His sacred Name, thus bringing down upon Jerusalem the same judgment that had fallen upon Shiloh; and the Jew, classed with the Gentile, both denounced as

uncircumcised. The moral condition of the Jew illustrative of what Christendom will be in the future.

Chapters xi. xii., open with Jehovah reminding Israel of their responsibility and call to *obey* the covenant which their fathers had broken. Hence, a curse pronounced upon all who would not obey when all prayers and intercession would be vain; nevertheless, there would be compassion and restoring mercy after chastisement and judgment.

Chapters xii. xv.—Under the symbol of the "linen girdle" left to rot, is shown how God would mar the pride of Judah during their captivity in Babylon, and famine, and the sword, the portion of false prophets who flatter the people with delusive hopes of security and peace.

Chapters xvi. xx.—The prophet is prohibited from mingling with the people. He is to be *separated*, contrasting the characters of those who *trust* in man and Jehovah. A curse on the former, and a blessing on the latter. Then we have God's sovereignty over His creatures represented by the potter having power over the clay, and the religious hardness of the people toward God, and their bitter hatred toward the prophet by Pashur, a priest and chief governor, and Jeremiah suffering as the result. Hence, we have the prophet, a type of the Lord Jesus, and all who are faithful in time of persecution.

Chapters xxi. xxiv.—The prophet declares the king and the people shall be taken captive into Babylon: then woes pronounced against pastors, priests and prophets, and the promise of the Messiah, the true Shepherd of Israel, and encouragement to the faithful to speak faithfully, the symbol of the good and bad figs representing the two sections of the Jews, those who yielded to be taken captive, and those who remained in Jerusalem contrary to the express command of Jehovah; the former would be protected and brought back to the land, while the latter would be a curse and consumed. Hence, we have in the first part of this book the prophet's earnest appeals to the conscience of the people of Judah.

Chapters xxv. to the end, is the second part of this book, and embraces not only that which is prophetic, but historical. Hence, we have Jerusalem besieged, Zedekiah taken captive with Israel into Babylon, then God's divine judgment threatened against other nations, closing with Babylon's utter

destruction and extinction. The false prophets, Hananiah and Shemaiah; the murder of Gedaliah; the burning of Jeremiah's roll; his imprisonment; the faithful fidelity of the Rechabites; and the prophetic portions intimating future covenant blessings in store for Israel. The judgment of Babylon, and the part she plays in Scripture history, afford fruitful and profitable study to the student of the Word of God.

EZEKIEL.



EZEKIEL (God will strengthen or prevail) was a priest as well as a prophet and contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel.

He was among the captives carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, and settled on the river Chebar, where some of the earlier exiles of the ten tribes were located; and probably he prophesied in the same place during the whole of his prophetic ministrations, which embraces a period of 22 years at least. His prophecies are remarkable, abounding with images and symbolical representations. The expression "Son of Man" occurs about 100 times.

This book may be divided into four parts.

Part 1, chapters i.-xxiv., consists of prophecies, in chronological order, soon after the captivity of Jehoiakim, and before the final destruction of Jerusalem. This covers a period of about six years.

Part 2, chapters xxv.-xxxii., gives the overthrow of those nations who were Israel's enemies, and rejoiced in the destruction of Judah.

Part 3, chapters xxxiii.-xxxix., here we have Israel first in judgment; then restored, converted, and blessed in the land. Secondly, her future enemy, "Gog," finally judged.

Part 4, chapters xl.-xlviii., Israel's future, with particulars of the millennial temple, ritual, priesthood, and the re-arrangement of the tribes in their distinctive bands in the land; closing with the name of the city, "Jehovah Shammah."

The Son of Zadok, chapters xlv. 15, 16; xlviii. 11, illustrative of certain reward given to those who remain faithful in times of unfaithfulness and apostasy (Titus ii. 7, 8).

God has two thrones: one in the highest heavens, and the other in the lowliest hearts.

DIVINE DELIGHT IN GRACE.

"In the meanwhile His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John iv. 31, 32).



MANY witnesses we have to the delight which God takes in the exercise of grace, in the work of Christ for sinners, in the provision He Himself has made for the bringing home of His banished ones. The whole of Luke xv. declares this; and this delight of God in the saving of poor sinners gets another fine reflection in the experience of Christ in John iv. 31, 32.

A sinner has just been converted, and her spirit filled with liberty and joy.

The disciples, who had left their Master to buy some food, rejoined Him just at the moment, and spread the table for Him. But He tells them that He needs it not. He has been already at a feast; though wearied, hungry, and athirst, He has been rested and refreshed.

But how? Since they had left Him He had been toiling diligently, and had only seen water without tasting it. All this might well have made Him more weary and more athirst. But still He was refreshed, and needed not the table which they had spread for Him. A sinner had been saved and made happy: *this had given Him a feast in a desert*. The very style in which He answers the disciples, its fervour and energy, bespeak the joy of that moment to Him, and what His soul had known.

What an expression of the divine delight in the grace that saves a sinner is this! The sinner had known her joy—but it was not to be compared with the joy the Saviour had known. To speak in Levitical language, *the fat was still the food of the altar*. In her new-found joy the woman forgets her *waterpot*; in His, Jesus forgets His thirst. Sacred, happy witness of a precious secret of the divine bosom.

And joy, let me add, begets generosity and largeness of heart. When we are happy we are open-handed. Joy is the parent of great and noble sentiments of soul. And thus is it also with Christ here; not that, but at all times, as I need not say, every sentiment of His soul was infinitely perfect. But these verses give us an expression of what I observed, that joy begets generosity. The mind of Christ having conceived this joy which we have noticed, is borne onward in a strain

of beautiful generosity, "One soweth and another reapeth," He says to the wondering disciples. It was the mind of David after the capture of Ziklag. David was then so full of joy that he decreed, "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his be that carrieth by the stuff." The joy of the spoil of the Amalekites so enlarged the heart of David that there came forth this great ordinance, and he made it a statute in Israel (1 Sam. xxx). And so, to speak as a man, the mind of the Son of God in this passage.

What, I ask, does all this tell us poor sinners, but the deep interest which our salvation has in the bosom of God? The Son came forth from that bosom to reveal it to us; and, in the words of a hymn, we say,

"Tis His great delight to bless us."

That song we may sing, tuning our instruments for such music, at this fine and fervent scripture.

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE.



AM desirous to go on carefully, with unshod feet, in inquiring into Scripture. The increase of light and knowledge among us may be turned of Satan to much mischief, if we do not, in the holy power of the Spirit, use it skilfully, and bear it about with us humbly. All knowledge should be gathered in the sanctuary, in communion, or else it will not be acquired in the divine way. The manna which fed the camp was conveyed to the camp in a vessel of God's providing—the dew bore the manna from heaven to earth (Ex. xv). The vessel, as well as the contents, were both of divine appointment. And so with us: our food is to come to us according to the divine order; knowledge is to be gathered out of the proper vessel, and, I judge, that is communion with the Lord. If my intellect merely take up knowledge, it is not the dew bringing the manna, but the food of the camp has contracted some soil from the earth. I desire much to remember this lesson; and oh! to know a little of the power of what we have already, rather than to attain more!

The blessed forgetfulness of self is of great esteem in the sight of our Lord and Master.

"None but Christ can satisfy."

THE PARENTHESIS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

In response to an appeal recently inserted in the *Northern Witness*, and in the hope of being useful to some of its readers, we submit the following running commentary on this important passage. We cannot profess to advance anything new, but desire to lead into fuller knowledge of truth those who are perplexed.

From verse 11 chap. v., to the end of chap. vi. is a parenthesis, necessitated by the state of soul of those to whom the apostle writes. Turning aside from his exposition of the Melchisedek priesthood of our Lord, he delivers them an exhortation accompanied by a solemn warning as to the course and end of the apostate. An extreme case is chosen, in order that the warning may have greater weight.

Verse 11.—"We have many things to say, and hard of interpretation."* To begin with, we have here the reason why so many encounter such difficulties in the Word of God. It would seem, to hear them speak, that the Word is full of darkness and contradiction, instead of being "a light shining in a dark place." The fact is, that these Christians "are become dull of hearing," and introduce the difficulties of human tradition and human reasoning into the simplicity of the Scriptures.

Verse 12-14.—"The senses" of the Hebrew believers were not "exercised by reason of use" to discern good and evil. The Christian can scarcely incur a more serious reproach than that of not being diligent in searching the Scriptures. He ought ever to remember that the salvation from the wrath to come is only the beginning of the "race that is set before us," instead of being, as many would seek to make it, the end.

Peter, whose teaching is the same as that of "our beloved brother Paul" in this epistle (2 Peter iii. 15), and is addressed to the same persons (1 Peter i. 1, 2), writes thus:—

"Seeing that His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . for this very cause, adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge, &c. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near" (2 Peter i. 5-9).

The Hebrews had remained idle, and, as to their knowledge, unfruitful. They could not see afar off; they could not partake of the food of full-grown men. How many Christians in our day who, "by reason of the time ought to be teachers," remain in this shameful condition, and try to justify themselves for not having advanced further!

"For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the Word of righteousness; for he is a babe."

The Greek language, in which the New Testament is written, is exceedingly rich and precise. It contains at least

* We quote from the Revised Version, not as preferring it to the other, but believing that the unfamiliar words may attract attention to the sense.

five words which are translated by "babe" or "child" in English, and each word has a distinct meaning which is conveyed by no other word. Three of these are applied in a special way to children of God as looked at from different points of view:—

- (1) *Teknia*—which simply means "descendants," serves to indicate the children of God without distinction of age, or advancement in the faith (1 John ii. 12, 28).
- (2) *Paidia*—that is to say, "young children," is employed to distinguish the newly converted from those who are "youths" and "fathers" in the faith (1 John ii. 13, 18).
- (3) *Nepioi*—literally "not speaking," has to do with those who babble as infants, when they ought to be able to use "sound speech that cannot be condemned."

First, the two terms do not contain any reproach, while the last is full of it.

This reproach is addressed to two churches.

(1) To the church of God at Corinth, which was enriched "in all utterance and all knowledge," but which had not continued in the fear of God and in the love of the brethren.

(2) To the Hebrews who, remaining under the influence of the traditional religion in which they had been brought up, had need to be taught a second time "the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God."

This attachment to a traditional religious training, is, perhaps, a more hopeless thing to deal with than even knowledge without love, in that the former may exist where there is much zeal and fidelity; but these good dispositions, being misdirected, are really lost so far as God is concerned. The Hebrews wasted them on that which God had cast aside. Many modern Christians squander them on that which God has never owned. There is only one step between this condition in which the heart refuses instruction, and that of open apostasy from Christ. This is what we see in

CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1.—"Wherefore let us leave the Word of the beginning of Christ." Not to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ is to remain an infant. To quit them as a balloon leaves the earth is to become an apostate. But where there is life there ought to be manifest growth, and the believer leaves these first principles as a tree leaves its roots, or a building its foundations.

Let us then "press on unto perfection." What is this "perfection?" It is not the idle theory of men in whom for a time the demon of pride has overcome the demon of lust, but a very practical reality—namely, "maturity," or "full growth." The word in the original is the noun from which the adjective "full-grown" in ch. v. 14 is derived. Those who, by the Spirit and the Word are being borne along to maturity, will not content themselves "laying again the foundation" of doctrines that they held before being called out of Judaism, and that the apostate may still hold after he has gone back to it. God expects from His children a "perfection" corresponding to the revelation He has given them of Himself, and not to any by-past order of things however true.

A word here unto the brethren gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been led in these last days to own the authority of the Lord Jesus as Son over the house of God. It cost us much thus to "ask for the old paths where is the good way," and to "walk therein." But to our assemblies are being added a multitude of young converts of which "the more part knew not wherefore they were come together" at the date of their reception. Are there young ones being left to satisfy themselves with the crumbs of truth that fall from our tables, or are they being instructed, not only in elementary truths such as that of baptism, but in all that concerns our separation from the religious world, our fellowship with those who own the Lordship of Christ, and our gathering together unto Him? Will God accept from us a lifetime of negative teaching that would be received by any "evangelical" sect in Christendom, if the truth *which is our only justification for separation from the National Church or other denominations* must hardly be hinted at in the assembly for fear of hurting somebody's feelings?

Verses 1 to 3 contain six fundamental truths which are common to all the dispensations. These verities are arranged in pairs, thus:—

(1) "Repentance from dead works and faith toward God." The first gives up all confidence in self; the second accepts that "salvation is of the Lord." It is in this way that the saints of God in every dispensation have come to, and been welcomed by Him.

(2) "The teaching of baptism, and the laying on of hands." Notice, that it is the *doctrine* of these things that is spoken of and not the things themselves. The "baptisms" referred to are the "bathings" or "washings" of the book of Leviticus and, indeed, the word *Baptismos* ought to be thus translated. It occurs only four times in the New Testament (Mark vii. 4 and 8, Heb. vi. 2, ix. 10), and is never applied to the ordinance of baptism. The "laying on of hands" is clearly on the head of the sacrificial victims prescribed by the law. The "doctrine" or "teaching" underlying these types, is the necessity of personal purification and of substitutional atonement; which necessity was impressed upon the mind of every Israelite, by the significant ceremonies of the religion in which he was brought up.

(3) "Resurrection of the dead and judgment." That it is only "the righteous man who has hope in his death," and that "God will bring every work into judgment with every hidden thing," is matter of Old Testament revelation. The Gospels and the Acts prove that these things remained part of the national belief of Israel. Not only so, but these truths flow from and complete the two first mentioned, inasmuch as he who has faith in God must needs look for a resurrection in incorruptibility, and he who has renounced his own dead works can hardly doubt that eternal judgment must fall on the unrepentant. The fact that eternal judgment is a *fundamental* truth has to be borne in mind in these days when Universalism and Annihilationism are making such ravages among those who profess to reverence the Word of God.

But the very fact that these doctrines were held alike by the Jews who rejected the Messiah, and the Christians who accepted Him—nay, that even the apostate could still hold

them and plead that "he had not given up anything essential"—is only another reason why those who wished to ripen in divine knowledge should "cease to speak of the principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection." Truth is ever advancing, and if we do not advance with it we will be left behind.

Verses 4-6.—The apostle goes further, and shows that it is possible to partake of privileges exclusively Christian without being born again. He strains language in his endeavour to demonstrate how far one may familiarize oneself with the things of God, and yet not be a child of God. All the experiences of which he speaks, when put together, do not amount to the new birth, and without it they only add to the judgment of the false professor. The character of the epistle comes out most distinctly in this passage. It is addressed to profession, and the only proof of reality that it will accept is a godly life, coupled with continuance in the Christian confession.

That Paul was consistent in applying this teaching to the individual cases that came under his notice is plain from other Scriptures. Compare 2 Tim. ii. 18-20. Hymenæus and Philetus are men who, concerning the truth, have missed the mark and overthrown the faith of some. Having apostatized they must no longer be called Christians. Their case may have been a very puzzling one, but it is enough for us that "the Lord knoweth them that are His." Therefore, "let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."

While writing these words, we feel most solemnly that this is the teaching needed for the present day. Profession of conversion has become so fearfully common and cheap, and yet so much importance is attached to it! Men who are now living unblushingly in open sin are referred to in our assemblies as "dear brethren, who have fallen into the snare of Satan, but whom the Lord is bound to restore," simply because long years ago they said that they were saved at a Gospel meeting. As a consequence professions are more numerous, while there is less and less effort on the part of those professing to square the outward life with the assumed inward reality. And the world has got to know this; and, although it is willing to profit by the believer so long as it is to its own advantage, it has found out that our word is no more trustworthy, and our service or our business transactions no more to be depended upon than its own. And, deeper depth still, suffering as an evil-doer is by not a few being mistaken for suffering as a Christian.

We insist that the possibility of a final falling away from even the fairest profession and the highest privilege is so real that the Lord does not leave it with us to decide who are backsliders, and who have gone back to their wallowing in the mire, simply because their outward working had never changed their inward nature. The fornicator of 1 Cor. v. was a backslider. In the second epistle we find that God had given him repentance, and that he was about to be restored to the fellowship; nevertheless, while he was living in his sin, he is described by the apostle, not as "that dear, erring brother," but as "that wicked person." The Lord knew him as being really His all the time, but to the brethren he was only "the wicked man."

If our consciences were subject to the word of God, our judgment would be the same to-day. It is not without reason that the little group of Epistles beginning with Hebrews and ending with 2nd Peter are so seldom read or expounded. For these are the Scriptures from which we learn that living faith always expresses itself in the life; and that it is much more likely that a hypocrite should make a noisy profession, only to yield himself anew to the world, the flesh, and the devil, than that a child of God should definitely abandon himself to immoral conduct or subversive doctrine.

Verse 4.—"For, as touching those who were once," &c. To the Jews who had rejected the Lord Jesus on earth, salvation was still offered by the preaching of Jesus: Christ risen and glorified; but for those who had feigned to accept these glad tidings and who afterwards apostatized, there was no more salvation. God, having done His utmost for them in thus making known the riches of His grace, has no alternative left but to condemn them. From their side, also, the gulf that they had fixed between themselves and salvation was impossible. Before their professed conversion, they were members of the nation who had crucified the Lord of glory. Nevertheless, repentance and remission of sins were again brought nigh to them by the Gospel. But those who apostatized from the Gospel "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." As touching them, it is impossible that they should be renewed again unto repentance. The national crime has, for them, become a matter of personal guilt. They have called down upon their own heads the curse of Matt. xxvii. 25, and they have put themselves out of the reach of the prayer of Luke xxiii. 34. It is not that the Gospel is limited, but that they have wilfully put themselves in a position where they can no longer benefit by it.

As it is impossible for God to lie, and impossible for Christ to abandon any one who has trusted in Him, so it is impossible to renew again unto repentance the man who has become, in the scriptural sense of the word, an apostate.

Let us examine briefly, the privileges enumerated as those that may be enjoyed for a time by the carnal professor:—

(1) "Who were once enlightened." Alas, there are not wanting earnest workers in these days who reason out what they call "the plan of salvation" as if it were a sum in arithmetic, and who hasten to assure the hearer that he is saved the moment they can persuade him to say, "I see it!" It is only very slowly that we learn by experience, that light in the intelligence, and life in the soul, are two very different things.

(2) "And tasted of the heavenly gift;" that is to say, Jesus, not only as sent into the world, but as raised to the right hand of the Majesty on high. We have already remarked that the apostate denies Christ in this last manifestation of His grace.

(3) "And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." The assembly of God is specially the sphere of the Holy Spirit's abiding presence and activity. This being so, the members of the assembly become partakers of the Holy Ghost, at least after an outward manner. Nay, not only so; but, where the condition of the assembly corresponds to its position, "if there

come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all, the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). How much the more must one who has been received into the fellowship be moved and affected by the Real Presence in the assembly, even if he has deceived himself on the subject of his conversion?

(4) "And tasted the good Word of God." Compare Deut. xxx. 14 and Rom. x. 8, "the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart." Alike under the Law and the Gospel the word may be in the mouth and in the heart—it may give much pleasure, intellectual or sentimental, to the man who reads it, and yet that man may remain in his sins, afar from God.

One may admire the justice of the law, the poetry of the Psalms, the sublimity of the prophets, the beauty and simplicity of the gospels, the unanswerable reasoning of the epistles, and the magnificent vista opened up in the Book of Revelation, without the seed ever having fallen upon the good ground.

(5) "And the powers of the age to come." The last, the most astonishing privilege of all, namely, miraculous gifts—"samples of that which will characterize the reign of the Messiah"—is not necessarily the proof that he who possesses them belongs to the Lord.

We have already quoted the word of 2 Tim. ii. 19, "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His;' and, 'Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'" In awful contrast to these two sentences stand out the two things the Lord will say "in that day" to many who have professed His name. "Then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'"

Two of the inspired historians of the life of Jesus have given us each a specimen of the kind of profession that passes current now, only to be exposed as a refuge of lies when it is too late to seek another and a better. The profession is differently worded by the different writers, as each keeps to the character of the Gospel he writes.

Luke, who represents man as a sinner and Christ as the Son of Man and the Sacrifice for sins, reproduces the words of those who have believed themselves saved because they have been enlightened by the preaching of the glad tidings. "Then shall ye begin to say, 'We did eat and drink in Thy presence, and Thou didst teach in our streets'" (chap. xiii. 26).

Matthew, according to the character of his Gospel, wherein man is seen as a rebel and Christ as Son of David and Sovereign Lord, quotes the case of those who have believed themselves called upon to become heralds of the kingdom, and whose preaching has been accompanied by miraculous signs and brilliant success. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy name, and by Thy name cast out demons, and by Thy name do many mighty works?'" (chap. vii. 22.) The word translated "mighty works" is really "powers" (see R.V., margin)—the very word used in Heb. vi. 5; thus confirming us in the interpretation we have given of the last-mentioned verse.

If any object that the scriptures quoted from Matthew and Luke apply to the kingdom in its outward manifestation, and not to the Church, we reply that it is only as we learn to admit frankly the primary application of all "kingdom truth," that we see how in principle most or all of it applies to the professing Christendom of to-day. It is certain that the principle that the damnation of the unregenerate becomes deeper in proportion to the height of their profession and the greatness of their privilege is not limited to any one dispensation.

Verses 7, 8—"For the land which hath drunk the rain," &c. This illustration, appended to the foregoing warning, serves to distinguish the most feeble disciple of the Lord Jesus from the most highly-finished imitation that Satan can produce. "The ground," in the case of the former, "bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled." Perhaps it does not yield fruit "a hundredfold," perhaps not even "sixtyfold;" still, it "yieldeth fruit," and "receiveth blessing from God." In the case of the latter, it only bears "thorns and thistles" (the emblem of the curse, Gen. iv. 18). There is no fruit for the Divine Husbandman. "It is rejected, and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned."

Verse 9.—"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you." How aptly the comfort succeeds the warning! Just at the moment when the fearful picture of the apostate might be used by the devil to terrify those who were real and true though feeble-minded and ready to halt, the apostle hastens to assure them that it was not their condition that he had thus depicted.

Verse 10.—He is satisfied as to their conversion, because he has already seen the practical results of it. Truly there were "things that accompany salvation" manifested in the days of their first love; and, as these things still continued at the time he wrote, there was no room left for doubt. The style of the epistle is consistently kept up. No one can "show his faith" apart from works. It is only by the works which it produces that the faith can be seen. This is true as to testimony before the Church and the world; but it is not the usual way of the Spirit of God to refer the believer, as in this verse, to *his own works*, in order to strengthen his faith. In this we must remember that the Hebrews had become babes, and had to be treated accordingly.

Verses 11, 12.—Lastly, "patient continuance in well-doing" is needed to complete the proof of their salvation. "Justification by faith," in the sight of God, is the act of a moment. "Justification by works," in the sight of men, is the labour of a lifetime. But it is a necessary labour, not only in order that others may be sure of us, but also that our own assurance may remain and deepen. God has joined these two "justifications," let no man put them asunder. The man who *is not being saved* from the power of sin has no Scriptural right to say that he *has been saved* from its punishment, or that, when the Lord comes, he *will be saved* from its presence. Therefore, let no man lean upon past experience, but let all "show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope, even to the end." It is by the "patience" or "long endurance" of the Old Testament inheritors of the promise that we recognize their "faith."

Verses 13-17.—Abraham waited long, and his faith was sorely tried, before he obtained the promise recorded in Gen. xxii., and quoted in verse 14 of our chapter. But the promise made to him, after that “in a parable” he had received back from the dead his only begotten son, is here brought in as a “strong encouragement” for us. Do any ask how this can be? We reply that all the promises of God await, for their full accomplishment, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Messiah of God, and the true Seed of Abraham. Only let us remember that the prophecies of the Old Testament do not reveal any interval between the first and second advents of Christ, and that even the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not indicate that the second advent is divided into two distinct moments—the rapture of the saints and the return of Christ with them—and we shall have no difficulty in seeing that towards the coming of Christ, *considered as a whole*, is directed every promise of God, and every hope of His people.

“For how many soever be the promises of God, in HIM is the YEA: wherefore also through Him is the *Amen*, unto the glory of God through us” (2 Cor. i. 20), is the divinely-inspired statement of the Apostle Paul. The grand example is given by John in the last chapter of the Revelation. “He which testifieth these things saith ‘YEA: I come quickly!’” Shall we not gladly respond “*Amen*: come, Lord Jesus?”

And God “being mindful to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath!” Man, recognizing his own changeableness, has ever, in taking an obligation to be truthful and faithful, appealed to Him who changes not. Society has always accepted the oath as “final for confirmation.” The One who could swear by no greater has sworn by HIMSELF.

Verses 18-20.—We may well show diligence “unto the fullness of the hope,” inasmuch as that hope is secured to us by two immutable things—the promise and the oath of our God. Human hope is uncertain, and often doomed to disappointment. Divine hope deals with divine certainties, and “maketh not ashamed.” We have the promise and the oath, and, as if to make assurance doubly sure, we have a personal guarantee, even Jesus the Forerunner, who has entered for us into the Holy of holies, where He is seated “High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek.”

Our barque may be tempest-tossed—we may have “fled for refuge” in dire distress—but our anchor is cast where no storms can ever reach. It has been carried “inside the veil” of the Sanctuary, and it has taken hold of the Throne of God!

A. P. M.

A LETTER.

WHITENESS, 30th January, 1886.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—It may interest some readers of the *Northern Witness* to know that the half-yearly conference of believers was held here, in the Ebenezer Hall, Lerwick, on Monday the 18th of January. The weather being very stormy, few got in from the country.

The first hour, from twelve to one, was spent in prayer. Psalm lxxxv. 6, along with other portions, were then referred to. Before revival there must be on our part confession (Hosea v. 15). Only as we ourselves are revived can we be the means of reviving others. Hosea xiv. and vii. —“They that dwell under His shadow shall return they shall revive as the corn.” What need for revival first in these hearts of ours, so that we may not only be in a revival, but better still, have a revival in us? Would we be the channels of blessing to the unsaved? then we must have restored to us first the joy of His Salvation. Would we be restorers of our brethren? then see to it that we ourselves are restored (Gal. vi. 1). We learn from James v. 19, that we may be the means of the conversion, not of sinners, but of sinning saints. “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him” &c. But are we converted ourselves? The Lord said to Peter “when thou art converted—strengthen thy brethren,” and this we find him doing in his epistles.

A searching address was then given on the two-fold washing in the word; cleansing by the blood once for all, cleansing by the word daily. Exod. xxix. 4, Exod. xxx. 19, were referred to; also, Leviticus xiv., from which believers were exhorted not to be satisfied with merely knowing sins forgiven, but to know the cleansing of our ways by the word, even should it be as in the case of the leper, the shaving—the sharper than any two-edged sword of God’s word, searching and trying us; not at all pleasing for the old man, but a very healthy exercise for the new man. After a few remarks by the same speaker on 1 Samuel chap. vii. our first meeting, was closed.

We met again at five. Soon after tea was served we had about three hours of ministry of the word; various brethren took part. Br. S. gave a needed word on doing the will of God—the truly happy one was the obedient one. After a few words of exhortation from Br. P. the meeting was closed with praise and prayer.

On the three following evenings meetings were held, chiefly for believers. We trust at these meetings the Master’s voice was heard by not a few, and that as the result of the word ministered, more fruit and a brighter testimony may be borne to His worthy Name.

Brother Martin has gone to Hoswick for Gospel work. A wooden building was erected there last autumn which seats about 150. In response to circulars issued some of the Lord’s people, individually and collectively, had fellowship in the erection of the same. We purpose having a tea-meeting and conference in Whiteness on or about the 16th of next month, when we expect to see many who were not able to get to the Lerwick meetings.

Pray for us. The need, especially in the country here, is great. If some of our friends could spend a few weeks or months here in winter, out in the west mainland, and see the long distances that many of the Christians have to travel to the meetings, over the hills, in some places not even a foot-path, they would have more sympathy with, and be stirred up to more earnest prayer for those who live, and also for those who seek to labour in these parts.

D. M’I.

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 CCXIX.

How should an assembly recognise (not appoint) those in their midst whom they know to be God-appointed overseers? In keeping with 1 Thess. v. 12, should they not acknowledge them by name, in order to prevent others from taking the place for which they are manifestly unfitted?

REPLY.

In this Scripture, the word “know” has not the force of “acknowledge,” which idea is expressed by quite a different Greek word, as in 1 Cor. xvi. 18. Still less does the passage afford any ground for a formal acknowledgement. The object of the “knowing” and “esteeming” of such, is not primarily to repress others, but to support and encourage those who are really shepherding the flock, or labouring in the Word and doctrine.

The true shepherd will seek to *know* the sheep; and it is a most godly and becoming spirit when saints desire to *know* and *confide in*, and *esteem* those who are over them in the Lord.

Were this injunction more fully obeyed—in the spirit of it—there would be less need to prevent unfitted ones from taking a leading place. Usually, in doing so, they are encouraged by some unspiritual ones, and persist in a ministry that is not acceptable to the saints or to God, because they are backed up in it.

We greatly fear that saints generally have little understanding of the real character of oversight. Some are recognised because they occupy a little better social position than the rest. Some because they occasionally attend an “oversight meeting,” and are always ready to give their “opinion,” &c., &c. After all, true oversight work is little seen or heard; but it is *felt* in the souls and in the affections of those who have experienced blessing through the ministry, or visiting of the true pastor.

It is God who alone can put the earnest care into the hearts of His servants (2 Cor. viii. 16).

It is worthy of note, that whilst *prophets* and *teachers* are specified by name in the New Testament (see Acts xiii. 1, xv. 32), there is no similar instance of *overseers* being so designated.

Shepherd-care might be budding in the heart, and shepherd-work might be done in truth by others than those whom the church has acknowledged by name. The “naming” would only stamp with official authority and stereotype certain persons in the position, and would always be more easily *done* than *undone*.

QUESTION CCXX.

Is it right for believers to have their children taught dancing?

REPLY.

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and even when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. xxii. 6).

“Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. vi. 4).

These two passages we take to be a sufficient reply to this question.

If dancing-parties and balls, with all their accompanying vanities are “*the way a child should go*,”—if they are to be found among the Lord’s “*admonitions*,” or if they form part of the Lord’s “*nurture*”—then by all means let the children be so taught. But, if the sum total of such things is “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” how, then, dare a Christian parent cause his child to be trained to such a manner of life?

Although no amount of “*training*” or anything short of regeneration will make a child a Christian, nevertheless, it ought to be the unremitting effort of Christian parents to bring up their children in such habits of thought and life, as shall leave little to be *unlearned* or given up, when grace has at last spoken the quickening word, and brought the child, by nature dead in sin, to life eternal.

QUESTION CCXXI.

Are we to gather from Rom. xi. 13-22, that a Gentile once saved can be lost again?

REPLY.

The whole chapter is dispensational. What occupies the mind of the writer is God's dealings with Israel nationally; and with the Gentiles, as having been brought into the sphere of privilege when Israel had been cast off.

In what sense, then, was Israel cast away or cut off? Surely it is not implied that any of those who were believers were so dealt with? On the contrary, we are explicitly informed "God hath not cast away His people *whom He foreknew*" (ver. 2).

The believing remnant "according to the election of grace" (ver. 5), never were or could be cast away, even though nationally they were deprived of all the privileges which had pertained to them as "the people of God."

But through their fall (not from salvation individually, but from position or privilege nationally), salvation has come to the Gentiles (ver. 11); and, in many respects, the Gentile nations that are nominally "Christian" are, in the place of privilege and responsibility, akin to that occupied by Israel of old.

But through unbelief Israel came under the judgment of God, and were cut off as branches from the olive tree, whilst the Gentile was put on trial in the position whence Israel had fallen.

But have the Gentiles, whilst professing Christianity and propagating the Scriptures, proved any more true to their trust than did Israel of old? We may surely say, "No."

True, many have believed; for electing grace has a numerous people in preparation for heavenly glory, out of every kindred, and nation, and people, and tongue, these can no more be cast away than could the election of grace out of Israel; nevertheless, the Gentile has failed in testimony as completely as Israel did, and will, in due time, be visited with the judgment of God, and be finally cut off from the position of privilege hitherto enjoyed.

Then will follow the grafting in again of the "natural branches" which were broken off. Not the restoring to salvation of individuals who had fallen away, but the restoring of Israel nationally, to the

place of privilege and blessing from which that had been cut off. And this will be when the veil is taken away from their hearts, and they turn to the Lord.

NOTE ON QUESTION CCXVII.

ACTS ix. 7 and xxii. 9.

The explanation given of the above in the *Northern Witness* for January, and illustrated by John xii. 28-30, is supported by the fact that the word most commonly rendered *voice* sometimes means simply *sound*. It is so rendered in John iii. 8, "the sound" of the wind, and Rev. ix. 9, "the sound" of wings and chariots (see also 1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8.)

But it is equally true that the verb used has a double meaning; *akouo* signifies both *to hear* and *to understand*. That Paul used it in the latter sense is very clear, from 1 Cor. xiv. 2, where it is properly rendered *understandeth*. In Acts ix. Luke evidently uses the word in its first and simplest sense when he speaks of the men as "hearing the voice, but seeing no man," while in Acts xxii. Paul uses it with the same meaning that it bears in 1 Cor. xiv. 2, "they saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they *understood* not the voice of Him that spake to me."

This explanation seems simpler than that which lays stress on the two different cases of the word *voice* (in the Greek); the genitive in Acts ix., meaning "hearing *something* of the voice," and the accusative in Acts xxii., stating that "the voice" fully and completely "they heard not." This explanation was given, I believe, in a most able article in *The Quarterly*, over twenty years ago, and that there is a distinguishing power of this kind in the cases was shown by a comparison of certain passages. For example, when Scripture says the Lord "fasted forty days and forty nights" (Mat. iv. 2), and that He was "forty days tempted of the devil" (Luke iv. 2), the accusative is used, but when it tells that He was seen by the disciples forty days after His resurrection (Acts i. 3), the genitive is given. The fasting and temptation of the Lord was *continuous*, His manifestations of Himself to His disciples only *occasional*.

The simple fact that there are at least three possible explanations of what at first sight seems a discrepancy, has its lessons for those who are wise enough to learn them.

W. H. B.

WILL THE CHURCH ESCAPE THE GREAT TRIBULATION?



UCH is the title of a pamphlet I have just read, which purports to prove that the Church, which is "the Body of Christ," is to go through the great tribulation, which is "the day of Jacob's trouble!"

I always thought that Jacob meant Israel, and not the Church, and that the tribulation was to be sent on the Jews as a nation for having rejected Christ, and not on the members of His Body who have received Him and become the sons of God.

I suppose, however, it will be admitted by all who hold the futurist view of prophecy that there must be a Jewish polity established at Jerusalem before the seventieth week of Daniel begins to run its course, and that a temple must be built which at the time will be acknowledged by God as His temple, for we find it so called in four different divisions of Scripture—

- 1st. In Old Testament Prophecy, - Malachi iii. 1.
- 2nd. In the Gospels, - - - Matt. xxiv. 15.
- 3rd. In the Epistles, - - - 2 Thess. ii. 4.
- 4th. In Revelation, - - - Rev. xi. 1.

And it is worthy of notice that the place where it is said (in Matt. xxiv.) that the abomination of desolation is to be set up is called by our Lord "the *holy place*."

I would therefore gather that the daily sacrifice must be acknowledged by God at that time, and accepted by Him from these Jews, *as Jews*, or it would be no sacrilege to take it away; and, further, there must be inside worshippers there who are recognized *as worshippers*, for in Rev. xi. the angel is told to "rise and measure the *temple of God*, and *them that worship therein*."

Is this the worship of apostates? I trow not! And it seems just as impossible that it can be the worship of the present time, of which it is said, "that neither in Jerusalem nor in the mountain of Samaria are men to worship the Father" (John iv. 21); and I might ask what possible correspondence is there between this and the gathering together of two or three to the Name of the Lord now?

This transition having taken place from Christian to Jewish worship, there must be some testimony to produce and warrant such a change both in the place and in the character of worship; and this, I judge,

will be committed to those spoken of in Joel ii. 28, 32, to whom God will send visions and dreams in those last days, after He has poured out on them His Spirit.

They are Israel's sons and daughters, and not prophets of the Church.

Their minds will be filled with kingdom hopes and expectations, and room must be left for their testimony at that time.

Might I ask, how could the present testimony *possibly* produce such a state of things, or even tolerate it?

How could our testimony, which is given to teach us that our citizenship is in heaven, and our inheritance also there, accord with that to Israel, which will tell them that Jerusalem is presently to be made "the city of the Great King" and a joy in all the earth, and that they were about to inherit the land promised to the fathers?

What would a Jew, with a heart exercised about his nation's hopes, think were he to hear in one place a preacher of the Church's hope declaring that our home was in heaven, and that Christ was coming, as He had promised in John xiv., to take His people up to the mansions which He had prepared for them in His Father's house? and, in another place, one of the prophets of the kingdom declaring that the Redeemer has to come to Zion to build its waste places?

Might he not turn in bewilderment from one to the other and ask, "Pray, which testimony am I expected to believe?"

It is only a weak person who will be deterred from seeking "rightly to divide the word of truth" by the charge that he is Judaizing Scripture by doing so.

There are Scriptures—and I assert it with boldness—which apply definitely and exclusively to Israel, and there are others which refer to the Church while Israel is "Lo-Ammi!" And, again, there are Scriptures which will have their application to God's earthly people when this present testimony is ended; but the language of faith and divine life is common to each and all, so that Christian instruction and exhortation can be derived from all, as from the Psalms and Old Testament prophets.

Four-fifths of the Bible refer to Israel's future; and it is not easy to conceive that the fulfilment of the many and stupendous events which are the subjects of prophecy will be crowded up, with all the events

preparatory to them, into a few days, and their fulfilment mixed up in a general way with the destiny and hopes of the Church.

I am happy to say that I do not know any one who repudiates the sublime principles taught by our Lord in the "sermon on the mount" as being given to the Jews and not to us.

They are the highest principles, and they are intended for those whose calling is the highest calling: for faith and godliness are common with the forgiveness of sins; these fundamentals remain under all circumstances. But if the rejection of the King, and the course the dispensation has taken, renders it impossible to carry out some of these to the letter—for instance, to carry no money in our purses when we go on a journey, or "from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"—it becomes us to see that there is nothing in our hearts which would hinder our doing this joyfully, *as a concession to need*, though not as an encouragement to fraud or dishonesty.

But to insist on appropriating to ourselves *indiscriminately* all the prophecies and promises of Scripture, because they are contained in the Word of God, would lead to a somewhat like confusion, as if the owner of a house were to insist on taking all the letters the postman brought without ever looking at the direction, and appropriating them and their contents to himself because he found them in the letter box.

A person dealing so with Scripture could find a warrant for taking "a two-edged sword in his hand" and slaying his enemies while "the high praises of God were on his lips!"

I do not pretend that every difficulty on the subject can be answered by a text.

God will not allow any part of His revelation to be "made up," as if for a competitive examination. His word is a "loving word," and we must be always prepared to learn that "we know nothing yet as we ought to know," and there are many things that we must wait for light upon.

I would like, however, before closing these few remarks, to state that, as our brother who wrote the pamphlet to which I refer says, that he held the doctrine of the rapture of the saints for five years, and then gave it up as untenable; I, on the other hand, held, and for some years preached and

taught, the tribulation doctrine, which I gave up as untenable, in view of the events which I conceive must take place, and the state of things which must be in existence in Jerusalem before the seventieth heptad of the ninth of Daniel can begin.

I would wish to be understood that there are many statements put forward by those who write to uphold the rapture of the Church which I can by no means endorse, and which are in my judgment as inconsistent and incongruous as some of the statements in the pamphlet which has called forth these remarks.

F. C. B.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER i. 5, 6.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY J. R. C.

FOR our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power." It was by this that Paul knew their election of God.

The Gospel which he preached, and which he here calls "*our gospel*," included much more than is now embraced in what is called "gospel-preaching." It included the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but it did not stop there; he preached Christ as the sacrifice, as the risen almighty Saviour, and as the coming King.

In 2 Tim. ii. 8, we read, "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, *according to my Gospel*." Again in Rom. xvi. 25, we read, "Now unto Him that is of power to stablish 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, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the Everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." From this we see that the Gospel preached by Paul included the great truth of union with Christ. It was something more than the preaching of Christ as Israel's Messiah and the sinner's Saviour; it embraced the truth that a chosen people are at present being gathered out from both Jew and Gentile to be joint-heirs with Christ, to be caught up to meet him at His coming, to be glorified

together with Him, and to reign with Him in His coming Kingdom.

The apostle had indeed a grand and glorious theme in the Gospel which he preached.

There are many now-a-days who hardly ever get beyond "Christ died for sinners." They seem to be limited to one aspect of the truth. They rarely even touch upon His resurrection, and as for the truth of His coming again and of His reigning as King of Kings, that is never by such preachers alluded to.

You might listen long enough to such before they would be accused by the world of preaching "that there is another King, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7).

Most blessed is the truth that "Jesus died for sinners," and that simply believing brings peace and life. God forbid that we should under-value it. Without it there is no Gospel for a guilty soul. But what we would point out is that the apostolic Gospel was the preaching of *Christ* in all the fulness of His grace and glory, and that as such it was a gloriously comprehensive and inexhaustible theme. He who knows and preaches Paul's Gospel ranges through all the breadth and length and depth and height of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

"For our Gospel came not unto you in word only." We may preach the Gospel to a hundred sinners in a meeting and not one of them be converted. It comes to them in word only. We all heard the Gospel many a time before it came to us in power. There needs to be the preparation of the heart for the reception of the Gospel. The soil of the heart has, so to speak, to be ploughed up before the seed of the Word can find entrance.

"But also in power." How blessed when the Word comes in power, when it enters into our souls and we realize it to be the voice of the living God to us. This makes all the difference. Look at a verse in the second chapter of this epistle (13th), "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." They received it as the authoritative voice of God to their own soul, which cannot be questioned, being the testimony of God himself—the God who cannot lie. Whenever the Word of God comes thus to the soul, that is the evidence that that one is chosen of God.

The Gospel thus received effectually works in those who believe and brings forth 'fruit that is its own witness to the possession of divine life.

"And in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance." The power was realised in their own souls, but the Holy Spirit was the One who made the Word effectual. It was the Holy Spirit who carried conviction to their consciences and brought the Gospel in power to their souls, and the result of it was "much assurance."

"As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sakes. And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost."

"The Word of God which effectually worketh in you that believe" (chap. ii. 13). Here is the evidence that they had received the Word in the Holy Ghost. If we hear of people professing to believe the Gospel, and there is no peace, no joy, no transformation of life, no testimony for Christ; if there is no change in the object and purpose of their lives, what then? We have no right to believe that the Gospel has been received as the Word of God when it does not produce these results.

In connection with this look at a word in Luke viii. 12-15, "Those by the wayside are those that hear; then cometh the devil and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience."

You see that there was such a thing as the reception and belief of the word, without any permanent result, but that is not what we have in 1 Thess. ii. 13. "Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

In these days in which the Gospel is so abundantly preached, we require to see clearly the grace of God in those who profess to have received the Gospel before we are satisfied that a real conversion has

taken place. Those of us who have been many years more or less engaged in the work of the Lord can look back to scores of cases which answer exactly to those referred to in Luke viii. There has been no ploughing of the soil in them, they just seem to listen to the word as a pleasant sound, and they profess to be saved, but by-and-by there is found to be nothing in it. They were not born of God at all; the word was not received as the voice of God to the soul: there was no real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There was the apprehension of the plan of salvation, but no real contact between the soul and Christ. But, whilst saying this, we would add that none need doubt or question their everlasting security who know what it is to deal with the living God—who have received the word as from God to their own souls, and have put their trust in a Living Person. The Apostle Paul could say, "I know WHOM I have believed;" he did not say, "I know *what* I have believed." His faith rested on a Person, not simply on the knowledge that he had of Him, but on Himself, the living Saviour.

"Having received the word with much affliction and joy of the Holy Ghost." Notice how beautifully the Spirit of God brings these two things together, "affliction and joy." We read of the Apostle's first visit to Thessalonica, and what opposition Satan raised to the work. The moment these Thessalonians were converted to God, and were therefore identified with Paul and Silas, they became a marked—a persecuted people. If you look at the 2nd chapter, 14th verse, you will see this: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." These Thessalonians had to suffer from their heathen companions the very same treatment that the converted Jews received from their countrymen. The religious Jew and the ungodly Gentile were both alike children of the devil; both alike opposed to Christ. When Christ was seen in His people they hated them, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Let us bear this in mind, that the hatred of the enemy, which took the form of persecution in those days, may take another form now, but the hatred is the same. Never let us forget this, that we have the same wily adversary to contend with that they had then.

Some in our days have to endure what we read of in the epistle to the Hebrews xi. 36-38: "Trial of cruel mocking." Think of God marking that down in the same list as those sawn asunder and slain with the sword. God knows how hard it is to bear, and that bitter words are like arrows. Following in the steps of Jesus, you may suffer in your business, or be called to endure bitter and trying persecution. But there is another form which Satan's enmity may take. When he finds that he cannot get the better of you by opposition, he will try to get you ensnared into the terrible vortex of the love and pleasures of the world. We read of one who went back into the world, but we do not read that he ever was delivered from it. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. iv. 10). In his case, as in the parable, the word was choked through cares, riches, and pleasures of the world.

Be on your guard against the enemy of souls—the enemy of the Lord Jesus. Cleave to the Lord, seek His grace, which will uphold you day-by-day. You do not know what snares Satan is even now laying for you, but the Lord knows, and He alone is able to hold you up.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER VII.

(Continued from page 36.)

NOW, I have said that the third and the eighth day shadow resurrection. In the third day we alone are concerned, but in the eighth the whole creation; the resurrection of this very earth through the process of fire and judgment. So we read, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)." We have mention of the Spirit in chapters iii. and iv. In the third it is being born of the Spirit, and so getting the new nature; in the fourth it is worshipping in the Spirit. Here it

is the Spirit coming down from a glorified Christ, and evidently something personal. A picture of Christ blessing, the Spirit flowing down from a glorified Christ, after allusion to His death and departure. Now think a little of the anti-type. We are in the wilderness, and God would have us feel it. But if these rivers flow down from a glorified Christ, our spirits are sustained apart from this world altogether. There is everything here to depress us, but we have the living water, or the Holy Ghost, from Christ in glory, flowing down unto, into, and even out of His people. Wherever God has a temple He marks His presence by blessing flowing out therefrom; so the Spirit marks the presence of God in this His temple, whether it be the individual or the assembly, by rivers flowing out. The Holy Ghost has come down to make me feel at home in heaven, while everything here makes me feel I am in the wilderness.

But here is a difficulty. It says, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Now, as a matter of fact, it does not appear to follow. Many believers there are, in whose company you might be for a long time and yet get nothing good from them, nevertheless you have grounds for thinking that they are children of God. How then are we to understand these words? rivers—abundance of living waters, when we might say, perhaps, that even in the majority of real believers there is comparatively scarcely a trace. I understand, first, that it does not mean only he that believes on Me for salvation. If I believe on Christ who hung upon the cross, I have got the salvation of my soul. But if I want to be giving out blessing, I must believe on Christ for more than that. According to my faith shall it be unto me. And you see, we have not merely to be getting divine life, but to be giving it out. Does this not shame us? Have we been blessings to those with whom we have to do? But to make this plainer, let us turn to another scripture, a chapter which points to the work of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit in our souls. It begins with the work of God at the top, but I will begin at the bottom and work up. In Ephesians 1, from verses 3 to 6, we have the work of God in lifting us to heaven. Let us begin at verse 6, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath taken us into favour in the Beloved One," giving it an exact translation; that is, He hath loved us

with the same love as the Beloved One, for the Beloved One's sake, making us partakers with the Beloved One. This is the foundation of the work of God for us. I begin at the end, God begins from His own throne, but that is too high for us. Next look at verse 5. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself;" because He has taken us into favour in the Beloved One. He wants us for Himself, so He predestinates us for sons. But a step higher, verse 4. "According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." The difference between predestination and election is this: predestination looks at the place *to* which He brings us; election at the place *from* which He takes us. He begins with the one truth, and predestinates us to sonship, through the Beloved One, to Himself; next He elects us out of all the mess in which by nature we are, to Himself to be holy. I will make those to be perfect holy saints, picking them out of a thorough mess. He elected us to be holy and without blame before Him in love; His arms of love thoroughly around us, embraced in heaven by His love on every side, in its height, depth, breadth, and length. Now one step higher, and you will see what I am quoting the passage for. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ" (verse 3). He has given us everything in heaven,—it is hard to take in,—everything in heaven in Christ; not on earth, very little there in one sense. But now see the passage in John in connection with this. "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." If you understand Christ in glory, Christ in glory the beloved object of God, if you understand that God is associating you with Him ("thou hast a part with Me, a share with Me"), with Him in the highest heaven, if your faith were in exercise and you were really believing and living upon that glorified Christ, you would turn from the paltry gewgaws of earth, caring nought for them, and from you would be flowing an uninterrupted stream of richest heavenly, spiritual blessing. "According to your faith be it unto you," and if you do not make the pipe a very wide one, of course but little water will pass through it. And if I am living in the spirit of those early verses of Ephesians 1, am living upon

that glorified Christ, can you conceive it possible that in my conversation with you I should be joking or fooling, or occupying myself with the politics or fashion of the world? Oh beloved, these words contain precious truth, but I feel they contain implied reproof.

Then there follows about the Council of the Sanhedrim, their purpose to apprehend the Lord, and the protest of Nicodemus. I do not propose to speak of Nicodemus now, because we come in chapter xix. to the time when he looks upon the Lord crucified, and must have found God. But certainly Nicodemus had no business in the council. Had he been a believer established and intelligent, he would not have been there. And then, connecting the last verse with the first of the next chapter, "And every man went unto his own house, Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives," it would seem to imply that He had no place to put His head. And when I think of the heavens, and the heaven of heavens which are His, I wonder and adore. Perhaps it was on account of the very special case to be brought before Him next morning, and He would hold communion with his God.

CHAPTER VIII.

These chapters about here have first a symbol, or symbolic action, and then a discourse explaining that symbol. As in chapter vii. we have reference to the Feast of Tabernacles, and then a discourse from the Lord allusive thereto, so in this we have similarly a symbolic representation of Christ as the truth. In this chapter, too, we have the commencement of a new line of things—namely, Christ as the Light. Now this chapter consists of two parts, of the symbolic action of the light upon the ways of different sinners; and then secondly, an expansion in the Lord's doctrine of the same line of thought. In verses 1 to 11 we have the symbolic representation of the action of the Light upon sinners. The chapter opens with Christ taking His seat in the temple as the Light. Some people, who represent themselves as seeing, come to test Him. They bring to Him Moses and an adulteress to test and see how He, the Light, will act. These Pharisees are intent, not so much upon getting the woman condemned as on getting Jesus to condemn her. And the great point in the passage, as I think, is not so much to see that Jesus did not so condemn her but that He saved her, as to

see that we were in an awful, awful plight too. Do you notice the words in Romans v. ? When we were yet sinners, when we were without strength, when we were enemies, rebels, foreigners, afar off by wicked works. Not even in the wilderness originally, farther off than that; we had loved our own ways, hated God, and obeyed the Devil. So we had better take care, even in reading these verses, lest we be too hard upon another. But the great question is, How will the Lord act? He is known to be very holy; He is speaking, as we see in verse 12, as the Light of the world, and light condemns sin. Will He side with the Pharisees? He cannot, people might think, side with this very wicked sinner. Ah, His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. How will the Lord act? If He is to speak out as the Light He must condemn everyone. So notice what He does. When they bring their accusation, taken from Moses, He stoops down to work in the dust. But they, merciless, want Him to speak out at once, and as they will interrupt, He raises Himself in the midst of His work. The symbol and the fact exactly correspond, the very thing men are doing now; they were always trying to interrupt, and begin to interrupt now. So while they persist in interrupting He lifts Himself as the Light—He cannot speak in any other character, for His work is not done—and flashes in omnipotent power light upon their consciences and lives. Then they that have heard what He says go out one by one, "beginning at the oldest even unto the last." The stoutest-hearted cannot resist the light flashed upon the conscience by God. Solemn is it to think that at the great white throne there will be no leaving His presence; they could then, because His work was not yet completed and He was still in humiliation. "Beginning at the oldest even unto the last," is another illustration of how that when the Lord proceeds in judgment He always begins with the greatest. Then he stoops down and goes on with His writing. The question might be raised, What did He write? If we think of the scriptures, and understand them, we are not left much either to inference or guessing. What did He write upon the cross? what is He writing upon the throne of God? what upon your conscience? As He worked in the dust, as He went down to the cross, was it not telling out the character of God? Telling of the mercy, the purity, the love of God. Have we learned the lesson

of the cross, and have we learned what it tells out of the character of God? That is what He wrote. Then, when these go away, why does not the woman? She was as guilty as any. Was there not something in the Lord, some power acting, which kept her at His feet till His work was done? Now, when He had finished His work in the dust, He raised Himself again, and there is a poor sinner trembling at His feet. But the case is altered now, and the Light says, "Where are thine accusers?" And the Light can say, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." Look at Him before He gets to the cross, as a sinner, and there is no hope for you; begin with Him at the cross, dying for you as a sinner, cling to that and He can say, "Where are thine accusers? Neither do I condemn thee." And may any poor sinner who hears this have such a private, closet interview with the Lord Jesus; it can but do him good—but save his soul. "Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." He had finished His writing, that was the great thing here. And have you read these words to any purpose yet, "It is finished. And he bowed His head and gave up the ghost." Have you taken them to your heart? and known that it was for a sinner like you, who have been taken off the dunghill. "Woman, where are these thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." Beautiful words! kind encouragement.

Such is the first view we get of the action, twofold, of the Light. If you have to do with Christ and God, apart from the finished work, it can but wither you up; if you begin with the finished work, what it says is, "No condemnation." Then the rest of the chapter is an expansion of this.—(*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

Beloved, let us rest in the bosom of the God of peace, and the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Lord of peace Himself rests there. All the toil is over. The waves which overwhelmed the Rock on which we build are all gone back, and our Rock is within the vail. Jehovah is our rock; exalted be the God of the Rock of our salvation.

GOD'S PROVISION AGAINST THE POLLUTION OF SIN IN A BELIEVER.

II.

HAVING looked shortly at how God has dealt with the *guilt* of sin in a believer, we now endeavour to throw some light on how He deals with its *pollution*. As the epistle to the Romans mainly unfolds the one truth; so the epistle to the Hebrews unfolds the other.

Let us seek to gather some instruction on this subject from the Levitical types. We may first lay down the general principle that the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices were instituted to meet the need of a people already redeemed. There is much in them from which the Gospel can be preached to the lost, but their primary application is to the saved. In Lev. iv. and v. we have the commandment of the LORD as to what an Israelite was to do if he *committed* sin—he had to provide a substitute to die in his stead. Here we may notice the contrast between the shadow and the substance; in the type the *offender* had to provide a proper sacrifice, but in the anti-type it is the *offended* ONE who provides the sacrifice; a most blessed truth for faith to rest upon. In this portion of scripture there are also different degrees of guilt provided for, the sin of a priest being equal to the sin of a whole congregation; but mark how the greater guilt was met. It was not atoned for by a greater amount of suffering in the death of the victim—the "bullock" for the "priest," and the "female kid" for "one of the common people"—both died in the same way; the greater guilt was met by a sacrifice of greater value; a most blessed truth also. How it magnifies the sacrifice of Christ.

Then we have the various washings for the various uncleannesses, as well as the command of the LORD to put certain diseases and defilements "outside the camp" (Num. v. 1-4). But after all these injunctions were attended to, after the most careful and godly attention to all the commandments of the LORD by both priest and people, there was still uncleanness, which was discernible only to the eye of Jehovah; and if He was to dwell in the midst of their camp, all their "uncleanness" and all "their transgressions in all their sins" must be met according to His knowledge of them, and according to His estimate of what

sin is. This is specially unfolded in Lev. xvi. 15, 16. There "the goat of the sin-offering for the people" was not to meet the need of the individual conscience, but to "make an atonement for the holy place." The sin-offerings and trespass-offerings of chapters iv. and v. were more for the human conscience, but the sin-offering of the day of atonement was for the dwelling-place of Jehovah. After all the self-judgment both priest and people could exercise, there was still uncleanness visible to the eye of GOD; and if He was to dwell among them, that defilement must be atoned for, according to His judgment of what sin is. There is no part of revealed truth we are more in danger of letting go than this; there is a tendency in these days to put conscience in place of God, and to fancy that if *we are not conscious* of committing sin, therefore we are sinless. The Apostle Paul sets forth the truth on this point where he says, "For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 4, *R. V.*). Here he says he did not know of anything against himself, but he does not give that as a proof that there was nothing; the Lord might have seen a great deal against him which his conscience could not discern, and hence he speaks of the Lord bringing "to light the hidden things of darkness," and making "manifest the counsels of the heart;" and if believers now are to enter through the "rent vail" and walk in the light of the presence of God, their uncleanness must be met according to His holiness. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John ii. 7). This is not God's provision for restoring those who have *sinned*—we have that in chapter ii. 1. This is God's provision for maintaining the fellowship of those who are walking in the light, but who have still sin in them; if it were not for that, the blood would not be needed to maintain their fellowship. Here the blood has a twofold aspect; it meets the need of an enlightened conscience in the light of God's presence; it also meets the requirements of the holiness of God on behalf of his defiled children. In the tabernacle of old the cherubim were made with their faces looking towards the blood-stained mercy-seat. Jehovah could thus meet and commune with a defiled people—so now, by virtue of the blood of Christ, He can take his children, not-

withstanding the sin that dwells in them, into His very presence, and walk with them in the unsullied light of His infinite holiness.

"O, the blood! the precious blood;
It cleanseth from all sin."

This double aspect of the priesthood of Christ is clearly set forth in the epistle to the Hebrews, where He is said to be "a *merciful* and *faithful* High-priest" (chap. vii. 17)—merciful towards man, and faithful towards God. Also in chapter iv. 12, to the end, this is set forth in a striking way. First there is the searching power of the word of God in judging not only the life, but in "discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart." But after the believer has used, or allowed to be used, the sword of the Spirit in the most unsparing way; allowing it to lay bare the very secrets of his heart in the presence of God, the eyes of Him who "knows what is in man" are made to shine in, and those all-searching eyes can see impurities in the heart which no believer ever saw, and could not bear if he did. Then our great High Priest is set forth as meeting this two-fold need of both God and man. We often sing—

"We glory in the fulness
Of Him who meets our need."

But if that is all we have learnt of the fulness of Christ, as our High Priest, our rest will very often be disturbed. If we are growing in practical conformity to the character and ways of Him in His walk down here, we will also be growing in the consciousness of the enormity of sin. The reason why there is so little exercise of conscience about sin is because there is so little *real* Christian progress. Every new discovery we make of the impurity of in-dwelling sin is sure to disturb our rest and mar our fellowship with God, until we learn that what may be a discovery to us is no new discovery to God. As we allow the searching light of the Word of God to judge not only our conduct, but to lay bare the very springs of action, we will become more and more painfully sensible of our sad moral deformity before God, and this is sure to mar our fellowship until we learn that our God knew it all before He took us in hand, and not only knew it, but in raising Jesus Christ to His own right hand as the High Priest of His people, He not only made perfect provision for all *our* need, but also for *His own* need in our behalf. The priesthood of Aaron had a God-ward aspect as well as a manward; perhaps it is not too much to say that it was mainly God-ward. And

so with the Priesthood of Christ. He has gone into the presence of God on behalf of His people, and His presence there not only secures their blessing, but also maintains the divine holiness on their behalf. So our God can take His children to His very bosom, notwithstanding their present defilement. This twofold Priesthood it is necessary to understand and enjoy before there can be settled rest and real fellowship. Without knowing this we will be sure to be caught in one of two snares; we will either have superficial, unscriptural ideas of the awful nature of sin, or we will have our consciences so defiled by its pollution as to be shut out from the light and joy of the divine presence; but if we apprehend and appropriate the Priesthood of Christ to meet all our infirmity and impurity, as we have rested on His sacrifice to meet all our guilt, we will be able to write ourselves the "chief of sinners," and at the same time nestle our weary souls on the very bosom of our Father and God; knowing that the more closely we draw near, and the more trustful we are in the presence of our God, we are the more correctly estimating the value of that precious blood that gives us a right to be there; and conferring the more honour on that Blessed Name and Glorious Person in whom we "have been made nigh," through whom alone we can draw nigh; and walk in the light as He is in the light, in the power of that precious blood that cleanseth us from ALL sin. G. A.

(To be continued).

JOHN'S THIRD EPISTLE.

BY F. A. B.

(Continued from page 39.)



WE desire now to call attention to the obligation imposed on us as Christians in the words of the Apostle, "We therefore ought to receive such that we may be fellow-helpers with the truth" (R.V.) Ours is a restricted responsibility in regard to preachers, and wherever we have good reasons for doubting that the two qualifications afterwards mentioned do not exist we may justly withhold our hospitality and keep our purses closed.

(A) Love to *the Name*, the constraining motive for service.

(B) Nothing taken from the Gentiles (nations) *i.e.* unconverted.

Love to Christ naturally produces zeal in His service, but knowledge of His ways will cause our zeal to flow in channels divinely made. Love for Christ's cause, where it exists, is a beautiful feature in the Christian's character, but unless it is a divinely educated love—intelligent in its apprehension of the Lord's will—it is blind, and will often, with the purest motives, unwittingly promote that which not being of His direction, cannot be for His glory or the furtherance of His designs.

Amid the innumerable "causes," each claiming to be good, and with partizans almost legion, we may cease to wonder at the perplexity of many as to which and what possess the paramount claims upon them, and yet there is a divine test—an unailing standard—by which our actions may be determined. This is what is meant by the Apostolic expression "Fellow-helpers with the truth," not with the Gospel *merely*, but with the truth in its widest and most comprehensive sense. All truth rightly declared and carried out, must glorify Christ, its author, He being its personification in all its attributes and far-reaching relationships.

Had these preachers, whom Gaius received, restricted their ministry to the declaration of the Gospel exclusively, what reason would Diotrephes have had for rejecting them? Their converts would have swelled the numbers for him to govern, and he would have had no cause to fear that his position would be assailed.

As it was, theirs was a ministry, which, beginning with the Gospel, proceeded to the assertion of the authority of the Lord in all the details of His revealed will, and one of the first things to be exposed by the truth would have been the anti-scriptural course of Diotrephes. This no doubt he feared.

They would have spoken the truth fearlessly, as the Lord's servants, and as the valued associates of the great Apostle John, with the result that the unwarrantable assumption of Diotrephes would have been challenged and condemned.

To avoid this, and to sustain his self-assumed position of pre-eminence, he repudiated these faithful men altogether and forbade others to receive them. One wrong step led to another, and the next thing this lover of power did was to *slander* his brethren and *cruelly misrepresent* them. Little by little, step by step, he had asserted his fleshly and arbitrary will,

until the Church (unsuspecting and faulty in not exercising its proper and necessary functions) had become powerless to act for God.

John wrote in the first place to *the Church* (ver. 9), not to Gaius, Diotrephes, or Demetrius, or to these and others in professed oversight combined, but to the Assembly, the right and only proper course to adopt in such communications. In this instance, through unwatchfulness and probably love of ease its corporate power had ceased, and it had permitted Diotrephes to cripple its actions and act in independence. Certainly his conduct calls for denunciation, but was the Assembly not also to blame for submitting itself to his will?

No doubt he was a Christian, but as the meaning of his name (one nourished by a false god) suggests, his spiritual upbringing had been very defective and far from divine. Forgetful of the Master's gracious words "I am among you as one that serveth," and "whoso will be greatest among you, let him become servant of all," *he made himself* pre-eminent and *forced* his will upon fellow-saints. But let us not confound pre-eminence with *love* of pre-eminence, two things which are essentially different, for in every God-constituted company of Saints there will always be some that are pre-eminent—some who will be "pillars" in the Church, and rightly so. The pre-eminence of such, however, will be owing to the measure of grace and gift bestowed upon them by Christ, and humility one of their chief characteristics. All Saints are priests alike to God, but all Saints are not called to prominent service.

That Demetrius ("relating to corn," i.e., one through whom spiritual nourishment came for the use of Saints) was worthy of pre-eminence is palpably demonstrated. Unlike Diotrephes, he had good report of all, and instead of subordinating the Truth to his personal vanity and love of power, he exalted it by his manner of life and doctrine.

Well might John say to Gaius, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil (the course of Diotrephes) but that which is good" (the course of Demetrius), for whatever is Christ-like in a Saint is worthy of closest imitation.

Evidently the Apostle 'hoped in the providence of God to go to this scene of trouble, but it is not put definitely for some wise, and to some of us, perplexing reason. We are so apt to desire to

see through a difficulty at once, while it is often better we should learn to be patient and wait in humble dependence on God.

Consequently, John does not promise Gaius, and with him the faithful, an immediate deliverance, but counsels him meanwhile to aid the true and abhor the evil. Unity is a blessed thing when based on Grace and Truth, and sustained in the love of the Spirit, but sometimes even among the assemblies of God it is of a limited kind. There could be no blending of the antagonistic principles underlying the conduct of these two representative men, Diotrephes and Demetrius, and until God stepped in the faithful would be greatly perplexed.

Some assemblies appear to be in a somewhat similar position to-day, and much waiting on God for guidance is necessary. The flesh in its restless activity would often precipitate matters, and thereby the sanctifying lessons of our assembly trials may be lost to us.

God only knows how much we may have each contributed to the existing errors and sorrows of the Assembly with which we may be identified, and it is far easier to complain loud and long against the evils developed, than in self-judgment to humble ourselves before God for our own part therein. Far be it from us to say that there *never* comes a time when separation from known and crying evils is not a necessity; we believe such a time does come (when such are the circumstances), but let it be the last resource—let us be sure God's time has come, and that His truth makes it imperative. Many have hurriedly separated from others, and with what result? They have maintained a show of assembly existence, but as for God's manifest smile and blessing, you may search for them in vain. Of course, we are not here speaking of separation from that which is merely of human origin, but from gatherings which at one time were according to God, but in which error and division in the midst have arisen.

May God, in these dark *and ever-darkening times* be pleased to give us His own light, and enable us to walk in it with Himself.

The secret of being happy and safe, is keeping always before us the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is His work *for* us that is the only foundation for His working *by* us.

AUTHORITY AND SUBJECTION.

JOTTINGS FROM AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.



READ Phil. ii. 5 to 11. Here we see Christ's perfect subjection to His Father's will. Throughout His sojourn on earth He constantly asserted this Divine principle.

To His anxious mother (at the age of 12) He exclaims, "Wist ye not, I must be about My Father's business?"

To affectionate, yet ignorant disciples (John iv.): "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."

The blessed Lord in His life was the perfect, burnt, or ascending offering, and He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Think of Him in His agony in Gethsemane: one of His followers about to betray Him, another to deny Him, the rest to forsake Him. There He contemplated not only man's cruel rage, so soon to be exhibited, but also the greater and more awful sorrow—the hiding of His Father's face and the outpouring of God's wrath against sin.

And yet He prayed: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, *not My will, but Thine be done.*"

Turn now to John xvii. In spirit Christ had here satisfied the claims of God, and prayed: "Glorify Thy Son;" but notice the object, not that He might now take His own course, but that "Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Even in resurrection the Son's sole desire was the glory of His Father.

This is further brought out in 1 Cor. xv. 28, a passage that stretches farther into the coming eternity than almost any other.

The Father *will* glorify His Son. Soon He will give Him the kingdoms of earth to govern and perfect; and when that is attained, Christ, still and for ever the *subject One*, will yield up to God all dominion and power.

Take a glance into the Garden of Eden. There you have a beautiful scene, fresh from the hand of God. But Satan, with fiendish hate against God and all that God's heart was set upon, studied to bring in insubjection to his will; and, alas! succeeded. The act of disobedience was trivial in itself, but the principle underlying it carried with it a stupendous evil. *God's will was no longer supreme*; and to that

one act of insubjection all the sin and sorrow, all the evil and corruption of earth, may be traced.

When Christ came, after nearly 4000 years, the whole earth was filled with ignorance and lawlessness, and yet amidst it all He was perfectly subject to the will of God and glorified His Father.

And He, the only *subject One*, is the only fit One to have universal power and dominion.

Now the same principle holds good in every sphere of life. In Rom. xiii. we read, "There is no power (authority) but of God; *i.e.*, all real authority is God-constituted.

For instance, Jesus, standing before Pilate, could say, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."

So that the very power which said, "Take Him away and crucify Him," was of God. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye with wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23.)

God attaches authority to various relationships of life, as seen in Ephes. v. and vi.

Here are three spheres of rule and corresponding subjection. Thus:—

<i>Ruler.</i>	<i>Subject one.</i>
1. Husband.	Wife.
2. Parent.	Child.
3. Master.	Servant.

Now, God can either be glorified in these relationships or mightily dishonoured, and remember that blessing necessarily springs from a right use and recognition of God-given authority.

A Christian home, when regulated by Scripture, should be a heaven upon earth, and would be if each kept his or her right place.

In the "disobedience to parents," a sign of the last days (2 Tim. iii.), and so prevalent to-day, we see the whole foundation of social order shaken.

The same is true in other departments of life. If the father is called "the governor" by the child, the master is disrespectfully called "the gaffer," while the very Government is often spoken of with unbecoming contempt and ridicule.

Thus Satan is working to produce insubjection, and more bitterly than in any other sphere does he seek to frustrate Divine rule in the assemblies of God.

As to social life. Remember, if the wife is not subject to her husband, the children will not be to

their parents. You may scold them and punish them, but often the parents are chiefly to blame themselves.

Mother! has that child, whose waywardness causes you so much sorrow, seen you fail in reverence to your husband?

Father! has it heard mother and you quarrel and differ? If so, therein lies the cause of much of the disobedience which so disturbs you.

Husband! do you go to God and seek His help to enable you, lovingly and faithfully, to fulfil your obligations to your wife, that she may reverence you? Harshness will not produce this, nor the honied love that always gives way to every whim.

God could say of Abraham, "I know Abraham, that he will command his house after Me;" and so he did. "Isaac lay down upon that altar!" The obedient son does as he is told.

Then, as to rule in the assembly, read 1 Tim. iii. 4.

If a man cannot rule in his own house, how dare he attempt it in a church of God? Instead of coming to the oversight meeting, better far he should stay at home and glorify God there. We have known men come to such meetings whose voice is only heard in a squabble or difficulty. No words of cheer or comfort come from them to edify the saints; but the moment a trouble arises then their voices are the loudest.

Besides, remember, whether it is in the church or the home, the only one capable of rule is he who has a subject and humble spirit. It is not that you are to assert your own will or caprice; your responsibility, like that of the judge, is only to administer the laws of the statute book. True rule conserves liberty; for without it all would be chaos.

Brethren! may you lay all these things to heart, especially as touching our social life.

We fear it is because these things are seldom spoken of, and less seldom prayed about, that so many of our households fail to commend the truth.

BACKSLIDING.



WISH to say a word on this subject, taking Israel as an illustration, for it is written, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples (types), and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. x. 11).

First of all I would say, let it be clear before the

mind that every Christian has been brought into union with Christ—one with Christ. The marriage bond is an illustration of this union (Eph. v. 23-32). This is what the grace of God has done and is doing with poor sinners who believe the Gospel. Christ gave Himself for the Church, and in return the Church gives herself to Him; it is a *willing* union. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." This is how grace operates in the heart of sinners who receive Christ now. What is true of the Church collectively is true of believers individually.

Turn now to Jeremiah iii, and read it carefully, and you will see how the Lord looks on backsliding, *i.e.*, departure from Himself in heart and life, or in the affections and walk of those whom He has received as His choice. Three times it is called "hath played the harlot," and twice "committed adultery," and once, "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt with Me." From these expressions we learn that it is an awfully wicked thing to backslide from the Lord; yet often this wickedness is committed by the people of God, and they know not of it until they are awakened by the rod of God coming down upon them. God warns His people by His word, and if they will not hear, then His hand becomes heavy on them. God withholds His blessing from them that backslide from Him, as we see from verse 3, "The showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain." Yet they were so insensible to their state they refused to be ashamed. How often many of the Lord's dear people are like this; there is no power with them to bring others into the presence of God, yet they are not ashamed of their weakness; they can go on in a boastful way, and yet it is clear the Lord is not with them. May the Lord put a stop to all such ways, and enable us to search our hearts and ways, to see whether we have not been guilty of this very sin.

Five times in this chapter we have the call of God to the backslider to "turn," and also He gives three reasons and promises why they should "return."

1st. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful." Return, for I am *merciful*.

2nd. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." Turn, for I am *married*.

3rd. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."

These are comfortable words to a broken-hearted, penitent child who has sinned against his Father. The first is, "I am merciful." This is wonderful, after all the wickedness that has been committed; yet He says, "Return; for I am merciful." Yes, this is grace! "Only acknowledge thine iniquity," and "I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you." The reason is, "I am merciful;" and the promise is, "I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you." Therefore, O come back!

But I think the second reason and promise is more wonderful still, "I am married unto you." He still acknowledges the marriage bond, although they have wandered from Him, and this is the reason He gives why they should return. But look at the promises which He gives under this head—1st, "I will bring you to Zion; 2nd, "I will give you pastors . . . which shall feed you;" also, in those days it will no longer be said, "The Ark," but "The Lord," and Jerusalem shall be called "The Throne of the Lord," all nations shall be gathered unto it, *to the NAME of the Lord*, to Jerusalem; there will also be a fellowship between the house of Judah and the house of Israel, they shall come together into the inheritance of the Lord. What may we at present learn from all this? I think, out of the many things, these which follow are prominent:—1st, That if we repent of our sin, and come back to Him, He will bring us again into the place of power and blessing, which is ours through grace; 2nd, He will give ministry fresh from Himself that will feed the spiritual life which is in our souls, so that we may be fitted for His presence to dwell with us. This was the first purpose of God in giving gifts to His church, "Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Psalm lxxviii. 18.) It is to be feared that very much of the ministry which has been given amongst the people of God has not been of this character, but rather tending to lead in the opposite direction. If God is to dwell with a people, they must be holy, for God is holy. This is a responsibility that lies with every one who seeks to minister the Word of God amongst His people, they ought to see if their teaching is making those whom they are ministering to more godly in their life and walk: If not, there is something wrong somewhere,

and there is great need of "searching of heart" because of this. Every assembly of God should just be like what Jerusalem is going to be by-and-by, "the Throne of the Lord;" also, the people round about an assembly ought to see the manifestations of the Lord, so that they must in truth acknowledge "the Lord is there." This is what ought to be, but, dear brethren and sisters, is it? Well, this is what God has promised to His people who turn with all their hearts to Him. As Jerusalem then will be for good amongst the nations, so the assemblies of God ought to be the same now amongst the people; and what is true of the assembly ought to be true of every individual member of it, so this brings the responsibility down on the head of each member. The Lord grant that we may hear His own voice in this matter, and if we have *failed*, let us come back to Him.

The third reason and promise is, "I will heal your backslidings." O, dear backslider, do not let your backslidings keep you from coming back to God your Father, for He has promised to heal your backslidings, and it is true. Solomon, speaking unto God, said—"Thou *spakest* also with Thy *mouth*, and hast *fulfilled* it with Thy *hand*, as it is this day" (1 Kings, viii. 24.) O precious and faithful words of our good and loving God. May they be known by all the redeemed family of God. "A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God." "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto Me." "Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God, truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains, truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, for we have sinned against the Lord our God." "If ye return, saith the Lord, return unto Me, and I will heal your backslidings." "Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in His season. He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest" (ch. v. 24.)

Dear young Christian keep near the Lord and you will never know this sad experience that this little paper treats of; be much alone with God in *reading*

the Bible, and prayer; neglect them, and you are a backslider—away from God. Backslider: hear the voice of your loving God and Father calling you to come back. And dear unsaved one, think on your state: a Christless soul, and in a short time a Christless grave, and then a Christless hell for all eternity. Come to Jesus.

EUODIAS AND SYNTYCHE,
OR
INDIVIDUAL ESTRANGEMENT.

PHIL. iv. 2, 3. (R. V.)

THE letter to the Phillipians is characterised by an absence of apostolic censure or rebuke in a specific sense, and is in this respect, unlike all the other Pauline epistles.

And yet there was a *germ* of trouble existing, which, if not destroyed, would hinder fruitfulness, and in all probability create faction.

Euodias (a sweet savour) and Syntyche (affable), two sisters, were estranged, and Paul, in a letter which would be read publicly, refers to this matter.

Some might be apt to say, "why call attention to such a trivial thing? Two sisters disagreeing, though deplorable in itself, is not a very serious thing, and its effects cannot be very far-reaching or hurtful." But Paul, with divine insight and wisdom, knew better. "Behold how great a matter, a little fire kindleth!"

Were the saints of God more careful to watch and remove the beginnings of sorrow, there would be less trouble and fewer divisions.

In Matt. xviii. a personal *trespass* or positive sin is referred to, but in Phil. iv. it is rather a personal *difference* or disagreement, and hence the corrective course is not the same.

Now let us observe the apostle's wisdom in dealing with this matter. Remember he was cognisant of the fact, ere he penned a line of this epistle, but he does not place this quarrel in the forefront.

But in the most sublime and pathetic strain, he depicts the lowliness and meekness of Christ, and ere Euodias and Syntyche heard the reference to themselves, they listened to the most thrilling and graphic account ever written of the humility and personal abasement of Christ.

Thus their hearts would be prepared and moved to covet the grace of self-abnegation.

Besides, instead of scolding them, the apostle *beseeches* them to be of one mind, and the very tenderness of his attitude would make his words all the more powerful.

It is interesting, too, to notice that Paul exhorts another, whom he calls his "yoke-fellow" (probably Epaphroditus), to assist these women to be reconciled (R. V.), thus leaving us an important precedent for all time.

To give his "yoke-fellow" an impetus for assisting them, Paul says, "they laboured with me in the gospel." The word rendered "laboured" here is translated in Phil. i. verse 27. "striving together," and by no means implies that these sisters had preached publicly.

If it does, then "striving together" in the first chapter, which refers to the action of the whole Church, means that every saint was a public preacher.

In conclusion, are there not personal estrangements among us? Probably the absence of individual sympathy and affection lies at the root of many of our Assembly troubles.

Can it be, that after partaking of the one loaf and one cup, beautiful emblems of our union with Christ and one with another, any make it a study to shun a brother or sister to avoid a personal greeting? We fear it is so often; nay, we know it to be the case.

In many instances offence may have been unjustly given; in others there may be what *we* would deem a justification, but oh! dear brethren, let us remember the magnitude of Christ's love to us, and covet to be tender-hearted and forgiving!

The flesh would say, "I'll stand upon my dignity, I'll assert my power," but grace would teach us to uproot "a root of bitterness," and for Christ's sake to cover a multitude of faults.

If the Lord would teach us to heap coals of fire upon an *enemy*, that we may successfully break down his bitterness and ill-will, *how much more* would He teach us so to act toward a mistaken and erring saint? May we not only sing, but sing in conscious integrity before the Lord:—

One with Thyself, may every eye

In us, Thy brethren, see

That gentleness and grace which spring

From union, Lord, with Thee.

F. A. B.

A LETTER FROM CHINA TO INTENDING MISSIONARIES.

THE following valuable letter addressed by Mr. Stanley Smith and Mr. C. T. Studd, to a Cambridge friend, appears in the *C. M. Gleaner* for March—

Ping-yang-fu, Shansi,
November 3, 1885.

We thought we (for Charley Studd is now at Ping-yan) would send you some warnings and hints for Cambridge and other men who may be thinking of coming out to the foreign field. These are our humble but candid opinions, and are mainly the results of not a little trying experience.

1. Let Christian men wait on the Lord to know His mind and will as to where He would have them go. It is true that the Master says, "Go into all the world," but that is "*all* the world," and may not mean England or France to some, or Asia or Africa to others. We are not independent officers, but deeply dependent soldiers. There are some of whom God says, "I sent them not, yet they ran and prophesied." God will guide those who wait on Him.

2. Let them beware of thinking, "Now I have made up my mind to this 'great sacrifice' in going out to the heathen, I shall grow in grace very easily, temptations will be almost gone, and worldliness will have no power over me." As a matter of fact, temptations are far stronger and far more subtle. This is our united experience.

3. Beware of thinking when they get out that "learning the language," or later on even "preaching" is *the* great thing. The great thing is to maintain a close personal walk with God.

4. Let them beware of thinking that the body is nothing at all, and not to be cared for; while, on the other hand, if a man is very particular about his food, the foreign field is not the place for him.

5. Let them not come out unless they are grounded in the conviction that the whole Bible is the revealed Word of God. They will have to face deep mysteries; if the Bible does not explain them, be content to wait for the right time, "when we shall know as we are known." At the same time,

if they do not believe that men who are not saved are lost, why do they think of becoming missionaries?

6. Unless in the foreign field they are prepared to find their joy and satisfaction in the living God, and not in circumstances (neither being discouraged by failure, nor puffed up by success), they will not have with them the weapon which is "their strength," namely, "the joy of the Lord."

7. Let them beware of riding one side of the truth to death: take the whole Word. Beware of the devil, who is strong here; and beware of fanaticism—by "fanaticism" we mean "unbalanced truths."

8. Beware of being carried away by the distractions of everything new.

9. Lastly, let them seek to be led of God, and not man.

Blessed be God, *all* these dangers are avoided by being in communion with God—abiding in Christ.

And now let us state a few facts as regards possibilities of service here.

1. The language. It is not so hard as represented often. After three or four months' ordinary study a man can do most useful work in putting the main facts of the Gospel before the people.

2. As regards travelling and living. Travelling in carts is novel, but you soon get used to it. Donkey, mule, horse, sedan, wheelbarrow, and boat are all used. As regards food, take away beef and butter, and you have as good plain living as you could get in England.

3. Houses are comfortable.

4. Dress. Native dress a matter of taste; we prefer it to English. On the coast stations they don't wear it.

5. The people, at any rate here in North China, are extremely well-disposed, constantly asking you to drink tea; in two or three provinces, however, it is not so.

6. Lastly, as regards opportunities, they are simply innumerable. Doors open on all hands. In the street you can always get an attentive congregation. Around here, in Shansi, is a blessed work going on. We want *labourers*, who know God, and believe in the Holy Ghost.

Yours affectionately in Jesus,

STANLEY P. SMITH.
C. T. STUDD.

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 CCXXII.

Has 2 Cor. v. 20 any reference to the unsaved?

REPLY.

The true meaning of the verse is plain if the word "you," which is in italics and is twice inserted, be

entirely omitted. Alford and others give the reading thus: "On Christ's behalf, then, we are ambassadors as though God were entreating by us: we pray on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.'"

The ambassadorship of Christ as referred to in verse 19 was on God's behalf towards a guilty world,

and such was the Apostles' ambassadorship as in verse 20. It is *enemies*, not *saints*, who have to be reconciled; compare Rom. v. 10 and Col. i. 21.

The burden of His message to the believers is taken up in chap. vi. 1: He beseeches *them* not to be "reconciled to God," but "that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." It had not been so received in His own case, but had been mighty in its results; see 1 Cor. xv. 10. He desired that it might be even so with them.

QUESTION CCXXIII.

How does owning Jesus as Lord affect our daily life? What difference does it make to us who are gathered out unto the Name of Jesus from those who, amongst the various sects, are the Lord's people?

REPLY.

The owning of Jesus as Lord, in reality, must begin in the heart and is the work of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

If it is not so, then it can only be a Pharisaic assumption, developing into much pride and arrogance, and ultimately bringing "the way of truth" into discredit, and bringing dishonour upon the Name of the Lord.

Where it is real, being inwrought by the Spirit of God, it will result in cheerful obedience as soon as the understanding is enlightened by the truth to know what the will of the Lord is.

There may be a real heart-acknowledgment of Christ as Lord and yet much failure to carry out His will through ignorance of the Word of God. For this reason many of God's children who are in the different sects, whilst totally ignorant of the mind of God as to "assembly" truth, are nevertheless zealous and devoted in personal matters—godly in their households, decided in Gospel testimony, upright in their conduct in the affairs of the world, and pure in their manner of life and conversation. It may be asked, "Why are such so slow to learn the mind of God as to the gathering of His saints and the order of His house? This is hard to answer; nevertheless it seems to us, from much experience and observation, that it is chiefly owing to a want of subjection of the *understanding* to the authority of the Word of God. It is because of this that tradition and prejudice have

such a firm hold upon so many dear children of God.

On the other hand, there may be the rapid opening of the understanding to the truth—a clear and easily acquired knowledge of that line of truth which detaches the saint from every denomination and gathers him with others so taught of God around the Name and person of the Lord Jesus.

But in it all there may have been little exercise of heart toward God, little subjection of the will to the authority of Christ, little self-judgment as to past failure when further light had been received; in short, only a reserved and partial acknowledgment of Christ as Lord.

The result is position gloried in and contended for in a carnal way that often repels instead of attracting; a repulsion not because of the truth so much as because of the carnality and ungraciousness of those who so contend for it.

Then along with high pretensions as to position, gathering, order, &c., &c., there will in such cases be a low character of individual life and testimony. Alas, how often is the truth belied by frivolity, fleshly indulgence, love of money, evil speaking, and many another form of sin, manifesting that the owning of Christ as Lord was far more a profession than a reality!

Oh that God would raise up among us a race of men and women who, understanding His will as to baptism, gathering, ministry, fellowship, and other kindred truths, and prepared, if need be, to sacrifice life itself rather than surrender one iota of God-taught truth—are also true in their acknowledgment of Christ as Lord in every relationship of their lives, "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

THE LORD'S DEALINGS.—Let us not presume to explain *all* the Lord's dealings with us—His ways are past finding out (Rom. xi. 33). Faith knows that He is leading us "by the right way" (Ps. cvii. 7), that *all* His paths are mercy and truth (Ps. xxv. 10), and that *all* things work together for good (Rom. viii. 28). Faith interprets *all* by the cross of Christ—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us *all* things?" (Rom. viii. 32).

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER I.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY J. R. C.

WITH joy of the Holy Ghost." We do not know until we are actually in the circumstances the joy the Holy Spirit imparts to those who, through faithfulness to Christ, are called to endure persecution. "What a Friend we have in Jesus!" In sickness, in affliction, or trial of any kind, as well as in persecution for His Name's sake, He is "the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

It is by unveiling Him and all His love and unsearchable riches and resurrection power, and coming glory that the Holy Spirit imparts comfort and joy in tribulation.

Look at Paul and Silas, with their bleeding backs and their feet in the stocks, yet they sing praise to God! Look at the three Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace; what joy and peace were theirs, as, loosed from their bonds, they walked amidst the flames in company with the Son of God! Well might they have said, "Thy love is better than life."

It is easy to be glad and happy when all is going well with us. This may be, and yet we may be strangers to the "joy of the Holy Ghost." Adversity tests our joy and finds out whether it is of God.

May we ever seek to be joyful in God. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." David said, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."

If we are not happy in God we have no power for testimony. The cure for fretfulness and bad temper is to be filled by the Holy Spirit with God's own joy.

"So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."

That is high commendation. I wonder of how many of us could the Apostle write thus? It was manifest to all, that those people were Christians. All had to confess that they were the right sort of people. Is it so with us? Is it the testimony of the world that "He's very peculiar, and goes to those meetings where they say they are saved; but he's the right sort; we can trust him to act the same behind backs or before faces; his word is as good as his bond," and so on. This is what ought to be and what alone is worthy of God. It should be perfectly

E

evident in our homes, our business, and everywhere, that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ—as we walk by His Word and manifest His Spirit.

"For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything."

The Apostle needed not to say a word on their behalf; everybody knew what they were. The Thessalonian Church was a centre from which streams of life-giving Gospel testimony were continually flowing out far and near. It is a sure symptom of decay when the Gospel testimony in connection with an assembly becomes powerless or ceases.

"For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven."

This is conversion. It is a turning right round about. Although none of us may ever have bowed down before an idol as they did, yet had we not idols in our hearts that usurped the place of God? And even yet there may be heart-idols cherished. Have you ever asked yourself, "What is my idol? Is there anything that comes in between my soul and God?" It may be a friend, a wife, a husband, a child; business, gold, worldly ambition; whatever it is, if it interferes with obedience to the will of God, then it is an idol for the time being. When we indeed turn "TO GOD," then all our idols are behind our backs.

The idols they worshipped were *false* and *dead*. In contrast to them they had turned to the *living* and *true* God.

Beloved, we have a *living* God to serve. One who sees and knows us, and is intensely interested in us and in all that concerns us. And He is the *true* God. Every word He has spoken is true, and worthy of our perfect reliance. Our service then is not in vain. It is not like the poor, miserable, painful service of idolatrous devotees, who prostrate themselves before the wheels of their idol's car, or place their offspring in its burning arms, but receive no recompense.

There is a day coming when the life-service of the saints will be rewarded; when it will be fully shown that our labour was "not in vain in the Lord."

But while they served they waited for one definite promise that had been given to cheer and comfort—they waited for the Son of God from heaven.

Old Testament saints had no such outlook. Whatever knowledge they had of resurrection as an ultimate hope, they knew that to them death must intervene, and so they looked to Jehovah to be their guide "even unto death."

But in the New Testament nowhere is death spoken of as the believer's expectation. It is referred to as that which *may* happen to us, but not as that which *must* happen.

The very fact that to Peter it was specially revealed that he should die, is evidence that, had no special revelation been made to him, he too, with other saints, would have looked forward to being of the number who should "be alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord."

Although those passages which speak of the state of believers who die are full of comfort and satisfaction—for what fulness is in that word, "present with the Lord?"—nevertheless even this is never the hope set before the saints; it is never *our departing*, but Christ's coming. It is "*the Son from heaven*" who is our hope. The Word of God to us, after so long a time, is still, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." In this promise we are called to rest, and for its fulfilment to wait. God has put the Church in the attitude of expectancy—waiting, looking for One who may return at any moment, as the Bridegroom, to take the waiting bride to be for ever with Himself.

And the One for whom we wait is the One who delivered us from the wrath to come. We do not *hope* to be delivered from the coming wrath; that has been secured for us already by His precious blood. We wait not for wrath or for judgment, but for "the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

A SINGLE EYE.

THE principle of acting simply for God makes plain the path of duty, glorifies the commonest actions of every-day life, solves the perplexing questions constantly arising, enables us to choose the proper means to effect our purposes, and delivers completely from the tormenting anxieties about our circumstances, that otherwise would disturb our peace.

Selfishness is the great hindrance to a single eye;

unperceived, usually, is our attachment thereto. Whilst all on fire to serve the Lord, schemes of our own are leading us aside. Trust in our own management has brought to grief many a promising work of God.

Our eyes must be opened, although the awaking is oft times rude and unpleasant. Whilst God is gracious in His dealings with our failure, yet He will not accept the performance of a divided heart.

When the Word of Christ dwells in us richly, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and we then possess the only motive to godly living worthy of the name. This leads to the prayer—"My soul, wait thou *only* upon God." The path becomes one of faith alone; and though oppositions should abound on every side, discouragement will not be felt.

Leal-hearted obedience must be the object of our lives. The cares of this life belong to Christ, Who was not more willing to bear our sins, than He is every moment to bear these cares. The thought

"I've only One to please,"

gives clearness of vision; and when this is true of us, the light of Divine guidance is no mere abstraction, but such a reality, as enables the Christian to go forward fearlessly.

P. H.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER VIII.

(Continued from page 55.)

THE latter portion of this chapter is an expansion of the truth that we have in the figurative action of our Lord in His dealing with this sinful woman, as related in the earlier verses. It begins with "I am the light of the world" (verse 12), and again in the next chapter, "As long as—or whenever—I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Here then He is seen as the light, and as the truth. I believe that the entire Gospel of John is an expansion of those words in chap. xiv.: "I am the way," chap. i. and ii.; "I am the life," chap. iii. to vii.; "I am the light," or truth, chap. viii., &c. Now let us see some ways in which He is the light, or the truth. Observe that God is with Him. "Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came,

and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." This is the explanation of how He is the truth. How is it that a beam of light gives light ? Because it is not separated from the sun. Christ could not be separated from the Father, nor the Father from the Son. God was in Him, and He in God ; He, the manifester of God, pouring the character of God upon the minds of men. Let us learn, whatever we have to judge, to see that God is with us ; otherwise our judgment is utterly worthless. Many carnal Christians form their opinions from books and newspapers ; whether such opinions be right or wrong they are worthless, for only as we stand in the light is our judgment worth aught. But then He was like the face of a clock, the setter forth of the mind of God.

We find in these verses that the Lord refers to Himself and to the Father in three ways. First, "I am the light of the world." The Pharisees possibly thought that they were the light. Ah, they knew not what darkness they were in—darkness that might be felt. But, "I am the light of the world," "I came forth to manifest God." Read 1 John iv. 9, "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him," and "sent His Son the propitiation for our sins ;" and think of these words, "I am the light of the world." That is the way God gives us light, by showing to us how abhorrent to His nature is all that we were and all that we had done ; and yet He wrought out a way by which He might get at us and we might get to Him. And He in His holy love got down to the case of that poor wretched creature, and said, "Neither do I condemn thee." Then, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Following Jesus we begin to see God's true way, His real thoughts, purposes, and designs ; His grace, His love, and His holiness. Is our light on the character of God increasing ? Is our light on the holiness of God increasing ? Is our light on the purity of the Divine Throne increasing ? Do we feel that we may well tremble at the thought of sin ? And do we feel that only as we take up our place in Christ risen, Christ glorified, Christ accepted as the Beloved One, are we in our right place ?

"The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself : Thy record is not true." Now notice Christ's second reply, for there is a very great deal in these words. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true ; for I know whence I came." Now what do you say to that ? Do you know whence He came ? Do you know the greatness of that God from Whom He came ? And He was, and will be ever, one with Him ; for "He proceeded forth and came from God." He came out of God. Creation is not God. It is very large, and there is a deal more in it than any of us know. As I read a little of astronomy, or of geology, or of history, I see God is very great ; but creation is not God, however big it may be. There is One above all, with Whom we have to do ; and Jesus came out from God ; and not only so but was still with God. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out." He could tell out God, and yet be, as it were, in the bosom of the Father. What a wondrous Being ! Here is an illustration of it, certainly designed, for Hebrews i. says so : the ray of light that shines into your chamber, the other end of that ray is in the sun. These Pharisees did not know whence He was, that was one reason of their error ; they took Him for a Messiah, or rather less than that even ; a Messiah of their own conception, a mortal man like themselves. That was not God's thought of His Christ. "For I know whence I came." Think of His carrying the consciousness, the intense consciousness, of all that He was and all that He had, wherever He went. "For I know whence I came, and whither I go." We have a *little* idea about all this, because the Holy Spirit has come and taught us a little ; we have some idea whence He came, and whither He has gone ; and when we say that He is sitting upon the Throne, they are not unmeaning words ; with some degree of awe and worship we apprehend what we say. And we know that He has gone right into the presence of the Holy God ; not as He was before, but as representing us, our High Priest, our Advocate, our Eternal Lover who has paid our debt, and who can, as He sits in yonder unsullied, uncreated brightness, say, when we drop at His feet and will not be put off, "Neither do I condemn thee."


Then follows a third answer. "Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man." It was not time for the

judgment of the Lord, nor is it yet. Whenever He judges it will be such perfect judgment as will be at once apparent to every one. "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." There is another very sublime thought in these words. Whatever He did, whether when His light convinced the Pharisees, or whether with His holy light He broke down a poor wretched sinner, the Father was with Him. Not merely as He is with us: God is with us, but, dear friends, when I say God is with us, that has to be to some extent qualified. He does not agree with our perverseness, our naughtiness, our unbelief, and much else. God is with us according as we believe in Him. "According to your faith be it unto you." But God was with Him perfectly. Never once in all His life, until He was upon the Cross, did a cloud pass between His soul and God; never! God was with Him indeed. If He spake, God answered Him in His soul; if God spake, Christ would hear it in His soul. But listen to His very strong words, "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true." By quoting this scripture He shows how fully He apprehended the distinctness, and yet the oneness, between the Father and the Son. "I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me."

Again picture the scene before us. The Pharisees with their hard words and harder thoughts, and their thoughts were more directed against Jesus than against the woman. The Pharisees with their hard thoughts and language, saying, "What sayest Thou?" And He takes the law and flashes it right in upon their consciences. Oh, what a searching time it must have been! Some have thought that the passage really means, he that is without *this* sin; but I do not say so, scripture does not. There were those venerable Rabbis, and there was that Being before them, and the light divine is poured into their consciences, and as it is, they quake and they go out, they cannot stand it; whilst the woman,—grace holds her at His feet, she cannot go out. She was not foolish, grace was working in her. And to her His word is, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." And why? First, I am the light of the world, and I show divine light. Secondly, I came out from God,

and I know His mind and heart full well. Thirdly, when I speak He speaks in and with Me.—(*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

 HE Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel."
"He spake three thousand proverbs."

"And, further, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he pondered, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written uprightly, even words of truth" (R.V.).

ARRANGEMENT OF ITS CONTENTS.

The Book of Proverbs may be divided into four parts.

Part I. forms a preface, extending from chap. i. to ix., wherein Solomon gives his reasons for so writing and compiling; and, while addressing his son in a connected series of admonitions, cautions, and encouragements, writes generally to all young men to warn them to flee the temptations and dangers which he had proved by experience to be so baneful to the soul.

This may lead to the profitable study of the question, "When did Solomon write, and in what order, the books called 'The Proverbs,' 'Ecclesiastes,' and 'The Song of Solomon?'"

If he wrote them before his grievous fall, described in 1 Kings xi., how could he use the language of Proverbs i. to ix. ? or Ecclesiastes ii. ? or of various verses in the Song, such as chap. v. 2-7 ?

If he wrote them after his fall, what may we lawfully infer from the tenor of the language he uses as to there being no satisfaction save in "the fear of the Lord" and His "love better than wine ?"

Part II. consists more strictly of what may be termed Proverbs (or short moral sentences, implying more than they *literally* mean), and extending from chap. x. to xxiv., repeated admonitions being added as to their study.

Part. III., from chap. xxv. to xxix., contains Proverbs selected, by men or prophets, by Hezekiah's orders, out of either a larger collection or from fragmentary sources.

Part IV.—Chap. xxx. contains the words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, *literally*, of the Gatherer, the son of the Pious One. Chap. xxxi. contains the wisdom of King Lemuel's mother in her advice concerning a wife. Each of the 22 verses, 10-31, begins with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet in order.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF FIGURES.*

1. We must not always take literally what was meant figuratively—*e.g.*, Prov. vii. 3. "Bind them upon thy fingers," "Write them upon the table of thine heart," evidently mean men to cultivate a close, ready, heartfelt understanding of the words of God, and not, as the Pharisees, to bind phylacteries or slips of parchment, with scriptures on them, on their fingers, or foreheads, or their clothing.

2. The same figure may be differently applied. Thus, compare Proverbs xxv. 27, "It is not good to eat much honey," with Proverbs xxiv. 13, "Eat thou honey, because it is good," the context in each case easily determining the meaning. Again, Proverbs xxv. 16, "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it," evidently refers to a *moderate* use of all things temporal and lawful. It is applied in the next verse to too frequent visiting of one's friends, which, like too much honey eaten, may cause disgust.

PARTS OF A PROVERB TO BE COMPARED.

As a rule, the two parts of a proverb are to be compared—the *thesis*, or statement, and the *antithesis*, or that which is set against it for consideration—*e.g.*, Prov. xii. 20, "Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil, but to the counsellors of peace is joy." Here deceit and joy are compared, evidently self-deceit is meant. Korah (Numb. xvi.), Abimelech (Judges ix.), and Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 6, xviii. 15) were thus self-deceivers; and Jonathan (1 Sam. xix. 4-7) and Abigail (1 Sam. xxv.) counsellors of peace, who must have rejoiced in the success of their efforts.

Prov. xxvi. 4-5, "Answer not a fool according to his folly" and "Answer a fool according to his folly." The seeming contradiction here is explained by the reasons given:—1. We ought not so to answer

as to betray in answering the same evil temper. 2. We ought so to answer as to expose the folly.

If the parts of a proverb are connected by the particle *and*, then the latter part generally confirms the former; but if they are connected with the particle *but*, then the latter clause denotes opposition. We also may notice the following general rule:—

The interpretation of a proverb is not always confined to the immediate subject, but has often a general and a spiritual application. General terms are sometimes to be understood in a limited sense. The allusions to natural history, to the manners and customs of Eastern nations, to geographical and physical features, to the Mosaic law, must be intelligently pondered, in order to get at the true meaning of the proverb. A. O. M.

(To be continued.)

THE RACE.

THE heart is fixed, and fixed the eye,
And I am girded for the race:
The Lord is strong, and I rely
On His assisting grace.
Race for the swift—it must be run;
A prize laid up—it must be won.

The atmosphere of earth—oh how
It hath bedimmed the eye,
And quenched the spirit's fervent glow,
And stayed the purpose high;
And how these feet have gone astray
That should have walked the narrow way.

Race for the swift—I must away,
With footstep firm and free;
Ye pleasures, that invite me stay,
And cares, are nought to me;
For Lo! it gleameth on my eye,
The glory of that upper sky.

"A prize laid up"—said He who fought
That holy fight of old,
"Laid up in heaven for me, yet not
For me alone that crown of gold,
But all who wait till Thou appear,
Saviour, that diadem shall wear!"

Patiently wait—so help Thou me
O meek and Holy One!
That dim although the vision be,
The race I still may run;
This eye thus lifted to the skies,
This heart thus burning for the prize.

* NOTE.—The substance of much that follows concerning the outline and guides to the interpretation of Proverbs is taken from a valuable book, entitled "The Book of Proverbs Explained and Illustrated from Holy Scriptures," by B. E. Nicholls, M.A.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

THE writer has often been asked by young students of the Word of God, "Who are the Ten Virgins of Matt. xxv. 1-13? Do the five wise ones represent the Church, or the faithful remnant in Israel? Is the primary application of the parable present or future?" Quite recently this question came up for consideration in our little Bible-reading out here in the Canton de Vaud, and a summary of what was presented by way of reply in the course of the evening may not be without interest for the readers of the *Northern Witness*.

1. The strongest, and, at the same time, the simplest proof is the evident connection between the end of the discourse of the Lord Jesus to the multitude, chap. xxiii., and the inquiry of the disciples at the beginning of chap. xxiv., which, in its turn, gave rise to the line of teaching contained in that and the following chapters. The terrible denunciations of Scribes, Pharisees, and people in chap. xxiii. conclude with these words, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The last phrase is a quotation from Psalm cxviii. 26, and refers, without any possibility of doubt, to the coming of the Messiah to the nation of Israel. The words of this psalm were well-known to every Jew, and the use made of them by the Master is not allowed to pass unremarked by the disciples. "As He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying (chap. xxiv. 3) 'Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the completion of the age?'" Surely "the coming" here spoken of is the same as that in chap. xxiii. 39, when the nation shall see Him again, and shall say, "Blessed is the coming One in the name of Jehovah," and, if so, what is the consequence? Simply that the answer of the Lord Jesus, extending to the conclusion of chap. xxv., deals with His public manifestation in glory, as Son of David and Prince of the Kings of the earth. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him: and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Yea, amen."

2. Indeed, as has often been pointed out, Matthew's

gospel is emphatically the gospel of the kingdom, and presents Christ as the Son of David and Sovereign Lord. It contains three notable discourses, called forth by the attitude of the fickle multitude in their departure from and rejection of the reign of the heavens which had been proclaimed on earth:—

(a) *The First Sermon on the Mount* (chaps. v., vi., vii.) contains the principles of divine rule, according to which God's will was to be done on earth as in heaven. The kingdom of the heavens had drawn nigh, and would have been publicly set up if the people had accepted it.

(b) *The Sermon by the Seaside* (chap. xiii.) is the immediate consequence of the rejection of the Messiah by the blaspheming leaders of the people. The rise and progress of the kingdom, from its first proclamation by John the Baptist till the moment of its glorious manifestation, is here set forth in parable. The mysteries of the kingdom are unfolded, and the faithful few are disciplined in the meaning of things new and old.

(c) *The Second Sermon on the Mount* (chaps. xxiv., xxv.) tells of the events that must immediately precede the return of the King to claim and take possession of His divine rights. The present dispensation is included in the seven parables of chap. xiii., but here all that is said about it is that "the end is not yet." These centuries of "wars and rumours of wars" must be passed before the faithful remnant arrive even at the "beginning of travail" (R. V.) spoken of in chap. xxiv. 7, 8.

3. The events that announce and accompany the completion of the age are arranged by the Lord Jesus into seven parables, as we have seen to be the case with the mysteries of the kingdom in chap. xiii. These parables occupy from chap. xxiv. 32 to xxv. 46, and might be enumerated as follows:—

1. The fig tree, - - - xxiv. 32-35.
2. The days of Noe, - - - " 36-42.
3. The householder, - - - " 43-44.
4. The faithful and the unfaithful servants, - - - " 45-51.
5. The wise and foolish virgins, - xxv. 1-13.
6. The talents, - - - " 14-30.
7. The sheep and the goats, - - " 31-46.

It would seem that this group of seven is subdivided (like the seven parables of Matt. xiii., and the seven churches in Revelation ii., iii.) into three and four;

the first three being rather introductory, while the last four treat of the judgment and rewards to be distributed at the coming of the Son of Man. In any case, is it not clear that the chronological and moral sequence of these illustrations would be interrupted, if, in the middle of the unfolding of the subject, a previous event, such as the rapture of the church were introduced ?

4. The illustration in the opening verses of Matt. xxv. is taken from the custom of an Oriental marriage feast. The "virgins" are the companions of the bride, just as the "sons of the bridechamber" (chap. ix. 15) are the companions of the bridegroom. If, then, the prudent virgins, separated from the foolish ones, represent the Church; who is the Bride, whose existence must be supposed in order to complete the idea suggested by the illustration ?

5. The Latin Vulgate comes in here with a testimony that has in our eyes a certain value. Let us remind our readers that this translation of the New Testament was effected by Jerome in the 4th century. He informs us himself that he took pains to follow "the ancient Greek manuscripts." Therefore his Latin translation is as old as the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which is the oldest copy of the New Testament in the original language that the civilised world possesses now; and it is drawn from sources that were ancient even at that early date. The Vulgate exists in two forms, namely, the Clementine edition, published at Rome 1592, and long received all over Europe as the authentic text of the New Testament; and the manuscript of Amiat, dating from the sixth century, which reproduces Jerome's original work. According to both these versions the ten virgins, having taken their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the Bride. Even if we are not authorized to accept the words "and the Bride" as part of the inspired Word of God, they show us how the primitive Christians understood the parable.

6. According to the New Testament writers the Church is espoused unto Christ, and will be manifested by-and-by as His Bride. On the contrary, "the virgin, the daughter of Zion," is the expression of the Old Testament prophets when speaking of the people of Israel.

7. The very scene of verses 10-13 is described in Isaiah lxv. 13, where the Holy Spirit inspires the prophet to speak of the separation between God's

servants and those who have forsaken Jehovah, when the former will be established in the Holy Land at the beginning of the millennium. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit." Could the parallel be more striking ?

8. No such parallel exists between the figurative language of Matt. xxv. and the plain declaration of the Epistles concerning the rapture of the Church. Compare, for example, 1 Thes. iv. 16-17. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." In the parable under consideration there is, on the contrary, no trace of a resurrection, nor of any of the Lord's people, except those that are left alive upon the earth when "the Bridegroom" comes—not to espouse them, remember—but to go in with them unto the marriage feast, where they will appear as the attendants of the Bride. In like manner the others, who are rejected, are still near enough to say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," and to hear Him answering, "Amen I say unto you, I know you not."

9. If we could admit the reading of the Authorised Version in verse 13, "Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh," the matter would be conclusively settled. The Lord Jesus appears on the page of Scripture as the Son of Man only in connection with the earth, and as the One to whom all judgment is committed. It is true that the oldest known manuscripts stop short at the word "hour" (see the Revised Version); still some conclusion must be understood by the reader in order to complete the sense. But with chap. xxiv. 44, *preceding* the parable, and chap. xxv. 31 *following*, it is hard to conceive that the ending of the verse could be other than that of our ordinary English Bible.

In conclusion, we do not lose anything of the force and beauty of this parable, in its *present* application to professing Christendom, by a frank avowal that the primary application is exclusively Israelitish. God's grand principles do not change, and there is probably

no "kingdom truth" that does not contain direct practical teaching when read in the light of the present dispensation, and applied to ourselves and our surroundings. But our first concern must be to rightly divide the Word of God.

On the other hand, the ground is cleared for the study of the Scriptures concerning the Lord's promise and the Church's hope, when the disciple *ceases to look for them in the first three Gospels*. "THE MYSTERY" of 1 Cor. xv. 51-54 was hid—not in prophecy, but in God—until it pleased Him to reveal it unto His apostle and servant Paul. He, in turn, taught it to the Churches, not by an appeal to the Scripture, but "by the word of the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 15). Blessed hope of the Christian. Glorious promise of the Father. Mystery of this age of mysteries. May we live in the expectation of its fulfilment, until the moment when we shall yield intact to an earthly people, with earthly hopes, those Scriptures that have cheered and guided our pilgrim way to the heavenly glory.

A. P. M.

GOD'S PROVISION AGAINST THE POWER OF INDWELLING SIN.

HAVING endeavoured to throw some light from Scripture on how God has dealt with the "guilt" of indwelling sin by the Cross; also, how He has provided against its "pollution" by raising up Jesus Christ to be the High Priest for all His people, we now proceed to look at how He has provided against its power. We have already noticed that the theory held by some, of believers getting rid of the *presence* of sin while still in the "mortal body," is not found in Scripture. It is one of Satan's delusions to throw saints off their guard, in order to get them to trifle with sin.

In that deeply solemn and little-understood portion of Scripture, Rom. vii. 20, Paul speaks of "sin that dwelleth in me." In that passage he shows very graphically how it was too strong for him; he could not by any means cope with its terrible power. Various interpretations have been given of this passage. Some have gone the length of saying that it is the experience of an unconverted person. Others teach that it refers to the struggles of an ignorant believer, who has never learned what they call resur-

rection truth. We do not believe that either of these interpretations is in harmony with the context, but rather are they snares set by the enemy to prevent this solemn part of truth getting at the Christian's conscience with its full power. It strikes me that in expounding Rom. vi. and vii., the distinction between the *guilt* of sin and the *power* of sin has not been apprehended with sufficient clearness. We have already shown how, in chap. vi., God has dealt with the guilt of sin, by putting the believer to death "with Christ." Hence "he that hath died is justified from sin" (verse 7); not only from *sins*, but from *sin*. Then follow the injunctions of verses 11, 12, 13: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body." "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God." But while the obligation of the believer to obey these injunctions is clearly taught here, the power to carry them out practically is not to be found in this whole passage. The painful conflict of the end of chap. vii. is the experience of a believer who is endeavouring to live according to the precepts of chap. vi., without his faith laying hold on God's provision to enable him to do so. And just as the ineffectual struggles of a convicted sinner to deliver himself from the guilt and condemnation of sin drive him to Jesus for shelter from coming wrath, so the ineffectual struggles of a believer to cope with the power of indwelling sin are the means of leading him to know his need of a Living Redeemer. The freedom from conflict which many now-a-days experience is not the deliverance of a godly victory over sin, but rather the peace of indifference to it. They have never had a life-and-death struggle with the sin that dwells in them, and by grace have come off victors. The rest which they enjoy arises rather from their having come to terms with the flesh, than from their having learned and proved God's provision for keeping it under. Perhaps the best illustration of Christian conflict with sin is the record of the battle between Amalek and Israel in Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 8). This struggle came on after they had crossed the Red Sea, and were several stages on their journey to the promised land. The passage of the Red Sea is called a baptism. They "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. x. 2). The Passover tells of redemption by blood; the Red Sea tells of redemption by power.

Rom. iii. corresponds to the Passover, as Rom. vi. is the parallel of the Red Sea deliverance. The passage of the Red Sea set Israel for ever free from Egyptian bondage; but that deliverance, great as it was, was not the source of Israel's power to conquer Amalek. It is most important to notice this. Amalek did not attack Israel on the Egypt side of the Red Sea, but after they were across it. So spiritual conflict, as we see it in Rom. vii., does not take place before the doctrine of deliverance by death and resurrection is taught, but after it is fully unfolded. And just as the Red Sea deliverance did not impart power to Israel to fight with Amalek, so a believer may know much of the doctrine of being crucified, buried, and risen with Christ, and yet be helpless in his struggles with indwelling sin, as Rom. vii. shows.

Another important truth must not be overlooked here. It was the onward progress of Israel which provoked the opposition of Amalek. Had Israel settled down on the shore of the Red Sea, in all probability Amalek would have let them alone; but their onward march showed that they were resolved to take possession of the promised land, and this roused the enmity of Amalek. It is the same now. The Christian who settles down on the mere doctrine of resurrection deliverance, will get little trouble from the flesh, acted on by the devil; but those who are resolved to go on with the "Living God," and gain fresh conquests, will soon find out that they have a nature still in them which hates to have anything to do with God. The devil and the flesh will allow the believer to be ever so sound in doctrine, and well taught in the Word, if they can only get him to part company with God Himself. The reason why Israel was so hated by Amalek and the other nations was that Jehovah dwelt in the midst of the camp. It was because Jehovah had chosen Jerusalem as *His* dwelling place that it was called by the surrounding nations "the rebellious and the bad city" (Ezra iv. 12). So it is only those who go on with God who really know what conflict is. Many people who are even Christians seem to have a God of their own imagination that anybody can walk with; but those who have made up their minds to walk in fellowship with the God of the Bible will soon find out that to do so will cost them something.

But to return to Israel and Amalek. Neither in Israel's fighting power, nor in Joshua's able leader-

ship, lay the secret of their victory, but in the uplifted hands of Moses on the mount. So it is with the believer in his conflict with indwelling sin; it is not his own power to oppose it, but the power of Christ's intercession before God, that is the secret of victory. It is also well, in gathering truth from Old Testament types, to notice carefully where the type fails. "Moses' hands were heavy," and had to be held up by Aaron and Hur; but Christ's hands are never heavy. He "fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. xl. 28). But although His hands never get heavy, we get our eyes turned away from Him, and fixed on ourselves and our enemies. Hence the exhortation to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," is followed by "looking unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 1, 2); and as we gaze on Him sin loses its power over us.

Another doctrine requires to be looked at here in connection with this subject, that is the truth of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It would be fanciful to say that Joshua, in leading the hosts of Israel against Amalek, is a type of the Holy Spirit now; but on this particular point we judge it quite legitimate to use him as an illustration. Moses on the mount sets forth Christ's intercessory work now before God, and Joshua leading the army on the plain illustrates the Spirit's work in the believer combating the power of the flesh; and as the success of Joshua on the plain depended on Moses upon the mount, so the Spirit's work in the believer is consequent upon the intercession of Christ before God.

It is very instructive to contrast the conflict in Rom. vii. with that in Gal. v. 17. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye *may* not do the things that ye would" (R.V.). In Romans we see what is called the "two natures" in deadly conflict; or, more correctly, it is the believer himself struggling against the law of sin which he finds in his members, and consequently he has the worst of it in the contest. In himself the believer is no match for the power of indwelling sin. As we noticed already, this is a necessary experience to cure the Christian of self-confidence, and the lesson may have to be often repeated in the experience of some; while others learn more quickly to "look up" to where help can be obtained. But when we come to Galatians there is a marked contrast: it is not the

believer himself contending with the flesh, it is the Holy Spirit who dwells in him, whom he received, according to chap. iv. 6; who is seen in v. 17 opposing the power of the flesh; consequently victory is on the other side. The clause, "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would," does not mean they could not do the *good* things they desired to do as in Romans; but the Holy Spirit opposing the flesh prevented them doing the *evil* things they would do were it not for His presence and help. Hence we conclude that God's provision against the power of indwelling sin is the presence and work of the Spirit in the believer, in perfect harmony with, and consequent upon, the intercession of Christ above.

And just as Israel's victory over Amalek and every other foe depended entirely on their obedience to, and confidence in Jehovah, so our victory now depends entirely upon our keeping right with God. Seeking to walk in godly obedience to His Word, prayerfully avoiding everything that would grieve or quench that Blessed Spirit; and if He is thus dwelling in us ungrieved, and working in us unhindered by our self-will and carnal ways, He will keep our eye fixed on our Great High Priest within the vail, supply us daily out of His fulness, leading us on to new victories, and as Joshua "discomfited Amalek with the *edge of the sword*," so will He discomfit the Amalek which dwells in every child of God with the "two-edged sword" of the Word of God. Are you, dear reader, willing to allow Him to deal with your heart, your conscience, and your ways, and thus know the joy of walking with God? or will you rather settle down, and thus lose the joy of His fellowship now, and it may be lose also an eternal crown? "If we suffer we shall reign with Him" is just as *faithful* a saying as "If we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12).

G. A.

One proof of the inspiration of the Bible is the almost incredible consent between the scribes and penmen of it, who, writing in such divers places, tongues, and seasons, must needs irreconcilably have crossed and thwarted one another had they been guided by their own spirits. How much more would the prophets and apostles have jarred, unless they had all been directed by the Holy Spirit?

THE FEAST OF REMEMBRANCE AND TESTIMONY.

THOUGHTS CONNECTED WITH 1 COR. xi. 23-26.

THIS Epistle is exclusively addressed to Christians, and the precepts and promises contained therein are only applicable to such. To some this remark may appear wholly unnecessary, but when we remember that isolated texts and portions of Scripture are being constantly detached from their context, and indiscriminately applied to saved and unsaved alike, the need for this reminder is at once apparent.

None but the truly saved of the Lord have any right to partake of the Feast of Love, and it behoves even such to "examine themselves" most thoroughly as to their condition of heart and conscience ere they partake of its holy emblems.

The first point that deserves attention is the *source* whence Paul obtained his knowledge of this ordinance and the manner of its observance; for let it not be forgotten that, at the time of its institution, he was unconverted, and personally knew nothing of that ever-memorable scene on the night of the betrayal.

Again, Paul did not receive his information concerning it from those who were "in Christ" before him and who were eye-witnesses of its institution, and this *enhances* the importance of his expression, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," implying as it does a special and peculiar revelation to him personally.

In the light of this striking fact, is it not impious in the extreme for any one to regard this blessed ordinance with feelings other than those of deepest reverence and awe?

Besides, observe the character in which the glorified Saviour revealed this to the Apostle—It was as **THE LORD!**—He in whom is centred all divine authority, the only Legislator for His servants and people.

Of a truth this ordinance is a precious privilege, but it is also a duty imposed upon us by the Master's imperative command.

It is a privilege, because it is to us the sweet memory of His Cross and Passion; but it is a duty in that its observance is a *proclamation* to the world, until He gives effect on earth to His triumphant conquest on the Cross.

Paul, having "received" the Lord's mind on this

matter, "delivered" it to those converted through him, that they after their baptism might regularly observe it. That the Saints at Corinth *were baptized* is proven from the apostolic enquiry, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" an interrogation quite meaningless if any should contend they were not.

Indeed, there is a divine fitness in the arrangement that Baptism should precede the Breaking of Bread (we are speaking of God's *order*, and any exceptional case cannot affect this); for these two ordinances are inseparably allied in their character, both directly relating to the work of the Cross.

Baptism is only *once* required, and this at the outset of the Christian life, and points to our personal identification with that *one* atonement which has perfected us for ever.

The Feast of the Breaking of Bread is the *periodical* reminder of our relationship with that same mysterious and wondrous event; and to those who say, "It is on our heart to Break Bread," who are quite indifferent on the subject of Baptism, we would say, Peruse your Bibles and ask God to discover to you the deep importance of that ordinance, concerning which your mind has been so little exercised.

Either Christ *is* the Author of the ordinance of Baptism, or He *is not*. If the former, then be assured He intended you should observe it; but if the latter, then, of course, "it is a matter of opinion," and you are free to do as you choose.

The *broken loaf* is symbolical of the bruised body of Jesus, on whom, as "The Bread of Life," we feed by faith, and the brother who says in the assembly, "Let us give thanks," ere he breaks the loaf *loses his individuality*, and is, for the time being, the mouth-piece of the Church. The same principle applies to the Breaking of the Bread—the act is not *ministerial* (or should not be) but *representative*. *We* break it, just as *we* give thanks; his tongue in thanksgiving is the tongue of the Saints, corporately; and the same applies to his hands in the Breaking of the Bread.

Paul's object in this epistle is to convey the teaching underlying this ordinance, and not to specify the time of its observance. The Apostolic expression "as oft" is to be explained by the Apostolic practice, and for this we must go to the book of the *Acts* of the Apostles (see chap. xx. 6 and 7). Paul and his companions were at Troas *seven days*, and while the Spirit

of God is silent as to their doings during that period, He has caused it to be stated, in the most explicit manner, that they observed this Feast "on the first day of the week."

This fact alike precludes the thought of its observance being either more often or less seldom than once a week in Apostolic times, and we do well to remember that the expression "Breaking of Bread" (or its equivalent) in Scripture does not always apply to the ordinance, whilst it is a designation undoubtedly applied thereto. Take, for instance, Acts ii. 46, a passage often wrongly applied to the Feast. Here, as the R.V. makes perfectly clear, the social life is referred to: "And *day by day*, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the *Temple* (the place of religious concourse), and BREAKING BREAD AT HOME, they did take THEIR FOOD with gladness, &c. The phrase "Breaking Bread" is frequently applied to an ordinary meal—see Lamentations iv. 4, Acts xxvii. 34, 35.

As we have previously remarked, there are two features, wholly distinct, connected with this Feast.

1st. It is a *remembrance* to the Christian, and is designed to stir up his affections to Christ in a scene where everything is calculated to make him forgetful of his Master's rejection and death.

2nd. It is a *proclamation* (ye do proclaim, etc., R.V.) to this ungodly world, that the ONE whom it rejects is the object of our faith and love, and that in His Cross is our only hope.

It is designed to perpetuate the recollection of the greatest event that ever did or ever will transpire on earth.

Hence the duration of the Feast is till the Lord shall come, Whose advent, while bringing to the Christian indescribable glory, will be fraught with eternal sorrow to His rejectors and enemies.

Brethren, let us awake from our slumber! The King of Glory cometh! Ere long, and no more for ever, shall we need emblems to speak of Him; for we shall behold in His blessed body the imprints of the wounds of Calvary, and prostrate ourselves before Him in unhindered, sinless worship.

Yes! the last Lord's-day Feast *will come*; and ere the next first day of the week shall dawn we, with loved ones gone before, shall be at home with the Lord.

F. A. B.

THE LORD'S SECOND COMING IN TWO ASPECTS.

1st. Christ coming into "the Air" for His Church.

2nd. The "Son of Man" coming to the Jews, and to Earth.

THese are two distinct aspects of the Lord's second coming, and they should always be viewed separately; for in them different phases of truth are involved, and more errors arise through carelessness in regard to these important distinctions than many Christians imagine. It is not sufficient merely to say "that is in the Scripture." We should covet divine perception that we may understand "things which differ." We need the guiding aid of the "Spirit of God" to enable us to "rightly divide the word of truth." The word of God teems with references to these precious soul-stirring truths, and may the Lord in the abundance of His grace enable us to approach the consideration of them with chastened and trembling spirits. For the sake of keeping these different views of the Lord's second coming clearly before our minds we will briefly consider in the first place.

I.—CHRIST'S COMING INTO THE AIR FOR HIS CHURCH.

In the 11th chapter of the Gospel by John we have a very sweet picture of this. Notice in verse 5 the individuality of the love of Christ. "He loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." It is not here (as in chap. iii.) the love of God to the world, but the love of Christ to those who were actually His own. The family at Bethany seems to me to illustrate the whole family of God of this unique dispensation. The Master is absent—away from the scene—and during His absence one of His loved ones falls asleep, and is lowered into the cold grave. By-and-by He comes again, and shouts Lazarus into life, and re-unites him with loved ones alive upon the earth. Observe specially two verses in this chapter (verses 25, 26) and compare with R. V. "He that believeth in Me, though he die (*i.e.*, in the probability of the death of the body), yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Lazarus is a picture of the sleeping saints of this dispensation raised into life, and freed from the associations of the tomb, while Mary and Martha illustrate those "who are

alive and remain." In chap. xi. it is what the Lord does for them, but in chap. xii. the scene changes, and it is what they do for Him. I believe here we have a glimpse of the glory in a picture. Martha's act of service speaks of our cheerful service there; the position in which Lazarus is depicted tells of our fellowship with the Blessed Lord; while Mary's act of worship portrays our cheerful, ceaseless adoration of His glorious person. That the Lord's coming is a glorious fact is incontrovertibly proved by a three-fold cord of divine testimony:—

1st.—The promise of Jesus (John xiv. 3.)

2nd.—The declaration of angels (Acts i. 10-11.)

3rd.—The revelation to an apostle (1 Thess. iv. 15-16.)

To elucidate this, turn to the 14th chapter of John and 3rd verse. In this verse we have a condition. "If I go . . . I will come again." All hinges upon that "If I go." The very simplicity of the condition is sublimely beautiful. Compare this with Acts i. and 9, &c., "While they beheld, *He was taken up.*" That is enough for faith. The whole question of His return is thereby settled! - *He will come again.* But observe, this subject is of such immense importance that as the risen Christ, conqueror over sin, death, and hell, ascends to glory, two men, clad in white apparel, descend from heaven, and are commissioned by the Blessed God to say to the wondering disciples, "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner." Thus cheered and confirmed in their hope the disciples return to Jerusalem to wait, and watch, and work.

A perusal now of a part of the 4th of 1st Thess. 13-18, will be of the greatest moment, and is further proof of the extraordinary importance attached by the Lord to this wonderful truth. The writer of *this* knew nothing (as a matter of his own experience) of the soul-comforting words recorded in John xiv. At that time he was in his sins, treading the broad road to perdition. He had not witnessed the wondrous scene depicted in Acts i., and therefore the greater weight must be attached to his expression, "For this we say unto you *by the Word of the Lord.*" Paul had not obtained his knowledge from any second-hand source, but had received it direct from the Lord. In these verses the picture of John xi. is now arrayed in glorious and doctrinal certainty. Consider the condition a moment. "If we believe that He died, and

rose again, even so them also which *sleep in Jesus* will God bring with Him." Herein is the fitness for the rapture—the acceptance of the Gospel of the grace of God. It is very necessary not to confound those who "sleep in Jesus" with "the dead who die in the Lord" of Rev. xiv. 13. The former are those who fall asleep during the present age, while the latter relates to those persons who are slain by the Antichrist because they will not do homage to him in a future day. Ere long, the Master's shout will be heard, the sleeping ones shall be raised, the living ones changed, and all together shall we be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Look now for a moment at Phil. iii. 20-21. Our spiritual origin is from heaven. We are, through the mercy of God, citizens of that country, "from whence we look for the Saviour." Our attitude, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, should always be *Heavenward*, and not *Eastward*. Some saints strain their eyes (so to speak) looking towards the latter place, and lose sight of heaven altogether.

God's purpose in our salvation is that we should be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). For that consummation we wait and hope. We are saved from hell. That is a past and settled reality! "He that hath the Son hath life." And "what a man hath why doth he yet hope for?" The salvation here is of the body, and we hope for that for the simple reason that we do not yet possess it. As He takes us up, by and by, we shall be made like unto Himself, so that when we stand before His judgment-seat to receive the things done in the body, *we shall be clothed in our glorified bodies*.

How could one be judged then as to the question of eternal life?

A word now as to Thess. ii. 1, 2. Always distinguish between the coming of the Lord and the day of Christ (or of the Lord). Compare Isa. xiii. 6-11 and Amos v. 18-20, in regard to the latter, and is there any wonder that these believers were afraid and discomfited?

The coming of the Lord has reference to Christ's coming into the air for His saints. The Day of the Lord refers to His coming with them to assert His authority, and to subdue His enemies under His feet. Much more might be added, but in respect of the first point this must suffice. It might not be undesirable, however, to refresh our memories with two Old

Testament illustrations, clearly setting forth what has already been said.

1. "Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him" (Gen. vi. 14, Heb. xi. 5).

"It is appointed unto men once to die" (*i.e.*, the general order), but Enoch was an exception to the rule, and is in this respect typical of ourselves. Taken from a scene of violence and wickedness ere the flood (typical of the great tribulation) came upon the earth.

2. Again, Isaac is another and very complete picture of what concerns us. Remember he was taken back from the dead in a figure, and Abraham in the presence of his risen son, called before him the ruler over all his house—the great agent through whom all his desires were accomplished—and instructed him to fetch a bride for Isaac. Eleazar goes to the place directed by Abraham, and tells Rebecca of the wealth of his master, and of the glories and personal attractions of Isaac. Her heart is won, her faith is strong, and she prepares to accompany the man through a dreary wilderness to an unseen, yet dearly-loved object. But, did Isaac wait until she reached his home? No! He came forth to meet her, and took her back himself. In her presence Sarah's death is forgotten, and he rejoices.

The blessed Lord Jesus Christ was not taken back from the dead in a figure. He went under the waves and billows of the wrath of God in dreadful reality; but, hallelujah! He came up, having triumphed gloriously. Upon His ascent to the Father's right hand, the Spirit of God came down to earth, the Divine agent (in marvellous condescension) through whom the will of the Father is accomplished. He has spoken to us of the love of God, and of the person of Christ. Our hearts have been won, and now with all the ransomed we journey upward, homeward to God. Very soon now the One of whom Isaac was a figure will come forth to meet us, and in the presence of His bride "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Ere long we shall hear Him say, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Meanwhile, during the little while remaining, may the Lord write across our hearts the solemn word, "Every man that hath this hope in *Him* purifieth himself, even as He is pure," and enable us not only to sing as pilgrims, but to act consistently with that profession until, satisfied, "We awake in His likeness."

II.—THE SON OF MAN'S COMING TO THE JEWS AND TO THE EARTH.

Whenever you read of the "Son of man" in connection with His coming, you will find it always concerns this second feature of His return. It is as the executioner of judgment that He is called the "Son of Man" (John v. 27).

Turn now to the 1st chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, and consider the introductory remarks. "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Omitting some portions of chaps. xvi., xvii., and xviii. (which seem to come in parenthetically), Matthew is consistent with his preface, and deals with Jesus as related to David, the king, and Abraham, the Hebrew. I know it seems a superfluous thing to say, but let me remind you that chaps. xxiii. and xxiv. come before chap. xxv. It is so easy to forget this, and, starting with the last-named chapter, to arrive at all sorts of speculative notions in regard to its explanation. In verses 37 to 39 of chap. xxiii. you really have the basis upon which the two next chapters are built, and unless this be seen, confusion must arise. The Son of Man is here viewing retrospectively the treatment He has received from the Jews, and breaks forth into tones of lamentation as He considers it. In consequence of their rejection of Him as "Son of David, and Son of Abraham," He declares their house shall be left unto them desolate, and that they shall not see Him till they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Please notice particularly that this prediction relates to an awakened remnant of the Jews, and to their apprehension of it. Then in chap. xxiv., the Lord having foretold the destruction of the temple, His disciples come to Him privately, and enquire of Him in regard to three distinct points.

I.—When shall these things be? (*i.e.*, temple destroyed.)

II.—What shall be the sign of Thy coming? (*i.e.*, the coming of chap. xxiii. 39.)

III.—And of the end of the world? (*i.e.*, the end of the age.)

That which follows is the Lord's complete answer to this threefold interrogation, but it is only the second query with which we are now dealing.

WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING?

Now let us calmly ask ourselves what this question

referred to. *Was it to His future coming into the air for His Church?* Most decidedly not! The words recorded in verse 39 of chap. xxiii. had given birth to it, and the explanation must be sought in the light of that context. Ere the sign of His coming appears, the most dreadful things must come to pass, and His elect (His Jewish people back in their own land) most go through unprecedented trial. As a matter of absolute fact, Matt. xxiv. and xxv. do not apply directly to us of this dispensation. Some persons imagine that every morsel of Scripture must be applicable to themselves, but this is a mistake! God's saving purposes are not narrowed down to us, neither is His word in its teachings confined to us, or to the dispensation in which our lot is cast. It is blessed to know that "the pearl of great price" is the chiefest object of the Love of Christ, but let us not forget, the whole field is His by purchase, and God means that glory shall redound to His name in the light of that in all its fulness. As a confirmation of what I suggest, observe verse 20 of chap. xxiv. Here the *Sabbath Day* is brought in, and evidently refers to the resumption of their ancient ordinances by the Jews returned to their own land. A comparison of Col. 2, verses 16, 17, with this may help us. There we learn that the keeping of the Sabbath does not concern us—it was a shadow of Christ—He is God's rest now, and we rest in Him by faith. And it is in connection with the Jewish restoration that the "great tribulation" is seen. Indeed, *its commencement* is linked with that, and a right conception of this is of the utmost importance. Read verse 21. "*Then shall be the great tribulation, &c.*" *When?* *Why then!* And if this were the only verse of Scripture bearing upon the subject, it would afford indisputable evidence of the fact that the great tribulation does not commence until after the Church is off the scene. Read Acts xv. 13 18, in the light of this. Here we have what we might call God's dispensational programme of salvation set forth in doctrinal order, and from it we may learn that *it is not until God has first taken out the Church, that He begins to deal with the Jews afresh.* Chapter xxiv. of Matthew sees them back again in their own land, the temple worship restored, &c., and therefore it is abundantly clear that the great tribulation, brought in as it is in this chapter, does not affect the Saints of this dispensation.

The days of Noah are referred to when it is the Son of Man's coming. Noah, his sons, and his son's wives, were preserved through the flood (illustrative of the remnant saved through the great tribulation), and came out to sacrifice to God upon a purged earth. We do not look for signs in this dispensation to herald Christ's coming into the air, yet there will be signs previous to His appearing with His Saints to earth. Chapter xxv. begins with the word THEN, that is after the events of chapter xxiv., and we have a parable of ten virgins brought before us. In the gloom of the night of darkness and tribulation, a cry is made—(There is the recognition of the coming One, and the confession of it.) "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," answering to the prediction of verse 39 of chapter xxiji. The Lord does not come into the air in Matt. xxv., but to the scene of earth itself. The wise virgins no doubt refer to the watching Jews who expect "the Son of Righteousness to arise," and possibly they refer to the 144 thousand of Rev. xiv. 1-4, "who are virgins." They go "in with Him to the Marriage Feast" (not the marriage, R.V.). The unwatchful and unfaithful ones know where He is, and where the wise ones are. They are represented as holding immediate communication with Christ as touching their rejection, and how could that possibly be if it concerned the unsaved of our dispensation. These latter will know nothing about Him or us, besides He will be then *in the air*, and we with Him. After having dealt with the Jews (for how could the judgment of the servants in this chapter in its primary sense affect us? Why, one of them is cast into outer darkness, and surely *none of us* believe that the Saints of the present dispensation will be so dealt with,) He sits as the King upon the Throne,

and judges the nations of the earth as touching their treatment of His Jewish brethren. Then cometh the end of the age. The Millennial glory commences, and Christ reigns in righteousness. These are not two comings, but two phases of *one coming*. The first concerns us—the coming into the air—the latter affects the Jews and the earth. Between the two the great tribulation goes on, and Anti-christ deceives the people. When Christ comes to the earth—the rightful King—then oppression and cruelty shall cease. The government shall be upon His shoulders, and ere God creates a new earth He means to demonstrate to the wondering eyes of all the redeemed, that the present one—so marred and blighted by sin now—can under the peaceful reign of "Emmanuel," be a glorious place, and be to the honour of His great Name.

In conclusion, may the Lord enable us each to lay hold of these sacred truths with all our hearts, and teach us truly to sing:—

Lord Jesus come! and take Thy people home
That all Thy flock so scattered here
With Thee in glory may appear,
Lord Jesus, COME!* F. A. B.

The glorious hope set before the believer is not, that by and by he also should die and rejoin his loved ones, but that at any moment Christ might personally come for His own, and re-unite the sleeping with the living—*for ever*. Not long ago, at a burial, the gentleman who conducted the service, after having read the passage, "We shall *not* all sleep, but we shall all be changed," engaged in prayer, and, strangely enough, his first sentence was, "Oh, God! we know we *must* all die, and that soon."

*The above can be had in book form from The Publishing Office, 6d. per dozen.

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 CCXXIV.

Can you make out from Scripture that there are two distinct raptures of the saints prior to the Millennium—one, the first fruits; and the other, those who believe during the tribulation?

REPLY.

The first of the heavenly company caught up from earth to heaven is Christ Himself. He is "the man-child" who is to "rule all nations with a rod of iron;" He is "caught up to God and to His throne" (Rev. xii.).

Next comes the great company spoken of in 1 Cor. xv., "they that are Christ's at His coming."

The sleeping saints having been *raised*, and the living *changed*, both together will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv.).

Next in order are the two witnesses of Rev. xi., who rise to life again, and ascend up to heaven in the sight of their enemies.

Lastly, there is that company who suffer martyrdom during the time of tribulation, under the persecution of the Antichrist. Part of these are seen in Rev. vi. 10, 11; but the company is at that point incomplete. Others have to join the ranks of those departed ones through like suffering and death; but in Rev. xx. 4 the whole martyred company is seen living and reigning with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom.

We read of them only that "they lived and reigned," not that they were "caught up;" though it seems to be implied that they ascended to join and form the completion of the glorious company designated "*the first resurrection.*"

QUESTION CCXXV.

Is it right, at the Lord's Supper, to break the bread and give thanks before it leaves the table, or should it be handed round unbroken, and without the giving of thanks?

REPLY.

Questions on these points are so numerous that we would endeavour to answer them, if, by so doing, we may help to oneness of mind and practice.

It is the almost universal custom for one to break the loaf into two or more parts before it is handed round. In a large assembly it is necessary to do so, in order not to encroach unduly on the limited time for being together; and we would submit that common decency demands that each portion be handed round upon a clean plate, and not from hand to hand, as one has sometimes seen. In some smaller assemblies, where no such necessity arises, it has been the custom to hand the bread from the table unbroken; the understanding of such being that each one breaks the bread as he partakes, and that thus each one can say "the bread which *we* break." By those who hold this view the breaking of the bread by one before it leaves the table is regarded as "ministerialism," and is on that grounded resented.

On the other hand, there are those who equally would seek to avoid what is "priestly" or "ministerial," but who, nevertheless, believe that there is a distinction between the *breaking* of the bread and the *partaking* of it, and that the typical character of the ordinance is not fulfilled by the handing round of an *unbroken* loaf.

In the judgment of such, the one who breaks the bread does so as representing for the time being the whole assembly, just as the one who gives thanks for the time being both leads and represents the whole gathered company.

So long as it is distinctly understood that neither the giving of thanks nor the breaking of bread is a priestly or ministerial act *that only some few are qualified to perform*, we do not see why any objection need be made by those who hold the former view to the practice of the latter, which; as we have already remarked, is upon various grounds the almost universal custom.

To any who would make such a point a continual occasion of contention and threatened division, we commend Phil. iii. 15-16.

While thus seeking to help as to minor and external matters, we would solemnly warn against making too much of these and losing sight of the inner reality, the spiritual discernment of that which is shown forth—"Ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

A question is asked about partaking with gloves on. We feel ashamed to allude to such details; and yet, though very small, they are not altogether unimportant. Why partake of the Lord's Supper with gloved hands, when none of us would ever dream of doing so at our own tables? We believe that a moment's consideration will suffice to show that a *clean, uncovered hand* alone should handle the symbols of that holy and precious body that was bruised for us.

A wealthy farmer was in the habit of having a nightly reading of the Scriptures with his family and dependents, after which he generally engaged in prayer. One evening he prayed very earnestly for the poor and starving, there being great distress in his neighbourhood. On rising from his knees one of his children, a bright little fellow, said,—

"Papa, I do wish I had some of your corn."

"Why, my child?"

"Because," said he, "*I'd soon answer your prayer.*"

CHRIST ; OR, WORLD-REFORMATION. WHICH ?

BY THE EDITOR.

HT has pleased God that in all things Christ should have the pre-eminence (Col. i. 18.) All things were created "FOR *Him*," as well as "THROUGH *Him*." He is "the End," as well as "the Beginning." He is the object before the heart of God. To exalt Him, to honour Him, to recompense Him, to fill Him with joy, to satisfy His heart's desire—to this end have the purposes and counsels of God been steadily working from eternity hitherto.

And in this age, since the Son has been manifested, since His incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection, God has most specially and peculiarly ordered that everything shall have its value in relation to Christ. He is "First and Last," the "Alpha and Omega" of the dispensation. It begins in His sufferings, and ends in His glory. The Gospel testimony, peculiar to this period, is the "Gospel of Christ"—it is "the preaching of the Cross." It is not the promulgation of a code of laws, as in the age that is past. It is not teaching the world "the doctrines of Christianity," exalted and perfect as the morality and justness of the teachings of Christ to His disciples undoubtedly were. It is the presentation to the world of a *Person*—a glorious divine *Person*—who is its only and all-sufficient Saviour, its rightful Lord, its destined King.

Those who are the fruit of this testimony are they whom the Father has given to Christ. The great King is making a marriage for His Son. At creation, God saw that all He had created and made was very good, yet though "very good," it was not complete. Adam set over it as head was alone, and no companion fitted for him was found. What was creation to Adam without a companion to share his affections, his joys, his thoughts, his honours, and his dominion? Till this was provided, creation, so far as Adam was concerned, was incomplete; but when, taken from his side, fashioned into perfect beauty, fitted in all respects to be the companion of his life, Eve was presented to him, then was his joy complete. He was satisfied!

And this is God's object in the present age. It is the gathering out from all nations of a people—
attracted by the love and the glory of Christ—to

F

be the bride, the wife, of the Son of God; to be the object of His heart's affection, the sharer of His joy and glory throughout ages without end.

This may be a familiar truth to many. Yet how apt is it to be forgotten and lost sight of! Satan spares no effort to spoil the peculiar testimony of this present age, to degrade it from its glorious object, and to substitute for the simple testimony of Christ a system of world-improving machinery, the object and aim of which is the well-being of man in the world and in the flesh, and from which the object and aim of the heart of God is excluded.

Suppose, for a moment, that by means of education, science, social and political reform, the world became convinced that *on the principle of self-interest*, on the principle that sobriety and morality, as well as honesty, were the best policy, those sins which directly produce misery to the flesh were given up; suppose that nations accepted the attractive peace doctrine of settlement of all national disputes by arbitration; suppose a world thus freed from drunkenness, immorality, injustice, war, a world that by this means was *all that the natural heart of man could wish*, a world of improved health, lengthened life, peace, prosperity, comfort, the very fruition of that which the so-called "Christian philanthropist" vainly aspires after:—suppose all this to have been realized, but not through the preaching of the Cross, not through individual regeneration, not on the ground of the conscience being set right with God by the blood of atonement, not the gathering of a people to Christ as their Saviour, their Lord, their Life, their All—*What would there be in such a world for God?*

Could God forget the Cross of His beloved Son? Could God take pleasure in such a Christless peace, and still behold athwart the scene the blood-stain of the murder of earth's rejected Lord? Could God accept the mockery of outward homage from a world that had thus *deified self*? Nay, we are bold to say, this realized dream of the philanthropist, this scene of pride and self-satisfaction would be more hateful to God than "this present evil world" with all its seething, hopeless mass of sin and misery, corruption, and death.

The very miseries that sin entails are blessings in disguise. How often do they act like the hunger of the prodigal, compelling the reluctant heart to give ear to the voice of love.

And is it not the case that many in these days who have themselves been saved through the simple testimony of Christ are being drawn aside from that simplicity, and allying themselves with philanthropic and world-improving movements, utterly foreign to the purpose of the heart of God in this present age? Is not the name of Christ and His Gospel linked with every species of world-reformation? Have not the Church and the world joined hands, on philanthropic grounds, that never would have joined had not an *object of common interest been substituted for CHRIST, the object of the heart of God?**

Let the testimony of Christ in all its simplicity be maintained, and let the preaching be "the preaching of the Cross," and neither the world nor the world-loving Christian will rally round the standard. The children of God would not be dragged through the mire of party politics, or defiled by familiarity with forms of evil that ought not so much as to be named among saints (Eph. v. 3.) But link the Gospel with politics, education, science, with teetotalism, social purity, anti-tobacco, or any other world-reformation cry, and both the carnal Christian and the religious worldling will hail with satisfaction a Gospel that does so little violence to their feelings, and offers such furtherance to their earthly hopes.

As already observed, the purpose of the heart of God in this present age is the glorifying of Christ. To this end He has sent down His Holy Spirit to dwell in that body, of which Christ is the Head. The Holy Spirit's indictment against the world is that it will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The law convicts of outward transgression, and conscience owns the charge, while it loves the sin; but the Holy Spirit convinces of sin because they believe not on Christ. Thus, at the very outset of

* As an instance of the subtle way in which all human perversions of God's appointments go to set Christ aside, note how the calling of "the Lord's Day" the "Sabbath," and linking it with creation and the law, severs its connection with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and in order that a semblance of reverence for the Risen One may be maintained, Easter Sunday is celebrated once a year.

Again, in baptism, instead of union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection being shown, it is transformed into a "christening," or with the more devout, *the dedication of an infant*; but in either view of it, Christ is lost sight of in the ordinance. Yet there are those who, whilst professing to have had their eyes opened to those errors, see "no harm" in countenancing such practices!

God's dealing with the sinner a charge is laid against him, over and above all that law and conscience have already borne witness to, the most serious and fatal that could possibly be made.

Yet this, the sin of sins, before which the blackest outrage pales, is never named, or, if named at all, only in a feeble and apologetic way by the world-reforming Christian.

Why? *Because it is a sin only against God and His Christ, and not one that brings present misery in its wake.*

Does not this show how little fellowship there is with the heart of God in the preaching that magnifies one or other of the endless trespasses of the flesh above all others, and proclaims by a ribbon or a cross that a crusade against IT is being carried on?

Does it not show how man's interests have been uppermost in the heart of the benevolent worker, and the glory of God a secondary consideration? Well would it be if many a zealous worker, so busily engaged in what is called "Christian work," would pause and seriously enquire, Is this the work of the Lord?

There may be zeal for a denomination, for a society, for a doctrine, for a movement, a zeal that is fervent and untiring in its efforts to promote the object in view, and yet Christ may be completely excluded, and the approval of God awaiting. Nay, more, those very lusts which bind the lawless as with adamant chains, and which, from their very nature, bring their slaves in this life such dire and awful retribution, are the sentence of God upon a deeper and more awful sin that had gone before, a sin which brings no suffering in the flesh as its necessary sequence. They are given up to their own heart's lusts, "because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. i. 28). Yet the advocates of a spurious gospel of to-day go to such with a pledge that *they shall break the chain in which, by the judgment of God, they are enslaved, as a step in the right direction, a step towards accepting Christ as the Almighty deliverer.* What is this but dividing the glory of salvation between the sovereign grace of God and the will of man—between Christ and the pledge?

But more than this. If Christ be the object of our service, as He is the object of the heart of God, then the fruit of Gospel testimony will be gathered to His Name, to form an assembly, of which He is

the centre, where His Name alone is owned and exalted, and where His Word is the only and final appeal.

Thus, to gather those who have believed on the Lord Jesus into a divine and scriptural fellowship, exactly such as that which resulted at the first from the testimony of the apostles, and which they left behind them in every city they visited, will never be popular work; but it is Christ-exalting work, and is the only following up of Gospel testimony that is in fellowship with the heart of God.

Let the simplicity of the testimony be departed from, and the issue is not scripturally-constituted assemblies, but *associations* of various kinds and names, each having for its object some form of philanthropic testimony; but all alike practically setting aside God's object—*i.e.*, gathering together into One—gathering to Christ.

The object of one will be the good of young men; another, the good of young women. The rallying cry of one will be, "total abstinence;" that of another, "social purity." The pattern of one will be a worldly military system; the pattern of another a Freemason's lodge, and so on.

Let Christ be the object, steadfastly kept in view, and, in as far as it is the purpose of God to grant it in this present age, all ends of human blessing will be gained, whilst God will be glorified. All the world-reformation schemes that ever were devised will not result in adding one to that elect number who, before the foundation of the world, were chosen in Christ to form the membership of that body, of which He is the Head. All they can do for man is to make him more comfortable and happier without God, whilst on his way to an eternal hell. If Christ be *served*, and *witnessed for*, and *lived*, both young men and young women will be blessed and saved, and all the saved will learn in the Church of God both sobriety and purity. They will shine as lights in the world, and those that desire the light will be attracted and saved, whilst those who hate it will turn away and cling to the evil which they love. The testimony will not be against particular sins, but for a rejected Christ. The object will not be the reformation of the world, but the gathering out of a people for His Name.

In the coming age God will deal with the world. Soon this present testimony will end in judgment, and then *God's world-reformation scheme* will take effect.

But when God begins to order and reform the world, He will do it by showing to it in heavenly glory its rejected King, and by causing every knee to bow to Him.

Christ will be God's object still. To this a millennial earth, where righteousness reigns, shall bear witness, as well as a glorified Church.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER VIII.

(Continued from page 68.)



HE Lord first forgives a poor woman detected in the very act of sin, and whom the Pharisees wanted to condemn; and then, when He had in His majesty, forgiven her, converted her (else she would have gone away—she could not possibly have stood that light, save as a converted woman), whilst the proud Pharisees, having their consciences exposed under the withering light of His countenance, went out one by one, from the eldest to the last. The Lord, in self-defence, as they do not understand Him, replies in three ways. First, "you know not whence I came—I came from God, and speak as God." Secondly, He says that Father and Son both testify as to Who He is—how very great; and Thirdly, He adds that the Father Himself can testify in similar words. It is evident that there is now a break, because in verse 20 it says, "These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come." And then, as they have nothing to say, being self-condemned and silenced, He proceeds, resumes the conversation. This conversation which follows, from verse 20 to 59, is in two parts—first, as to what He is; secondly, as to what they are; and the two together are intensely solemn.

In verse 19 He said, "Ye neither know Me, nor My Father; if ye had known Me, ye should have known my Father also." And again, "I said, therefore, unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. I have many things to say and to judge of you; but He that sent Me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him" (verses 24-26). Now perceive the thought, "I being true,

being in communion with the Father, am telling you about the light, and my Father tells me not to spare you. You will die in your sins, and my Father says tell them so, and I, the Truth, tell it out." In other words, it is an expansion of verse 7. Then look at another point as to the truth; it tells about the Cross—"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 the Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." This again, is like the writing on the ground, writing out the name of God. "When I have finished My writing you shall see what I have written, either in salvation or damnation; the Cross shall be your judgment." In verse 23 He tells them there was One among them, clothed in human flesh, but far, infinitely far, distant from themselves. He got close to us by the Cross; though until He was crucified, while robed in humanity, He was far removed from us. I have often thought, when reading the earlier Gospels, how kind it was of God to speak of Jesus on this wise—"A man is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." As if Nazareth was His own country! Ah, we should have to take a survey of heaven, and that would require millions of years, to see where Jesus came from. To understand Christ's reply in verse 25 we must notice first that the words "the same" are in italics, and, therefore, we may leave them out; but there is a word put in, and, I regret to say, not in italics, that is the word "from." The revisers seem to have been in a fix as to how to render the passage, for they have put one translation in the text, and another in the margin, and neither, in my opinion, is correct, because both insert that word "from." Now I will first give you the words as they stand in the original, and then try and interpret them. "Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou? And Jesus saith unto them, The Beginning—even that which I am saying unto you." That is an exact translation of the Lord's reply. I do not feel sure what was meant when they ask, and He replied "The Beginning"; whether He meant that He was the Creator of all things. I do not care to dogmatize on such a subject; but that is what He said. If there had been no Jesus there could not possibly have been any creation; a very little reflection will show you that. But then He adds other words which are somewhat more intelligible, "What I am speaking unto you." That is, His

words are the outcome of Himself. For example, those verses, 14 to 19, which we have been looking at; I do not recapitulate them now, for it is not so much any particular conversation I refer to, but to the great doctrine that when He speaks it is the outflow of His own majesty. If He says "Light be," light immediately follows; it is the outcome of Himself in all cases. We are His creatures, and can hardly understand the immense, the infinite distance between the Lord of Glory and ourselves, such poor things.

Notice, too, that expression in verse 25, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." As if God had talked to Christ about the work He had given Him to do. Just such similar language we have in chap. v. 30, though there I think that it is the voice of God greeting His soul at that very moment, but am not so sure that it is in the verse under consideration. "I speak those things which I have heard." Both tell us what He was hearing, or what He had heard from God. Verse 28 tells us the way that God begins to teach any of us. God's first lesson book is the Cross. And Jesus ever had that before His mind; and not only as the manifestation of God's love, but as well of man's hate. And what was it His Father had taught Him? That he would have to go and be rejected of the Pharisees, and encounter their hate when He forgave that poor woman, and turned her into the path of righteousness; to encounter their withering scorn, yea, to have to go to the Cross. The Father teaches Him, and He hears; and not as we, straightway to forget. Christ was perfectly obedient to what the Father said; He never turned a deaf ear. In Isaiah I. we read of Him, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back."

Verse 30 leads us in the second place to notice what Jesus said of those who opposed Him, those proud and haughty Pharisees. He had said "I am the light of the world," then He had pointed to the Cross from whence the light streams out; and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us, and the holiness too; we have heard the Truth speak. Then He tells us, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Beginning at the Cross, we are to go on with Him, "he that followeth Me." We have heard Him say, "peace be unto you" in resurrection, and then

we are to follow Him, and in following get more light. "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed." Then observe how He shows that He is the true Isaac, in contrast with those Jews who were virtually Ishmaels, drawing a distinction between Abraham's *seed* and Abraham's *son* (verses 33-37). Now ponder the distinction. Ishmael was Abraham's seed, but not, in the strictest sense, the son of Abraham, the Isaac whom he loved; he was the child of the flesh only, and not of promise. And there was the true Heir, the real Isaac amongst them, and they knew Him not. Isaac was as the Only-begotten offered up by the Father, and, in figure he came down from that mount in resurrection. Now see what it says as to the true Son, the risen Isaac; "the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." You will remember that when we read of Isaac in figurative resurrection, the Holy Ghost adds immediately to the narrative about a number of persons being born; there is the resurrection seed. And that *that* is the meaning is taught us from Galatians iii. 13, 14, "Christ hath redeemed us 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, that the blessing of Abraham might come on Gentiles through Jesus Christ." And so again in chap. iv. 22-28, "Now, we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise," because we have the blessing of Abraham come upon us through His Son Jesus Christ, and so the Son has made us free. We are one with Christ in resurrection, and are to abide in the presence and home of God for ever—we are free indeed.

This He says about the children, partly to assure their hearts, and partly to the Jews who oppose, saying that they were the seed of Abraham. But look at what a state they were in, even to taunt Him with being about to commit suicide (verse 22); but He would not answer such a Satanic remark. We read of six suicides in Scripture, and every one perished awfully, evidently without any idea of mercy; and with such intention do these Jews charge the holy, uncreated Son of God. Then further on they say, "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" See what led them to make the remark, because He denied that they were the sons of Abraham and children of God. They reply and

say, Thou art a Samaritan, and not a son of Abraham, and hast a devil, and art not the Son of God. Thus we see that their hearts are full of fury and enmity against Him. And observe what He says of the devil himself, because the light uncovers everything, "He was a murderer from the beginning (referring to his slaying of Adam), and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it." That expression "abode not in the truth," I believe, carries our thoughts beyond this world. Christ is the Truth; it reveals Christ, and he would not accept Christ; it is a hint, I think, of rebellion against Christ in scenes anterior to this world altogether.

Now look at what He is, and what God is. I am trying to sketch the action of the light on the sinner at His feet, on believers that follow Him, on the wicked that oppose Him, and on Himself, and on His Father. The words "I am" occur here several times over. Thus in verse 12, "I am the light of the world." And that, observe, in opposition to another word, similar in sound, but very different in sense. In verse 58 we read, "Before Abraham *became*, I *am*." Now "to be" and "to become" sound much alike, but are infinite in their difference. God is One that *is*; all creatures have *become*. Never is it spoken of Him that He became; but it is of every creature. There may possibly be an allusion here to chap. i. The Eternal One necessarily existing from all eternity. In the Old Testament we hear the word uttered without His being brought nigh as in the New, "I am that I am." But in the New Testament He has come near, and takes characters to suit the poor wretched objects He came to befriend. "I am the Light," "I am the Way, the Truth," "the Good Shepherd," "the Resurrection and the Life." But here as the Light, dealing with the consciences of those opposing,—those carping Jews presuming to utter the athiesm of their hearts in His presence.

One word more, on His reflecting God and telling out God. "I honour My Father, and ye do dishonour Me. And I seek not Mine own glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth." There is One that seeketh, that is, My honour. My Father sees to that. Every one My Father is judging according to his acceptance or rejection of Me. He hints at what the judgment of the Father will be on those that do not honour

Him. "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death. If he does not honour Me—see that I am the 'I am'—he will taste death. My Father seeks My honour, and that man at His hands will taste death."
—(*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

SHALL I TAKE THE THORN AWAY ?

"**S**AY! shall I take the thorn away?"—
So spake my gracious Lord—
"O'er which thy sighs are heaved by day,
Thy nightly tears are poured ?

Say! shall I give thee rest and ease,
Make earth's fair prospects rise,
And bid thy bark o'er summer seas
Float smoothly to the skies ?

"Shall peace and plenty's cup swell high,
Health leap through every vein,
And all exempt thy moments fly
From bitter inward pain ?
Be naught to check the inspiring flow
Of human friendship's tide ;
And every want thy heart can know,
Be quickly satisfied ?

"Know, thine ease-loving heart might miss
The *comfort* with the *care* !
And that full tide of earthly bliss
Leave little room for prayer !
Few were thy visits to the Throne,
Unhasten'd there by pain ;
Thou, o'er thy bosom-sins, alone,
Wouldst small advantage gain !

"Nor deem the highest, holiest joy
A stranger still to woe ;
Blest servants in My high employ,
Most closely linked they go.
My love illumines with tenderest rays
The path of self-denial ;
And burning bright the glory's blaze
That crowns the fiery trial !

"In conscious weakness thou shalt hang
On My almighty arm !
Soon as the thorn inflicts its pang,
I'll pour My love's rich balm.
Thou, patient in thy deepest woe
Shalt feel Me at thy side ;
And, for My praise, to all shalt show
Thou art well satisfied."

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART II.

THE religious teachings of this book are peculiarly clear and spiritual. Jehovah is set forth as the creator and governor of the universe, and the disposer of human destinies (chaps. iii. 19, viii. 22-29, &c.), incomprehensible alike in His nature and His works (chaps. xxv. 2, xxx. 3). His providence is represented as both active and universal (chaps. v. 21, xv. 3); controlling not only the outward fortunes (chap. x. 22), but the minds of men (chap. xxi. 1). He is declared to be holy and just; loving, commending, and rewarding piety and virtue, and abhorring and punishing all sin (chaps. iii. 33, x. 3-29, xii. 2), not only in this life, but also in a future state (chap. xiv. 32).

"The necessity of religion, 'the fear of the Lord,' is inculcated in this book, in strong and emphatic language, as the beginning of wisdom (chap. i. 7) and the foundation of happiness. Trust in God (chap. iii. 56); reverence for Him (chap. iii. 34); cheerful submission to His paternal chastisement (chap. iii. 11, 12); the love of our fellow men (chap. xi. 17); justice (chap. xi. 1); kindness (chap. iii. 27); gentleness of spirit and demeanour, charity, prudence, active diligence, purity of heart, humility, modesty, temperance, and, in short, all those things which make men happy in themselves, and create a happy state of society, are here exhibited and urged in the most forcible manner; and, after all the light which the gospel has shed upon us, we are glad to resort to this book for guidance, encouragement, and warning."*

The Word of God contains the whole counsel of God—and the guiding principles and directions of the Old Testament are embodied and unfolded in the New—while the general injunctions of the New, such as those referring to daily life and conduct, are detailed in the Old, The power to fulfil them in their true spirit being in Christ, and in the daily abiding in Him for fruitfulness towards God.

"The very nature of the book of Proverbs is such, that it has a direct application to people of all times, all conditions, and all countries. It says very little about the sacrifices and offerings, and other ceremonial institutions, of the Mosaic economy, but is almost wholly occupied with the substantial duties of morality

* NOTE.—Extracted from the "Annotated Paragraph-Bible," many of the notes of which on the Proverbs follow.

and religion; and it is so comprehensive, that all ranks and degrees have here their word in season."

Let us therefore endeavour to take up the leading thoughts of the various proverbs in succession—illustrating them by such scriptural or other examples as may tend to make them clear, and explaining such as may need explanation.

CHAPTER I.

Verse 2. To know, *i.e.*, in order that we may know true wisdom, or prudence, &c.

Verse 4. "To give cautiousness to the inexperienced;" the young man who is liable to be led astray.

Verse 5. They are *truly* wise who listen and learn. Only the self-conceited and vain think they know enough. "To Him that hath shall more be given." See how the simple group of early disciples—the Ethiopian (Acts viii.), Sergius Paulus (Acts xiii. 7), the Bereans (Acts xvii. 11, 12), Apollos (Acts xviii. 24-26), though an eloquent man, and therefore most liable to be self-satisfied—how all these hear and increase learning.

Verse 6. "Dark sayings," *i.e.*, difficult of understanding (compare 1 Cor. ii. 9-16).

Verse 7. The fear of the Lord is the principal part of knowledge, without it we *cannot* truly understand. See Abraham's fear (Gen. xviii. 19); Jethro's (Exod. xviii. 21).

"But fools despise wisdom, &c." See Cain's folly (Gen. iv. 6-8); Hophni and Phinehas' (1 Sam. ii. 12-25); Rehoboam's (1 Kings xii. 13).

Verses 8 and 9. Filial obedience is a graceful ornament.

Verses 10 to 14. Adam was enticed (Gen. iii. 6).

The prophet of Judah under a veil of pretended message from God (1 Kings xiii. 16, &c.). Jehoshaphat, though godly, nearly lost his life by listening to Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 4-31).

Joseph, enticed, resisted and consented not (Gen. xxxix. 9, 10).

The threefold temptation of the Lord (Matt. iv) shows us how to resist the enticements of Satan.

Let no alluring promises deceive thee; the devil is tempting behind the scenes and using these sinners to entice.

Verses 15 and 16. Walk not *with* them in their way, refrain, shun, keep clear of their path; for their feet run to evil: they are swift to shed blood.

Verses 17 to 19. Poor, silly birds snatch at the bait and don't think of the net, so they who greedily seek gain and their own lusts think not that their living souls are endangered thereby, for these things, when gotten, take away the lives of the owners thereof.

Verses 20 to 33. Wisdom ("Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God") crieth aloud, everywhere by God's providences, His works, His messengers, His servants, by His Son, and by His Spirit—beseeching men to hearken, beseeching the thoughtless, the scorner, the openly wicked, to turn at His reproof.

"I will pour out My Spirit unto you," *i.e.*, I will freely utter what is on My heart to you, and make known My words to you.

But, no! men remain unmoved.

Now doth God speak in solemn judgment, "I called—ye refused."

"I have stretched out My hand (beseechingly, beckoning to men to come); no man regarded."

"Ye have set at naught *all* My counsel, and would (wished for) *none* of My reproof."

This is the indictment; men stand speechless, guilty before Him.

Now follows the awful, the inevitable sentence.

"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

Then shall there be no opportunity afforded.

"They shall seek Me *earnestly*, but they shall not find Me (see Deut. i. 45, 46), and Judas' case (Matt. xxvii. 3-5).

What they have sown *must* they reap.

"For the turning away (from My admonitions) by the simple shall be the cause of their death; and the love of prosperity and ease causing carnal security, by fools, shall prove their destruction."

"But who so hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (see Psalm i., Jer. xvii. 5-8, and Is. xxxii. 17-19). A. O. M.

(To be continued.)

In Philippians iii. we have—

- I. Paul's Stripping Place.
- II. His Clothing Place.
- III. His Studying Place.
"That I may know Him."
- IV. His Running Place.
- V. His Weeping Place.
- VI. His Waiting Place.

J. G. M'VICKER.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. X. 23, &c.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.



ALL things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." These same words occur in chapter vi. 12, but in relation to quite a different principle.

In chapter vi. they are followed by "I will not be brought under the power of any;" in chapter x. it is "All things edify not." The one takes cognisance of the influence that things in themselves lawful, may have on myself; the other has to do with the influence such things may have on my neighbour.

Many things may be in themselves lawful, and, not only so, they may in no way prove a snare to me; I may be in no danger of being brought under their power, yet my doing these things may so affect others that it is not expedient for me to do them.

Thus, love becomes the higher rule by which to determine whether that which is lawful is also expedient or not. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). Hence the words that follow, "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good" (R.V.).

"None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. xiv. 7). Love must deny self, for love cannot but live for others, and self is the greatest hindrance to the outgoings of love. The Lord Jesus was the One who pre-eminently lived for others, His whole life, death, and resurrection, His intercession and coming again, are for others good, and even in the glory He will gird Himself, and come forth and serve His redeemed (Luke xii. 37).

The natural man seeks his happiness in that which he esteems to be for his own personal advantage; self is his object, and for self he lives.

True happiness consists in doing the will of God; in walking well-pleasing to Him. It is His will that we should seek the good, the blessing, the edification of others; and if we are doing this in such a way as to please God, He will surely bless us and make us happy in so living for Him and for others. It may be the will of God for one that he lay down his life for his brethren (1 John iii. 16). This was done, in effect, by Priscilla and Aquila (see Rom. xvi. 4). It

may be that another is called to sell his all, and distribute to the poor or to the Lord's work. But, whilst each of us, the redeemed of the Lord, is not his own, because bought with a price, and ought, therefore, to be willing at any moment to sacrifice his all, or life itself, for God; still, it is not in such a way that most are called to seek their neighbour's good. It is in the little things of daily life—the eating and drinking, the speaking and acting of every hour—that the principle of consideration for others is to take effect. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience sake."

The question ought not to be raised by the believer as to whether the animal was offered in sacrifice, part of which he purchases for food. Why? Because "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." That is to say, an idol is in reality nothing. The fact of its having been offered to an idol makes it neither better nor worse; it was the Lord's as a living animal, and it is the Lord's provision for food, now that it is slain; so the believer can use it as from God, and give Him thanks.

"If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go." Notice the instruction from God; it is not "*you ought not to go,*" but "if ye be disposed to go." But what is involved in this? Is it not evident that it must be a matter of consideration before God. Some might have the faith and firmness to go and let their light shine even at the feast of an unbeliever. We have known of persons going to a wordly party in plain attire, giving away tracts, speaking the truth to several, and going home early! By all means, *if you be disposed to go, and do so,* then it is not for any one to judge your liberty. But with the majority, to go, would simply mean to surrender all testimony for the time being, to get a defiled conscience, spend an unhappy evening, and get home tired and miserable! Alas! for the believer who could go and join in its godless frivolity and enjoy it!

"Whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake; but if any man say unto you, 'this hath been offered in sacrifice,' eat not, for his sake that shewed it and for conscience sake: conscience, I say, not thine own, but the others."

Here, again, the principle of love and consideration for the good of others comes in to regulate. So far as my own conscience is concerned, I may be at perfect liberty to eat, but the one who calls my attention to the fact of the food having been offered in sacrifice, thereby shews me that he, in his ignorance, looks upon it as pertaining to the idol to which it was offered; he would misunderstand my partaking of it, and attribute it to my having respect to the idol. Or, if he were a weak believer, who regarded it as defiled and defiling, my partaking might (as in chapter viii. 10) embolden him to do that for which, by his unenlightened conscience, he would be self-condemned.

Thus, upon consideration for others, I abstain from that of which, for myself, I could with a good conscience partake.

This principle (though here it is found in connection with what may not directly concern us) enters into every detail of our lives. Our every action, however trivial, influences others, and this in ways that we are not always aware of. I may be recovering from a fever, and not be myself aware of the unconscious influence I have upon others; but one with whom I come in contact may in an instant be smitten by it.

So our actions and our condition, spiritually, which regulates them have an influence for good or evil upon others. Others are influenced by our conversation, our behaviour, our dress, our furniture, whilst neither they nor we may be conscious of it.

At the Judgment-seat of Christ we shall get a deeper insight than we now have into the amount of good or evil which the unconscious influence of our ways has produced.

We may then have reason to regret that we lived so much to please ourselves, and so little considered the glory of God and the influence of our actions upon others.

“For why is my liberty judged by another man’s conscience? for if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?” In connection with this read 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

Two things combined are here said to sanctify my food, viz., “the Word of God and prayer.” The Word of God has set it apart for my use, and as God has given it to me, I give thanks to Him for it. The Word of God before the law, and under the law, and since the law (Acts xv. 29) has forbidden the use of

blood; hence, even my giving thanks for such food would leave it still unsanctified to me. I might by grace partake of a crust of bread and a cup of water, and give thanks, and it might be a blessed meal; but if I ran into debt to procure myself something more savory, neither the Word of God nor prayer could sanctify to me the food. Daniel, in Babylon, as a godly Jew, could not partake of the portion of the King’s meat, for, in all probability, the things provided and the manner of their preparation would often, if not always, contravene the law of Moses as to things clean and unclean. He found that the pulse and water which the Word of God set apart for him, and for which he could honestly give God thanks, were, with the blessing of God, better than all the King’s meat.

If, then, by grace—*i.e.*, by God’s favour—I am a partaker of food that His Word sets apart for me, why should I be evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

I am to consider my weak brother, in order that I may not in anywise stumble him: at the same time he is not permitted to judge my liberty by the standard of his conscience.

This is brought out in Rom. xiv. 3, “Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth.” The temptation of the strong one is to *despise* the weak. On the other hand, the temptation of the weak one is to *judge* the strong. Both are alike wrong.

Verse 31 is the summing up of the whole, “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

Thus, we are to consider God in all we do, and, because it is His will, we should also consider the effect our actions will have on others. In seeking not our own, we shall find the secret of a happy life. The more we seek to please and glory in self, the more sorrow and dissatisfaction shall we reap.

Let all we do be such as befits the calling of a son of God—who ought to walk as a king in all the conscious dignity of being a joint-heir with Christ in His coming kingdom and glory.

Then come the words, “Give none offence, neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God.”

To give offence signifies in scripture to give no occasion of stumbling, see Ps. cxix. 165, “Great peace

have they which love Thy law, and they shall have no stumbling blocks"—this is the marginal reading, and gives the sense of the text, "Nothing shall offend them."

If this meant to give no offence in the ordinary modern sense of the word, then, none ever gave such offence as the Lord Jesus!

He, indeed, gave offence to many, but He was no stumbling block, except to unbelief and disobedience. Paul preached "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block;" and, again, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." But this was only to the unbelieving—to those who would not have the light.

But have not our ways, our levity, our selfishness, our want of likeness to Christ, often proved a stumbling block to both saved and unsaved? May God give us grace to consider our ways; to see that whatever we do it is to the glory of God, and then we may be certain it will be no stumbling block to others.

SECOND THESSALONIANS.

THIS epistle was written to saints who were passing through "tribulation"—and that of a very severe nature.

Paul had taught them as to "the great tribulation," ending with the coming of the Lord in judgment (see chapter ii. 5, and connect verses 3 and 4 and chapter i. 7-9).

Being themselves in trouble, they had concluded the day of the Lord was "present," and instead of looking at their troubles in the light of His coming, "and our gathering together unto Him," they were reading all the troubles as if this were not so.

Now, in these last days, when things are shaping on all hands for the revealing of the "lawless one," are we not in danger of losing sight of our blessed hope—"our gathering together unto Him?"

When the tendency is to try to unravel prophecy in the light of every-day telegrams, oh, what a rest to our souls to say, "But I shall be gathered unto Him very soon" in company with all the ransomed.

This is just how Paul deals with the Thessalonians—he seeks to take their eyes off the turmoil and fix them on "our gathering together unto Him."

In effect this epistle clearly teaches that ere the

day of the Lord (Amos v.) begins, they will be with Him—out of it all.

Note well his words, chapter i. 7, "And to you who are afflicted rest with us." That surely is just the same thought he gives in Hebrews x. 35-37. "Cast not away, therefore, your boldness" (Heb. x. 35). Why? "For ye have need of patience" (and you can only get it at the mercy seat, Heb. iv. 14-16). And why had they need of patience? That, "doing the will of God, they might receive the promise."

And what was the promise? John xiv. 1-3 tells us, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also;" and in Heb. x. 37 the Holy Spirit says, "Yet a very little while, He that cometh, shall come, and shall not tarry" (R.V.).

Paul, in Thessalonians, says, "Rest with us"—all will be put right when He comes; you will be like Himself, for He shall be marvelled at in all them that believe (2 Thess. i. 10). And when is that to be? Clearly when verse 7 of chapter i. is fulfilled—that is, when the Lord is revealed, manifested to the world, and His saints with Him; for there is no deliverance to a groaning earth till the manifestation or revealing of the sons of God (Romans viii. 19.)

Now, we are not yet manifested—the world sees His own in many a poor, weak body, and even cold garret; but the moment we see Him, we shall be like Him. This is what we wait for (Phil. iii. 20, 21); and just as He, after His resurrection, appeared to none but His own, but had happy little family gatherings, so, ere He is manifested to the world, and we with Him, there will be our "gathering together unto Him" (chapter ii. 1).

That seems to us the force of 2 Thess. ii. 1, "The coming of the Lord" (according to His promise), and "our gathering together unto Him." Why does Paul beseech them by this? Is it not once and for all to dispel from their minds the thought that the man of sin, the Anti-christ, would ever have the opportunity of harming them? In other words, that they would never pass through the great tribulation spoken of in Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

No, no! dear child of God, Paul's words are "only there is One that restraineth now, until He be taken out of the way, and then shall the lawless one" be revealed (chapter ii. 7-8, R.V.).

This seems to point to the Holy Spirit dwelling in

believers now, and when He is withdrawn, there will be no restraint upon the lawless.

Now, since the Church is the habitation of the Holy Spirit, it follows, the Church is taken away *ere Anti-christ is revealed*, and, consequently, will not pass through the time spoken of in Matt. xxiv. 21, 22. Thus, Paul, in this epistle, follows his Master in John xiv 1, 2, by stilling their fears, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me"—*trust Me*.

While all the *waiting time* is to be employed in patiently doing His will, "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ" (chapter iii. 5).

Thus, being in the tribulation (Coloss. i. 24), and kingdom (Coloss. i. 13), and patience which are in Jesus (R.V., Rev. i. 9). *He* is our pattern. And what a pattern! The Father's welcome, "Sit thou at My right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool"—*as a command*, has been patiently waited for over 1800 years. And what has He been *doing*? Doing, as on earth, His Father's will.

This is our pattern, and this explains Paul's remarks on the disorderly in chapter iii., as we read it in connection with Titus iii. 8, 14.

May the prayer in chapter i. 11, 12 be fully answered in each of us, that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming. T. C.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.



HE presence on earth of the Holy Spirit in person is a truth of immense importance, which children of God need constantly to bear in mind. He is not Himself the object of faith, but the Son of whom He testifies, yet is He entitled to equal honour (Acts v. 2-9).

When God the Son was here, to disown Him as the sent of the Father was to dishonour the Father; and may we not say, assuredly, that to offer an indignity to the Spirit now, is also to dishonour both the Father and the Son, from whom He has come (John xiv. 16 and xv. 26). This the unrepentent do when they resist Him, and Christians are liable to offend through ignorance, unbelief, or unwatchfulness. The following brief remarks with reference to some scriptures bearing on the subject in various aspects, may conduce to a further consideration of this weighty

truth, to the glory of God and the blessing of His dear people:—

1st. *The Holy Spirit in relation to the World*.—He is here as a divine witness to convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John xvi); and those who persistently resist are shut up to everlasting condemnation (Acts vii. 51, compare Matt. xii. 31, 32).

2nd. *In relation to the Individual Believer*.—To each one who obeys the Gospel the Holy Spirit is given (Acts v. 32). On the part of God He is the "seal," whilst He is to the recipient the "earnest" of glory to come (Eph. i. 13, 14); the human body He makes His temple where He condescends to dwell, holding possession for the Lord of that which is His by right of costly purchase (1 Cor. vi. 19); and He is there to control (Rom. viii. 13), to teach (John xiv. 26), to comfort (John xv. 26), to intercede for (Rom. viii. 26), to guide (Rom. viii. 14), and to glorify by conforming morally to the likeness of Christ now (2 Cor. iii. 18); and when the Lord comes He shall quicken the mortal body itself, and fashion it like unto the body of His glory (Rom. viii. 11 and Phil. iii. 21).

To know this blessed truth is the first essential, then experimentally to realize it (see Eph. i. 17-21 and iii. 16-20). In order to this there must needs be the subject mind, the acceptance in simple faith of the truth as revealed in Scripture, and heart-obedience to it, remembering the exhortation, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30); and this latter may easily be done by giving place to the flesh in self-pleasing, rather than unreservedly yielding to the Spirit's precious leading and control (Gal. v. 16-18).

3rd. *In relation to the Saints Collectively*.—The truth in this connection demands especial attention, owing to the fact that many children of God appear not merely ignorant of it, but also unconscious of their solemn responsibility in the matter. How much God is dishonoured through the self-will of His people, and how great the loss sustained by them through grieving and quenching the Spirit, who can estimate?

Each individual quickened by the Spirit is united to the Lord above (1 Cor. vi. 17), and also to every fellow-saint below—"For by one Spirit are all baptized into one body," of which the Lord in heaven is Head (Eph. i. 22 and 1 Cor. xii. 13); the body thus formed and indwelt by the Spirit is said to be the temple of

God on earth (1 Cor. iii. 16-17); and in the early chapters of the Acts we find, for our instruction and encouragement, how the Holy Spirit at the first sought to effect this, and with such blessed results. "Believers were the more added to the Lord—multitudes both of men and women" (Acts v. 14); and all that believed were together" (Acts ii. 41-44). A separated company they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, &c." Again and again were they filled with the Holy Spirit—they spoke the Word of God with boldness—were all of one heart and of one soul—great grace was upon them all (Acts iv. 31-34); and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied and were edified (Acts ix. 31).

True, we find ourselves in different circumstances, believers and unbelievers have become intermingled in what may be called *the World-Church*; which, still claiming to be the Church of Christ, and assuming His name, practically disowns His authority, and all who believe are no longer together. But the purpose of God has not changed in any wise. Nor has the relation of the Lord to His members, or the presence, power, and functions of the Spirit, or the Apostolic doctrine; consequently, the responsibilities of Christians remain to this day as at the commencement of the dispensation.

The Spirit (if yielded to) now, as at the first, will gather together children of God unto the same one and only centre, Jesus Christ as Lord; this, of course, will involve a separation from all that is contrary to God, not merely from that which by profession is of the world, but, also, from that which, whilst professing the name of Christ, is yet of the world (see 2 Cor. iv. 17, 2 Tim. ii. 20-22 and iii. 1-5); to such a company, however few or feeble, will apply the precious pledge of the Lord (Matt. xviii. 20); as also the principles of truth taught in the epistles—for instance, 1st Corinthians and Ephesians, which, inasmuch as they are intended for the Church as a whole (1 Cor. i. 2 and Eph. i. 1), are designed alike for all Christians in every place until the present purpose of God is accomplished; and, further, the truth of the presence of the Lord in their midst, may not be confined to one occasion, but whenever children of God are gathered *under certain conditions*, whether for the purpose of breaking the bread, or for prayer, or for matter of discipline, or for mutual edification, faith

can count upon the fulfilment of the Lord's engagement and consequent power and blessing.

If this, then, is indeed the present purpose of the Spirit in pursuance of the Lord's desire for His people, is not the sin of man in seeking to withstand Him, by substituting an order of his own, very presumptuous? (compare 1 Kings xii. 26-33); and, alas! that it should be said, but so it is, many of the Lord's own people allow themselves to be made consenting parties to His dishonour, where His authority as Son over His own house is set aside. the traditions and teaching of men taking the place of the Word of God, and where the Spirit is quenched, being bound under human restraints.

That this is so in the worldly religious systems can scarcely be denied, and it is defended on the ground, either that the truth of 1st Corinthians does not now apply, or else that it is no longer possible to act in obedience to it. Surely it well becomes all who love the Lord to examine themselves in this matter. On the part of those who still profess to obey the truth, there is great cause to watch, for the same tendency to turn aside is in all; and of this may we not see evidence in the desire now becoming so alarmingly prevalent for man-presidency and pre-arrangement when Christians come together for worship, prayer, and mutual edification on other occasions than that to break bread? Not that the writer would ignore a stated ministry, or special gifts, neither does he question the competency of one or more on his or their responsibility to invite Christians together and address them, nor would he deny that there may be special occasions when the consideration of some one general truth might be desirable; but what he does view with alarm is the adoption of a principle which practically sets man in the place of God; for it is the prerogative of the Lord alone to preside over His people gathered together in dependence upon Him, to control His own servants, and to direct ministry in the liberty and power of the Spirit so as to meet the varied condition and need as known to Him who searcheth hearts, and it is His people's privilege to wait only upon Him. But how can this be in cases where all has been arranged days and weeks beforehand? Servants of the Lord are no longer free to be used of the Lord as He will—they must either speak on this particular subject named or not at all. The Spirit is quenched, and that most probably in order that the flesh may have license.

The Apostle Paul, when addressing saints, had regard to their condition; he always sought their profit, even though he might not please (see 2 Cor. xii. 19 and Gal. i. 18). How often with us is it quite the opposite of this, as though to please all was more the object than to edify, even though at the risk of wounding the pride of carnal Christians.

Lastly. *In relation to the Work of the Lord.*—The Holy Spirit is the only power for effective service (compare John xiv. 12, Luke xxiv. 49, Acts i. 8 and iv. 31-33, also 1 Cor. ii. 3-5), and He is the infallible guide in the path (Acts xiii. 4 and xvi. 6, 7). It is the sense of this which keeps the servant subject and dependent. Where this is wanting, work will become but self-pleasing or activity in the flesh, even though apparent good may be effected. The instrument the Spirit uses to convict and convert the sinner, to teach and comfort the saint, and to gather together unto the Lord, is *the truth* (see 1 Thes. i. 5 and ii. 11-14). Now-a-days one of the most striking features in connection with work for the Lord is the use of carnal means and accompaniments, as if such were needed to help the Spirit or to make His work more effective.

It is well to watch against the beginnings of departure. It may appear very trivial and have much to be said in favour of it, but we know well that God is infinitely wise, and His way is always the best, and departure from that, however slight, if not repented of, is certain to lead further and further in a wrong direction; and who can say where it may end? We have solemn warning of this (1 Tim. i. 19). Some putting away faith and a good conscience, of the faith made shipwreck—and the word to the faithful in a day like this, when letting go, is the rule rather than the exception, is *hold fast*. “Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. i. 13). “Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. iii. 11). R. S.

WHERE YOU ARE.—You have a work to do for Christ *where you are*. Are you on a sick bed? Still you have your work to do there as much as the highest servant of Christ in the world. The smallest twinkling star is as much a servant of God as the mid-day sun. Only live for Christ where you are.

R. M'C.

ON HEBREWS VI.



THE Epistle to the Hebrews was evidently written to a community of Believers, which had once been in a better and more zealous spiritual state than when this was written to them. See chap. v. 12 (specially the words “are become such, &c.”); also chap. x. 32-34.

Also, as is usually the case when a Church of Christ declines in faith and zeal, *mere professors* had been easily and largely received amongst them. Perhaps very largely, and these things are just the condition of the Church at Jerusalem, as shown when Paul went up to Jerusalem, in Acts xxi. 20. There James, the Lord’s brother, says to Paul, “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands (myriads) of *Jews* there are that *believe*, and they are all zealous of *the law*.”

What a sad mingling. They *believe* (*i.e.*, in Jesus), and they are zealous of *the law*, and it was the ceremonial law, as in Leviticus, of which they were zealous, for it is to gratify the Judaizing mind of these “many myriads” that James wishes Paul to join in the *vow* of four of their number, and shave his head. What a contrast is this to the spiritual state of that same Pentecostal Church in Acts ii. 41-47, where it was only of Jesus and His love that they were zealous, and all were looking for HIM from heaven.

It is this contrast between the state of the Jerusalem Church in Acts xxi. and Acts ii. that agrees only too well with the Epistle to the Hebrews. And the “creeping in unawares” (Jude) of this multitude of mere professors accounts for the different warning passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews which caution the real believers—“the holy brethren” here written to—against the dulling and deadening effect on them of the presence of such ones, and against the tie of outward visible Church fellowship with them. Chap. vi. 1-8, is one of these cautions.

True believers—God’s own children—are here urged to go on to “perfection” (*i.e.*, to Jesus, now in *resurrection*) as their portion, and not to be always occupied with *only* those elementary things, which are the “beginning of Christ,” for if they do nothing but repeat and repeat the “Word of the beginning of Christ,” though this will keep them in touch with the unregenerate, it will not advance themselves as believers on to the full age and the strong meat

character of the Christian, to which they should be aiming and advancing.

Besides, this constant repetition of the A B C of divine things will not be found of any avail to this mass of *mere professors*. On the contrary, they already show their dislike of even these elementary truths of God's grace, and they will ultimately "fall away" from them, and will openly apostatize from even the profession of Christ altogether, and will prove to be soil that "beareth thorns and briers, whose end is to be burned."

You might as well consent to stultify intelligent and capable scholars in a school by never telling them anything but A B C, in the hope of awakening mental faculty in all the rest of the class, who, alas! were idiots, and could not be taught!

Or the farmer might as well insist on each year ploughing over the whole of his farm, two-thirds of which was bog, and could give him no corn in return, and thereby lessen his time and strength for the one-third, which was "good ground," and would have well repaid better tillage.

Meantime this mistaken work of teaching the idiots equally with the capable, and of ploughing each year even the bog soil, gives to the mere professor every OUTSIDE mark of being also "good ground," though they are not such. Hence it is said of them in verses 4 and 5 that they were "once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the coming age," and yet they "fall away," and they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, &c.

In fact, they are such as Balaam, Gehazi, and King Saul, before Christ; and as Judas Iscariot and Simon Magus in New Testament, and all the five *outward marks* here given of them are capable of being applied to the specious and Christian-LIKE professor.

Such an one may be "enlightened" intellectually; may have "tasted" the heavenly gift in receiving the Word "with joy" for a time; may be "partaker of the Holy Ghost," as Judas and others were in the Holy Ghost's *miraculous* endowments, and may have tasted the good Word of God, with an outward relish of it, and the powers of the coming age, *i.e.*, miracles (see Hebrews ii. 4); and relapsing back from all this there is nothing left by which to renew them. Alas! how LIKE the false can be to the true!

Why, then, says the Apostle, should you still wait

for such ones? But it has always been a temptation to God's people to wish to hold large audiences, and to lay themselves out, and also to shape their spiritual labours to this end. Our Master began with twelve, and left off with eleven; but God said of Him, "Behold my Servant, in whom my soul delighteth."

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.



THE idea, commonly entertained, that there is but one general Judgment in the future is quite erroneous. The Judgments of God are always associated with His dispensational dealings; and as these vary exceedingly, it follows that there should be separate judgments suited to the nature of the testimony God is pleased to give at any epoch of the world's history. So far as we have been able to gather the mind of the Lord, from the revelation of His will in the Sacred Scriptures, the following brief summary includes all the various judgments yet future:—*

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| I. The Judgment Seat of Christ, | { | 1 Cor. iii. 13- 5. |
| | | 2 Cor. v. 10. |
| II. The Destruction of Antichrist, the False Prophet, and those who take the mark of the Beast, | { | Rev. xix. 17-21. |
| | | 2 Thess. i. 7-10. |
| | | 2 " ii. 8-20. |
| III. A Remnant of Israel judged and purged, | { | Mal. iii. 1-4. |
| | | Matt. xxv. 14-30. |
| IV. The Judgment of Living Nations by Christ as King at Jerusalem, | { | Matt. xxv. 30-46. |
| | | Zech. xiv. 16-21. |
| | | Rev. xxi. 24. |
| V. Satan cast into Bottomless Pit during the Millennium, | { | Rev. xx. 1, 2. |
| VI. Gog and Magog, headed by Satan, after Millennium destroyed by Fire, | { | Rev. xx. 8, 9. |
| | | Rev. xx. 11-15. |
| VII. The Great White Throne, | { | Rom. ii. 3-16. |
| | | John v. 28, 29. |

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God," but that which He has revealed is meant by Him to be understood by us, not to satisfy a mere craving for knowledge, but that His dear children, the objects of

* These do not include the judgments of God connected with the Vials of Wrath, Babylon, &c., between the Rapture of the Church and Christ's appearing to earth.

His changeless love, may have a reverent acquaintance with their Father's intentions. This principle underlies the expression, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do," for all acquisitions of knowledge in the things of God, spiritually acquired, will make us increasingly humble and godly.

We have enumerated these judgments, not to deal with them in this paper, but to show that they are all distinct and may not be mixed up. In considering "The Judgment Seat of Christ" there are three introductory facts to be kept in mind.

- 1st. We who believe in Jesus are already saved from Hell. To us, in God's infinite mercy, and through the atonement of Christ, *there is no condemnation* (Rom. viii. 1). We "shall not come into judgment" (John v. 24).
- 2nd. Where there is carelessness in walk among God's children, and unconfessed sin upon the conscience, God deals as a Father with His children, afflicting them in their circumstances and bodies, "*that they should not be condemned with the world*" (1 Cor. xi. 30-32).
- 3rd. Ere the judgment seat of Christ is set up, the sleeping saints will be raised in glory and the living saints changed into immortality. This rightly apprehended precludes any thought of the ultimate damnation of any of the saints. We stand before Christ then, in the righteousness of God, and conformed to the image of His son, through grace (1 Cor. xv. 43, Phil. iii. 20, 21).

Having called attention to those points, we desire now to proceed to the consideration of the subject itself—

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST;

and, in order to simplify the matter, so that the youngest Christian may intelligently follow, it may not be undesirable to place the various points under the form of questions.

1st. **WHEN WILL IT TAKE PLACE?**—1 Cor. iv. 5 answers this: It is to follow the coming of the Lord for His saints. That the blessed Master is really coming for His people is abundantly clear from the Word of God. We are waiting for Him, and, as the R. V. sweetly puts it (Heb. x. 37), it is only "*a very little while*" and we shall see Him, and be with Him ever-

more. He joys in us; we joy in Him. He waits patiently for the consummation of His happiness in having His blood-bought bride beside Him, and grace enables us to reciprocate the yearnings of His heart.

"He and I, in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share;
Mine to be for ever with Him,
His, that I am there."

But while there is a joy in prospect of His return, there should also be a wholesome and godly fear lest as *servants*, He cannot then approve us.

2nd. **WHAT IS IT FOR?** (read 1 Cor. iii. 13-15, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10)—As to our standing in Christ, we are accepted in the Beloved, *i.e.*, God looks at us through the merits and glorious person of His well-beloved Son (Eph. i. 6). In this chapter, however, the principle is different, it is the Christian so acting on earth that Christ, as the Lord and Master, may be able righteously to approve of his service. The judgment-seat of Christ will be minutely retrospective, and will, in its great review, survey all our pilgrim pathway from the time of our conversion. It will be a judgment of works—*acts done in our mortal bodies*; works implying possession of life; and, therefore, the question will be the quality and sincerity of work done. The thief on the Cross was saved, and as they hastened his death by breaking his legs they but quickened his soul's entry into the promised paradise. His salvation was secured through Jesus' blood, but he had no opportunities for service; he will share eternal glory as a trophy of the Saviour's grace, but he will have no works after his conversion to judge or reward.

This may illustrate what it is to be saved, so as by fire; for, alas! many of us, after years of conversion, may be as barren of rewards as he was of opportunities to secure them. In Rev. xix. we have the saints depicted as an army coming to earth with Christ, and the very analogy suggests a difference of rank and position. This follows the judgment seat of Christ, as to time, and indicates that various degrees of dignity and honour are assigned to the faithful among God's people. To be next to Jesus, in the kingdom, is not a position to be obtained by asking for it, but it is to be the honoured place given to the one for whom it is prepared by the Father, and this principle holds good throughout.

F. A. B.

(To be Continued.)

POINTLESS PREACHING.

This may be compared to a letter put into the Post Office without a direction. It is addressed to nobody, and if a hundred people were to read it, not one of them would think himself concerned in the matter. Such preaching, whatever excellences it may have, lacks the chief requisite it should possess. It is like a sword, which has a polished blade, a jewelled hilt, and a gorgeous scabbard, and yet will not cut, and therefore as to real use, is no sword. The truth properly presented *has an edge*, it pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

J. N.

THOUGHTS FOR PREACHERS.

I.

"Generally speaking, the more attention the style of a preacher attracts, the less it deserves."

II.

"Preaching the Word, and preaching about the Word, are very different things."

III.

"The preaching of foolishness" must not be mistaken for the "foolishness of preaching."

IV.

"The preacher who is proud of his preaching should be ashamed of himself."

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 CCXXVI.

Is the individual who cuts himself off from the assembly in the same position as one who has righteously been "put away"?

REPLY.

One person may cease coming to the assembly on very different grounds from another. Some have been known to withdraw from indifference; some from having a defiled conscience; some from the fear that their presence might be a stumbling-block to others. To lay down a rule applicable to all such cases is clearly impossible.

The responsibility rests with the assembly—and specially with those who have shepherd-hearts and do oversight work—to deal with each one with discretion, discerning their true spiritual condition, and seeking their restoration in a godly way.

If no such evil in practice or doctrine as warrants *putting away* has been committed, then clearly the person who has withdrawn from the assembly ought not to be regarded as in the same position as one righteously excommunicated.

But, if sin has been committed that warrants excommunication, then the mere fact of the guilty person *withdrawing* does not relieve the assembly from the responsibility of formally declaring the person to be no longer in fellowship. Every case of manifested evil of such a nature is a call to the whole assembly

to humiliation, self-judgment, and clearing of itself from all complicity with the sin (see 2 Cor. vii. 9-11).

QUESTION CCXXVII.

What is the meaning of the words in Romans viii. 24, "We are saved by hope"?

REPLY.

In the Revised Version the rendering is, "for by hope were we saved;" or, perhaps more clearly yet in the margin of Mr. Newbury's English-Greek New Testament, "to the hope," or "in hope."

The meaning evidently is, that when, by the grace of God, we were saved, it was with a view to *future* blessing.

It was to this aspect of the Christian calling the apostle referred when he said, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." Apparently, as far as the world could see, the man who confessed that he was *saved* was subject to sorrows, infirmities, reproaches, persecutions, beyond all others! But it was in the element of *hope* that he was saved. Faith made the things hoped for substantial, present realities to his soul (see Heb. xi. 1 Revised Version, margin); nevertheless, that which, as a ship's anchor, held him steadfast, was all unseen and future as to its full possession and enjoyment. "What a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?"

REDEMPTION.

BY ALEXANDER STEWART.

(From a Hearer's Report.)

URN with me in the consideration of our subject to Eph. i. 7.—“In whom we have redemption through His blood;” also verses 13, 14—“In whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

Of course, one obvious distinction between the 7th and 14th verses is, that the redemption of the 7th verse we have already, and that of the 14th we shall know when the Lord comes. There is another great distinction: the one is redemption by *purchase*, and the other redemption by *power*. In the 7th verse it is “redemption through His blood,” and those who have it are the purchase of that precious blood shed on the cross; in the 14th verse it is redemption by power—by the right hand of the Lord Jesus when He comes in His glory.

There is another reference to this redemption in chap. iv. 30—“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” That is the same period referred to in verse 14, chap. i.—the redemption yet to come.

God has redeemed us by blood, and sealed us by the Holy Spirit. We are not only separated by the blood sprinkled upon us, but by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and we are left here thus sanctified, until the Lord Jesus comes back to redeem by power that which He has purchased by blood.

A Christian is a man whose sins are forgiven through the precious blood of Christ, sealed by the Holy Ghost, and waiting for the Lord Jesus to come and assert His title to him.

Like a man who has a certain number of bales of goods, which he puts into a warehouse, and sets his seal upon them; they are distinct from the rest by the seal. He goes away for a time, and when he returns he takes the goods that were sealed, out of their place, and appropriates them to himself.

Having pointed out the distinction between the redemption *we have* and the redemption *we hope for*, I would ask you to turn to Heb. ii. 14, 15. The Hebrew word for Redeemer, which occurs so often in the Old Testament scriptures, is rendered “Kinsman,”

“Redeemer,” and “Avenger.” These are three blessed things, and they are all connected with the Lord Jesus Christ. There are a number of precious doctrines in the word of God, but they are all connected with the Lord Jesus. We might lecture all night on redemption, but such a doctrine is put this way, “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and *redemption*” (1 Cor. i. 30). Just as you might trace the rays of the sun and find that they all converge in that sun which shines in the heavens, so every blessed truth of God is centred in and flows from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We often lose a great deal of profit to our souls by getting into a false way of dealing with the word of God, becoming doctrinally skilful, instead of looking into the scriptures for Christ, seeking thereby to know Him, and to have our hearts influenced by His grace. The Bible is like that alabaster box that the woman referred to in Luke vii. had. The box was beautiful to look upon, but it contained something precious within; and when it was broken, the odour flowed out. So it is with the word of God. The unconverted may say that Isaiah is grand, and that *the poetry of the Psalms is magnificent, but the converted man alone knows the power of the word of God.* May God, as we read the scriptures, so open our eyes that we may behold the Lord Jesus Christ in all His glorious person unfolded in them. He is our Redeemer, and He stands to us in these three characters—Kinsman, Redeemer, and Avenger. What is a Kinsman? He is a blood relation. Your brother is your kinsman. What is a Redeemer? One who buys back an article, or perhaps a man or woman, as in the case of a slave. He purchases such from the holder, and thereby redeems it. What is an Avenger? A person who, because of wrong done, exacts retribution from the person who did it. It seems to me that in Heb. ii. these three characters of the Lord Jesus are set forth.

“Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” That is to say, that becoming incarnate He became kinsman to man. We need to be very careful here. We are not united to Him before the cross, but as risen from the dead. Nevertheless, our whole salvation is based upon this, that the Lord Jesus took true flesh and blood of the Virgin. Every-

thing is based upon the fact that He was as truly man as any in this room, although apart from sin. He became a man, and therefore the kinsman of man. If He enters into the relationship, He must take the responsibility of that relationship. If he becomes kinsman, he must also become redeemer and avenger.

"That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death," &c. That is the character of the Lord Jesus as the avenger of those who had suffered wrong at the hand of the enemy.

"And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." That is the redemption which the Lord Jesus Christ, as kinsman, wrought for us. As the kinsman He took flesh and blood; as the redeemer "He delivers those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage;" and as the avenger He destroys him that had the power of death. He does not merely bring back from the hand of the enemy, but He smites to eternal destruction that enemy himself.

These things are abundantly illustrated in the Old Testament scriptures. In order to show this, did time permit, we might read the whole book of Ruth; but there is a passage in the book of Leviticus to which we might turn, chap. xxv. 23-47—If in Israel a man's possession passed away from him it was his kinsman that should buy it back; or the man himself might be sold into slavery, and it was his kinsman who had the right to buy him back. But observe that in this case the person who acquired the land had a righteous claim to it, and the person who acquired the man had a righteous claim to him; and the kinsman in paying the price satisfied a debt that was due. How does that apply to you and me? That by our sins and for our sins the law had a righteous claim upon us. We had forfeited everything; and when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross to redeem us, He was meeting a just claim. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." How? By "being made a curse for us." Just as this kinsman in Israel was meeting a righteous claim by buying the land, so Jesus was meeting a righteous claim when He died for us on the cross.

We see how Abraham, in Genesis xiv., did the part of a kinsman to Lot. This is the chapter which tells of the battle of four kings with five, and you will remember how Lot got involved in the result of that

fight. When Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants and pursued after the victors, and brought back Lot and his goods. Just as in Leviticus xxv., the goods were brought back, and the man was brought back, only in this case they were not redeemed from the hand of a righteous claimant, but from the hand of the enemy.

God remembers that, however righteously we may have merited the sentence passed upon us, there is one who has to render a terrible account. The Lord Jesus not only brings us back from the hand of the enemy, but will for ever break his power.

In connection with that, turn to Romans viii. 19-23—"for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God, for the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (R.V.). We must remember that when Adam fell he did not fall alone, but he dragged down along with him the inheritance that God had given him. God said, "cursed is the ground for thy sake," &c. Man fell, and the inheritance fell with him. What is the relation of that to the redemption in Christ Jesus? Just this. Not only have we—who, through grace, have believed on Him—that redemption, not only shall our bodies be made like unto His glorious body, but the groaning creation itself will be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

What a basis God has laid in the Cross for the working out of His purposes!—the redemption of man, the deliverance of this groaning creation, and by-and-by, a new heaven and a new earth. Why all that? Because Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross. This will not always be a groaning and travailing creation. In nature the travail pains precede the birth. When the Lord comes this groaning creation will be born into the liberty of the glory.

Just as we saw from Leviticus xxv., the man has his possessions restored to him, and in Genesis, Lot has his goods brought back to him, so when the Lord

comes, not only man but the creation will share in the deliverance and joy of redemption.

The miracles of the Lord Jesus recorded in Luke viii. are connected with our subject. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down into the kingdom that Satan had taken, and everywhere He saw the marks of Satan's hand. As the mighty Redeemer He came right down into Satan's domain, and set at liberty them that were bruised by Satan. Every miracle He did was a redemptive act, and all combined with one voice to say—"The Redeemer, the Redeemer has come!" He was only giving samples and foreshadowings of what He is going to do upon a more glorious scale when He comes again.

Turn now to Luke viii., where we have four miracles recorded which illustrate this point.

There was a storm on the Lake of Galilee, and those in the little ship were in jeopardy. There were no storms in Paradise. When God placed Adam in innocence there, he was not exposed to such dangers. All those things are results of the fall; and they show that Satan has got possession of man's inheritance. While the Lord was sleeping peacefully in that tempest-tossed vessel, they came to Him and awoke Him, saying—"Master, Master, we perish." Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm. The Son of God with the anointed eyes, clear seeing in the Holy Ghost, as He looked through and behind the scene, perceived that the mover and raiser of that storm in the lake was no other than the same who once brought ruin and desolation on the sons and daughters of Job. We talk of second causes, but Jesus looked straight through and saw the enemy of God and man moving in this matter; therefore, when He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, He recognised the agent who was behind them. The sphere of that miracle was not man, but man's inheritance; it was not wrought on the body or mind of man, but on this material creation.

The next miracle that we read of in Luke viii. is the casting out of the demons out of the Gaderene demoniac. He came in contact with the Son of God, and you know the result; his whole condition is reversed. He who had his dwelling among the tombs is found sitting at the feet of Jesus. Formerly he had been naked, but now he is clothed. His reason had been dethroned, but now he is in his right mind.

He had been delivered from a power that had possession of his reason. The Lord Jesus gave back to that man his right and sound mind. It was a redemptive act, and the sphere of it was the mind of the man.

The next case that is brought under our notice is the woman having an issue of blood. It is no longer an affection of the mind, but a grievous affection of the body. She touches the Lord Jesus by faith, and immediately she is healed.

The next miracle that we read of here is the raising from the dead of the daughter of Jairus. He spake the word, she arose, and was restored to her parents.

We have thus recorded in this chapter four redemptive acts of the Lord Jesus. We see Him here as the mighty Redeemer, passing in triumph through the kingdom of Satan, all being subject to His mighty power.

Turn now to Numbers xxxv. This is the chapter where we read of the cities of refuge which were appointed for the man-slayer.

"They shall be unto you cities for refuge." Seven times that word "avenger" occurs; it is the same as redeemer. He who took vengeance was the kinsman, or redeemer. Jesus on the cross met the righteous claims of God. The power of the Lord Jesus will yet deliver us, although in one sense we are delivered from the power of darkness. But, more than that, the Lord Jesus has yet to take vengeance on the enemy. You remember the first promise made in the garden of Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. iii. 15.) That is to say, that vengeance is to be taken upon the serpent. Read Romans xvi. 20, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," because the redeemed are associated with the Redeemer.

Turn to 1st Cor. xv. 54, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying, death is swallowed up in victory." Also 24-26 verse, "Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

You notice that the bruising of the head is by the heel. In all that, the Lord Jesus is fulfilling the promise made in Eden, not only in delivering the captives of Satan, but in taking vengeance upon Satan

himself, and He is bound thus to be the avenger, because He became the kinsman.

This is a very practical subject. Let us turn to one or two Scriptures which shew this.

Look with me at Titus ii. 13, 14, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He does not only redeem us from the curse of the law, and from all iniquity, He does more than that. He purifies unto Himself a peculiar people. Holland is, to a large extent, a redeemed country, because the land of that country is taken from the sea by the industry and energy of man. What are they doing with that which they have reclaimed and redeemed from the sea? They are cultivating it. See how much food they send over to our country, taken from this land which has been redeemed from these waste salt waters of the sea, and then made to blossom and smile as the result of their industry. "Ye are God's husbandry."

"Christ gave Himself for us" to this end, "that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," such as visiting the sick, relieving the oppressed, as well as preaching the Gospel—the whole range of good works that the Lord did when on the earth. What do these words mean—"purify," "zealous"? Clean and warm. That is what is wanted. God wants clean and warm Christians. It is only giving to the Lord the purchase of His blood. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body." When the Lord comes again He will take the purchase of His blood to the place that He is preparing for them. There will be no credit to that blessed crowd redeemed to God by the blood of Christ.

To all these things there is a practical side. It is not only that He by His blood has purified a people to Himself, but they are to purify themselves. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" (2nd Cor. vii. 1). We are exhorted to "redeem the time" because the days are evil. That is buying back the opportunities given to us for serving and glorifying God.

Beloved, what is the Lord Jesus to you and to me?

Kinsman, very man, Redeemer; He who has taken us out of the hand of the enemy. How blessed to be God's redeemed! Listen to what He says, "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "Behold, I and the children that thou hast given Me." "Those that Thou hast given Me I have kept, and none of them is lost."

You will grant me that the subject we have been considering is a great and blessed one.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART III.



CHAPTER ii. 1-9, "My son if thou wilt receive my words and hide (treasure up) my commandments with thee." If thou diligently seek after my wisdom, even as a man seeketh treasures, "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." From the Lord alone it comes, and He revealeth what true wisdom is (Job xxxviii. 36, Job xxviii. 12-28), but only to the upright (verse 7). He keeps His people in just ways, guarding from transgressions of justice. He preserveth the way of His saints (Ps. xci. 11, Hebrews, vii. 25, Jude 24).

Verse 10-22. This understanding of "righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path," is the true way of preservation from the dangers now spoken of, namely, from evil or designing men and women. To deliver from the ensnaring reasonings of those who would argue that natural inclinations may be lawfully followed, and who thus lead those not kept by God's grace, into all manner of evil, as Satan seduced Eve. Also to deliver from the ensnarements of strange women, *i.e.*, those who have departed from the right way, who would tempt to evil, forsaking their allegiance to their own husbands (the guides of their youth) and forgetting the covenant of God, *i.e.*, the marriage covenant. Such unholy intercourse leads to death, for it pollutes the mind, deadens all moral sensibility, paralyses the conscience, and thus none that yield thereto return again to the right way, nor take hold of the paths of life. Fornication and adultery are soul-destroying sins.

The upright and true of heart shall have long life, according to God's promise; but all transgressors will meet their reward.

CHAPTER III.

Verse 1-12. God's laws, loved by us, tend to life and inward peace; mercy and truth, loved as one's companions, cause favour and good success before God and man. For the following of all God's moral precepts, convince men, by their beneficial effects, of their value, whereas the ways of men are seen to be of ill success in the end. Trust in the Lord wholly, lean not on thine own understanding for guidance. Refer to Him; take His revealed will as direction, and the issue will show thee the wisdom of so doing. Be not wise in thine own eyes, nor think because things seem to promise well, by taking a contrary course to the Word of the Lord, that thou wilt prosper. Such conduct would soon wither thee up. But the Lord's way shall be inward health and vigour.

Render to the Lord His dues in full measure of all thy substance, and of all He gives thee, whether thou hast only a pittance. So shalt thou be enlarged and greatly enriched.

My son, despise not the chastening, the faithful true training of the Lord, nor loathe his correction. He does it in tenderest love, as a father unto his loved child.

Verse 13-26. True wisdom (*i.e.*, the understanding of God, and appreciation of His ways) is invaluable. It ensureth every blessing to its possessor. In wisdom hath God created everything; in wisdom doth He sustain all things—the rain (the result of the "broken up" depths) and the dew show His knowledge. Keep then by His wisdom, and listen to no other advice. So shalt thou be comforted and preserved. No fear shall be upon thee; thou shalt sleep in perfect peace. Thou needest not be afraid of sudden fear, nor of any sudden judgment on the wicked, "For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken."

Verse 27. "Withhold not good." See Luke x., the priest and the Levite turning aside from the wounded man, whom they surely should have helped.

Verse 28. Make no vain excuses when it lies in thy power now to aid; such conduct is displeasing to the Lord, and robs thee of blessing.

Verse 29. "Devise not evil against thy neighbour," for "thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*."

Verse 30. "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men."

Verse 31-32. Envy not the prosperity of the oppres-

sor, nor seek to obtain thy desires by choosing ways like his, for *the Lord* blesseth His people and takes good care of them, but His anger and wrath are upon the ungodly. See Psalm xxxvii 1-11 verses, and Psalm lxxiii.

Verse 33-35. God's blessing only rests on what is godly. He cannot bless evil-doers, though Christ was sent to reclaim them. God resisteth the proud, and visits their sin upon them, but He giveth grace to the lowly. For the lowly, professing and following wisdom, shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the portion of fools, who shall wake to "shame and everlasting contempt."

CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1-9. This faithful warning from the fathers to the children teaches the necessity of godly parents impressing on the minds of their children God's ways and will, as absolutely perfect, and as the sole preservative from evil, for the love and honour paid to God's wisdom will prove a better legacy than any earthly means. "Get wisdom" at any cost, and with all thy getting get understanding, *i.e.*, get fresh wisdom to use thy wisdom obtained. See Prov. xvi. 16, "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding rather than choice silver." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Verse 10-27. "Length of days is in his right hand." The way of wisdom is perfect. There is no straitened way for the feet; thou may'st run even therein and not stumble. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein."

Take fast hold of God's instruction—it is very life. Enter not into the path, and go not in the way, of evil men, avoid it.

Remember Lot's failure by going to Sodom (Gen. xiii. 10-13).

Dinah's disgrace by curiosity to see the daughters of the land (Gen. xxxiv).

Peter's failure when warming himself at the fire with the high priest's servants (Matt. xxvi. 34, 35).

Take note also how Joseph escaped the wiles of Potiphar's wife (Gen. xxxix. 9).

How Daniel and his friends, passing by the common idolatry, are preserved of God. "Flee also from the youthful lusts." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The wicked are happiest when seducing others to

wickedness. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, &c.," increasing continually in its clear shining. Light followed leads to light. "I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

But "the way of the wicked is as darkness." "They know not at what they stumble." When a wicked man acts, he can only do so according to his own (Satan-led) wisdom; therefore he stumbles and falls, not in the least foreseeing the sure results of his ways.

Remember Korah and his company, vainly imagining no one could gainsay their demands; how soon destroyed! (Numbers xvi. 16-19). Ahab (1st Kings xvi. 31) allowed Baal worship; Jeroboam and the calves at Dan and Bethel; the evils brought on Israel by these things.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence." It is the fountain of action. Guard most carefully every inlet and outlet thereto. God looks to the motive of the heart, and judges accordingly. See how Job sought to do this (Job xxxi. 7), and David (Psalm cxix. 113, Psalm xc. 12), and Paul (1st Cor. ix. 27).

How Eve failed (Gen. iii.), and the wayside hearers (Luke viii. 12), "Let thine eyes look right on," i.e., avoid all crookedness of action or policy, and keep thine eyes fixed on God's ways.

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." "Ponder the path of thy feet;" weigh deliberately; inspect carefully every step. "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies" (Psalms cxix. 59, Psalms xxxix. 1). Note, as examples, Abraham's action (Gen. xxiv. 1-9), and Eliezer's in obeying him. Ruth's deliberate choice and its consequences (Ruth i. 16-18). The excellent woman (Prov. xxxi.). Daniel's carefulness in this (Dan. i. 8, and vi. 3, 4).

He who well weighs his steps in life, and takes God's way in truth, shall find his ways established, for if a man take heed to God's ways, God will establish the ways of that man. "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left," but ever listen to that voice which says, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Is. xxx. 21, see also Is. l. 10). "Remove thy foot from evil;" avoid it, pass not by it; flee from it. "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe!" Avoid every appearance of evil, abhorring it, and cleaving to the good.

A. O. M.

"THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION."

By G. STABLES.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON PSALM XXIII.



HERE are six instances in the Old Testament where the word Jehovah is specially connected with certain aspects of Shepherd grace, and it greatly enhances the riches of this short Psalm to find them all, expressed or implied, within its narrow limits of six verses. If Psalm xxii. tells of the *dying love* of the Good Shepherd (John x. 11), and Psalm xxiv. bespeaks the *coming glory* of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter v. 4), Psalm xxiii., coming in between, may well declare, as it does, the *resurrection power* of the Great Shepherd (Heb. xiii. 20). Its first and last verses distinctly connect it with the Psalms preceding and following, and the three together make a golden chain of everlasting love, which some one has aptly termed "The Cross, the Crook, and the Crown."

The theme of this Psalm, then, is the practical expression of *the power of His resurrection* with reference to a believer's wilderness walk, and it will be seen that, under the constant, unailing grace and guidance of the Great Shepherd, it covers the whole journey from the Cross to the glory.

Verse 1, setting forth Divine provision and resources, leads our thoughts to the first of those instances referred to, namely—Jehovah-jireh ("the Lord will provide"—Gen. xxii. 14), with its double significance of death and resurrection, thus forming a link with Psalm xxii. The three days' journey—the altar, the substitute, Abram's faith in God, who quickeneth the dead (Heb. xi. 19: Rom. iv. 17), the memorial of Jehovah's provision to be "*seen* in the mount of the Lord" (Heb. xi. 19)—all these proclaim the power of Him who died and rose again, and readily bring to memory and heart Rom. viii. 32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also *freely give us all things?*" "I shall not want." How can I, when all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him who is my Shepherd! But lest this happy conclusion should tend to foster idleness of spirit, under the oft-mistaken idea called "leaving everything to the Lord," it is necessary to keep in mind that every truth has two sides, and none more practically so than this. Otherwise there would be no starving

sheep. Three things are required of those who are His sheep—hearing, doing, and following (John x. 27 and xv. 14). Like the anointing of Aaron or the cleansed leper, ear, hand, and foot need not only to be purged with blood, but separated for Him by the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit. When this is so, there will be no listening for guidance to the world's suggestions of expediency, no doing what He hath not bidden, no following where He leadeth not.

Verse 2.—“He maketh me to lie down, &c.” The “place of trouble” (Josh. vii. 26) becomes a “place for the herds to lie down in” (Isa. lxxv. 10). Here may be discerned the peace-speaking voice of Jehovah-Shalom (the Lord is peace—Judg. vi. 24). Gideon's fears, in common with Manoah (chap. xiii. 22), and Zachariah (Luke i. 12), when conscious that he was face to face with the messenger of Jehovah, were doubtless founded on that solemn declaration to Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 20), together with a profound sense of *unfitness by nature* for the presence of the Lord. This must ever be so when the natural conscience is sufficiently awakened to realise the holy character and claims of that God with whom we have to do. Nor is it confined to such, for the heart of a believer is never so fertile in doubts and fears as when he is occupied with himself, his feelings, or even his attainments, in a vain search for abiding peace. In the miraculously manifested acceptance of Gideon's sacrifice, and in the place where his altar stood (Abiezer means “father of help”), are further foreshadowings of resurrection power in virtue of the peace that was made by the blood of the Cross. This seems to be the force of Heb. xiii. 20-21. That is to say, until self, both as regards *salvation* and *service*, is seen in its proper character and place through the “one sacrifice,” and the God of peace *learned as such*, there can be no “doing” of His will so as to be “well-pleasing” to Him. Let us think for a moment what this peace-making involved. What trouble! What stormy billows of Divine wrath engulfed Him, the waters coming in even unto His soul! When the daughter of Samaria affirmed that the well was deep, she little knew what depths the One to whom she spake was, by Himself, about to fathom ere living water could flow for a dying world. But having made peace, He is the first to declare it. Yea, more, He is our peace, and the soul that has practically

learned this can truly say, “He leadeth me beside the waters of rest.”

'Tis everlasting peace!
Sure as *Jehovah's name*;
'Tis stable as His steadfast throne,
For evermore the same.

Verse 3.—“He restoreth (or *turneth back*) my soul.” Here is the grace of Jehovah-rophi (“the Lord that *healeth thee*”—Ex. xv. 26). The first moments of wilderness experience are occupied in raising a song of triumph for salvation accomplished; but very soon stern realities involved in the new order of things make themselves painfully manifest, and the people who were to have gone “three days' journey into the desert to sacrifice unto the Lord” (Ex. v. 3) are found, at the end of that time, not sacrificing, but murmuring. Why was this? Oh, says one, “the water was bitter; circumstances were against them!” There was nothing against them but their own deceitful hearts, and a strange forgetfulness of the great deliverance just wrought on their behalf. Its very magnitude would almost seem to have made them think that the *same power* could not be reckoned upon for the detail of their daily life and needs. How often is this, in measure, true of us? Eternal interests are left in His keeping without a moment's misgiving, and the broad principle of “deliverance from this present evil world” (Gal. i. 4) by the Cross of Christ is fully admitted in them. But is there not sometimes the desire, more or less active, just to keep in touch with a few of the world's landmarks—its society, fashions, politics, amusements, and so forth—lest we should be *too isolated for usefulness*, or, in spite of Pharaoh's clever device, get too far away? What does it mean but failure to bring “the power of His resurrection” to bear on all these things, and so make manifest their utter impotency to help either the children of God or His work. Circumstances are often blamed when the heart is astray, and the well-springs of earth not only fail to satisfy, but hinder that which alone can do so. Hence come unrest, discontent, and running hither and thither, or it may be apathy and comparative indifference about the things of God. There may even be much cleansing of heart and washing of hands, but unless it leads, as it ought, *into the sanctuary*, it will surely be in vain (Psalm lxxiii. 13-17 and xxiv. 3-4). What a mercy to know that, when our hearts get divided or drawn

away by these things, He *turns us back* by the power of His grace, and, if willing to be guided by Him, He will lead us in the path of righteousness for His name's sake. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is *set on high*" (Prov. xviii. 10, R.V.).

Verse 4.—"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." A comparison of Psalm cvii. 10-14 with Is. ix. 2 and Jer. ii. 6 precludes the thought of this being the falling asleep of a believer. Indeed, the last named verse clearly points to the wilderness as being, at all events, one aspect of it; and we may safely assume that the expression indicates generally a place where the *sustenance* of life is *not native*, or where the believer is surrounded with what, to him, speaks only of death. A calm spirit of conscious safety and protection through the realised presence, power, and grace of the Lord pervades this verse, carrying our thoughts almost intuitively to the typical scene of Ex. xvii. 15, Jehovah-nissi ("the Lord is my *banner*"). It is worthy of note that the altar, in this instance, received its name, not from Joshua's victory, but from Jehovah's declaration that henceforth *the battle was His*. That conflict was materially affected by signs of *weakness on the Mount*; but now the only source of weakness is in our slowness to take advantage of the *power on the Mount*—in other words, to occupy the vantage ground which the Cross of Christ has given us over the flesh. We are fain to do open battle with rebel passions and lusts, raising them to the dignity of acknowledged foes, instead of hunting them down like robbers and murderers, and dragging them to the Cross, where their power is gone (Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5). The true meaning of the Jehovah-nissi altar is, therefore, a token, not of endless conflict, but of accomplished victory and complete prostration of the foe—God's estimate of the flesh as seen at the Cross. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee (they have *no other fear*), that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Psalm lx. 4), or "that they may flee from before the bow" (see R.V. and compare 1 Tim. vi. 11). The Lord give us grace to display this banner in answer to temptations from whatever source; then the rod and staff of His power and grace, with His own precious promise, "I am with you," will be comfort indeed.

Verse 5.—"Thou preparest a table." The three-fold blessing recorded in this verse will yet be the rich

portion of restored Israel, when Jehovah "sets shepherds over them who shall feed them" (Jer. xxiii. 4). Then He will be known to them as Jehovah-tsidkenu ("the Lord our *righteousness*"), and Jerusalem will bear *the same name* (see chap. xxiii. 6, and chap. xxxiii. 16). But it is with the present application of this title that we have now to do. A reference to the word will show that the double application, to Him and to us, is true now as then. Compare 1 Cor. i. 30 with 2 Cor. v. 21. Observe in both these cases it is *in Christ Jesus*. The glory of grace is that it not only saves but justifies, or makes righteous *in Him*. Hence the special force of Eph. i. 6, "the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted *in the beloved*." Since all the promises of God *in Him* are yea, and *in Him* amen," what grand reasons have believers in Jesus to "glorify God for His mercy" in spreading such a table! "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity (unsullied purity or spotlessness—the root word for sincerity means *tested by the sun's rays*) and truth" (1 Cor. v. 7-8). This feast begins with the return from the far country, but he who searches for the end thereof will labour in vain. How precious, then, in this light, are the words "Thou *preparest*" (present tense)! Do we sometimes sing,

"What foes and snares surround me?"

Here is an impregnable refuge. "Thou *preparest*," or, according to 1 Peter ii. 3, 4, "If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. *To whom coming*"—it is not "having once come," but "*coming*"—the continual provision of His grace when the flesh pots of this Egypt world would beguile our hearts. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger" (John vi. 35).

"Thou *anointest* my head." Priestly separation to God is indicated in this, as well as the privilege of feeding upon the consecrated bread, which was seven days before the Lord (Lev. xxiv. 9.), speaking to us, in type, of Him in whom Jehovah ever finds perfect satisfaction or infinite delight. What grace upon grace is here! Can it be wondered at that the cup should not be able to retain such royal measure? Alas! how humiliating the thought that it is not always full, much less running over! Specially humbling is it that the joyful privilege of unitedly telling our Father, on the first day of the week, how full it is,

frequently "becomes a confession of its emptiness. "But He giveth more grace."

There is something peculiarly tender and precious, yet suggestive of sadness, in the opening words of verse 6. "Surely goodness and *mercy* shall follow me." *Precious*, because He who knows all has made abundant provision. *Sad*, in the sense in which it reveals our constant liability to failure and coldness of heart, notwithstanding such mighty love. Mercy must ever tell of our need, just as grace ever contemplates His fulness, and in the midst of all shines out the blessed hope—so glad, and sure, and clear—"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

In Ezek. xlvi. 35 we learn that the presence of the Lord in her midst will give to Jerusalem a new name—Jehovah-shammah ("the Lord is *there*")—and although the earthly city is not our hope, surely the very name must recall some faith-strengthening, soul-reviving words about Him who is there, even now, for us.

The first to enter in resurrection power, His presence yonder is the strongest pledge that everlasting love could give of our being there also. "If I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER IX.

(Continued from page 86.)



ROPERLY speaking, chapters ix. and x. are one, and should not be separated at all. It is the way of the Spirit in this Gospel to narrate some miracle, and then to append some important discourse thereupon. There are seven representative men that pass before us—Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the sick son of the nobleman of Capernaum, the paralytic, the woman taken in adultery, the blind man, and Lazarus; each are in due order, man religious, man irreligious, man sick, infirm, sunken in sin, blind, dead. But, with all the wretchedness of every one, the Son of Man is competent to deal, and does.

Here we have the picture deepening: it is man blind, and Christ giving sight to the blind. With the Jews it was a more wonderful thing than we can realise to give sight to one blind, still more to one

born blind. No case have we in the Old Testament of one blind being made to see. So in Matthew ix., at the beginning, and in chapter xxii. at the end of this work, when He accepts His rejection as King, we hear of His healing the blind. Here it is a man born blind; but not here, as in Matthew, Christ healing as Son of David, so as He will when He comes down to earth, and is blessing the Jews with earthly blessing, but it is as Son of God; and not the blind man here imploring aid, but the Son of God giving mercy unasked and unexpected. So, as it is here the case of the sinner blind, then chapter xi. goes on to show a deeper stage still in human misery, and points to the sinner *dead*.

Observe a difference between Christ Himself here and any other man. Every other man gets light from God, whether moral or physical: Jesus could say, "I am the Light." "Whenever I am in the world I am the Light of the world." Nothing is revealed here of Christ in judgment except indirectly. When He says, "I am the Light," it is for the blind. True, He says in verse 39, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." But that was not His purpose in coming: when He comes, according as He is accepted of man or not, grace or judgment follows.

Observe, also, that He proceeds in His miracle in a very singular way, other than in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. He puts clay upon the man's eyes. With what object? We have seen, in chapters v., vi., and viii., that the action of the Lord Jesus before His discourse was symbolic; and so is it, I think, here. Symbolic of what? Undoubtedly the Lord Jesus, by taking human form, made it more difficult naturally for man to see Him as Son of God,—that in human flesh, and apparelled as man, it was the Light, the Life that stood there! Just so would clay upon the eyes rather have increased the blindness. But see the beautiful antidote, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." And please particularly note the Holy Ghost has translated the word here, evidently calling for our attention. How was it that He was in the flesh, if He was God and the Son of God? He was *sent*; and greater is He that sends than He that was sent. When the Lord Jesus became man He took the form

of a servant, and the lower place. Seeing that He was sent, then how great He must have been to have been sent right from God Himself!

Then the evangelist, before he speaks of Christ's further dealings with the man, narrates two investigations consequent upon the miracle wrought upon him: first, by the people; secondly, by the Pharisees, the religious. The first ask him three proper questions, to each of which he gives matter-of-fact replies. Then, in hesitation how to account for the miracle, they take a most unfortunate step—they bring him to the Pharisees. The ungodly world is sure to apply to the religious world. Then the Pharisees ask seven questions, one after the other. It says it was the Sabbath day when Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man: the Holy Ghost seems to give a hint as to what might be expected to follow. Sticklers for the Sabbath, but with no heart for Christ; that was ever the way. The Pharisees ask him how he received his sight; then commune with themselves. "Therefore," said some of the Pharisees, "This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day." The man had not said He was of God, so that their consciences must have been disturbing them. They then ask the man, "What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes?" that is, to decide what they were called upon to settle; shelving the difficulty. Fourthly, they ask—what they should have asked at first—of the parents, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?" Then their remark is, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." A crafty remark, trying to get the man to revile his Lord. His answer is, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Thus, by referring to the fact of his present seeing, he becomes a type of the Church of God, what each in fellowship can also truly say. Part of the commission of the Lord to Paul was "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." When Paul quotes these words he omits "that they may receive forgiveness of sins," because those Ephesian saints had got that. Now our blinded eyes are waking; we are not seeing fully yet, but are beginning to wake up to the grandeur of God, to the desperate condition

in which we were, to the realities of the eternal future. "The darkness is passing, and the true light now shineth."

Then follows their sixth remark, "What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes?" (verse 26); and then their seventh, "Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is." And so, because they did not know, they supposed that none of their followers should know. Thus were the guides involuntarily confessing that they were blind. Then the man remarks on the wonder that he should have been healed, and that they should not know how; and they cast him out. And where did they cast him out to? On to Christ's bosom. Oh, what a blessed excommunication!

Now here we have a striking specimen of God's ways, in that the Lord Jesus, before He gave more light, allowed the man to act up to the light he had. But, cast out by the Pharisees, in what blessedness he finds himself. So with Stephen; the stones that came upon his head were amply compensated for by the heavens opened, and the sight of Jesus at the right hand of God. Though some are content to be, as they think, inside the veil and inside the camp. Then when He has found him, how gracious are the Lord's dealings with him. He asks him a question: he had been asked ten or eleven; and now the Lord asks him one—a helping question, not a stumbling one. He had a spark of faith, and by revealing His name the Lord would help this. He appears to have been a remarkable man for tranquility of character. Very slow, but very sure; a slow, gradual apprehension of the greatness of the Being that had called him. Feeling the difficulty, as he was sure to do, if really called in the depth of his spirit; pulled hither and thither, only he will not give up Christ. I admire the man's question, and his carefulness before he replies. Evidently Christ was not displeased. "He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." But I would particularly call attention to the fact that Jesus did not ask if he believed on the Son of Man, but on the Son of God. To others He was Son of Man. Do you see how, in the depth of His consciousness, Jesus ever knew who He was?

And He did not care for the multitude knowing it; but He let it out as an infinite favour to a poor blind beggar, a glimpse of His deepest, highest glory. He would rather have one follower, true at all costs, than fifty or a hundred half-hearted. I remind you of a similar case. When was Jesus spoken of by the Apostles as the Son of God? Not until Acts ix. Christ had been continually preached as Servant of God; but then, when thoroughly rejected by Stephen's murder, Paul is raised up, seeing Him in glory, and straightway preaches Him in the Synagogue as Son of God. Rejected in a lower He retires into a higher glory; and then it does not matter to Him one jot whether they be counsellors of state or poor blind beggars: the glory of the Lord can turn a poor blind beggar into a son of God.

It is a striking fact how carefully Scripture is written with reference to this question as to His being Son of God. It occurs much more rarely in Paul's Epistles than one might think, as if to impress us with its solitary grandeur, everything else resting upon it. So that, that being told us, everything is seen to be secured. It occurs, I think, only four times, unless we add Hebrews, when it is eight. Once at the beginning of Romans, because Romans is about the Gospel, and it is put there as if the whole Gospel rested upon Jesus as Son of God. It occurs again in 2 Corinthians, the Epistle for the last day; and how comforting to us in these last days, when everything is upside down, to know that the Son of God is not yea and nay. So in Galatians Paul says, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Then once more, in Ephesians iv., as if that were the one great, grand climax of all our knowledge, to know the Son of God. In fact, John tells us it is so. In his Epistles it occurs seven times. There are many other equivalent expressions; but what I mean is, that the Holy Ghost esteems it so choice a thought that He puts it as the foundation, the topstone, the pinnacle of all. And that ought to enhance to us the greatness of the privilege that we, too, should be called "sons of God."

So we see how that Christ unveiled His highest glory to a poor blind beggar. And then, lastly, he worships. And where did he worship? In the light. The others were judged; but there was one poor blind beggar worshipping in the light. The man

occupied with the Lord, with opened eyes gazing upon the Lord; and the others judged. They kept all their religion, and took it to hell with them. The Lord had come with His whole heart set on saving them; but if they would have their religiousness, then He must judge them, and harden them in their unbelief. — (*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

(Continued from page 95.)



OW should this influence us in our relationships with other believers? This is a very important question, and embraces two different spheres of life.

- (1). It should affect us in our Church life (see 1 Cor. iii. and iv.).

Indeed as to actual date this is the first apostolic reference to this tribunal. The germs of strife and open division were at Corinth, some saying "I of Paul," "I of Cephas," &c. Now this sectarian position can only be explained by the assumption that these Corinthian schismatics had judged the merits or supposed demerits of these various servants of God, and had to their own satisfaction settled the degree of eminence each one was entitled to. In this they, who could neither see the heart or determine motives, were arrogating to themselves the prerogative of Christ at His Judgment Seat.

There, with infinite penetration and incomparable wisdom, He who is able to read the heart and examine motives will finally settle the question as to whether Paul, Cephas, or Apollos was most deserving of pre-eminence and reward, and in that assurance Paul could rest contented. Hence he says, "with me it is a very small matter to be judged of you *or of man's day* (margin); yea, I judge not mine ownself." As though he would say "there is nothing in your judgment of me and my labours that either elates or depresses me, you cannot see the heart, and as for myself I am so conscious of failure and weakness that I do not attempt to form an estimate of my own service or worth. He that judgeth me is the Lord."

And then follows the exhortation, "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come." "You have been calling yourselves after this name and that, do it

no more; we are only the servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." In 1 Cor. iii. we have the assembly at Corinth compared to a temple which can be "defiled" or "marred," and it is there said that the one who mars it shall be marred himself. Clearly this refers, not to the heavenly aspect of things, but to its earthly representation, while the marring of sect makers and dividers implies their being stripped of all service and anticipations of reward and being left at the Judgment Seat of Christ with the bare possession of eternal life alone. Sectarianism dethrones Christ and ignores to a great extent the offices of the Holy Spirit, while it glorifies man. We need to get into God's thoughts as to sin. Too often we think of sin only as it affects *men and manners*, and while we censure in no small degree these sins which in their nature chiefly affect humanity, we are apt to forget there are ecclesiastical sins which are terribly heinous in God's sight in that they are directed against the authority of His beloved Son and His most gracious Spirit. It is illegal and punishable to attempt to take the life of one of the Queen's subjects, but let the attempt be made upon the life of the Queen herself, and, because of what she is and who she is, the crime becomes far more serious, and the punishment vastly different. Let us seek grace so to act in relation to the Lord's will that we may have His approval by and by. This requires patient continuing in well doing. Zeal is requisite, but it must be guided by knowledge. Peter showed plenty of courage when he cut off the high priest's servant's ear, especially so if we remember the latter was one of multitudes who had swords and staves; and yet it was wasted energy, and called forth the Lord's interference to undo the folly of His servant. This is akin to "beating the air," an effort very tiring to the one who attempts it, but productive of nothing.

(2). It should also regulate our conduct in the social and domestic relationships of God's people (Romans xiv.).

In this age God has not laid down specific laws for the observance of His people as touching days, meats, and drinks. This is a dispensation not of literals to portray spiritual things, as was the past age; we are therefore called to liberty of conscience and action. The Apostle James tells us we are to be judged by the law of liberty. True Christian charity will, in matters of this sort, while conserving this freedom,

seek to avoid stumbling others who are weak. But this word "weak" is liable to be mis-used. Those are truly weak who, beholding another do a certain thing (with faith), follow that example (without faith) and violate their conscience. We have known those who "strain at a gnat (*i.e.*, put drink through muslin or something of the kind, lest there should be a tiny insect in it) and swallow a camel," carp and criticise at the smallest things behind one's back, and excuse themselves on the ground of being "weak" believers.

Whether we eat or drink, we should do so to the glory of God, and let us not forget that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we must give account, even as touching matters of this nature. Let us therefore not judge one another any more, but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way.

F. A. B.

(To be concluded in our next.)

LOVE DIVINE!

LOVE Divine! 'neath human feature
Thou Thy glory hast concealed.
Love! to me, a fallen creature,
Thou Thy fulness hast revealed.
Love! I give myself to Thee,
Thine to be eternally.

Love! before my soul's creation
Thou my ransom didst decree.
Love! to purchase my salvation
Thou becam'st a man like me.
Love! I give myself to Thee,
Thine to be eternally.

Love! the shameless cross enduring,
Thou Thyself to death didst give.
Love! eternal bliss securing,
Thou dost bid the sinner live.
Love! I give myself to Thee,
Thine to be eternally.

Love! at once both strength and being,
Word and Spirit, Truth and Light.
Love! since I, for refuge fleeing,
Find deliverance through Thy might.
Love! I give myself to Thee,
Thine to be eternally.

Love! Thine easy yoke upon me,
All my powers shall cheerful own.
Love! the sovereign grace which won me
Reigneth in my heart along.
Love! I give myself to Thee,
Thine to be eternally.

CHRONICLES.

CHAPS. i. and ii.



THE two books of Chronicles, like the books of Samuel and Kings, were anciently one, and were called the "Words of Days"—that is journals or annals. The appellation of Chronicles was given to these books by Jerome. Ezra is regarded as the writer and compiler, and they appear to have been written about the time of the restoration to Jerusalem (1 Chron. iii. 19-24, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, 22). It will be seen that the second book closes with verse 21 of the last chapter; verses 22 and 23 belong to the book of Ezra. The first nine chapters of 1 Chron. contain genealogies of the Children of Israel, showing their descent from Adam to the time of Ezra. Verse 35 of chapter ix. commences the narrative, giving us the ruin of the house of Saul and the establishment of the house of David, and the Kingdom until its downfall. It will be seen that specially the history of Judah and not Israel characterises this book. The books of Kings are thought by some to give the heavenly side of things; the books of Chronicles the earthly. Hence the grandeur of Solomon is more fully described, and millennial glory of the latter days of Israel's *earthly* blessing is shadowed forth when they will need the "Veil" and the "Altar."

The second book of Chronicles may be divided into two parts. Part I., comprising chapters i. to ix. Part II., the history of the Kingdom of Judah after the separation of the ten tribes, chapters x. to xxxvi., ending at verse 21.

Chapters i. to ix. give us Solomon's peaceful reign over all Israel; his sacrifice at Gibeon; his prayer for wisdom; his wealth, and the building and furnishing of the temple; his dedicatory prayer; God answering by fire, consuming the burnt-offering and the sacrifice, and the glory of the Lord so filling the house that the priests could not enter, but fell upon their faces to the ground and worshipped and praised the Lord; the visit of the Queen of Sheba, and all the kings of the earth seeking his presence; then his death. Hence we have in these chapters a foreshadowing of millennial glory and blessing in store for the people of Israel in the latter days. The Queen of Sheba, the king of Tyre, and the kings of the earth, representing the Gentile glory of the

world, contributing to, and supplying all that will be needed to the exaltation and magnifying of the true Solomon of latter-day glory. The name of the two pillars before the temple are significant—Jachin (He shall establish), Boaz (in Him is strength), chap. iii. 17.

Chapters x. to xii. give us the separation of the ten tribes—Rehoboam representing the House of Judah, Jereboam the House of Israel—in fulfilment of the prophecy of Ahijah, the Shilonite, to Jereboam the son of Nebat (1 Kings xi. 31). The stoning of Hadoram by Israel (see Matt. xxiii. 35-37, Acts vii. 58, John x. 31-33). The priests, the Levites, and such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers. Illustrative of those who separate from a false and mixed worship unto the name and person of the Lord Jesus Christ (John iv. 24, Col. ii. 18-23). The priests and the Levites *first* led the way; example is better than precept (Acts xx. 7, 17-38). Rehoboam and Judah only walked in the way of David and Solomon three years after this brief period of success and prosperity and when they were *established* they forsook the law of the Lord; nevertheless, when they humbled and judged themselves, the Lord gave them deliverance, but this deliverance was only partial, and only for a little while. Spiritual prosperity and vain confidence in the flesh, and high attainments of knowledge have led to the downfall, degradation, and dishonour of many an assembly and of many an individual believer; and if the repentance and confession is not *real*, the restoration will only be partial, and of short duration. "A double heart gives an unfixed heart, and if the seeking of the Lord be not real, the serving of the Lord cannot be real" (1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 2 Cor. vii. 7-12).

Chapter xiii.—Abijah and Judah: illustrative of the faithful who *adhere* to the Word of the Lord, and *keep* the charge of the Lord, and *trust* in the name of the Lord—hence spiritual prosperity and victory (Rev. iii. 7-12). Jereboam and Israel: illustrative of a national unscriptural religion and worship, which fosters a false priesthood and service—hence spiritual decline and defeat (Col. ii. 1-19, Rev. iii. 11).

S. B.

(To be Continued.)

THE WARNING IN THE TENTH OF HEBREWS.

VERSE 26. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

The whole of this chapter is occupied with the subject of sacrifice. The peace-sacrifice of the old covenant with the gift-offerings, burnt-offerings, and sin-offerings are passed in review (verse 8; see Lev. i., ii., iii., and iv.), only to declare how powerless they were to bring the worshipper into communion with God, to secure the acceptance of his person, or to atone for his sin.

At last Christ appears on the scene. "Then said He, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!'" He taketh away the first (namely, *the law*) that He may establish the second (that is, *THE WILL OF GOD*).

He has offered Himself without spot to God, and His offering has been accepted. Its unspeakable value is borne witness to by His own proclamation (verses 5-10); by the act of God in making Him to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty (verses 11-14); and by the new covenant language in which the Holy Spirit now speaks (verses 15-18).

The will of God has been established on a sure basis. In virtue of this will the true worshipper has now sanctification (verse 10) and perfection (verse 14).

Because of the grand truth that sins and iniquities are remitted on the ground of the never-to-be-repeated offering, the Christian reader of the epistle has a threefold exhortation addressed to him (verses 19-25). His *faith* is instructed in the value to us-ward of the blood and priesthood of the Lord Jesus. His *hope* is cheered by the remembrance of the faithfulness of the One who has promised. His *love* is stirred up by constant contact with his brethren in the assembly which he frequents.

The warning we are about to consider is the corollary of the exhortation of verse 25, inasmuch as forsaking the assembly over which the Lord presides is often the first step towards publicly forsaking the Lord Himself. Let it never be forgotten that Christ, as Son over the house of God, has the right not only to our individual loyalty, but also to our collective obedience. If an assembly has once been scripturally gathered together, we are only warranted in withdrawing from it when it has become no longer possible to *carry out collectively the will of God in its fellowship*. Then separation from it becomes a duty—not because *we* cannot have *our way*, but because separation unto God necessitates it.

We never like to hear Christians boasting that they enjoy more of the Lord's presence in their private chamber than in the public gathering of the saints. If private communion is real and not fictitious, it will fit us to be blessed and to be a blessing when we come into the gathering.

The "assembling of ourselves together" (verse 25) here and now is intended to be a foretaste of "our gathering together" (2 Thess. ii. 1) in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ by and by. The same Greek word is used in the two cases, and is never again employed in the New Testament. And when

Christ comes, we shall not be "you in your small corner and I in mine," we shall be all together!

But in exact proportion as we realize in the fellowship of saints a foretaste of the coming glory, the false professor will find it a weariness to the flesh. They will go out from among us, for they are not of us.

The world will welcome its own back again. In Paul's day there was the temple to return to, and the priests and the altar—things that Christ had supplanted and God had set aside. In our own day they can have a counterfeit priesthood and soothing religious ceremonies, or they can go to the sages of this world, who will tell them that the Bible is a myth and the atonement a delusion. But their end is not yet. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The case of the apostate has already been looked at in chapter vi.; here the apostle takes it up a second time from another point of view. Let us consider the difference—

- (1). According to chapter vi. the renegade, having been made to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in the assembly of God, "falls away" into his former unbelief.
- (2). According to chapter x., "having received the knowledge of the truth" concerning the one and only sacrifice for sin, he "sins wilfully" in giving up this ground of confidence for something else.

Let no man deceive himself. The sacrifice offered once for all by Christ, and the consequent coming down of the Holy Spirit to take possession of and abide in the members of the Body of Christ, are the two fundamental truths of Christianity as distinguished from Christendom. To deny these truths publicly after having made profession of them, is to commit sin concerning which God does not hold out any prospect of pardon.

In the case before us, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," the apostate having turned away from the one and only sacrifice that is precious in the sight of God, it matters little whether he has gone back to cover himself with his self-righteousness and seek refuge in man's religion, or whether he has lost himself in the vain deceit of a philosophy which denies the need of an atonement; the Scripture brands him as an adversary of God, and as such he will be mercilessly punished.

The "reception" of judgment (verse 27) would be a more literal rendering of the original than the words "looking for" that we find in the Authorized Version, as there is no question here of the feelings or fears of the adversary. The teaching is rather that he has already received his judgment, and that the fiery indignation will fall upon him whether he fears it or not.

A. P. M.

(To be Continued.)

The Lord Jesus keeps none waiting. On the blessed resurrection morning, while it was yet dark, *He was alive*, and ready for the first needy one who would seek Him.

H. D.

SUMMER WORK AMONG THE VILLAGES



NCE again it is our happy privilege to invite the fellowship of brethren in Christ in the summer work among the villages, during the holidays. Some of our valued helpers of former years are now far sundered from us, and diligently serving the same Master in other fields. Dear Fred Arnot, who was with us in earlier years, is now in the heart of the Dark Continent, and two of our fellow-labourers of last summer—Peter Scott, of Liverpool, and Charles Swan, of Sunderland, are speeding on their way to join him, and will, we trust, ere this be read, have arrived at Benguella, on the West Coast of Africa. The need of that dark land was often the theme of conversation as they walked among the hills and dales of Cumberland, and it may be, that while serving in the humble sphere of visiting from door to door and from hamlet to hamlet *here*, they heard the Master's call to go forth *there*. One thing, at least, is certain; we must be "found faithful" in that which the Lord *has already* given us to do, before we can be entrusted with greater things; and the *one* talent must be diligently used before others are given us. We firmly believe that there are many young men whom God would send to these far off fields if they *first accustomed their hands to His service at home*, and showed that their

hearts were in it. Now, here is their opportunity, and now is their time to embrace it. It has been purposed that the more needy parts of *Lanarkshire* should form the field of labour for the present year, and notwithstanding that in many of the larger towns the Gospel is constantly preached, the need is great. Many villages, and many hamlets are thickly scattered over the east and south, where little or nothing has been done. And the people need to be visited in their houses everywhere, and personally dealt with on eternal things. *Saturday the 4th of July* will be a convenient time to begin work, and from that date onward as long as workers can remain. There is work of many kinds, and for various *gifts*. Visiting from door to door, posting texts on walls, speaking to the children, preaching in the open air, and *personally dealing with everybody that can be reached*. There is a small tent which could be used, and the new Bible carriage will be worked in connection as well. May the Lord Himself thrust out the workers, and provide things needful for the work. Those who desire to be helpers in the work, will please communicate with us as *early* as possible, giving probable time they may be able to spend, and date of their arrival. Any further particulars we shall be glad to supply. Communications to be addressed to John Ritchie, Braeside, Kilmarnock.

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 CCXXVIII.

Was John the Baptist the Elijah of the Book of Kings, or was he another person in the spirit and power of Elias?

REPLY.

Most certainly John the Baptist was not Elijah. The prophecy in Malachi iv. 5 is quite definite as to Elijah being sent to Israel before the day of the Lord with a special testimony to the nation, preparatory to the appearance of Messiah in judgment.

John the Baptist was "sent from God" on exactly such a mission. His testimony was toward Israel. It was a call to repentance, and it was preparatory to the presentation to Israel of their Messiah.

They were thus tested as to their readiness to receive the blessings of Messiah's reign. But it only proved them to be nationally a people unprepared to meet their God.

The Lord's words to Israel concerning John the Baptist were "If ye will receive it"—that is receive the kingdom in the person of Christ—"this is Elias which was for to come." There was no need that the fulfilment of promises of blessing to Israel should be postponed any longer—God was willing to grant *all*, there and then, provided they were willing to receive Christ. Had they done so, then the ministry of John would have fulfilled the same end as the yet future ministry of Elias is intended to accomplish.

But they treated John in the same spirit that they treated Elijah of the past, and will treat Elijah of the future. Therefore the Lord said, "Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed."

Evidently meaning by this that the ministry of

John having "been in the spirit and power of Elias" had tested and manifested the true character of the people exactly as if Elias himself had been sent.

The Witness for God was slain, and the nation cast off, though a remnant was saved according to the election of grace, and incorporated into "the body of Christ."

So, again, the Witness for God will be slain in the streets of Jerusalem, yet a remnant will be saved through grace who had no part in the national sin—see Rev. xi. 3-12.

QUESTION CCXXIX.

Acts xxiii. 10. Does the Lord as distinctly answer the questions of His people in these days, and, if so, in what way?

REPLY.

In verse 14 we read that Saul was specially chosen of God to "see that just One," and to "hear the voice of His mouth."

This is not yet the privilege of all saints, though it will be when Jesus comes. There is no doubt that Paul received special and peculiar communications concerning the mind and will of God, such as were not granted either then or now to others.

Nevertheless, there is the distinct promise "the meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way." "I will guide thee with Mine eye." "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness."

It is, therefore, quite evident that it is not the will of God that His children should be in darkness, and destitute of Divine guidance as to their path. On the contrary, the prayer of the apostle for the Colossian saints was that they might be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

This knowledge of the will of God must be obtained in the first instance from the Word of God. It is astonishing how many perplexing occasions, in which two courses are open, derive all their perplexity from our lack of moral perception. To one who is of quick understanding (or quick scented) in the fear of the Lord there would be distinctly apparent a *right* and a *wrong*, where to the duller perception there appeared no moral difference. It is by reason of use that the spiritual senses become thus exercised and expert in the discernment of good and evil.

It is this habitual application of the principles of

the Word of God practically to the circumstances of daily life that forms the most important element in guidance. And here it is also that we are so dependent upon the Spirit of God—for no mere natural intelligence or acuteness of perception can avail in this exercise. It is the Spirit's teaching alone that can enable us thus to *make use* of the Holy Scriptures.

There is also, subjectively, the condition of soul to which God has promised to impart His instruction—the *meek* will He guide.

When He says "I will guide thee with Mine eye," it implies that our eye is intently watching the glance of His eye. It is this yielded will and waiting spirit that is essential to real Divine intelligence as to the ways and will of God.

Guidance may sometimes be obtained by observing circumstances which faith ever delights to own as of Divine appointment. But here, again, the infallible test must be brought in, for circumstances may favour an evil heart of unbelief that is departing from the living God. It was a *favourable circumstance* that Jonah found a ship just sailing for Tarshish—but it did not afford safe guidance, for his eye was not on God and His Word.

Again, guidance is sometimes given by inward impressions. To one who is prayerfully waiting upon God for guidance, He often grants an inward conviction that a certain course is His will.

Here, also, the infallible test must be brought in, or else inward impressions, supposed to be from the Spirit of God, become a veritable Will-o'-the-Wisp to lead simple souls into quagmires.

Every impression that is from the Spirit of God will be necessarily in strict accordance with the Word of God which that same Spirit has indited.

It is painful and humiliating to hear God charged with being the author of speeches and actions that even babes in knowledge could discern to be contraventions of the Word of God.

We are complex beings, and the evil within is subtle in its workings. It becomes us to be slow to claim that we are led of the Spirit unless we can shew that we are so from the Word.

Nevertheless, many who have to confess that they were led like blind ones, step by step, can see on *looking back* that they had indeed been guided by a right way.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER i. 9, 10.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY J. R. C.

FOR they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;" our attitude here is "waiting"—but while waiting we are also called to "serve." In worshipping God according to His Word we "serve" Him. We also serve Him in bearing testimony in the Gospel. But we are too apt to confine our ideas of serving God to these two aspects of service, forgetting that God would have our whole life to be one continued service to Him in all things.

This will be clearly seen by turning to Col. iii. 22: "Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."

Here the principle is applied to the ordinary duties of servants (or, more correctly, "bond-servants") in their daily life. They might have hard and exacting masters to serve, and their work might be in itself but drudgery, yet they are here exhorted to look away beyond the earthly masters, and to do all exactly as if Christ had bidden them do it. Their recompense on earth for all their faithful, patient toil, may be poor and inadequate, but when the Master in Heaven comes He will reward it all if done for Him. This sheds new light upon the commonplace duties of ordinary lives. How work is thus elevated from the rank of drudgery to worship; and if this were seen and believed, and remembered, how differently might we behave under provocation and trial, or when called to suffer for righteousness sake. How blessed, in the midst of daily toil, to be able to look up into the face of our Lord and say: "Lord, I am serving Thee, therefore through Thy grace I will do this work well, and cheerfully, and heartily."

If serving *thus*, what power would accompany our

gospel testimony! The world would see that such a life bore the stamp of reality, and God would own and bless a testimony thus glorifying Him.

An aged and experienced servant of God was once asked, "Would you not teach young converts to *do something* for Christ?" "Oh, no," he replied; "I would teach them to do *everything* for Christ." This is the kind of serving that fitly accompanies waiting for a coming Lord.

Thus waiting is not idleness or inactivity; while we wait patiently and expectantly, we serve diligently and cheerfully.

Will you now accompany me in searching through the New Testament Scriptures to see how unvarying is their testimony as to the hope of the believer being the coming of the Lord.

We know that the great majority of Christians are not looking for His coming as an event that might possibly, or even probably, take place during their lifetime. They are looking for death, and have got their lair ready purchased in the cemetery; they have no other thought than that they shall die.

There are others who think that Christ will come before the Millennium; but they see so many prophecies to be fulfilled before that period can arrive, and so many changes have to take place first, that they do not expect for a moment that they could continue till the Lord comes. Such expect to die, and prepare for it. I now wish to enquire whether the New Testament affords any warrant for such a position.

I think we shall find not; but that, on the contrary, it calls our eye and heart away from death, and sets before us the blessed prospect and hope that Christ may come for His people at any moment.

Let us now read John xiii. 33-38, and xiv. 1-3.

Jesus is here speaking of going to the Father. A little while and He would be away from them, and they would not see Him. But He tells them that, although He would be in Heaven with the Father, they were to believe in Him just as they believe in God. "I am going to prepare a place for you; you cannot follow Me now; I am going by a path you cannot tread." His path to the Father was down through the waves and billows of judgment. He must needs go *alone*, for none could follow Him there. None could go down with Him through that deep, dark, painful path, of bearing the curse, enduring the

wrath, being "made sin for us." Alone He descended into the dark domain of death; but God, in whom He trusted, raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand. They could not follow Him there; but there is a time coming when all His own shall follow to that bright home, the Father's House.

Perhaps there was a deeper meaning in the words of Jesus.

There were three of the disciples whom Jesus separated from the rest on three different occasions—Peter, James, and John. First, to see His power in raising the daughter of Jairus; then to see His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration; and lastly, to see His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Of these, Peter and James suffered martyrdom; and as for John, the last glimpse we get of him is in the Isle of Patmos, banished for the testimony of Jesus.

The Lord may have referred to this fellowship of His sufferings when He said to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards;" but, whilst admitting that such a meeting may underlie the Lord's words, it is clear that He had rather in view the end than the way—the Father's house rather than the path by which it was to be reached.

Notice specially these words, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Whenever He says "I will come again," He refers to His personal return. When He says, in verse 23, "We will come unto him and make Our abode with him," the word "again" is omitted. This verse refers to His coming by His Spirit into the hearts of His people and making His presence a blessed reality; to them a joy and a comfort. But, when the word "again" comes in, that signifies His personal coming from heaven.

There is a marked difference between the hope of the Church and the hope of Israel. The hope of the Church is, that the Lord is coming to take us to Himself and to the prepared place in the Father's house. The hope of Israel is the coming of Christ, their Messiah, to destroy their foes and to establish them nationally in peace in their land.

Turn now to Heb. vi. 19-20. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Jesus is here spoken of as the One who has entered "within the veil." This takes us back to the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. The Epistle to the Hebrews is pre-

eminently the book of the sanctuary, all its illustrations being taken from the Old Testament records of the ordinances of the dwelling place of Jehovah. So when it says "within the veil" it refers to "the Holiest of all"—the inner sanctuary, where the symbol of Jehovah's presence dwelt, between the cherubim and over the mercy-seat. In Heb. ix. we read that all these things were the patterns of things in the heavens. The High Priest who once a year went into the presence of Jehovah, not without blood, was a type of the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, when He passed through the heavens to appear in the presence of God for us.

He went up into heaven through the veil of cloud that hid Him from view, right into the immediate presence of God, and took the seat that was His by right on the throne of God.

But, notice, He is here called "the Forerunner." The High Priest in Israel went once a year within the veil; but he never went as "forerunner," for none but himself was permitted to enter. But Jesus has entered into heaven as the Head and Forerunner of the redeemed family, the First of the holy and heavenly priesthood; the "many brethren" whom He is bringing to glory, bringing to the very same place in the Father's House that He has gone to occupy Himself.

Oh! what wondrous grace that you and I, poor sinners of the Gentiles, without a claim upon God, should be able to look forward, as a blessed certainty, to following Him into that place which He has gone to prepare; yea, to His coming Himself to take us there by His mighty power. Yet nothing less than this is our happy prospect; and I know of no scripture that interposes anything between us and this blessed hope of our Lord's return.

Christians, now-a-days, would have said: "He could not mean that, for we must all die;" or, "He comes to His own at death." But all such remarks only show how souls get turned aside from a simple understanding of the truth by theological theories.

Turn now to John xvi. 16-22. "A little while and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while and ye shall see Me; because I go to the Father."

Jesus knew that they were desirous to know what He meant by these words, and He said unto them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall

be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Here He is referring to the Cross. What a thought, that the world rejoiced over the murder of Christ! And there is a day coming when two witnesses shall die in the streets of Jerusalem, and the world shall rejoice at their death (Rev. xii. 10); for the spirit of the world is the same throughout. O the miserable, wretched sham of religion! they sat down to keep the Passover when the Christ of God was murdered. There is nothing so contemptible as religion without Christ.

He gives the illustration of a woman in travail. Does not that remind us of that word in 1 Peter i. 3: God has "begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Whilst Christ was dead the disciples thought that their hopes had perished. Thus the two disciples walked on their way to Emmaus, sad and sorrowful; but when the Lord manifested Himself to them, their sorrow was soon turned to joy.

"And ye now, therefore, have sorrow, but I will see you again," &c. In this verse He does not say, "I will come again;" because He is not speaking of His coming again, but of His seeing them before He went away. He is speaking here of seeing them again before His ascension, and filling their hearts with joy that no man could take from them.

Turn now to Luke xxiv. 50-53. "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them . . . while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." They returned to Jerusalem, not "mourning an absent Lord," as they had done when He was dead, but they rejoiced in One who was alive for evermore. The time of travail was over; the Son was born and He was at God's right hand, their living Hope. Instead of mourning the loss of their Lord they were continually in the Temple praising God. That's our joy. Our joy is, that the Lord Jesus, the Lord of Glory, lives for us at God's right hand; that He is Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body (Eph. i. 22, 23). And in a little while He is really and truly coming, and we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him, and be with Him for ever. Is that not joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, and solid comfort to our souls? Is that not enough to make our hearts glad, that the One who so

loved us as to bear our sins and endure the wrath of God for us, has pledged His word that He is coming to take us to be with Himself. They returned to Jerusalem rejoicing, not merely in the fact that He was alive, but in the promise of His coming again.

Look with me at Acts i. 11. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." These heavenly messengers confirm the promise made to them by the Lord, and in the strength of that they go back to Jerusalem, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God.

John xvi. 23: "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing." Up to this present time He had been with them. When they wanted anything they just asked Him. It was very simple—was it not? He was Emmanuel (God with us). He was there, the object of their worship; and to Him they went for everything they wanted or desired. "Now," He says, "in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name." There was going to be a new method of approaching Jehovah. They are now to be directed to the Father Himself; they are to go to the Father as children, in the spirit of sonship, crying "Abba, Father!" and using, in the Father's presence, the Name of Jesus. That blessed Name was to be their one plea and the ground of their confidence in coming to the Father. That is the position we are in now, as we come with our prayers and praises to God. I don't mean to say that we are in any way restricted, so that we may not make request or offer praise to the Lord Jesus; on the contrary, there are instances of prayer addressed to the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, the ordinary way now is, that we approach the Father, whether in prayer or praise, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Let us pass on from this to a word in John xxi.: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God" (verses 18 and 19). "Peter saith to

Jesus : Lord, and what shall this man do ? Jesus saith unto him : If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad that that disciple should not die."

This is a most suggestive little incident. The Lord had taught His disciples that there would be a little while between His departure to the Father, and His coming again. Turn to Heb. x. 36, 37, and you will see how these words are taken up again. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "A little while" yet ; what does that tell us ? It does not tell us when it is to be ; but clearly shows that the attitude of our souls should be that of constantly expecting, waiting, and watching for our Lord's return. In John xxi. the Lord is telling Peter that he is to die. Turn to 2 Peter i., 13-15. "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus hath showed me." Notice, that whilst Paul again and again speaks to the saints as in expectation of being alive, and remaining till the Lord would come, Peter does not use such language. He says : "I am not to remain, for so Jesus said ;" therefore, leaving us to infer that other saints to whom no such divine prediction was given, were not to look for death. We find Paul saying in 2 Tim. iv. 6 : "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." This seems to have been revealed to him near the termination of his life ; that he also was to depart and be with Christ. But, with these exceptions, it is left an open question whether any saint would die or remain unto the coming of the Lord. The Old Testament saints—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—looked forward to their death ; they had no immediate hope before them as we have.

But when Jesus said concerning John : "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?" the disciples took it to mean just what it naturally signifies ; that if he tarried till the Lord came he should not die. They quite correctly interpreted what the Lord said ; only they forgot that He put in the word "if."

(To be Continued.)

MINISTRY.

IN these days when everything is being subjected to the severest test, there is no subject that needs to be more jealously guarded by those who love the truth than that of the Ministry of the Church. Whether we look at it as coming down from the ascended Lord, or at its effect on the people, it is of paramount importance.

Perhaps there is nothing from which the Church has suffered, or is suffering, more than unscriptural or inefficient ministry.

It is with a deep sense of the importance of this subject, and a conviction that the truth regarding ministry requires to be defended against the wiles of the enemy, that we submit the following thoughts to our readers.

In doing so we will observe the following order :—
1st. *What is ministry ?* 2nd. *What is its design ?* 3rd. *What is its source ?* 4th. *What is its power ?* and lastly, notice some of the dangers to which it is specially exposed in the present day.

1st. *What is ministry ?* It might help us here to say what it is not. It is not worship. It is not praise. It is not prayer. All these in their very nature go from man up to God ; that is, if they are what they seem to be. But ministry does not rise up from man to God ; it comes down from God to man. It is true that when the LORD called Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood, He said "that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office" (Exo. xxviii.). If an Israelite would present anything to God, it had to be done through an earthly priest. That ministry has now ceased to be ; it is fulfilled in Christ, and has passed away. In the present age all believers have, through Him, an equal right to present their offerings unto the Lord. Ministry, as it exists in the Church, is not presenting anything to God ; it is getting something from Him, and giving to the people. Ministry is an institution for conveying blessings from God to man ; and in this God chooses His own channels. Hence Paul speaks of being "made a minister" (Eph. iii. 7) ; and of being "put into the ministry" (1 Tim. ii. 12). Peter exhorts believers thus : "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter iv. 10). This

passage makes it very plain that ministry is giving out for the benefit of others, what one has received from God. Were we to write a volume we could not make it more intelligible.

2nd. *What is the design of ministry, or what is it intended to accomplish?* In a word, we say it is to build up the body of Christ. The careful reading of Eph. iv. 1-16, would satisfy any unprejudiced mind on this point. In this passage there is a twofold ministry—a general and a special. The general includes “every joint” in the body; the special is bestowed on some, for the benefit of the rest. “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” (verses 11, 12, R.V.) The “unto ministering” implies that the special gifts are bestowed in order that each and all may be in the condition to do their part in building up the body. Hence we read of “that which every joint supplieth” (verse 16.) God might have carried out His present purpose without human agency at all; He might have used angels, but He has ordained that the body of Christ should edify itself; and for this end ministry was instituted.

3rd. *What is the source of ministry? or where does it come from?* Scripture must again settle the question. When the Lord was on earth He chose His own ministers, and sent them out—first twelve, then seventy. Luke ix. 1, 2; x. 1. After He ascended He still exercised the same prerogative. He was raised by God, and set at His right hand, as Head of the body—the Church; to be the source of its life and ministry. Scripture teaches that when the Lord was on earth He chose, He educated, and directed all the movements of His servants. It is also clear that after He went up He continued to exercise the same authority through the Spirit, whom He sent down to teach and guide His flock. He has also given to the Church special instructions regarding the character and qualifications of those who would take a prominent part in ministry (see 1 Tim. iii.), and the “man of God” is solemnly charged to “keep the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. vi. 11-13, 14-20). For man to reason and act, as if the Lord had ceased to exercise the same authority now as

then, is practical infidelity to the truth. The Lord is still Head of His body, not in name merely, but in reality; and all spiritual gifts come from Him the same as ever, and will continue to do so “until His appearing,” until the “new man” is complete.

4th. *What is the power of ministry?* Well, it is not human wisdom. Paul’s power did not consist in the “wisdom of words” (1 Cor. i. 17). He had a first-class education, but his power as a minister of Christ did not consist in his knowledge of “letters.” No amount of scholastic training can impart spiritual power. God has set all that aside, “that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. ii. 29). Neither is spiritual joy the power of ministry. The disciples, after witnessing the Lord’s ascension, “returned to Jerusalem with great joy;” and yet they had to wait for power from on high ere they began to preach. Nor is the knowledge of truth God’s power in ministry. The apostles received their commission before the Lord ascended, but they had to wait until He gave them power to fulfil it. “But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts ii. 8, R.V.). And when He came down they did receive power, which resulted in the conversion of thousands; and when they needed a fresh supply of power, they went direct to the Lord and got it.

We have a striking instance of this recorded in Acts iv. 23 to 35, where we read that in answer to prayer “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake the word of God with boldness.” He did not on this occasion come down “from heaven” “as at the first,” and as He afterwards did on the first Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius. He *filled* them; that is, He energized them in the sense in which the enemies of the Lord “were filled with madness” (Luke vi. 11)—they were entirely under the power of madness against the Lord Jesus; they were animated by it, so were the disciples animated by the Holy Spirit.

They did not receive a “Pentecostal baptism” of the Spirit; but He who was already dwelling in them, supplied unto them fresh energy or power to meet their need in service. We read that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power” (Acts x. 38). Paul’s preaching at Corinth was “in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power” (1 Cor. ii. 4). The Gospel came unto the Thessalonians “in

power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1 Thes. ii. 5). In these passages there is a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and power: there can be no power but by the Spirit; but the Spirit may be, and yet no power. All believers have the Spirit, and yet few have power in ministry. Perhaps some may ask for a definition of power. Well, we cannot define it. We are not sure if it can be defined, but it can be possessed and felt; and more—ministry is of no use without it. There may be a good appearance made by ministers, and people may think they are getting something grand, but if ministry lacks what Scripture calls "power," the Body of Christ will not be built up either by the addition of new members, or the growth of those who are already in the Body. The kingdom of darkness can never be brought down, nor the kingdom of light extended, but by the same power which the Lord enjoined His disciples to wait for, ere they began their ministry; and, as we have already sought to point out, believers never receive the Spirit a second time to dwell in them; yet, they do need fresh supplies of power in order to effectual service.

This brings us to our last point, namely: some of the snares to which we are specially exposed in these days in our ministry. We have touched on what ministry is; its use, its source, and its power. We have been very brief on these points, because we presume most of our readers are already well taught in these truths; we would not have noticed them at all, but for the sake of younger Christians, whose need of being taught first principles is apt to be forgotten.

In what we have still to say, we do not intend to deal with the evils of a *heretical* ministry; but rather try to expose the danger we are in of being satisfied with a *powerless* ministry. The devil is ever ready to get some God-dishonouring errors mixed up with the truth, but he has another more subtle device—that is, an *orthodox ministry without power*.

The snare of substituting human learning for Divine power deserves a passing notice. Valuable as a university training may be, it can never produce an efficient ministry. The best it can do is to polish the instrument, and that is much; but, however highly polished the instrument may be, without the gift and grace from on high, it will be useless in the things of God. A ministry that is essentially of man may deceive sinners, and too often please saints, but it can

never accomplish the conversion of the one, or the edification of the other; yet, how many there are who profess to be God's ministers, and are recognised by many as such, who have no credentials but what they have received at the hands of their fellow men, and to this their work testifies. If saints come under its influence they are misled and dwarfed, and sinners are deceived and ruined. G. A.

(To be Continued.)

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART IV.



CHAPTER v., verses 1-2. "My son attend unto my wisdom, and bow (or incline) thine ear to my understanding," "that thou mayest regard (preserve) discretion for thyself," and "that thy lips may keep knowledge" for others.

Verses 3, 6. For the lips of a strange woman—such as I have before spoken of—drop honied words, and her mouth is smoother than oil, in order to seduce thee from right ways; but her end—and thine, too, if thou heedest her—is bitter as wormwood. Her ways end in death, and the grave. Lest, too, thou shouldest ponder on thy ways and repent (when once ensnared), her ways—and devices and arts are constantly shifting—thou canst not understand them.

Verses 7, 14. Now hearken to me, my children: Avoid her company, and keep right away from her house and her haunts; for she will bring thee to ruin, and thou wilt lose thy health and means, and become a slave to thy lusts. Then thou wilt groan out, when flesh and body are consumed through lust, and in remorse confess thy sinful folly in not heeding thy teachers; saying, "I was almost in all evil (even) in the midst of the congregation and assembly."

Verses 15, 20. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews xiii. 4). Let "no man go beyond or defraud his brother in 'these matters,' for God 'is the avenger of all such'" (1 Thess. iv. 6).

Read also, in connection with these verses, 1 Cor. vi. 9-20. The figures used simply teach man the wisdom and blessing consequent on the faithful observance of the marriage bond, and the madness and folly of fornication and adultery.

Verses 21-23. The chapter closes with the solemn warning, that nothing can be hidden from God's notice; and that, though men may sin in heart and think none know it, yet as surely as a beast is caught in the toils of the hunter, so shall the fornicator and adulterer be held by the cords of his sins, and shall die like beasts.

He who sins against God may be sure of discovery. "For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He pondereth all His goings. For there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job xxxiv. 21-22).

Read Cain's case, Gen. iv.; David's, 2 Sam. xii.; Ahab's, 1 Kings xxi. 19; Judas', Matt. xxvii.; Saul's, 1 Sam. xviii. 8-9; &c.

"Most people who follow unlawful pleasures think they can give them up whenever they please; but sin repeated becomes customary, custom soon engenders habit, habit necessity; the man then becomes bound by his own cords, and so is led captive by the devil at his will." Take Samson's case to illustrate this, Judges xiv. 16.

CHAPTER VI.

Verses 1-5. Caution is here given against imprudently becoming surety, even for a friend—striking or joining the hand with a stranger, being witness or token thereof—and bringing the surety's person and property into full liability for his friend.

If thou hast been thus misled, and snared by thine own words, then make haste and go and beseech thy neighbour to let thee off the engagement. Become a fool in trying to get out of the snare, rather than add to folly by trying to brave it out, as though ashamed of owning thy mistake. "He that hateth suretyship is sure."

Verses 6-11. Cautions against slothfulness and idleness. Learn from the ant, which instinctively provides against want by laying up in summer time, to stir thyself betimes, and work whilst there is opportunity. The instinct of the ant ("a people not strong," Prov. xxx.) leads to rare provision for the future. Let God's wisdom—surely higher than instinct—lead thee, O man! to make provision also whilst thou canst, lest poverty, both temporal and spiritual, come upon thee as swiftly as a courier travels, and lest want come as one that destroys!

Lazy people *hope* things will all come right, and grumble and complain if they don't. God gives

seasons to sow that we may reap, opportunities to lay up for times of need. If a man has time to work and get good wages now, let him lay by and not spend it all on present luxuries.

Many think to lie abed and let others (who get up and work) help them. "If any will not work neither should he eat" (2 Thess. iii.)

There are always many poor and truly needy ones to give to—for such there should be always care; but "the sluggard shall beg in harvest and have nothing," and "the runagates continue in scarceness."

Verses 12-19. A man of Belial—yea, a man of wickedness—is he who walketh with a froward mouth, &c. Not only actions, but words, and even signs, may be made instruments of mischief, and are often employed by deceitful persons, who think to attain their ends thereby and to escape notice. God will make such hope vain; for their "calamity shall come suddenly;" they shall "be broken without remedy." God hates discord, and judgeth discord-makers, noticing their subtle ways and classing their conduct in the same black list as murderers, &c. He mentions six hateful things, and then adds "discord among brethren" as the seventh, hateful as much as the rest.

1. A proud look. 2. A lying tongue. 3. One who sheds, or causes to be shed, innocent blood. 4. A heart *devising* wicked imaginations. 5. Feet swift to mischief. 6. A false witness speaking lies.

Then 7. As bad as any of these is he who soweth discord (in the way described in verses 12-14) among brethren.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Verses 20-35. These verses contain another earnest warning against adultery; the artifices, guilt, danger, and punishment of which are most forcibly described.

A thief, if he steal because he is hungry, is often pitied by men; yet even he has to pay to the utmost. But what shall be the punishment of the adulterer, who lacketh understanding? It is irreparable mischief he doeth, rousing men's most violent and lasting resentment, bringing destruction on himself; for none will spare him, nor take any ransom for him.

CHAPTER VII.

Verses 1-5. The subject is continued, and fresh appeal is made to the sons of men to cultivate the closest intimacy with wisdom (verse 4), in order to

preserve from seduction to evil; to guard the commandments of God, as the eyelids guard the apple of the eye (verse 2), and to follow them closely.

Verses 6-23. This circumstantial and life-like narrative affords to the young and inexperienced an impressive warning against the dangers which beset the loiterer or pleasure-seeker. The description of the woman (verses 10-20) strikingly exhibits her character—her levity, falsehood, and shameless impiety in making her pretended religious observances a prelude to her sin.

"The goodman," or "my husband," is away from home on business; there is no fear of one being found out.

How this passage not only shows the cunning ways of sinfulness, but also the certainty of God knowing all such ways, and of their assured judgment. This phase of secret sin is by no means a thing of past days, or of other peoples. God thus writes for present days, in solemn warning, that "He will judge the secrets of men." This sin of adultery, so little judged by men, is fully exposed by God, as in David's case (2 Sam. xi. 12); and the unchanging law of His kingdom is, "No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Col. v. 5).

Verses 21-23. She so beguileth the unwary, that he yieldeth, and is overcome, the temptation (from which he should have fled, like Joseph) proving too strong for him, and he follows like a bird to get the bait, not knowing it will be fatal; for (chapter ix. 18) "he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

Verses 24-27. "She (*i. e.*, lust personified) hath cast down many wounded: Samson (Judges xvi.), David (2 Sam. ii.), Solomon (1 Kings ii.). Her victims are many, even among the strongest; how, then, may young and inexperienced ones escape!

Death temporal and death eternal follow in her train.

A. O. M.

There are flowers that bloom amidst the forest shade, but wither in the sunshine. There are earth-born hopes that must perish if we are brought into the sun light of God's presence. There are streams that only flow in winter, and disappear when summer days have come. There are streams of earthly joy that soon run dry if we abide in fellowship with God.

FAITH, OBEDIENCE, AND POWER.

JOTTINGS FROM A CONFERENCE ADDRESS.

"**A**S 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 subject of this verse is Divine life, and in it our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that the Living Father is the source of that life. Moreover, He reveals to us the secret of living by faith, and sets Himself before us as our perfect example in so doing. If we turn to Isaiah l., it may help us to get a clear, simple, and Scriptural view of what is meant by living by the Father; or, as we would say, the life of faith.

Here, in verse 4, we have the morning-by-morning wakening of the ear, and in verse 5 we have the subject will.

The spirit of the day in which we live is to read the Bible as an old out-of-date book; but our blessed Lord did not so read it. To Him "Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" were as fresh "morning by morning," as was the manna gathered by a hungry Israelite before sunrise. Hence the hearts of His hearers burned within them while He opened to them the Scriptures. Be it ours, beloved, thus to read and obey the Scriptures, and so shall we know in blessed experience what it is to "live by the faith of the Son of God." We may measure our faith in God by our subjection to His will as revealed in the Scriptures, and our practical holiness is in proportion to our obedience to the Word of God. It was by making the doing of His Father's will His meat that our blessed Lord lived by the Father, and manifested His faith by His works. In Hebrews xi. 8 we are told that by *faith* Abraham *obeyed*; and here I would remark, that if in chapters xii. and xiii. of Genesis we see Abraham trusting and obeying, in chapter xiv. we see him endued with power to deliver his captive brother Lot. Believing and obeying God is the *only* pathway of power and true spiritual prosperity (see Josh. i. 8, 9).

Faith, obedience, and power being linked together, it becomes us honestly to ask ourselves whether our *power* corresponds with our profession of *faith* and *obedience*. Let us, as individual Christians and as assemblies of saints, beware of mere empty talk about

the sufficiency of God and the word of His grace, lest the precious language of faith become wicked cant on our redeemed lips.

God forbid that I should say one word to dishearten those of us who, in obedience to what God has taught us by His word and Spirit, have separated from unscriptural doctrines and traditions of men, and who seek to own the Lordship of Christ by bowing in everything to the supreme authority of the Word of God; but I do desire that we should be as zealous for our *condition of heart* as for our position, for it is only when we are right in both of these before God that we can show ourselves "approved unto God," and manifest to fellow Christians from whom, in obedience to the Lord, we have been compelled to separate, that we are "approved of God."

Now turn to Psalm xvi. for a word on another aspect of the life of faith. Here, again, we have our Lord as the trusting, obedient One. Verse 1, "In Thee do I put My trust;" verse 2 (R.V.), "I have said unto Jehovah, Thou art My Lord." Now, while trusting and obeying God secures for us Divine preservation, it also provokes the hatred, malignity, and craft of Satan against us. Hence the cry in the first verse of this Psalm, "Preserve me, O God!" Our blessed Lord could say, "I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art My God from My mother's belly" (Psa. xxii. 10). Therefore, when only a babe on His mother's breast, His life was sought by Satan through Herod (Matt. ii. 13-16). And, again, when in fulfilment of His Father's will He was baptized of John in Jordan, immediately afterwards He was confronted in the wilderness with the religious craft of Satan (see chapters iii. and iv. of Matthew's Gospel).

Most of us here to-night are those who, in obedience to the Lord, have separated from unscriptural sects and systems, and who seek, through grace, to gather to the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ simply as Christians endeavouring to *obey* all the words of God, as well as *reject* the commandments and traditions of men. Therefore, depend upon it that the assemblies of God to which we belong are special targets for Satan to aim at in one way or another. Hence the need of watching unto prayer—crying from the very depths of our hearts, "Preserve us, O God, for in Thee do we put our trust!"

Our own religious ways can be maintained by our-

selves without faith in God, but to carry out God's ways we must be right in heart with Him.

A Christian young man, who had learned from the Word of God that God's children ought to be baptized as believers, and to meet as disciples every first-day of the week to break bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus, asked a godly old Covenanter how he thought it would work. "Well," said the old Christian, "while you all keep right in heart with God it will work rightly; but if you get away from God, you will worry one another like dogs."

Be it ours, with purpose of heart, to cleave unto the Lord; and so shall we, even in these evil days, experience the sufficiency of God and the word of His grace.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER X.

(Continued from page 107.)



PROPERLY speaking, this chapter forms one with the preceding, and we have two whole chapters devoted to this poor blind beggar. In just looking at the chapter I would ask you to notice these four points: first, what it says of the Shepherd; second, what it says of the sheep; third, what it says of the Father; and fourth, what it says of all together.

Let us look at them in order. The Shepherd first alludes to His approach. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; but he that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep." But here is a difficulty at the outset. The Shepherd is said to come by the door, but in verse 9 it says, that He is the door Himself. The explanation is that Christ came according to all the indications given in the Word of God, and, particularly, in the Law of God, so as to enable the sheep to identify Him when He came. Then when He had come and fulfilled everything, He became the door. The especial thought is of suffering. Scripture points everywhere to a Shepherd who would come to suffer; notably, for example, Isaiah liii. and Psalm xxii., and all the types in the sacrifices. It is a very striking coincidence, that, when scripture specially speaks of Christ as suffering, it refers to His people as sheep. If in Psalm xxii. 1, we have, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken

Me!" then we have in Psalm xxiii. 1, "The Lord is my Shepherd." And this coincides with our chapter. Again, when His people are seen to need salvation, there is One to save presented as a Shepherd. One is presented who would befriend by suffering. Other shepherds sought the fleece; He, instead of seeking, gave, even to all that He had. Others, even of good shepherds, avoid suffering; *the* Good Shepherd came to suffer. "He that is an hireling, and not the Shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." A very nice way of shirking difficulties. We have the same thought in Zechariah xi. 17, "Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock;" and again in Jeremiah xvii. 16. The next thing is the Shepherd's arrival at where the sheep are, "I am the door." It contemplates His having got down to where the sheep are in all their wretchedness. He gave Himself for them, and became, in resurrection, the door of the sheep. Notice, too, His object in thus coming after the sheep; in Matthew He is seen to come to reign, but in John it is more the attraction to hearts in coming to suffer. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." It flows out freely because He has been slain. Old Testament saints had life from Him, now we in death and resurrection have it more abundantly. We ought to be full of joy and peace now, because our Shepherd is One who has come and put away everything against us, brought us nigh to God, and given us the Holy Spirit. Did you ever notice the next words, as if the Spirit would attract our hearts to Him? "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Do you not see how He exalts Himself, and how the Spirit exalts Him in our eyes; for now that we live we can enjoy Him.

Notice, in the next place, what the Scripture says of the sheep. First, that this Shepherd speaks of the sheep as His own, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." He appropriates or claims us. I love to think I belong to the Lord, and that the Lord says of me, you are Mine. That is the thought in the word "call." To call by name is often used as a symbol of appropriation. "I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine." Again, it shows

His affection; how that He knows everyone, though He has scores. He knows exactly the character His Spirit is producing in each one, for name denotes character. I am reminded of that passage in the Song of Solomon, "He brought me into His banquetting house, and His banner over me was love." *He* did it. Thus He leads. First He calls us, and when we have become His, then He leads us. All shepherds should be leaders, should see a little further than the sheep, should be prepared to suffer more than the sheep, should be a little more in communion with God, so as to give a little more of the Light of God. But He is *the* Leader. And what is the mark of His leading? He leads them out. Out of what? The thought here is Judaism. And is there not much of Judaism in all the systems around us in the present day? Then this is the Lord's way, and should be the way of those who act as under-shepherds—to lead out of the whole thing to the Lord Himself alone. The reference is to the poor blind man, whom the Pharisees, the hirelings of their day, had cast out; and a most blessed thing indeed, to be *cast* out for His Name. But who is the Porter? Undoubtedly it refers to the Holy Spirit. Literally it is "the door-seer;" and the Holy Spirit sees Christ, and draws sinners to Christ, even to the suffering Christ. And Christ reached the sheep through the Holy Spirit, we are told. The Holy Spirit strengthened Christ as a man to reach the case of the sheep. Then observe that the Lord Jesus puts it very plainly, that anybody that likes may be one of His people. Who would like to be one of His people, but has a doubt as to whether he is or not? "If *any man* enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Come unto Christ, and you are one of His flock; Christ is the door, close to you. Then observe from verse 1, than these "anyones" are together "the sheep," for whom the Shepherd giveth His life. Then when they have come to Him, as we see in that 9th verse, they have salvation, and liberty, and food; and, further, as we learn from verse 28, security. The Good Shepherd Himself takes care of us.

Notice in the third place, what it says of the Father. We must not stop at Christ, though He is the Good Shepherd. How beautiful is God's way! He ordains that we are to help one another, by giving us under shepherds to cast us upon Christ, and He, the Good Shepherd, bringing us to God. Not only

have we Christ as the Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit as the Door-seer or Porter, but there are several allusions to the Father's love too. In verse 17 we read, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." Undoubtedly the Father loved Christ apart from His laying down His life for us; but Christ especially gratified the Father's heart by bringing to Him His sheep, the children of His love. A little obscurity has arisen over that verse, for you observe that He takes the same life that He lays down, and there are those that deny it, but that verse ought to be enough to convince any. It is the same life in a resurrection form. Before He laid down His life He was alone, now that He has taken it again He is not alone; the beautiful illustration of the corn of wheat in chapter xiii. teaches us this.

But now, fourthly, what it says of the Shepherd, and the sheep, and the Father, all together. Verses 14 and 15 are somewhat obscure, and if they are to be understood, must be read with a parenthesis in this way, "I am the Good Shepherd, (and know My sheep, and am known of Mine, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father); and I lay down My life for the sheep." There are six clauses, and the first and the sixth hang together. Then of the four intermediate the second and the fourth hang together; I take care of My sheep, encourage, strengthen, and love My sheep, as My Father strengthened and loved Me. Think how thoroughly the Father knows Christ, how He delights in Him; and here He tells us that as the Father knows Him, so He knows us. Now read the third and the fifth together. I trust My Father; I am going to give up everything to show My love for My Father; and My sheep can trust me; I tell them to come out and they come, though their obedience entails suffering, they know that I shall make it up to them, and I will, in the present enjoyment of My love and in future glory with Myself. But there is another place where all are viewed together, that is in verse 16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd." (I read it as correctly it should be rendered.) There is a difference between a "fold" and a "flock," and the main difference is this: in a fold the means of keeping the sheep together is by a stone wall round them,

so that they cannot get out; the Shepherd may be there or He may not, the flock are locked up by a stone wall and iron gate. Of old the sheep were thus kept together by the stone wall, but now by the Shepherd in the midst, and all pressing around *Him*; then by compulsion, now by the attractive power of a present Shepherd. The allusion is to Judaism, for in Judaism it was a "fold." Then it was to be a Jew, to live in Judea, and three times a year to go up to Jerusalem. But Ephesians ii. will tell you what broke the wall down. "For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Then were the sheep confined to a particular clime and region; now the sheep may be found everywhere, but if they cling to the Shepherd they have in Him their centre and bond of union. Then was there no liberty, now may they go in and out and find pasture. Go anywhere that is lawful, and where we may take the Lord with us. — (*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

(Continued from page 108.)



WHAT is our individual attitude in connection therewith?

This is clearly brought out in 1st Cor., ix., a chapter dealing almost exclusively with personal service, its character and results, and having as its key-note "Am I not an apostle?" This context if intelligently grasped, makes clear the Apostle's meaning, when he speaks of the possibility of being a "castaway," or "disapproved." In fact, the connecting link is "Lest, when I HAVE PREACHED to others"; not "Lest having possessed eternal life, I may, through sinfulness, ultimately fall away and be finally lost."

We who have believed to the saving of the soul are "accepted in the Beloved," and this acceptance depends for its continuance evermore, not upon ourselves, but upon God's satisfaction with His own handiwork, and His appreciation of the priceless blood shed on Calvary.

To be accepted of Him, *i.e.*, of Christ, 2nd Cor. v.,

is quite different ; *for that* we labour as servants, knowing that our position in the coming kingdom of glory depends upon the Lord's appreciation of our willingness to suffer reproach for His Name, and of our sincere endeavours to please Him now.

Here, then, Paul compares his service to wrestling, and running in a race. Men, for the honour of obtaining the fading wreath and the applause of their fellow-mortals, would, in self-denial, subject their bodies to restraints of the most trying kind, as a necessary preliminary to entering the lists. From this Paul would learn what it is throughout life's pilgrimage to "keep under his body" to allow no Satan-suggested or earth-born thoughts or deeds to impede his progress or interfere with the fight of faith. His eye was on the incorruptible crown, and nothing made him so tremulous as the thought that at the end of the fight and race he might be set aside, and have "nothing but leaves" exposed to view. At this point in his life, in the thick of the fight and in the midst of the race, he felt he must be humble and fearful ; but there came a time, only eight years later, when the same man, in the inner consciousness of his soul, and with an anticipation begotten from on high, threw aside all uncertainty and exclaimed,

"I have finished my course (*i.e.*, the race),"

"I have fought a good fight,"

and knew the *crown of righteousness* to be his own portion (2nd Tim. iv.).

The 9th of 1st Cor. 24-27 should always be read with 2nd Tim. iv. 6-8. They mark two separate stages in the experience of Paul in regard to the judgment seat of Christ, which are of the highest importance.

Taken together, they show clearly he refers to *service, not life*, in 1st Cor. ix., and prove that, even as to service, there may be even in this life, the assurance in the soul, of the Master's approbation. This connects itself with 2nd Tim. ii. 5., "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." The Word of God is the statute book, in which are written the laws of the kingdom, and no amount of zeal aided by the services of expediency will do. If a Christian would be "crowned," he must strive lawfully, *i.e.*, in conformity with the written commandments of the Lord.

In 2nd Tim. iv., Christ is called "the righteous Judge." There are misunderstandings, broken hearts,

and troubled lives, through the pride and sinful ways of God's people here ; but at the Master's judgment seat righteousness will be enthroned, and right acts will receive His "well done." Aye, it may be, deeds which were regarded here by fellow-saints with distrust and cruel suspicion will then receive the approval and recompense of Him who knows the heart and never errs in judgment.

There are three crowns referred to in Scripture—

1st. "The crown of life," James i. 12.

2nd. "The crown of righteousness," 2nd Tim. iv. 8.

3rd. "The crown of glory," 1st Peter v. 4.

Some dear brethren regard the first as conditional, but certainly the latter two are. To "love His appearing" connected with the crown of righteousness implies a godly, scripturally-guided life by its context ; while the "crown of glory" is associated with shepherd work.

The latter is the Chief Shepherd's gracious and unique recognition of a life spent in care and love towards the sheep and lambs for whom He shed His precious blood.

The judgment seat draws nearer, and the effect should be to make us humbler towards God and tenderer toward our brethren. We need continuing grace to run and fight till the Master comes. Some go on well for a time, and then fail. May the Apostle's words, "See that ye lose not that which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a *full reward*," be our experimental portion.

F. A. B.

THE NAILS ARE GONE, BUT THE MARKS ARE LEFT.

—As a means of punishing his boy for wrong-doing, a father used to put a nail into a piece of wood each time he transgressed, and, with a view to encourage the boy to good behaviour, one nail was extracted for every commendable action. For some time the boy had behaved well, and at last every nail had gone. The same day the father saw his boy weeping, and asked him why he cried? Ah! said he, father, the nails are gone, but the marks are left. This illustrates greater things. The sins and wrong actions of God's people may be forgiven, as in David's case, but their effects linger, and will most assuredly bring sorrow in their train. We do well to pray, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my feet slip not."

ISAAC AND REBEKAH.

TUNE—"Have you any room for Jesus?"

THINE the beauty, Thine the glory,
Heir of all things, Son of God;
Shining round me and before me,
Lighting all the desert road.

Camels girded for the journey,
Kneeling laden, set for home;
Ah! my heart has gone already,
Centred there, no more to roam.

Roll afar, thou proud Euphrates,
Nought can hold me from my bourne;
Where my mighty Guardian came from,
There with me will He return.

Buried in Chaldea's city,
I had perished with my race;
But the steward sent to save me
Put me in my Master's grace.

Asked me for a "little water;"
Let me quench His camel's thirst;
Saw in me Bethuel's daughter,
Her He prayed for at the first.

Oh! the errand that He told me—
Of the (Living One) who died,
Of the Father's love and counsel,
Taking unto Him a Bride.

Nothing, I remember nothing,
But that sacrifice and choice;
Never music filled my spirit
Like that penetrating voice.

Could I hear Him, "Eliezer,"
And for Isaac not be won?
Oh! the Father loved and sought me,
Sent and claimed me for His Son.

See the token on my forehead,
See the bracelets on my hand;
Prove me now the chosen daughter
Of the Lord of all the land.

I will go—I would not tarry,—
Object of that heart's delight;
He was unto death obedient;
I would walk with Him in white.

I shall see Him in His beauty,
He Himself His bride shall meet;
I shall be with Him for ever
In companionship complete.

Thoughts of Him are strength and gladness;
What Man comes there forth our way?
'Tis my Master, 'tis the Bridegroom
Veiled—the Bride is caught away!

And the servant telleth Isaac
All the things that He hath done;
And Rebekah reigns in Hebron,
Wife of the once-offered One.

FIRST CHRONICLES.

SECOND PAPER.

CHAPTERS xiv. to xvi.—Asa's reign. In the previous chapter we have Abijah victorious over apostate Israel, here Asa victorious over Zerah, the Ethiopian, and his mighty host—the former illustrative of the apostate church, the latter of the world (1 Tim. vi. 12, 1 John v. 4). Asa: illustrative of those who remove and abolish idolatry and unscriptural practices, and establish and revere pure and scriptural worship according to the divine commandment of the New Testament. Azariah, the son of Obed, typical of the Spirit and the Word. Earthly relationship does not interfere with Asa exterminating false idolatrous worship. Asa's league with the King of Syria: illustrative of the professing church seeking help from the world and the enemies of God to further the cause of truth. Hence those who are faithful to such, like Hanani, will have to suffer persecution, imprisonment, and even death (Matt. xiv. 34, Gal. iv. 16, 17).

Chapters xvii. to xx.—Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah; his joining affinity with Ahab, King of Israel: illustrative of the believer having unholy alliance with the unfaithful and the unbeliever (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). Nevertheless the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father and of David, and sought not unto Baalim, but sought the Lord and walked in his commandments, and not after the *doings of Israel*. He removed teachers of lies, and established the priesthood and Levites with the princes who taught Judah the book of the Law of the Lord. Hence those who have zeal for the truth, and seek for revival in the Church, should seek it according to the Word of God, and after the pattern of New Testament instruction and example; and not after the fleshly, worldly, sentimentality which pleases and satisfies the old and natural instincts of *man in the flesh* (Gal. i. 8-10, 2 Cor. v. 11-17). The appointment of captains of thousands and hundreds: illustrative of Divine, not human, appointment of gifts and ministry in the Church (Rom. xii. 3-8). Judges sit in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah: illustrative of Divine order and rule in the Church of God, the qualification of those who rule or take oversight in the Church are given us in 1 Tim. iii., Tit. i. 5, 9; such should be acknowledged and submitted to by the Church when their behaviour and the spirit in which they act corresponds with 1 Pet. v. 1-4.

In Chapter xvii. we saw Hanani imprisoned for faithfulness without seeing any result. In Chapters xix. and xx. we find Jehu and Jahaziel *seizing* present results of their faithful ministry.

Jehoshaphat's victory over Amon and Moab:

illustrative of the believer being victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil; able to do all things through Christ who strengthens him (Phil. iv. 13). Chapter xxi., Jehoram's wicked reign—he slays all his brethren; marries a daughter of Ahab; the Edomites revolt, and Libnah, one of his own cities, set up as a free state on account of his idolatry and worshipping of false gods; Elijah's letter threatening him with terrible and unmitigated judgments, and Judah attacked by the Philistines, and the Arabians who pillage the land and the king's house, and destroy all his seed but one; then his miserable and unlamented death, the result of God's righteous judgment. Jehoram: illustrative of a jealous idolatrous Anti-christian spirit, and the sad and sorrowful downfall of those who give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Elijah's letter: illustrative of the prophetic word denouncing apostate Christendom, and every one who loveth and maketh a lie (Jude 11-19).

Chapter xxii.—One woman seeks to destroy the seed of David, another to preserve it from being wholly and finally extirpated: illustrative of the flesh or carnally minded, and the spiritually minded. (Rom. viii. 5-10).

Chapters xxiii. and xxiv.—Joash hidden, then crowned king: typical of Christ who now for a while is hidden in the heavens, but will yet take possession of the Throne of His father David; also illustrative of the children of God, the world knowing them not, yet a time definitely fixed when they shall reign with Him whose right it is to reign, and fully share in his coming glory (John xxvii, 21-26).

Athaliah slain: illustrative of the terrible doom awaiting all those who exalt themselves against God and His Christ (2 Thess. ii. 7-12). Baal's house, altar, and priest, denounced and destroyed. The worship of the Lord restored and the temple repaired: illustrative of the establishment and restoration of the worship of God according to His mind and the written Word; but this reformation lasts only while Johoiadâ the priest is living, as soon as he dies Joash degenerates into apostacy, rejects God's message, and ultimately slays Zechariah in the Court of the House of the Lord. Then the king himself has a miserable disease, and dies an ignoble death by the hand of his own servant. Hence, in this book, we see God acting in judgment because the kings and the people are in close connection with Himself, and in such like manner will He deal with Christendom. Zechariah slain, typically and prophetically shadowing forth John the Baptist, who was beheaded. Zechariah representing the priesthood, John the prophet.

Chapter xxv.—Amaziah: illustrative of an action, right, and scriptural, but the heart wrong and imperfect.

Chapter xxvi.—Uzziah, who for a long time walked with the Lord and prospered, but when he was *strong*

his heart was lifted up. He usurps the priestly office and takes upon himself the priestly function. Hence he is smitten with leprosy till the day of his death: illustrative of the judgment of God on the pride and presumption of men in spiritual things (Ps. xix. 13, 2 Pet. ii. 10.)

Chapter xxvii.—Jotham himself walked uprightly, prospered, and finished his course with honour, but the people did yet corruptly: illustrative of individual testimony for God and His truth amidst abounding evil and wickedness in professing Christendom (1 Tim. i. 15, ii. 4, 16).

Chapter xxviii.—Ahaz: illustrative of backsliding from God, and being wholly given up to idolatry of the most barbarous and inhuman form.

Chapters xxix. to xxxii.—Hezekiah establishes the true worship of God; the doors of the House of the Lord opened, and the priests and the Levites sanctified; then they go into the house and cleanse it from all the filthiness; sin and burnt sacrifices offered: illustrative of cleansing the Church of that which is sinful and unscriptural. The names recorded who did this work: illustrative of those who are faithful being remembered (Heb. vi. 10). The sin and burnt offerings: typical of Christ—the sin and burnt offering for *all* Israel. Christ was the propitiation, not only for the Church, but for the whole world (Rom. iii. 25, 1 John ii. 2). The first day of the month and the eighth day: typical of resurrection. The Hebrew number of seven shows the perfection of the atoning death of Christ—"His work is perfect." Therefore Hezekiah rejoices, and all the people. The passover re-instituted; analagous to the Lord's supper. Those who refused the invitation to keep this feast: illustrative of professing Christians who reject God's ordinance of the breaking of bread the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7); the unleavened bread typically showing forth Christ as a perfect offering, and Himself perfect food (John vi. 34-36). The images and the altar cut down: illustrative of false worship and idols in the Church, and in the heart, destroyed. Holy reformation, the abundant provision appropriated for the supply of the priests and the Levites: illustrative of spiritual wants supplied for those who trust in Jehovah (see verse 21 of Chapter xxxi). The written Word of God the only guide—hence prosperity.

Hezekiah and Sennacherib: typical of the Christian warring with spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. vi. 11, 12, Rom. viii. 33-35). Hezekiah interceding on behalf of Israel: typical of the intercession of Christ. His prayer also beautifully illustrative of those who ought always to pray and not to faint (Heb. vii. 25, Luke xviii. 1).

Chapter xxxiii.—Manasseh's wickedness, repentance, and reformation in Judah: illustrative of the backslider restored to communion, and bearing fruit meet for repentance.

Ammon follows his father in his wickedness, but

not in his repentance. It will be seen that most of the kings of Judah began well and ended badly. Manasseh began badly but ended well.

Chapters xxxiv. to xxxvi.—Josiah early converted; only four years after, he begins to purge Judah and Israel, and repairs the House of the Lord his God. In the temple, the book of the law is found; to its Divine authority he humbly submits; and like Hezekiah, he revives the institution of the passover. That which characterized the revival and reformation in Josiah's times was entire submission to the law of the Lord (Acts ii. 41-47).

The last chapter closes with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; the king and people taken captive into Babylon. Nevertheless, in the midst of judgment, God remembers mercy. Josiah and Jeremiah must be read to learn fully the corrupt fallen condition of Judah and Israel during the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, and the future blessing yet in store for the land at present so barren, and the people so scattered and divided. S. B.

THE WARNING IN THE TENTH OF HEBREWS.

(Concluded from page 110.)



VERSE 28. We have no doubt that the apostle thought of the Sabbath-breaker of Numbers xv. when he quoted the case of him "that despised Moses' law." This was the man who set at nought the rest of Jehovah and Israel immediately after listening to these solemn

words—

"The soul that doeth ought presumptuously (Heb., with an high hand), whether he be born in the land or a stranger, the same reproacheth THE LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him" (verses 30, 31).

God had provided, by means of the sacrifice, for the soul that sinned through ignorance; but this man, having sinned "wilfully" or "presumptuously," must be put to death. "The congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses."

Our verse unites the two ideas of the *rest* and of the *sacrifice*.

God has found His rest, so far as the question of sin is concerned, in the sacrifice of Christ; and into this rest His people are invited. The apostate, by seeking another rest and despising the sacrifice, acts in high-handed rebellion, and will be dealt with accordingly.

For the second time, and in a specially powerful way, the apostle suggests the awfulness of the doom of which he who neglects or rejects the grace of God will be thought worthy. At the beginning of the epistle (chapter ii. 3) he insists on the certainty of this doom; and now, as the epistle is drawing to a close, he leads us to think of its severity as far beyond the most fearful punishment indicated by the law of Moses. If the annihilation doctrine (known now-a-days by its less offensive and fashionable name, "conditional immortality") were not a lie, the death sentence of the Mosaic law would be the worst consequence of the wrath of God; and the apostle's

question, "Of how much *sorer* punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy?" would be entirely meaningless.

The soreness of the punishment is justified by the fact that the apostate has outraged the Godhead in His three Persons—

- (1). He hath trodden under foot the Son of God.
- (2). He hath counted as a common thing—that is, something not worthy of his attention—the blood of the covenant shed by CHRIST.
- (3). He hath done despite unto THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.

The expression, "blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified," has always been a difficulty to interpreters of this portion of the Word of God. If it is applied to those who "sin wilfully" after having received the knowledge of the truth, it seems to contradict verse x, where we see that believers "are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "How," it has been asked, "can one be sanctified once for all, and yet come to regard the blood that sanctifies as an unholy thing?"

We would suggest as the true explanation that the words "wherewith *HE* was sanctified" refer to the Son of God spoken of in the preceding clause. It will be needless to remind the readers of the *Northern Witness* that the Scriptural meaning of the word "sanctified" is "set apart"; we would only bring before them the two notable passages whereby we see that our Lord has thus been set apart—

- (1). The Father sanctified Him and sent Him into the world as the Saviour (John x. 36).
- (2). He sanctified Himself, taking a new position in resurrection, in order to become the Great Shepherd and High Priest of His People (John xvii. 19).

But, after all the side-light that can be thrown upon a difficult passage by a general comparison of the Scriptures, the key to it is to be looked for in the writings of the same inspired author, and generally in the very book in which it occurs. Thus we believe that Heb. xiii. 20 is the key to Heb. x 29. "The God of Peace" has "brought again from the dead our LORD JESUS, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

Verses 30, 31. "Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense," saith the Lord," is a quotation from Deut. xxxii. 35. The same words are quoted by the same writer (the Apostle Paul) in Rom. xii. 19, there to teach us not to avenge ourselves, for the day of vengeance is not yet come; here to warn us that, when it does come, the wrath of God will be as unmingled with mercy as His grace is unmingled with judgment now.

"The Lord shall judge His people" is from Deut. xxxii. 36. If we look at the context in the Old Testament scripture, we will see that this judgment will be accomplished when God rids His people, once for all, of those "whose rock is not as our Rock." It is written that "their foot shall slide in due time."

Verses 32-34. Nevertheless, it is not the mind of God that even those Hebrew "babes" should be terrified or discouraged. "Call to remembrance," says the Holy Spirit through the apostle—"call to remembrance the former days." It is the second time that the days of their first love are brought to mind in this letter. In verses 9 and 10 of chapter vi. the apostle has spoken of their labours, here he speaks of their sufferings. These labours and sufferings are to him the active and passive proofs of the reality of their faith.

The exhortation of verses 35, 36 resembles also that of chapter vi. 11, 12. He pleads with them to persevere and be patient, seeing that THE HOPE that they confess is founded on THE PROMISE of a faithful God (compare verse 36 with verse 23, R. V.). "Your confidence," he answers them, "hath great recompense of reward."

The words of the Promise (verse 37), "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry," are translated freely from Hab. ii. 3: "Though it (namely, the

fulfilment of the prophecy) tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." The difference between the language of Habakkuk and that of Paul is very interesting. What was a vision to the Old Covenant prophet has become a Living Person to the New Testament apostle.

"Now the just shall live (or more literally, *shall go on living*) by faith" (verse 38). The quotation from Habakkuk is continued, only the order of the words is reversed, so that the last clause of the verse may be rendered more emphatic: "If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Verse 39. Some undoubtedly do draw back; but the elect of God never. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the preservation of the soul."

Blessed is the man who, having found rest in the once-offered sacrifice of Calvary, goes on living by faith, hoping for the fulfilment of the Divine promise, even the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven, and exercising the happy ministry of love towards his brethren that are in the world.

A. P. M.

Geneva, 28th May, 1886.

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 CCXXX.

What is the teaching of Col. i. 21-23?

REPLY.

Scripture, throughout, recognizes the possibility of a profession of faith, a degree of enlightenment through the truth, and even a measure of experience greatly resembling that of a quickened soul, whilst yet there are lacking the grand essentials of faith and regeneration.

Hence the various tests that are continually applied to profession. In John the test is love and righteousness (see 1 John ii. 4, iii. 7, 10). In James "faith" is tested by "works" (James ii. 14-26). In Hebrews the test is "holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. iii. 14).

In Galatians the apostle stands in doubt of them until he can see *Christ formed in them* (Gal. iv. 19).

Similarly in Col. "man" had been coming in to subvert the truth; and the whole of the second chapter is a warning against the principles that had been at work. Five times in this one chapter are they warned against "man" (see verses 4, 8, 16, 18, 22).

It was in view of this state of things—where the faith and the hope of the Gospel were being gradually let go—that the apostle speaks in this strain. Continuance in these was the only evidence that they had known "the grace of God in truth" (see chapter i. 6), and that they were indeed of the number of those who, having been reconciled by the Cross, would in the end be presented holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.

The word rendered here "present" is the same as in 2 Cor. iv. 14; xi. 2; Eph. v. 27, and can hardly be

applied to anything short of the final presentation at the coming of the Lord.

QUESTION CCXXXI.

How is it that God told His people not to eat that which dieth of itself, but they could give it to strangers, or sell it to the alien? (Deut. xiv. 21.)

REPLY.

The reason is distinctly given in the words which follow:—"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God."

There was nothing morally evil in eating that which died of itself. But it was ceremonially defiling and inconsistent with that law of ordinances which God in His wisdom chose to prescribe for Israel as a chosen nation separated from all other nations unto Himself. Had the stranger or the alien chosen to identify himself with the "commonwealth of Israel," and become one with them through circumcision, he would thereby have become entitled to keep the Passover, and at the same time would be under obligation to observe all the ordinances, just as a true-born Israelite (see Exodus xii. 48, 49). But so long as he remained outside the "wall of partition" he was in no way bound by the ceremonial law given to Israel aloné.

It is important to distinguish between *ceremonial defilement* and *moral evil*. Though the yoke of the law never was upon any Gentile nation, nevertheless natural conscience, where it was not seared, was and is sensible of moral evil. But it could in no way respond to the demands of a *ceremonial law*, which was designed for *one nation and one period only*, and had therefore no witness in the conscience of man by nature.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER i. 10.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THE last Scripture we referred to was John xxi. 23. This little incident shows us the importance of carefulness in hearing and in repeating the Lord's words. The Lord had said, "If I will that he tarry till I come"; but the disciples attached no importance to the little word "if," and accepted the saying as an absolute prophecy that John would continue alive till the coming again of the Lord, and consequently "that that disciple should *not die*." This became a current saying, or, in other words, "a tradition," and it was a false one, quite tending to mislead.

Thus the best confirmed traditions—only once removed from the very words of the Lord Himself—are at best unreliable. How much less trustworthy must all other traditions be! Indeed, does this not show most plainly that His Word alone is Truth—His sayings alone worthy of our unquestioning confidence.

And notice that the Apostle John corrects the erroneous tradition by simply referring to the *exact* words spoken by the Lord. Surely this is a good example for us—to abide accurately by the Word of the Lord, not omitting the smallest nor in any wise adding thereto.

But let us now continue the examination of Scriptures showing that the believer's attitude in this present dispensation is that of waiting—not for death, but for the Lord from heaven.

Turn to Acts i. 10, 11: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

In connection with this, read Luke xxiv. 52, 53: "And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God."

From this it is evident that when our Lord (in John xvi. 20) spoke of a time during which His disciples should weep and lament, He did not refer to this present period of His absence in Heaven, but to the "little while" during which He was in the grave, when they supposed that all their hopes had

perished, forgetting, through the unbelief of their hearts, that He had said, "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

But, true to His word, He did see them again, and their hearts did rejoice, and they returned to Jerusalem not only in the joy of knowing that He was alive, but in the further and fuller joy of the hope of His coming again. And this answers to Rom. xv. 13: "Now *the God of the Hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Now this passage in Acts i. settles the point, clearly, that the disciples were taught to look for and expect the personal return of the Lord Jesus—not His coming by His Spirit into our hearts. It is true that He does so, that He manifests Himself thus to His believing, obedient saints, but it is not that to which their eye is here directed. The words are, "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

They saw Him as distinctly go up into heaven, passing through the cloud out of their sight, as Israel saw the High Priest going in to the tabernacle, in to the holy place, and thence within the veil, having the blood of atonement in his hand. Israel waited till the High Priest came out. In like manner do the saints now await the coming again of our Great High Priest forth from the heavenly sanctuary. He has gone there as the "*Forerunner*," that means that He has gone before others who are to follow. These are the priestly family, whom He has redeemed and brought nigh by His blood. He is coming forth to take them to be for ever with Himself within the veil, in the immediate presence of the glory of God. This is the hope for which we are taught to wait.

Turn now to 1 Cor. i. 7. "Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus, as His coming was the hope of the Thessalonian saints, so was it in like manner the hope of the Corinthian Church. They were waiting for Him!

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

When instituting the feast of the Passover, God said, "Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations" (Ex. xii. 14). How different the

institution of the Lord's Supper ! Not a thought of generations coming and going, with the lapse of ages and the certainty of death, but only "till He come." How long or how short the time may be is not hinted at. One definite object is in view. The "*yesterday*" of the Church is the Cross, the *to-morrow* is His coming again.

In 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, we find a definite mapping out of the future. There is first the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ; next, "they that are Christ's at His coming ;" then intervenes the period of His Kingdom, and, finally, "the end ;" when having, in His kingly reign, "put down all rule and all authority and power, "He" shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

This places us between Christ's resurrection and His coming again ; at which coming, all that are His shall be raised from the dead, and the living changed, and both caught up in one company to meet Him.

This is further shown in the same chapter, verse 51. "Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." If Paul had believed, according to current theology, in the certainty of death, it would surely have read thus : "those who are then alive upon the earth shall be changed." But it is not so ; the Apostle links himself not with the dead, but with the living—"and we shall be changed ;" clearly implying that the Apostle and the Corinthian saints were both waiting for and expecting the coming of the Lord during their lifetime.

An attempt has been made to connect "the last trump" here with the last of the seven trumpets in the Book of Revelation. But let it be distinctly understood that the Book of Revelation could not have been known to the Corinthians, not having been then written. The Apostle could not possibly have referred to a book not then in existence ; and, moreover, the trumpets in Revelation as seen in vision are symbolic, and not literal as here.

It may be that the "last trump" is in contrast to the trumpet that sounded long and loud from Sinai at the giving of the law. That was a trump of terror, of judgment, of condemnation, and of death.

But the "last trump" is one of grace and glory, of mighty resurrection power, and of unspeakable joy.

Turn now to 2 Cor. v. 1. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved." Here again is an "if" that runs counter to current

theology. If the ordinary doctrine that all must die, and the Lord's coming cannot take place for a very long time, had been in the Apostle's mind, would he not have written, "For we know that *when* our earthly house of this tabernacle *shall be* dissolved." We do not believe that, necessarily, dissolution will be our experience. If it comes, then we know that soon we shall be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ; but it may not come, Christ may come first, and then—

Oh joy ! oh delight !
Should we go without dying !

Now, let us look at Phil. iii. 20. "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven (this implies strangership on earth) ; from whence also we look for the Saviour (this is very explicit—we are looking for or expecting the Saviour to come from heaven) ; who shall change our vile body," or, "the body of our humiliation." This corresponds exactly with 1 Cor. xv. 51 : "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." The Apostle says nothing in any of these Scriptures to indicate that death is certain to overtake all. We could not gather from any of these passages that he was expecting to die. They all serve to show quite the contrary—that his constant hope and expectation was to be alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord—and, therefore, to be among those who shall be "changed," and not among those who shall be raised from the dead.

In 2 Tim. iv. 6 there is a change. He there says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," from which it is evident that at the end it was revealed to him that he was to suffer martyrdom. But only by a special revelation to that effect, as in the case of Peter and of Paul, is death at all anticipated in the New Testament, and such a special revelation to Peter and Paul only proves the rule. If any believer says to me, "I am quite sure that I will die," I ask him, "Why are you sure ? Were you told so by the Lord, like Peter ?" If not, then you have no right to say so, and no ground in Scripture for any such expectation.

Col. iii. 4. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Mark the blessed truth we have here, viz., that when Christ shall be publicly manifested to the world, then shall we also appear or be manifested with Him in glory. Notice, this passage does not speak of our

being caught up to meet Him, but of our being manifested with Him. Thus we see that Christ cannot appear or be manifested to the world as its rightful King until first He has taken us to Himself. His first act, therefore, will be the raising of the sleeping saints, the changing of the living, and then the taking of them all to Himself; and after that, His manifestation and theirs to the world that rejected Him and them. (See also Romans viii. 19, and 1 John iii. 1, 2.)

Turn now to 1 Thess. iv. 15-17. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." If I believed the commonly received theology, I should expect to find it read thus—"those who shall be alive at the coming;" but, observe, the Apostle says "we."

Chapter v. 23. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless"—"until the hour of your death?" No; that is not how it reads, though popular theology demands it, but "unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." As we sing—

"But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming, we wait;
The sky, not the grave is our goal."

1 Tim. vi. 13-16. "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable"—"until the day of your death, Timothy?" No; that is not it, though modern theology would have it so. "Keep this commandment . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." That was the goal to which the Spirit directed the eye of Timothy. There is not a word about Timothy having to look forward to death.

James v. 7, 8. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

This clearly brings out the same line of teaching. They might be called to patiently bear for a longer time than they expected; but, nevertheless, surely and certainly, the hope for which they waited was drawing nigh.

Heb. x. 35-37. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise."

Not "that after ye have done the will of God ye might fall asleep and be at rest," but "that ye might receive the promise." And what is "the

promise?" The next words answer: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

Rev. xxii. 20. "Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Do our hearts ever say, "My Lord delayeth His coming?" No; there is no *delay*. To "delay" would imply that His love had grown cold! He is waiting the moment appointed by the Father—patiently waiting; and this, I believe, is the meaning of 2 Thess. iii. 5: "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ." He is waiting patiently on the Father's throne, and we are to be waiting patiently in testimony upon earth.

When the Father's time arrives there will not be a moment's delay. In "the twinkling of an eye" we shall be changed and caught up to meet Him.

Many other Scriptures might be referred to, but surely these are enough to show that in the New Testament there is but one unvarying testimony, that the horizon of our vision is not the grave, but the coming of our Lord.

Let us, then, cherish this separating, purifying hope. "He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He (Christ) is pure."

MINISTRY.

II.



HAVING, in a former paper, glanced shortly at the principles of Divine ministry in the Church, and also noticed the danger of substituting human learning for Divine power, we now pass on to point out some of the snares into which those have fallen, or are liable to fall, who have left the bondage of sectarian systems, and have come out into the place of liberty, where we have it in our power to carry out the will of the Lord as to ministry in the house of God.

We have felt no difficulty in leading our readers thus far, because, as far as most of them are concerned, we have been exposing the failings of others; but it is not so easy to get people to listen patiently when you are exposing their own shortcomings.

We presume most of our readers have already been gathered unto the Name of the Lord; and we ought to be able to say to those who are still in

bondage around us, "You are all wrong; come with us, and you will see God's way carried out. You require a human 'president,' and everything cut and dry, to secure order in your meetings, but we have the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit to preserve order; just come with us, and see how beautiful and blessed it is for believers to take the Lord's way." Well, the time was when many of us could have given such an invitation to our fellow-saints in the sects; but, alas, in many instances, "the glory is departed," and "the fine gold has become dim." How often do we feel that to invite strangers to our meetings, is only inviting them to come and see our nakedness. We desire to write in all charity, and yet we do not think that we are going beyond the truth when we say that much that is passing for ministry in the Spirit among "separated" believers is really a deplorable failure. Christians with very little discernment can easily see that much of it is not in the Spirit at all, and its literary merit is also very poor. We sometimes hear Christians complaining how so many young people, specially young men, are turning away from the truth, and going back to that which their parents left many years ago; but, beloved, is there not a cause? Can it be wondered at if those who have received, or are receiving, an education of a very high order, get tired of a ministry that has nothing in it either for head or heart? We are not justifying any one in turning aside from the Divine path, we are simply writing on behalf of the truth; and we are convinced that not a few are driven away by the poverty of the ministry among those who profess to be following the leading of the Spirit. And how can we expect intelligent Christians to leave what is called an "educated ministry" and come to where ministry is too often a matter of painful endurance. We write strongly, because we feel that the cause of truth is suffering, and the "testimony of the Lord" in many places is being all but ruined.

It may be asked by some, "What is to be done to remedy this state of things? Shall we go back to where we will get education and refinement, even if it lacks power?" No; whatever we do, we can never go back to what is not of God. But we do think that a little more attention to mental culture would, in many cases, be very helpful. In these days, when there are such opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of

letters, we do not see why those who seek to minister the Word of the Lord should not give more attention to this. We do not believe it is a wise thing for those who have no opportunity of learning languages thoroughly, to begin to *dabble* in these things. We have never seen much good come out of this; but we do think that all those who desire to minister, either to saints or sinners, should endeavour, as far as possible, to be able to read the Word and to express their thoughts without blundering. We believe the "gift of utterance" is by the Spirit; but we should remember He was never given to teach people to read, nor yet to teach them to speak their mother-tongue correctly; and to be careless of these things is to bring dishonour on the name of the Lord, and also is a great cause of stumbling to some who are enquiring after the truth.

But while these things have their place, and should not be overlooked, the one great remedy for the want of an efficient ministry is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, not in pretence, but in reality. If one is in a condition to be used by the Spirit, his ministry will not require much *book*-education to make it effectual to either saints or sinners. The great cause why there is such a lack of a really spiritual ministry is the lack of spiritually-minded men; and it is becoming more and more clear to us that nothing will bring about a better state of things among those who have been gathered on scriptural ground, but a revival of spirituality and godliness. We are learning more and more truth every year, whilst in too many instances our power to carry it out in practice is becoming less and less. Nothing is more deceptive than a mere knowledge of truth without power. A brother of long experience remarked some time ago, "that he knew of nothing more hurtful to a church than the ministrations of a gifted man who was out of fellowship with God." When we speak of a revival, we do not mean what is known as "revival meetings;" there will be no fear of the meetings if the people who compose them are all right. The reason why there is such failure in carrying out *positional* truth is because the *condition* is wrong. We should be sorry indeed to say a word that might lead any one to look lightly on their church position; but many have yet to learn that a scriptural position demands a scriptural condition; and it is plain that the truth regarding the "calling," "government," and ministry

of the Church, which has been committed in a special way to many of us, is being spoken against because of our sad failure in carrying out truth that we know and have been teaching for years.

Of course there is still much ignorance as to what the Scriptures teach concerning ministry. Many seem to think that the liberty the Lord has given to all whom He has fitted to speak, means licence to all without exception. On this point we cannot enter just now; we may take this up again. What we specially wish to dwell upon is the danger of those who are called of the Lord to minister His word allowing themselves to become unfit to do their work efficiently.

We have already said that nothing will meet the present need of individual saints, and of assemblies, but a restoration of spiritual power—an increase of *life-power*; and the question we ask is this: Is the ministry among us calculated to bring this about? Are ministering brethren even aiming at it? Whether we look at local ministry, as in Acts xx. 17-25, and Heb. xiii. 17, or to the ministry of those who, like Paul and Apollos, move from place to place, we greatly fear that much of the feebleness and barrenness in many places is for want of freshness and spiritual power, and much of the shallowness of our Gospel work is from the same cause.

We have said that ministry is giving out for the benefit of others what we ourselves have received from God. Are we who minister receiving *fresh* from Him what we are giving out to others? If we study Paul's preachings and writings we will see that there was a special adaptation in all he said to the condition of those whom he was addressing. He does not seem to have had any stock of "subjects," or "addresses," or "stories," that suited every place and class of people alike; he was simply an instrument in the hand of the Spirit, to give out what He got from the Lord. And spiritual ministry is the same yet; however interesting it may be, if it is not God's message to the people, there and then, it cannot really accomplish much, and the likelihood is that it will be a positive injury. Is there not a great danger among us of trading in what has been learned in bygone days? Those who are moving from place to place are specially liable to fall into this snare. We fear it is a growing evil. We profess not to believe in sermons written down and read off to the people; are we giving them anything better than

what we are condemning? This question is pertinent and deeply solemn, and strikes at the root of much that we have to deplore. Is not an address that has been carefully studied and written down as good as one stored up in the preacher's memory, so that he can give it out at any time without any exercise of soul? Do they not both set aside the necessity for continual intercourse with, and dependence on, the Lord? Some may think that we are too particular in these things. We reply that our God is very particular as to how His work is done, and also as to the condition and character of those who do it. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully [negligently]" (mar. Jer. xlviii. 10). And with all our boasted liberty, is there not often a serving the Lord with that which costs us nothing? And is there not a call for those who assay to take the lead in ministry to lie low before the Lord, and seek to find out why there is so little power with all the truth we know?

In the year 1859, a minister, who was afterwards greatly used by the Lord during the revival that commenced about that time, had an experience like the following:—He had just finished his Sunday preparations in the form of two or three carefully prepared sermons. He had heard of a revival prayer-meeting to be held near his house on that Saturday evening. He went to see it. It was a real prayer-meeting, and it was far into the morning hours before they separated. The good man's soul caught the holy fire; he came home a *revived* believer. He sat down to look over his forenoon sermon; but he had not gone far when he said to himself, "This will never do!" and he consigned all to the flames. He went down on his knees before the Lord, and then betook himself to his Bible. And when he commenced to preach, the people wondered what was up. Those who could go to sleep under his "essays" before, now trembled under the power of the truth. They felt that God was speaking to them, and that they must listen. It is something of this kind, we need: messages, and power to deliver them, direct from the Lord Himself.

We once heard of a godly woman who got a reading of a volume of Gospel addresses by a celebrated preacher. On being asked what she thought of it, she replied, "It is very clear and very clever;" but she added, "it had a strange effect on my soul; I

had much less desire for secret prayer after reading it than before." We greatly fear the same remark could justly be made regarding much preaching and writing; it is like the woman's book, both clear and clever, but it does not help people to pray. This is what we need, and nothing else will do but a ministry that will bring us all to our closets and to our knees; and truth gathered in the past will never effect this, however orthodox and clear. Notwithstanding all we have learned of the leading of the Spirit, it is too painfully evident that in many cases the flesh has come to the front, and refuses to give place, and it is impossible to put things right by Truth alone. The flesh must be burned up by fire from God's own altar; first within our own breasts, and then in God's assemblies. If the flesh is to be subdued, the Spirit of the Lord must blow upon it. Ministry must not only be orthodox, but in "demonstration of the Spirit and with power," and the same results will follow as in early days. G. A.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XI.

(Continued from page 123.)

IN this chapter we have the narrative of Lazarus, the seventh representative person of this gospel, the man who was dead. As Christ was in the world and the Light of the world, He more and more shows the desperate condition of man, and the last picture that we have here shows us that man is dead.

Perhaps it will be best to study it by observing the Lord's way with the several parties that pass before Him in it: His way with the family, with the dead one, with the other two, with His disciples, with the beholders, with the Father, with Himself. This family at Bethlehem is no doubt a type of the Church of God. Bethlehem signifies three things—the house of sorrow, the house of joy, the house of communion. Everything here is suggestive. Here we see the family of Bethlehem, and, like as is true in our case, a part of the family worshippers round the Lord have lost one dear to them. And it is well always to keep chap. xii. with chap. xi., for there we see the family re-united round the Lord again. It is a millennial chapter, showing us the Church first, the

Jews second, and the Gentiles third. Now, in the picture of the family we see that death invades the circle. Their resort is Christ. He who speaks of us as His people sees us as sheep—stray sheep, in chap. x., where He is seen to be Himself the suffering Saviour to meet their case; then, in chap. xi., where the Church of God is seen broken in upon by cruel death, the Lord is seen as the victorious, triumphant Saviour, mastering death.

Happily are we told at the beginning of the chapter, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." How good of the Holy Spirit to tell us this! They were all dear, though of remarkably different attainments in the divine life. And what had they done to get this love? Nothing. It is striking that, when we read of God's love, it is to the world, of Christ's, to the Church; and whilst, on the one hand, we only come to God through Christ, yet the love which the sinner first learns is the love of God rather than of Christ. Then comes that inner truth, that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. But look at the Lord's way with the separate members—with Lazarus, the dead, the risen one. We are told of His love, then that He stayed two days where He was. Do not let us, when we have a dear one ill and dying and our hearts are weighed down with sorrow, judge harshly because He does not respond instantly to our appeal. He loved. Though yet the blessing appeared to tarry, still it came. "Then, after that, saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judea again." And when His disciples dehorted Him, He said that the sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God. That is a precious word again, when we know what sickness is; for when it says "the wages of sin is death," that comprehends not only the passage out of the body, but all the sorrowful steps on the road to it. Then he presently dies, and at last we are told of his stinking. An infallible sign of death is corruption, morally as well as physically. When you see corruption, be assured there is death, whether around or within. But it was for the glory of God, and so we read in another verse, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." Glory, in Scripture, is always conjoined with power. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue

all things unto Himself." "Strengthened with all might, according to the power of the glory." Thou shalt see the glory, the display of God in power. When God shews Himself out, there is no resisting His will ; it is done.

But look at the Lord's way with the other two, the bereaved. They send a little message to Him, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Much in a little. No need of many words to touch His heart. May we learn the holy art of appealing to Him, and so as to be mindful of His love. Surely we have good ground there. Then we see further, as we look down the chapter, their different character and attainments strikingly come out. Undoubtedly Mary is much in advance of Martha. The latter evidently feels a constraint upon her heart, and she has to fetch Mary, who will understand the Lord better than she. And is not the clue to this found in Luke x. ? They had been together in the Lord's school before now. And then in that passage we read of Martha busy giving, but Mary was getting—getting to know His love, and probably there hearing of His dying love. Both were His people, but Mary was learning first, before she would be bustling. Then, when Mary's time for service came, it was service of such rich character as to draw out His rich commendation. Mary representing the worshipper, Martha the worker ; Mary knowing his mind. There are several hints as to how little Martha was up to the mark. Thus, she says to the Lord, in verse 22, "I know that, even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Now, the word in the original there used for "ask" is never anywhere else in Scripture used of Christ ; its force is, "to petition." Whenever the Spirit speaks of Christ asking the Father, another word altogether is used, "I will *request*." A specimen of how little she entered into His glory. Then, again, "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this ? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord ; I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." She has to fall back upon rudimentary truth, and does not

answer His question. She is ill at home with the Lord ; a veil is upon her heart. Every one could say that, but Christ asked something more, and she felt uncomfortable, and had to go and call her sister. I am struck with this, which we often have to learn in experience, that we should begin our adoration of Him, not in service, but in communion. Let all our service flow out of communion ; our communion with Him to be well established first. Both use at first the same words, but notice the action of Mary ; she simply drops at His feet ; she is not full of words. "When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Though both used the word "if," His tears then denied that doubt ; and if any doubt His love now, His blood denies that doubt. So she simply drops at His feet ; no verbosity, but just her eye upon His. Communion again. Some in the family know Him better than others, though He knows all and loves all. Some are like Martha, bustling, and that takes more with the world ; but we see that it is the Mary spirit that pleases Him—that which is intent upon Him and upon His glance. The more we are in the light, the more are we alone with Christ ; the less we are in the light, the better are we understood by the world, the more in keeping with the views of the mass, and the more do we have our reward here. Notice that Martha is spoken of as "the sister of him that was *dead*," while it is in resurrection that Mary is spoken of as his sister. Many Christians do not understand resurrection life ; that all life from Christ is of resurrection form. I believe that that is the first step to coming out of Babylon, the realization of our association with Christ risen.

Look again at the Lord's way with His disciples. They thought they were going to death, and tried to dissuade Him ; they did not know they were going to resurrection. In fact, they were afraid, and would try to detain the Lord away from Judea, where His enemies were thirsting for His blood. Observe that Jesus says, "*Our* friend, Lazarus." If Christ is a friend to me and to you, we are mutual friends. Lazarus began by being loved of Christ, and Christ stood his friend, and thus he became the friend of Philip and of Peter. Our true union is by a risen Christ.—(*Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

SPRING-TIME IN THE SOUL.

CANT. II. 8-16.

WINTER of my reprobation—
Cold neglect of Thy salvation—
All is gone, is gone for aye;
New found love and joy sustain me,
Nought on earth can now retain me,
“Rise,” Thou say’st, “and come away!”

Lo! the clouds were dark around Thee
When with cruel hands they bound Thee
To the Cross, that awful day.
Fountains of the deep were broken,
Fell the rain of wrath unspoken;
But the storm has passed away.

Nevermore shall tempest streaming—
Forked fires of judgment gleaming—
Claim Thee for their lawful prey.
Ne’er again the frost-chain bind me,
Nor the whirling snowstorm blind me,
While my being’s pulses play.

Flowers around my feet are springing,
And my hearing heart is singing,
Singing all the livelong day;
Hearing in its ceaseless beating
Evermore a voice repeating
Thy sweet summons, “Come away!”

From the worldling’s passing pleasure,
Robes moth-eaten, rusting treasure,
“Rise, My friend!” I hear Thee say:
To the rapture of our union,
To the calm of our communion;
“My companion, come away!”

Bluer seems the sky’s pavilion,
Brighter burns the cloud’s vermilion,
Fresher fragrance breathes the May,
Since the word of Thine election
Thrilled me with its strong affection,
“Rise, My friend, and come away!”

And the spring-time’s blossom tender
Ripens unto summer splendour
That will never know decay.
Thou art mine—earth-bands are riven!
Thou art mine—the Lord from heaven!
I am Thine, and Thine for aye!

A.P.M.

Aigle, Switzerland, July, 1886.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART V.

CHAPTERS viii. and ix. These two chapters sum up the matter of the previous exhortations, and conclude with a solemn and powerful appeal addressed to all—and especially to the young—in the name of Divine Wisdom, whose attributes and benefits are fully set forth, and contrasted with the allurements of wanton pleasure. And in these chapters we may rightly regard this description of wisdom as a personification of that Divine attribute which the Son of God possesses equally with the Father. According to the Word in 1 Cor. i. 24, “Christ, the power of God, and *the wisdom of God.*”

Verses 1-11. Wisdom appealeth and beseecheth both publicly—as a herald—and privately. She begs men to give heed to her teachings—as excellent—as right—as true—as plain—as most valuable—as better than all riches—as incomparable.

Verses 12-21. Wisdom and prudence always go together as inseparable. She finds out knowledge of all skilful inventions—*i.e.*, of all that is truly wise and discreet—so that any guided by her may be safely led through the intricacies of this present evil world.

Such wisdom is most needful in the conduct of the most important affairs of human life. Such wisdom is one of God’s attributes (verses 22-31), and He reveals it to those who attend to Him, that they may “dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil” (chapter i. 33).

In the fear of the Lord—*i.e.*, in whole-hearted, trustful, reverential confidence in Him and in His commandments and directions—is there wisdom. With Him is there hatred of evil, and in His children is there begotten the same. Counsel, or skilful ability to manage, is learned from Him. Sound wisdom, understanding, and strength are His, and gifts He loves to bestow. Kings reign equitably by His wisdom only. All true rule and justice are through His imparted and acknowledged wisdom. God loveth the wisdom-lover, and promises that those who seek it *diligently* shall find Him. Joseph, Samuel, David, and Daniel all sought Him thus early, and found Him.

True riches and honour, durable or substantial

riches and prosperity, are the portion of His people. He leads ever in righteousness—in the middle of the way of judgment, never deviating to the right or left—that He may, thus leading, cause His followers to inherit substance, and that He may fill their treasuries.

Verses 22-36. These verses give us, under the guise of wisdom's action, precious understanding of the intimate and lovely accord between the Father and the Son from the earliest acts of creation: for "without Him (the Word) was not anything made that was made" (see Col. 1. 15-17). Anointed from everlasting, or ever the earth was, to fulfil God's purposes, was the Son—"the wisdom of God." Before the earth was made, or the fields, or even the first clod of earth (see R.V.)—when God circled the deep and fixed the clouds on high; when He put to the sea its limit, so that the waters should not pass its shore—then was wisdom by Him as His foster-child, His delight, ever rejoicing in His presence; rejoicing in His habitable earth, which He created for His own delight and joy; delighting in and revealing Him to the sons of men.

"It is the happiness of God to create; and He rejoices in all the works of His wisdom and power, but chiefly in man created after His own image, and therefore capable of enjoying the communications of Divine wisdom which He delights to impart."

"Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children;" for happy are they who keep my ways.

As men wait at the gates and doors of royal palaces in the East to show their respect unto, and in expectation of favours from, the sovereign, so happy—thrice happy—is he who heareth wisdom's ways; watching daily, waiting daily. Such shall find life and favour from the Lord. The transgressor doeth wrong to his own soul, and is a moral suicide; for disregard of God is everlasting death.

CHAPTER IX.

Verses 1-6. Wisdom, as before described, builds her royal palace, and finishes it in perfection, so that nothing is wanting. The seven pillars denote completeness. She then provides a banquet, and sends out her messengers to publicly invite, proclaiming that there is a refuge and ample provision for the simple of mind, to enable them to turn away from the foolish, and so to live walking in the way of

understanding. He who eateth of God's bread hath no stomach for the devil's dainties. He who hath his eyes opened by God's wisdom can quickly discern the world's delusions. Moses forsook Egypt; Caleb and Joshua forsook the company of the unbelieving spies; many forsook Korah's company when they saw the danger it was leading to; Ruth forsook everything for the sake of going with Naomi, and found life-long good.

Verses 7-12. It is not clear whether these verses are connected morally or not with the context, but verse 11 seems to show it is so, and that in the effort of making known wisdom's invitations, such experiences as these will be found:—Some will scorn and mock; if so, pass on and take no heed; give the message, truly and lovingly, and leave it. Others will listen, perhaps shamefacedly at first; reprove such, and invite. Such will love thee, such will benefit; for "the fear of the Lord"—*i.e.*, the consciousness of God's way being the right one, and the bowing to His correction—is "the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Most Holy is understanding. To such wisdom, then, speaks personally, saying, "For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased." If thou be wise, if thou seek after wisdom, it shall benefit thee; and if thou turnest away and scornest, thou shalt bear the penalty (see chapter i. 32, 33).

Verses 13-18. Folly is clamorous and brazen-faced. She hath the approbation of the many, therefore she carries on her business openly and unblushingly, inviting especially the simple and unwary, who are heedless of danger. She has no need to invite others, they come too readily. She adopts the very sound of wisdom (verse 4), and promises all manner of sensual delights, in secret, saying, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." She promises to give full gratification to the lustful desires of men, secretly, so that no one may know; as though God did not behold the evil and the good: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." He who is thus beguiled considereth not that such ways lead to death, and that Folly's guests find their end in the depths of hell. Let none be deceived: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

We must remember that the teachings of the book

of Proverbs are according to the relative light under the law. They serve as a schoolmaster's precepts—promising reward to the obedient, but penalty to the transgressor. To those who know Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer the wisdom taught is precious and also appropriate, and the practical lessons taught are of present value; for none of God's moral precepts can ever fail to be beneficial to those obedient thereto. "Old-fangled notions" some may call them; but this world's wisdom will fail and pass away, while these His precepts will stand, and affect His people to the end of time.

A. O. M.

FAITHFULNESS.—On one occasion, Charles Simeon was summoned to the dying bed of a brother. Entering the room, his relative extended his hand to him, and with deep emotion said, "I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed from neglecting the salvation of my soul!" "Nay, my brother," replied Mr. Simeon, "I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject of salvation before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters." "Yes," exclaimed the dying man, "you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, *closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat, and told me that I was unconverted*, and that, if I died in that state, I should be lost. And now I am dying, and, but for God's grace, I might have been for ever undone!" It is said that this affecting scene made an ineffaceable impression on Mr. Simeon's mind.

ENTHUSIASM.—The late Rowland Hill, in once addressing the people at Wotton, raising himself, exclaimed—"Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast. When I first came into this part of the country, I was walking on yonder hill, and saw a gravel-pit fall in and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help, so loud, that I was heard in the town below, at the distance of near a mile; help came, and rescued two of the sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast *then*; and when I see eternal destruction ready to fall on poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud to them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast now? No, friend, I am no enthusiast in so doing; and I call on thee aloud, to urge others to fly for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel of Christ Jesus."

FIVE GOLDEN RULES FOR BIBLE READERS.

I.

KEEP your minds close to God's Word; let them not rove and wander while you hear it; if they do you lose all. This is the apostle's counsel, "to give earnest heed;" to be intent upon the things we hear; to watch the words as they come forth out of the preachers' mouths (Heb. ii. 1). And why so? "Lest at any time we let them slip." If we would remember well, there must not be the least diversion.

II.

Get a good understanding in the Word of God. The observation of the Holy Ghost is notable for this purpose: Luke ii. 19, "They understood not the sayings which He spake unto them. But Mary kept all these sayings in her heart." They kept them not, because they did not understand them. That which is not understood will very hardly be remembered. They are our understanding hearers that carry all away, while ignorant and sottish people keep nothing.

III.

Value the Word of God more, and you shall find you will remember it the better. See the necessity, the excellency of it, and then you will be careful how you lose it. Esteem it, as the prophet David did, above gold—yea, above fine gold. He whose memory is weakest seldom forgets where he hath laid his gold.

IV.

Strengthen memory by meditation, repetition, conference of what you hear. If it be hard to take in holy truths, chase them in, rub them in, and settle them by this means. Let them be as a nail well fastened, as the expression of the wise man is, and set home with many strokes, that they may not out again.

V.

Set instantly upon the practice of the truth delivered to you; as soon as you hear it, act it. That which you do you will remember. Mark that of the apostle, James i, 25, "Not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work;" the doer then is no forgetful hearer. Many men remember nothing, because indeed they do nothing.

J. M.

LUKE XV.



It has been well said by another: these Divine pictures are all *one parable*. They show the love of the Son, the love of the Holy Spirit, and the love of the Father.

The order is unique, for we are brought to the Father by the Son, and have access to the Father in one Spirit.

Chapter xiv. ends with, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;" "then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him."

The self-righteous Pharisees have no ear to hear; but *lost* sinners, realizing their need, draw near to hear.

The Pharisees retort, "This man receiveth *sinners*, and *eateth* with them." How blessedly true; for the Holy One, through atoning blood, can now call redeemed sinners into the holiest (Heb. x. 19), to have fellowship with Himself (1 John i.).

We have in this chapter a *lost sheep*, a *lost piece* of silver, and a *lost son*; and to all three the love and grace of God flows out. Nay, when *found*, they get nearer than those who never were *lost*.

This is what God does to every saved sinner: He gives him to be an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ; brings him into His house, for we are of the *household* of God (Eph. ii. 19). Gabriel is of the household—he is a *servant* there; but lost sinners, when *saved*, get a *son's* place (Gal. iv. 5, 6, 7), and are brought to the same glory as the Son (Heb. ii. 10, connect John xvii. 22).

All this is told out in these three Divine pictures of the ways of our God. Man is nowhere; *all* things are of God.

A *lost sheep*—what a fitting type of a sinner lost. The most foolish animal in the world—a fitting likeness of what we were. A dog can find its way home; a *sheep cannot*. Neither can a sinner *find out* God.

Sheep blindly follow one another. Old Adam took the *leap away from God*, and *all we like sheep* have gone astray; we have turned *every one* to our own ("fig leaf") way. A *lost sheep* would die unless gone after; and if the Good Shepherd had not gone after us, we should all have eternally perished.

But He loved us; yes, even when the angels were shouting for joy over His mighty creation works

(Job xxxviii. 5, 6, 7), "His delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31).

"He saw us ruined in the fall,
Yet loved us notwithstanding all."

And so He made heaven as a wilderness, for He came down; He left the ninety and nine, and went after the *lost*.

What does it cost a shepherd to find a lost sheep? *He has to tread every foot of the way to where it is until he find it.*

Behold, then, the Divine picture of a Saviour's love. Down from the shining courts He came; but though He became flesh, He could not find us.

But Calvary's wail: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" has sounded the depths of our wanderings; and on the third day, having found us there—"without God, as we were" (Eph. ii. 12)—He bears us on His mighty shoulders, and never will set us down till the day of judgment (Jude 24).

But even now "there is joy (the joy of our God) in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

A *lost piece of silver*. What a picture of our deadness by nature.

In our unconverted days, while made uncomfortable by the dust of sin (it was the Holy Ghost manifesting our state, in order to shine into our hearts God's love), we were altogether ignorant of how precious we were to God. But soon the light dawned upon us, and then, in all our unworthiness, we could say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Thus we were turned from darkness to light, and as *found*, were taken out of the darkness of Satan's kingdom, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Satan's power was thus broken, and sinners saved are brought to the *Father*.

Hence we have a *lost son*; and here we learn how, even after being saved, we may cause our Father grief and pain.

No one is *seen* going after the lost son. The Father chastens him till he comes to himself, when he says—remembering what he once knew (2 Peter i. 9), and returning to him who loves him still,—"I will arise and go to my father."

Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Such are the words of our Father to

us in our many backslidings of heart. He makes the word quick and powerful (Heb. iv. 12, 13; 1 John i. 6), and that in order to make prodigal sons say—"Father, I have sinned" (1 John i. 9).

The moment the lost son arose to go to his father, the father was on the road to meet him. Even so with us. The moment of confession is the moment of the kiss: "bring forth the best robe and put it on him;" in other words, "ye pastors and teachers, teach him what my love has provided, and feed his hungering soul with the Lamb of God."

But there is another son, as far away in heart as this poor prodigal. Out in the field (the world, Matt. xiii. 38) is a son who can say, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a *commandment of thine* (R.V.), and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with *my friends*."

Once as happy as the prodigal in the house, he had made *friends* of the world, and thus his heart was estranged from the fellowship of the father.

What a picture of us, as Dr. Horatius Bonar well says,—“I look for the Church, and I cannot find it, for it is in the world; I look for the world, and I cannot find it, for it is in the Church.”

But what does the father do? Out to the field he goes, puts his arms around his neck, and says, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that *I have is thine*."

What a God we have, for this is His own picture, drawn by His own unerring finger. Oh that it might find a place in our hearts! Killing our worldliness, stripping our *attainment* robes, and leading us, like Paul, to "forget the things behind, and reach forth unto what is before us;" that is, the open door of the Father's house, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard—the things which our God hath laid up for us.

Then, truly, like Isaiah, we shall say,—

"Here am I, send me."

For soon the opportunity of serving Him here will be over, yet—

"He and we together entering
Those bright courts above;
He and we together sharing
All the Father's love."

Yes, beloved; and may this wondrous grace constrain us more and more to love and serve Him.

Finally, note the place all these lost things get. *The shoulder* is the portion of the lost sheep.

The hand (my sheep are in mine hand) is the portion of the lost precious thing.

The house, the robe, the ring, the fatted calf, are the place to which the lost son is brought.

Gabriel stands before His God, the seraphim veil their faces, and mighty angels wait His will!

But *redeemed dust is on the shoulder*.

Sinners saved *are in His hands*, and wandering sons find a place *at His table*.

Oh how thoroughly God has thwarted Satan!—when true it is we shall praise God to all eternity, that even we were LOST, for none are brought so near as

The *lost* who is *found*.

T. C.

AN APPEAL ON BEHALF OF SPAIN.

"WORLDLY PROSPECTS KILLING THE CHURCH."



ON Sunday afternoon, June 20, Mr. J. Cecil Hoyle, from Spain, addressed the meeting at Brighton on the subject of foreign missions, and especially in regard to Spain. He referred to Isaiah vi. 8: "Here am I, send me;" to Matthew xxviii. 19: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c.; and Proverbs xxiv. 11: "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain." He said—Our Master, before He went away, gave His last command to us to finish the work that He had begun. The Lord came from the far-off country, and told us to do the Father's will, and then He suffered and died and rose again; but before He went away He gave a command for us, His servants, that we should go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Now, we may well ask ourselves, Have we obeyed this command that the Lord has given us? Have we been true to the Word of God? Have we listened to our Master's voice, and what have we done towards fulfilling it? We are very apt to take this verse as if it belonged to 1800 years ago; but it is clearly as much for the assembly in Brighton as it was for those disciples of the Lord. But what is killing the Church at the present day is worldly prospects; young men settling down to "get on in life," looking for earthly things, and, at the same time, singing on Sundays that we are a "heavenly people!" Let us examine our lives a little and see what they consist of. With a great many of the people of God of the present day life consists of working day after day, toiling for the

daily bread, going to the meeting, and then going to bed, and dying. That is about what the servants of God do in the present day. I do not mean to say that every one can go out; there are those who have cares at home—the maintenance of family, and so on. But there are, also, I am sure, out of the great mass of Christians in England, many who should be outside instead of inside. Many stay at home because of ignorance, and say they have not got the gift. A brother, Peter Scott, who has gone out to Africa, spoke in Glasgow a short time since. He said: "I have not got what is called in the Church a 'great gift,' but I can tell the people in Africa of the love of God, and that Jesus Christ came down to the world to die for sinners." And that is just the gift that is wanted. There are hundreds and thousands in Sunday schools who do that; and there is none that has so hard work as the Sunday-school teacher very often; and how fit they are for this service. And yet many of them, young men, say they have no gift. Put in an advertisement for half-a-dozen agents wanted on the West Coast of Africa, at so many hundreds a year, and see if they have not got gift to apply for the agency. But the Lord's command is "go to the work." Then, again, the sisters tell us they have not got the gift; but, as a rule, sisters are not less efficient in talk than the brethren. And that is just what is wanted in the service—either sisters or brethren who have got the love of God in their hearts. It is not a great gift that is required; it is whole-heartedness in the service of the Lord. And what are our lives? They will soon end, and we shall soon be seeing the King in His beauty—very soon, in a few months—supposing we did live another twenty years—that is only 240 months—and that will soon be up, and we will be seeing the Lord who was crucified. Then He will be talking to us about this verse. Truly the requirements of the work outside are very great; and we ought to consider our position before God in this matter. Have you ever thought that within four days from England there is a country which has not heard that the Son of God has come down—that is Africa. Two days to Madrid, and then two to Africa with its millions. We enjoy ourselves in England, but millions are going down from Africa within four days of our shores, and we have never told them that Christ died for them—that the Son of God came down to save them.

The Lord's command was to go and tell these people of Christ, that the Son of God came down to die for them. You may see mothers there taking a little babe and pouring boiling water down its throat to kill it. And to whom is the command sent. To England, surely; Russia cannot do it; America can do a little; India cannot do it. The responsibility lies at the doors of England, and this work is lying at our doors. God seems to have made England the means by which He would reach the heathen, and England has done it in part. Take Spain itself. In the year 1868 one could hardly find any to praise Him, but now 10,000 would leap up to praise God in Spain and Portugal. And you who are praying, go on week by week, month by month, expecting God to send us down greater blessing. What we should bring home to our own consciences, as regards this matter, is the going out into other lands. How many! I daresay there are some here who are anxious and troubled about it. Well, the matter will be brought before you more clearly if you give yourselves to prayer, and, if you are willing, then God will send you out. God never will have an unwilling labourer. Do not think God will send us out if we are not willing to go. I met a brother once, and he said that for a good many years he was exercised about going out, but something came in the way, and he was not able to do it. No wonder God put him aside. God won't have a forced labourer; it must be a work of love. It must be a work of love, whether at home or abroad, whether in Africa or India. God will never have slaves do work for Him. He can do without them. We meet different classes of people, all anxious to go out, but they have not obeyed the command of the Lord—"Go ye into all the world." Well, why have you not gone out? Where is your commission for stopping at home? Christ never said, "Stay at home." He said, "Go." Where, then, is your commission for staying at home. Let us consider the matter. The great argument of the present day is that there is a great deal of work to be done at home. Yes, but look at the number to do it, and look, also, at the percentage you get. They get 80 per cent. in China; and among the Jews great returns are coming in. Wherever they go great returns are coming in; but look at the great masses, and what is the result of our preaching in England. What fruit is it yielding? Look at

the great mass of the labourers! Look at the mass of Christians! Why are the results not greater? Because we have not obeyed the command of the Lord. When God sent Jonah out, was not one man enough to make the whole of Nineveh to go down on their knees and confess. God could do it as well by one as by a hundred. But, is God limited? Surely not. We have been singing, "Till He come." Do we mean what we say? Do we mean we want the end to come? Could we tell Him how His work is going on? Would we not have to say that we have neglected it in China, in India, and in Africa, which is close by, and does not know of Christ. And yet we talk about the Lord coming. We sit in our favoured island whilst other lands sit in darkness. It is a very solemn question when we talk about the Lord coming. We ought to make it an individual case. Some say, "I would go, but I do not know how I am to go." If you are willing to go so as to assist in His service, whether here or out there, God will surely give you a clear word; He will make known His way. How many strong, hearty ones, might be out preaching the Word, but are kept back by the influence of earthly things, and their time is not taken up by the things of Heaven. So it is with many sisters. How useful many of them would be. But what is it here? It may be a little sewing, a little lawn tennis, and a few other things, and then the day is done, and the week, and the year is done, and then death comes. God has been sending out many labourers in these days, but we want to see more in Spain. Let us take Spain. How many have we got there? We get one in eight years—one helper in eight years. That is a very solemn thought. One in eight years! One sister went out the other day from Greenwich to Leon. If you go out you may have a whole province to yourself. The labourers in Spain are working alone. God would have them do their work two-and-two. But we cannot do this. We have not the number; therefore they work alone, though it is desirable to have two-and-two.

Mr. Hoyle then proceeded to give details of the work during the last ten years in Spain, and said that it had made marvellous progress. It must be remembered that Spain was under the Inquisition, and how the Spaniards gave themselves up one by

one to the stakes, the last one being burned in 1808. Now, however, they could hardly go into the capital of a province without meeting some Christians.

THE BURNT OFFERING.



N the burnt offering, we have typically brought before us the Lord Jesus, perfectly surrendering Himself to God, in an infinitely acceptable manner, "*for us*;" so that His people are "accepted in the Beloved." It proclaims that Christ "hath loved *us*, and hath given Himself *for us*, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2). It sets before us the whole life of the unblemished One, voluntarily and unreservedly consecrating Himself to God, always doing those things that please Him (John viii. 29). "My meat," said He, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). It shews us Jesus loving the Lord His God, with *all* His heart, and mind, and strength. It is not the bearing our sins that the burnt offering specially teaches us; that, the sin offering blessedly represents. It is Jesus as the *obedient One* that is here considered; He, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the FORM OF A SERVANT, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, HE HUMBLIED HIMSELF, and became OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6-8). Yes, it is Jesus, who is so touchingly depicted in this offering, perfectly surrendering Himself to God,—"*unto death, even the death of the cross*,"—that "*by the obedience of one*," many might "*be made righteous*" (Rom. v. 19). Trace this "*Holy One*" where we may, and in whatever circumstances, He is *always* doing "*the Father's will*." In *early youth*, the abundance of His heart flowed out in the utterance of His lips, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49). In *the wilderness*, after fasting forty days, and being afterwards an hungered, with what quiet submission do we see Him quenching the tempter's dart, with, "It is written!" In the garden of *Gethsemane*, when filled with bitter anguish and indescribable agony, so that "*His sweat was as it were great drops of blood*

falling down to the ground," and in the full prospect of the accursed "death of the cross," still He could say, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). And again, when *His betrayers and murderers* came to lay hold of Him, Jesus went forth "of His own voluntary will," and said, "Whom seek ye?" and when they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," with what Divine composure did He reply, "I am *He!*" Trace still further this elect Servant, in whom Jehovah's soul delighted; and whether we see Him witnessing a good confession before Pilate, or "bearing His cross," or bowing His head, and giving up the ghost (John xix. 30);—wherever we look at Him, we see Him setting His "face like a flint," to accomplish all the will of Him that sent Him, until He could say, "It is finished." We see in Christ, the obedient One "unto death," the antitype of the *unblemished* sacrifice, which was offered "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord,"—there, *killed* "before the Lord."

Though the blessed Lord walked up and down in an evil world, trod upon a cursed earth, and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet was He "without sin." "In Him is no sin;" and, doubtless, the washing of the legs and inwards of the burnt offering in water, was to typify the Lord's purity both within and without. To shew us His entire consecration, and infinite acceptability to God, *all* was burnt on the altar: tried by the holiness of Jehovah, "who is of purer eyes than to behold evil," and *all* was a "sweet savour" unto Him. God could rest in every thought and act of Jesus, with entire satisfaction and delight; and He could rest in Him with this complacency, on behalf of others, too; "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness *to every one that believeth*" (Rom. x. 4). He did most truly say, what none other could, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have *finished the work* which Thou gavest me to do;" and it was as *having finished*, and as "*having obtained* eternal redemption for us;" as *having rendered* a whole life of obedience to God, infinitely meritorious; as *having made* reconciliation, and brought in an everlasting righteousness to justify His people that He entered "into heaven itself," A SAVIOUR OF REST unto God (see margin Gen. viii. 21). And this He is still, and at all times; and to exhibit the perpetual fragrance of His presence at the right hand of God, the burnt offering was ordered to be repeated every

morning and evening, "for a continual burnt offering" (Numb. xxviii. 1-6). There Jesus is *now*, emphatically called, OUR "ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ THE RIGHTEOUS," securing the perpetual acceptance, both of our persons and services. It is in this way, that the presentation of His name at the throne of God is all-prevailing, according as He said, "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John xiv. 14).

But while it is thus blessed to perceive the correspondence between the shadow and the substance, and also to contemplate the marvellous wisdom, power, and grace of God, in having provided a perfect and acceptable burnt offering for His people; nevertheless, the consolation to be derived from this unspeakable gift is comprehended in the few words, "it shall be accepted *for him.*" The *knowledge* that there has been a person dwelling on the earth called Jesus, or an *historical acquaintance* with many of His wonderful works, or ability to make *clear statements* concerning the way of salvation, might interest and gratify the mental faculties; but such acquirements could not of themselves impart peace or consolation to the soul. It is to the *conscience*, guilty and burdened, that the Holy Ghost delights to commend Christ, both in His person and work; and the promise of blessing, both present and eternal, is to such only as *come* to Him. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Such, doubtless, is the instruction in the Scripture before us, "he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering;" and it is language feelingly understood by the household of faith. They well know, that it was not a mere alteration of sentiment, or a senseless imitation of others, that brought them there; it was the unseen hand of their heavenly Father; for "no man can *come to Me,*" said Jesus, "except the Father which hath sent Me *draw* him; "every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, *cometh unto Me*" (John vi. 44, 45). The question is, Is Jesus mine? Happy people, who have thus learned Christ in the obedience of faith: for while they sing,

"By faith I lay my hand
On that dear head of Thine,"

the heavenly response is, He "shall be accepted" FOR YOU!

(To be continued).

RECONCILIATION OF FRIENDS.—Two men had quarrelled and parted ill friends. Just before sunset one heard a knock at his door, and on opening it saw his late antagonist. He had returned, and pointing to the west, said, "See, the sun is going down!" Then they shook hands, and their old friendliness returned. (Eph. iv. 26.)

THE things of this world, like Absalom's mule, run away and leave us when we have most need of them.

ERRATUM.—We desire to correct a serious misprint that has passed into our last number, August.—Article on "Ministry," p. 118, first column, line 22—"Yet they do not need fresh supplies," should read—"yet they do need, &c."

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 CCXXXII.

Please explain Rev. xx. 7-9.—Will the people, here referred to, be in the four quarters of the earth during the 1000 years of the reign of Christ?

REPLY.

Whilst the dominion of Christ will be universal, and the whole earth will be blessed during His reign of righteousness, it is clear that all the inhabitants of the earth will not be truly converted to God.

The thousand years reign of Christ will be the last of the dispensations through which, in the wisdom of God, the hopeless depravity of man shall be fully manifested.

Without law the earth became filled with ungodliness and violence. Under law man proved himself a transgressor. Under the free proclamation of grace the enmity of man has been brought out—the Son of God rejected, the Spirit of God resisted.

Finally, the glory of God is displayed. Satan is restrained. Earth is delivered from the oppression of the lawless. Under these circumstances, so favourable for the development of good in human nature—if there be any—will man not prove to be better than under former trials? The answer is found in the passage before us. Man is still unchanged—ready at the very first intrigue of the enemy to surrender allegiance to God's King, and rise in open rebellion to His authority.

The only remedy is being "born again"—"a new creation."

QUESTION CCXXXIII.

Did Christ suffer for righteousness or for sin, and was His whole life a suffering for sin?

REPLY.

At the hands of man Christ suffered for righteousness' sake. The world resented His holy testimony, and carried out the will of its prince and god in putting Him to death.

But His death was more than a murder committed by man. He suffered as the sin-offering under the judgment of God. He was made a curse for us. Other martyrs in the hour of their dying agony have been gloriously sustained by the conscious presence and favour of God; but Jesus, the Holy One, the well-beloved Son, cried out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The full significance of this darkness that enshrouded His soul we cannot know. Only in part can we comprehend it. But on no occasion during the life of the Lord Jesus was there a shadow of conscious distance or cloud between Him and His Father. It is only on the cross.

Till then His experience was "the Father is with Me." He was ever consciously in the light of God, resting in His Father's bosom, abiding in His Father's love.

It was then and then only that He was the sin-bearer. "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." It is erroneous to speak of His having been forsaken by His Father. The Father yearned with unspeakable love over His obedient Son, whilst as the sin-avenging God He turned away from the Holy One who stood answerable for our guilt.

THE PRIESTHOOD AND ADVOCACY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.



UR Lord Jesus Christ did not die to sin that we might live in it, but that we might live out of it and above it. But we must distinguish. To say of a Christian walking in the Spirit that he is living in sin is to say what is not true. It would be just as far from truth to say that he has no sin.

With regard to the question of sin in the believer two passages of scripture, both occurring in the first Epistle of John, may be considered.

First, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8).

Secondly, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9).

In order to understand the latter of these passages, we must apprehend the manner of the Apostle John in this Epistle, which is to speak of the things he treats of according to their nature and essence. There is with him no shading between white and black, no mingling of light and dark. You are either a child of God or a child of the devil, in the light or in the darkness, a sinner or a person who does not commit sin. When he speaks, for example, of darkness, he does not mean the clouded experience of a believer, but the absolute darkness of moral night to which Satan and sinners belong. God is in the light; He dwells in it; His children are with Him there; but he that hateth his brother is in darkness even until now; he is as Cain, who was "of that wicked one"; he is a "murderer," and "abideth in death."

Regarding in this absolute way the man who is born of God, he says of him not only that he does not commit sin, but that he cannot do so. In the principle of his new being he sins not. As we should say of an apple tree, that it produces apples, and can produce nothing else; it bears according to its nature only.

The nature corresponds to its origin. As is the source, so is the stream. When we read "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not," we are looking at the stream flowing *from* its source. When we read "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him," we trace the stream *to* its source. Is the man born of God?

he sinneth not. Is the course of his life righteousness and love? he is born of God.

Observe that these statements are not only absolute but universal. They are without qualification, and they apply to all Christians. The words "whosoever" and "every one" give the scope of their application. They do not refer to a class among believers, but to the regenerate as such, and without limitation.

There are differences among Christians. We read elsewhere (1 Cor. iii.) of the "carnal" and the "spiritual." And there are degrees of maturity among the spiritual. There are, as this Epistle teaches us, "children," "young men," and "fathers." But such distinctions are not in view in the passages we have been considering. In these, John is looking into the essence of the things of which he writes.

But regarding the regenerate in their actual condition he speaks otherwise, and as plainly says, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." For, as a matter of fact, there is sin in man's nature, even though he be born of God, and he is liable to commit sin.

Besides this, the believer is subject to infirmities which are not in themselves sinful, which may indeed be occasions of sin, but which may also be so borne as to bring to him fresh accessions of the grace of God.

For the believer thus liable to sin and subject to infirmity there is a twofold provision of grace—the Priesthood and the Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Priesthood applies to his state as subject to infirmity, the Advocacy to his condition of liability to sin.

These offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, do not apply to the Christian viewed simply as the possessor of new life from Christ and in Christ. You could not, I suppose, from the Epistles to the Ephesians or Colossians, where he is thus regarded, tell that Christ was exercising for believers the office of a Priest at all. It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we are looked at in our state of actual weakness, compassed with infirmity, that the Lord is shewn to us in the blessed ministry which meets such a condition.

Moreover, our Lord's Priesthood and Advocacy are exercised subsequently to accomplished atonement. The Lord Jesus is not now expiating sin. He did so when He died on the Cross, and those for whom He intercedes have already, by the blood which He shed, been cleansed from all sin. They are justified from

all things and accepted in the Beloved. We must entertain no thought that would detract from the completeness of the work which was finished on the Cross, or for a moment suppose that aught else was needed for our reconciliation to God.

A GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

In Heb. iii. 1 we are bidden to consider "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." As the Apostle He came from God among men, teaching us what we needed to know about God; as the High Priest He went from among men to God, in order that He might represent us in His presence, and exercise for us the ministry which our condition required.

That condition is one of weakness and infirmity, of liability to temptation, a condition that needs "mercy." In our Lord Jesus Christ "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It is these "infirmities" that call forth the grace of His priestly intercession.

And it is these infirmities that bring to our aid also that other Intercessor whom God has given us, as we read—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." Our times of weakness are the occasions alike of the High Priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus and the gracious intercession of the Holy Ghost, and it is at such times that we may expect the flow to usward of mercy and grace, and the forthputting within us and on our behalf of the power of the Spirit of God.

Paul well knew how to regard infirmities. In 2 Cor. xii. he relates his experience how, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, he was caught up to the third heaven and heard words that it was not possible for a man to utter: but so far from this exalted experience delivering him from liability to sin, the very greatness of the revelations was likely to be a snare to him. He was in danger of being proud of them, and "lest he should be exalted above measure"—words which are twice used in verse 7—there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. The word which, in the authorised version, is translated "thorn," is in the revised version rendered "stake,"

and may signify an affliction comparable not to a thorn in a man's hand, which pricks and irritates, but to a stake through his body, which pins him down, and renders his struggles ineffectual.

For this thing he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him, but the relief he asked for was denied. The Lord did not remove the affliction, but gave him grace to endure it, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." And the conclusion which the Apostle draws is this—"Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Revelations might have made him proud; infirmities brought upon him the power of Christ, therefore he boasted in infirmities. He did not murmur because of them; he was not merely resigned under them; he gloried in them, because of the grace which they brought.

AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.

But the believer is not only compassed with infirmity; he is also liable to sin. Though perfectly cleansed by the blood of Jesus—"clean every whit"—having the standing of a clean person in God's sight, he may sin and become defiled. It is to his condition as thus considered that the Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ refers. What John had written in the first chapter of his Epistle was intended to be a deterrent from sin. "These things," he says, "write I unto you that ye sin not," but, he adds, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

How that Advocacy is exercised we may learn from Luke xxii. 31, 32. In view of the trial of faith, through which His disciples were about to pass, the Lord said to Simon Peter—"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."

The Lord foresaw the attempt which Satan was about to make upon His disciples. He singled out Peter, and before ever the time of sifting arrived. He prayed for him that his faith might not fail. Peter fell, but not finally. He was turned again into the right way from which, under temptation, he departed, and he lived to be an honoured witness to the Lord whom, under temptation, he denied. We

know but little how much we are daily indebted to that Advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which anticipates even our temptations to sin.

Faith uses Christ in His offices. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep," says the Psalmist, and then in simplicity adds "Seek Thy servant" (Ps. cxix. 176). To go astray is our tendency: to restore our souls is what the grace of our Lord Jesus charges itself with. And heavenly-wise is he who having erred makes immediate honest confession of his wrong-doing, and in simple faith looks to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul to restore him.

We have a great High Priest, who is also our Advocate with the Father. Our wisdom, when we are conscious of weakness or of sin, is to make our immediate believing appeal to Him. He can never fail to be true to the offices which He bears.

A. STEWART.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. x. 32.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.



BEFORE passing on to the Eleventh Chapter I purpose considering for a little these words, "The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God."

THE JEW.

And, first, Who were the Jews? Remember, the people of Israel were not always called "Jews."

The title of honour by which the nation is usually known in Scripture and which implies their covenant-relationship to Jehovah is "Israel." It is not until long after the nation had been divided into two kingdoms that those who formed the Kingdom of Judah are called Jews, and it is noticeable that its first occurrence is in connection with a disastrous defeat by the Syrians (see 2 Kings xvi. 6). It afterwards becomes identified with the feeble remnant who returned from the Babylonish Captivity, and it seems always to have contained an element of reproach. But, as it occurs in the verse before us it simply designates those who nationally represented the old covenant people of God, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob according to the flesh.

The privileges that attached to this favoured people were very great. They are summed up in

Rom. ix. 4-5, "Who are Israelites." They are here spoken of in their honourable character as in relationship with God.

"To whom pertaineth the adoption." God adopted them nationally and owned them as His children, an honour that never was put upon any other nation (see Ex. iv. 22, Deut. xiv. 1, Is. i. 2).

"And the glory"—the visible glory-cloud of the divine presence as seen in the wilderness; a cloud by day and fire by night; the same glory which remained between the cherubim until seen in vision by Ezekiel, slowly, and as if reluctantly, withdrawing from its much-loved but utterly defiled resting-place (Ezek. ix. 3, x. 18, xi. 23). No outward visible sign of the divine presence was ever attached to any other nation.

"And the covenants." The covenants have to do with the nation of Israel, past and future. God never entered into covenant relationship with any Gentile nation.

"And the giving of the law." This does not refer merely to "the ten commandments," but to the entire law—moral, ceremonial, social, judicial—as committed to Israel by the hand of Moses.

"And the service of God." That is the priestly and Levitical worship and service of the sanctuary.

"And the promises." All the promises of the Old Testament were given in connection with Israel, and all promises of blessing to Gentiles are to flow to them through Israel as the channel.

"Whose are the fathers." No other nation had a divinely recognized genealogy connecting them with ancient patriarchs to whom God had made promises.

"And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." This is the crowning honour which attached to Israel. That Christ should come in the line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made; He saith not unto seeds, as of many, but as of one; 'And to thy seed,' which is Christ."

The nation of Israel, then, was separated off by God in His sovereign grace from all other nations. It was Jehovah's vineyard. "He built a wall about it (margin) and gathered out the stones thereof and planted it with the choicest vine . . . and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes . . . what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it" (Is. v. 2-4).

Thus God chose, as it were, in Abraham and his natural seed—the very best specimen of humanity ; giving man every possible advantage, bestowing upon him the utmost care, the highest cultivation—but in spite of it all, man brought forth no fruit unto God. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” They said, “this is the Heir, come let us kill Him and the vineyard will be ours.” God’s abounding goodness to that nation results at last in the murder of His Son—their own Messiah.

Thus, the Cross of Christ shows out what man is. Man is incurably wicked. Cultivation is no more to be thought of. Nothing remains but “*a new creation*”—“Ye must be born again.”

Since then, God has not put any nation under law ; no nation upon earth has been given the place of privilege that belonged to Israel.

Nothing affords such an unanswerable reply to the infidel as God’s dealings with Israel. That nation in its past history and its present circumstances is the great standing miracle, confirming to all who will honestly look at it the infallible truth of the Word of God.

In Isaiah xlv. we find God pleading for the confidence of His people upon three grounds—1st, as the only Creator (verse 18) ; 2nd, as the only Saviour (verse 22) ; 3rd, as the only foreteller of events (verse 21).

And just as He claimed the faith of Israel upon the ground of prophecy fulfilled, so may we now from the prophetic Scriptures and their undeniable fulfilment, demand that they be acknowledged as the Word of God in truth. Nothing affords such a magnificent illustration of the truth of prophecy as the history of the nation of Israel.

All national distinctions are meantime set aside, and God’s message of mercy is sent to “every creature.” He now “commands all men everywhere to repent,” and bestows pardon and life upon “all that believe.” But does this offer of perfectly free grace elicit any good from man ? Alas, no ! As *law* brought out man’s powerlessness to obey, grace brings out the enmity of the heart of man, for naturally he will not have God or own His claims upon any terms. Man’s free will deliberately rejects the Christ of God as presented in the Gospel.

THE GENTILES.

All nations outside Israel are included in the term “Gentiles.” Had Israel been obedient to Jehovah they would have been maintained by Him in the position they occupied in the reign of Solomon as the first of the nations.

But Israel utterly failed to glorify God, and finally cast off the worship of Jehovah and went after the idols of the Gentiles.

For this cause God in judgment gave them into the hands of their enemies. Israel became weakened and impoverished whilst the power of the Gentiles increased, and finally they were carried away captive into Assyria and Babylonia.

Thus, the Babylonish power under Nebuchadnezzar became the dominant power upon earth. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah began what the Lord calls “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke xxi. 24).

Ever since then Israel has been in subjection to the Gentile power, and though in part restored to their city and land in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, yet it was only by permission of the Gentile to whom they were still subject.

In the days of our Lord they were still subject to the Gentiles, being under tribute to Cæsar, and as they were so by God’s appointment, the instruction given by the Lord was, to “render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.”

The Gentiles still have rule in the earth, and will continue to have it until God fulfils His promise and brings forth His King from His right hand and sets Him upon His holy hill of Zion (Ps. ii. 6, ex. 2).

But although in judgment power is given to the Gentile, still from Nebuchadnezzar to Pontius Pilate, power in the hands of the Gentile has been abused as completely as in Israel, and man has proved himself unfit to wield the dominion of earth.

Satan is all along the real “prince of this world,” and Gentile dominion will finally be headed up in a greater than Nebuchadnezzar or Cæsar—a prince who will be a very incarnation of Satan, claiming universal dominion and universal worship.

The dominion which Satan offered to Jesus if He would fall down and worship him, but which He promptly refused, will be accepted by another. Him, all the world will wonder after. Kings will yield

him their authority. By his signs and wonders all that dwell on the earth will be deceived. Whoever will not receive his mark or worship his image will be put to death. Such will be the culmination of Gentile dominion in the earth. But that shall end in the manifestation of the Son of Man, Israel's rejected Messiah. To Him belongs the title to universal dominion. "There was given to Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away" (Dan. vii. 14).

THE CHURCH OF GOD.

Let us now look a little at the third subject, viz., "the Church of God." Turn to Gal. iii. 26. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Also Col. iii. 9-11, "the new man . . . where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian; bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." From these Scriptures it is clearly seen that in "the Church," which is "the body of Christ," all national distinctions are done away with.

"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." While the natural seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, is set aside and scattered, what has God done? He has raised up from the dead that "seed of Abraham" to whom all the promises are made, and in whom all the nations of the earth are yet to be blessed. He is the Heir: the One who is destined to reign, though meantime hidden at God's right hand. But more than that. It is not Christ alone who is the Heir; there are "joint-heirs" to reign with Him. These are now being gathered out by the Holy Spirit's quickening power through the Gospel, and being linked in life and fellowship with Christ. One with Him, they are Abraham's seed—all things are theirs, for they are Christ's. Christ's reigning time is meanwhile postponed till the last of this elect company be gathered out, and creation waits and groans in expectation of the manifestation of the Sons of God.

Let us now glance at Eph. ii. It is exceedingly interesting to note in this chapter the use the Apostle makes of the words "We" and "Ye." "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins wherein in time past ye (Gentiles) walked . . .

among whom also *we* (Jews) all had our conversation." "Wherefore remember that *ye* being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, . . . at that time *ye* were without Christ, &c., &c."

Thus, the ancient distinction between Jew and Gentile is strongly marked. No other national separation was ever formed or recognized by God. While that distinction existed, a Gentile, in order to obtain an interest in Israel's covenant blessings, must become identified with Israel's commonwealth through circumcision, thus owning Israel nationally as Jehovah's people. Many thus acted and were called "proselytes."

But the believer in Jesus now, though a Gentile in the flesh, comes into blessing upon quite a different principle. "Now in Christ Jesus" . . . (not apart from Him) ye (Gentiles) who once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace *who hath made both one*, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . to make in Himself, *out of twain*, ONE NEW MAN."

Mark the expression, "the middle wall of partition." Who built it? It was God. It was God who had separated off the Jew from the Gentile and hedged them round with ordinances as by a wall. How long was that wall to stand? Jesus in His lifetime never sought to break it down—on the contrary, He fully recognized it. To the woman of Canaan He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He was "a minister of the circumcision" (Rom. xv. 8), and as such, in all His ministry, He never stepped beyond the limits of the land that properly belonged to Israel.

To the Woman of Samaria He said, "We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." Thus, he fully maintained the ancient, divinely constituted "middle wall of partition." When, then, was it broken down? We answer, at His death. Then it was that Jehovah rent the veil in the temple and Israel's High Priest unwittingly annulled his office by rending his clothes as he condemned the Messiah. Thus the dispensation was closed, and the separation that God had made and maintained was for the time swept away.

ONE NEW MAN.

But what, after that, was the purpose of God? "To make in Christ, out of twain (that is, out of Jews and Gentiles) ONE NEW MAN." One Head and one

body. Christ the Head, we the members. In this glorious company—this elect membership—there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Believing in Jesus and united to Him, the Gentile is no longer a Gentile, and the Jew is no longer a Jew. They are now *one* in the risen Christ. The old things have passed away and all things have become new.

Thus, believers, Jew and Gentile, are baptized in one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). This unity is a grand divine fact, and will, by and by, be gloriously manifested when Christ—the Head and members, the Heir and the joint-heirs, all complete, shall come to reign.

Thus we see God's ideal of the Church. It includes all who are in Christ, it excludes all who are not in Christ.

"He hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." That word fulness would be better rendered "*completion*."

Christ the Head would not be "complete" without His body, the church. Nay, more, may we not say, without the feeblest member of that body. A mutilated Christ will never be manifested in glory.

In Col. ii. 10, we get the opposite side of this truth, "Ye are complete in Him." That is, ye who form the body are not complete without Christ; just as He, the Head, is not complete without the Church.

When Jesus comes the dead shall be raised, the living changed, and the whole body *complete* shall be caught up to be for ever with the Lord—the Head. The "one new man" complete.

This mystery being ended, God will again resume His work upon the old lines: again acknowledging the distinction between Jew and Gentile—restoring Israel to their land, and so making restored Israel the centre of blessing to the whole earth.

The Church is called "a kind of first fruits." The "first fruits" in Israel was only a sheaf from every field, cut and presented to God, before the harvest was reaped. Such is the Church—a company gathered out for His name from every kindred and nation and people and tongue,

At Antioch, Peter sided with those who were seeking to introduce among the disciples the old line of distinction between Jew and Gentile. But Paul withstood him to the face. Paul saw that such a division

in the Church was a denial of the very truth of the Gospel, oneness in a risen Christ.

But how is this oneness to be manifested by us practically? Only in one way; by implicit subjection to the Head. All divisions have their origin, like that at Antioch, in the introducing of some element that sets aside the revealed will of Him who is Head of the body and Lord of the individual.

True subjection to the Head will necessarily imply love to every member—"love in the truth." Divine love will never sacrifice truth for unity, but will ever seek to bring all the children of God into practical and manifest subjection to the word and will of the Lord.

"THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK."



IT is laid upon my heart to say a word, more especially to younger fellow-saints, as to the more exact and precious meaning of this command of breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup; for not only is it a distinct command, but it is filled to the very brim with God's thoughts, and we need to draw out from the very act the meaning that He would impress.

God's ordinances in the Church are very simple, and therefore are they also very brief—I refer to the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

On that very account, because as an action it is so very brief, we need to have our thoughts gathered up to the brief moment of the action; otherwise we may think it enough if we obey. It is sweet to obey, it is sweeter far to have the full meaning of the act as we obey; for we not only please by our subjection, but we enjoy communion with the Father's thoughts. Again, I remark, that the very simplicity causes great brevity, and I thank God for Scriptural simplicity, but I tremble over the brevity. I could never baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—and it is the most solemn action my fingers have ever done, and the words the most solemn my lips have ever uttered, words which we could utter over no angel in heaven,—I could never, I say, perform that action which is registered in heaven and upon earth, without marvelling how soon it was over; and I have wondered if any have gone down to the wondrous depths, or risen to the infinite heights of it. And I have prayed that none of us

might fail to get the vastness of precious Christian baptism.

So with the Lord's Supper. We sit in our seats and partake of it, passing it from one to another, and two, three, or four hundred will quickly partake. But, I ask, has each one as he broke that loaf remembered something of all that which it is meant to remind us of? Has each one, as he has drunk of that cup, realised something of all that it is meant to teach? It is soon done. Oh for blessed preparation! Let our first thought as we wake on the morning of the Lord's day be, that at such and such an hour I shall be partaking of the Lord's Supper; lest late rising, and the hasty meal, late arrival, and hasty partaking, do our souls no good, and we do not justice to that brief action. Oh, we need to remember the preciousness of the ordinances of God's house! Of Jehovah's dwelling-place of old it was said, that every whit of it uttered glory, not a cord or a pin but did; and not a whit of this feast but does. Shall I have handled a crumb, or put my lip to the cup, and did it not utter glory?

There are depths and a fulness of meaning for us, but we must be taught how to gather them up, by meditation, and by the Spirit's teaching.

God in these fifty or sixty years past, has brought together more children of His to partake of the Supper of the Lord, than even in centuries before; and I thank God that they do so gather, it is Scriptural. "On the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread." But the oftener we partake the more need to have its meaning deepened and graven within us. It is a saying with the world that "familiarity breeds contempt." Alas, if the state of our soul be such that it does not get much wisdom from the action, for, if so, it will not get much from the teaching.

Now, therefore, I want to point out one or two simple things, and first, as respects the bread. Please, dear youthful fellow-saints, please to remember that the bread which thus we break, has two very distinct and different meanings. It has first, which we well know, the meaning of our once broken Lord Himself. We cannot look at a fragment upon the table and not have many a thought come up about Him.

Secondly, it teaches us that we, in God's sight, are one family—one loaf. I turn to two Scriptures for these two different meanings. The first is in 1 Cor. xi,

we read from verse 23: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed,"—and that act of betraying brought Him to be the broken One upon the tree,—“took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is My body,”—that is, an emblem of what My body will soon be, it is about to be the broken thing,—“this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me.” This and many other passages supply the first meaning, namely, that this loaf pourtrays in vivid figure the broken One, broken for you; to bring to your mind whenever the time comes for you to partake in this particular action, “Oh Lord Jesus, Thou was broken for me, my sins broke Thee upon the cross 1800 years ago!” Dear friends, the thought indeed is deep. It brings in the infinite knowledge of God, who knew all my sins, and put them all upon His Son, and omitted not one upon the solemn cross; sins, not of my unregeneracy only, but the darker and blacker sins since I have been a saint. And the sins of me as a believer, are infinitely more guilty than the sins which could have sent me to hell, because they are sins against love I knew not then. And all were laid upon Him. Oh to gather up the blessed remembrance time after time, as we again and again break the bread. And the breaking means every time more to you. Have not you, since last you broke it, discovered more of your wanderings and your sins? Have you had a very careless week? If not, have you indulged in half-hours of idleness? Have you spoken an idle word? Jesus died upon the cross for that. Remember, it is not a whole life-time of a sinner's sins which dooms him, but one single sin. Thus the loaf to me to-day, means more than it did last Lord's day. Have I got more acquainted with it? Only as I have grown in self-knowledge, have I learned how much more it cost Him than last week I knew. Therefore, let me break it with more solemn remembrance.

It does not mean the same to everyone, but to each one what he discovers it to be. Oh, may our discovery of it greatly increase, and that shall only be by the increasing knowledge of what He bore upon the cross for me! Have we come here to-day with unexercised souls without having had communion with Him over His love to us? Then, sure I am that it has only been an outward action and without

meaning. The augmenting of the sin is not in fact, but in your acquaintance with it. Oh may you every week learn something of how much you owe, that every week may deepen the reality as you partake of that bread! There is the same abundance on the table for all, but the meal is according to the appetite. "Didst Thou die upon the cross for every shortcoming of mine in the week gone by? Then Lord Jesus, I know Thee better, and I love Thee more!"

Now suppose I partook of it alone, and in my chamber: then it would be but my individual apprehension of what He did for me. But if I partake with others, there is not only the individual remembrance, but the collective thought, "Didst Thou bear the sins of all these who are here?"

"Oh Christ! what burdens bowed Thy head;
Our load was laid on Thee."

Why friends, it seems a more solemn thing to break bread with twenty than with ten, and with a hundred than with twenty; it ought to be to my waiting soul. And as the assembly grows, there will be no puffing up, but a going down, as we see how much Christ has done; and we shall be much lower down in the sense of the mighty depths of His love the greater the assembly is. What did each of the many hands mean as they broke the loaf? Each said, "Lord Jesus, I broke Thee at the cross;" and all are drawn together, for all said the same. But it needs watchfulness really to say it.

"Thus while His cross my sins displays,
In all their blackest hue.

—and blackest are the sins of our regeneracy,—

"Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too."

"With pleasing grief and mournful joy,
My spirit now gets filled;
That I should such a life destroy,

—and that is what the action meant, by my sins I killed Him, "He loved me and gave Himself for me," goes from lip to lip,

"Yet live by Him I killed."

Oh! friends, is it not enough to make us self-abhorred as we joy and rejoice in Him?

Now turn a moment to the other meaning. In chapter x. of this same epistle to the Corinthians, we read, verse 14: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee

from idolatry." He was writing to the saints, the community of the children of God in Corinth, and is referring to the ordinary meal-tables of the general community there, that they should not get snared into companionship with idols. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion"—that is, fellowship together—"of the blood of Christ?" The word "supper" is not used, but it is the fellowship in which we are by coming under the precious blood. It speaks further back of "Christ our passover, sacrificed for us;" therefore it puts the cup first, because fellowship begins with the blood. The household was formed by coming through the blood-stained door; the fellowship is formed by means of faith in the precious blood of Christ. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" But what body is meant? Read verse 17: "For we being many are one bread and one body." Hence it is not Jesus, but the body of the mystical Christ—the Church. "We being many are one loaf and one body." Now, mark the use which the apostle makes of the loaf here. He makes it the emblem of the unity of the partakers. When that same flour passed through the kneading trough and the oven, it became a united thing. We were all separated one from another, but have now confessed that we have died in Him, and that we are one with Him, and one in Him; and as it took force to break that loaf, it should take force indeed to break this fellowship. Are we to go hence, then, and forget one another? Far from it. We are to behave as members one of another. Why? Did not I break bread with you, and thus confess that we are one? You and I said each, "Jesus died for me;" and are we not to care one for another? We may go away to our different homes, and to our varied occupations; but, wherever we are, let us remember that we are one with fellow-saints, and remember that we confessed our union when we broke bread.

Hence all the business of caring for, admonishing, and instructing one another. "I care for every limb of my natural body, shall I then let you go off into idolatry, and not care for you?" says the apostle. The death of Jesus upon the tree was to make us one—"members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ! For we being

many are one loaf and one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf." Ah! but if the first meaning of the loaf does not get deep down into my soul, I shall not be ready to accept the responsibilities and duties of our membership one with another. When Paul said, "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it," he exhorted all the elders to "take heed to all the flock," and to "feed the Church of God." Let us see to it that we are at this business of pastors and teachers; and that is not all, but "all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." But if the breaking of the bread be the mere passing action, and we forget the deep meanings God would teach us in it, it is pretty sure that we shall not care much for the body of Christ during the week. One thing that alarms me in God's Church is, that if I went astray in my soul, there is hardly any one that asks me about my soul. We converse upon many and necessary topics, but how seldom am I asked the question, "Dear friend, how is it with your soul?" And why is it? Because there is too little the recollection that each one is taught by the precious death upon the tree—that Jesus died, not only to save you from hell, but that you might be a fruitful garden upon the earth.

Aaron would have missed a loaf from that table of shewbread had there been less than twelve; and he would have missed the frankincense had it not been upon the top (Lev. xxiv., 7).—the beauty of the Lord upon every one of the twelve. Is the frankincense of heaven and of God upon your daily life, my brother? In the counting-house or in the warehouse, upon the railway, or in the family life at the meal-table? Ah! if the meal-tables of the saints were filled with what the Lord's table teaches, every meal would have the preciousness of the table of the Lord in it. If I sit at the breakfast-table or the dinner-table with you, shall I forget that we bowed together in worship, and together broke the bread, and talk folly with you across the table to-morrow? And the top of the week is cut off from the rest. We are one loaf, and the Lord keep us from leaven. The Israelite was to search leaven from his four-walled house, and you and I are to search leaven from our conversation during our daily life, and at our daily meals; and, then, happy when the Lord comes to take us to dwell with Him, above, for ever, be it what day it may.—*Notes of an Address by H. D.*

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART VI.



CHAPTER x., verse 1, "The Proverbs of Solomon." These Proverbs give certain distinct teachings, according to the standard of religious and moral duty, as it existed among the Israelites at their best times. The reader is earnestly requested to compare the examples given from Scripture explaining the point of the Proverb, and to seek wisdom to stand firmly by these precepts of God's moral law, which is "holy, just, and good."

"A wise son maketh a glad father; { Joseph was the joy of his father's heart (Gen. xlvii. 12; xlviii. 2; xxxvii. 3).

But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." { Esau (Gen. xxvi. 34-35; Gen. xxvii. 45-46).

Verse 2. "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; { Eccles viii. 8. See parable of the rich fool (Luke xii. 20)

But righteousness delivereth from death." { —i.e., prolongeth life—Mordecai (see Esther).

Verse 3. "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish; but he casteth away the substance of the wicked." } Read Ps. xxxiv., 12-22.

Verse 4. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." } Laziness and diligence are here contrasted, and it is true in both temporal and spiritual things.

Verse 5. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son;" } See Prov. xxx. 24, 25. "Now is the day of salvation."

"But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." } See Prov. xxiv. 30-34; Acts xv. 38.

Verse 6. "Blessings are upon the head of the just; but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked," or rather "the mouth of the wicked covereth or concealeth violence," therefore no one blesses him. } See Job xxix. 11, 13, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me."

Verse 7. "The memory of the just is blessed; { "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." }
Marry (Mark xiv. 9).

- But the name of the wicked shall rot." { Balaam—once in high honour among men, but held up to our abhorrence in the Word of God (2 Pet. ii. 15; Jude 11). Judas Iscariot—once a professed disciple, now a name of execration.
- Verse 8. "The wise in heart will receive commandments;" { "To him that hath shall more be given." They only are wise who receive God's commands, and obey without question. See Abraham's case, Heb. xi. 8.
- But a prating fool shall fall." { —i.e., he rushes headlong, misled by his own talk, and refusing to listen to those who would counsel aright. Absalom's case.
- Verse 9. "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely;" { "Hold thou Me up, and I shall be safe."
- But he that perverteth his ways shall be known." { "Some men's sins are open beforehand going before to judgment; some men they follow after."
- Verse 10. "He that winketh with eye causeth sorrow, but a prating fool shall fall." { "He who lightly passes over follies, or shuts his eyes to them, causes sorrow in the end"; "but he that rebuketh openly" (see Rev. Vers. Margin) "maketh peace."
- Verse 11. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life," &c. { "Full of grace are Thy lips" (Ps. xlv.).
"His mouth is most sweet" (Canticles v. 16).
"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord" (Ps. xix.).
- Verse 12. "Hatred stirreth up strifes;" { "Abimelech and the men of Shechem" (Judges ix.)
- But love covereth all sins." { —i.e., Love to others, instead of publishing their sins, casts a veil over them (see 1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xiii.).
- Verse 13. "In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found," { See Joseph, Gen. xli. 33-38; also Daniel, chap. ii., chap. v. 11.
- But a rod is for," &c. { The men of Succoth (Judges viii. 16).
Rehoboam's refusal to listen to wise counsel brought heavy troubles on him.
- Verse 14. "Wise men lay up knowledge, &c." { They reserve it until time of need, while the hasty measures of the foolish soon prove ruinous. See Verse 13; Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 10-13.
- Verse 15. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty." { —i.e., it helps him to ward off many evils, which the poor cannot avert, and therefore suffer, but this only for this life. The rich man and Lazarus. Luke xvi. illustrate this Proverb.
- Verse 16. "The labour of the righteous tendeth to life; the fruit (or increase) of the wicked to sin." { The one labours for good, the other for ill. The one to serve and bless others, the other to obtain means to do wickedly
- Verse 17. "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction;" { —i.e., guardeth carefully what he has learned of the truth (see Prov. iii. 18).
- But he that refuseth reproof erreth" (or causeth to err). { He that forsaketh good advice is sure to stumble, and be a stumbling-block. See Korah's case in Numbers xvi.
- Verse 18. "He that hideth hatred with lying lips," { Rather "is of lying lips" (see Absalom's conduct 2 Sam. xiii. 20-22, and 2 Sam. xv. 1-6; and Joab's 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10).
- And he that uttereth a slander, is a fool." { Haman's slanderous charges against the Jews recoiled on himself.
- Verse 19. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin;" { See Eccl. v. 1-7.—Job and his friends multiplied words, to their sorrow and rebuke.
Read also James iii.—Light words weigh heavy in God's balance (Matt. xii. 37).
- But he that refraineth his lips is wise." { Elihu kept silence till needful (Job xxxii. 4).
The Lord Jesus before His judges.
Speak little with others, and much with thyself and God.

Verses 20-21. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom."

Verse 22. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."

Verse 23. "It is sport to a fool to do mischief, but a man of understanding hath wisdom."

Verse 24. "The fear of the wicked it shall come upon him, but the desire (or longing) of the righteous shall be granted."

Verse 25. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more;

But the righteous is an everlasting foundation."

Verse 26. "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the slug-gard to them that send him."

Verse 27. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."

The words of the righteous are as choice silver, instructing many, but the heart of the wicked has nothing in it but bad, and they perish for lack of attending to God's wisdom. Daniel is an instance of the first class, Nabal (1 Sam. xxv.) of the second.

It made Abraham rich, but without it Lot reaped sorrow in the path he chose.

Or "As mischief is sport to a fool, so is wisdom delight to the wise." The character of each is manifested by their pursuits.

Read Jer. xlii. 8-18 and chap. xliii.; Dan. v. 6-30; Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 20; Esther, Esth. iv. 16, viii. 15-17; Simeon, Luke ii. 25-30.

Read Ps. 73.—"Sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape."

As in the days of the flood, so shall it be again in the day of His coming.

"Say unto the righteous it shall be well with him." "He shall never be moved."

Vinegar sets the teeth on edge, and smoke makes the eyes to smart, so the sluggard is a trouble to those who send him; his dawdling proves most vexatious.

"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it" (Col. iv. 17).

Long life was a reward of righteousness, and sudden cutting off was often a sign of the Lord's anger, under the old dispensation. Abraham lived to a good old age: but "Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him" (Gen. xxxviii. 7).

Verse 28. "The hope of the righteous shall be —*i.e.*, it shall be fulfilled to his joy, but not so for the wicked (Ps. i. 1-6; Athaliah, 2 Kings xi. 1-16. gladness," &c.

Verse 29. "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright," &c. Daniel found it so, and his three companions; but Haman found the reverse (Esth. vii. 10).

Verse 30. "The righteous shall never be removed," &c. See notes on Verses 25-27.

Verse 31. "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom;" See notes on Verses 20, 21.

But the froward tongue shall be cut out." "Cut off"—*i.e.*, the man of froward tongue shall be punished (see Lev. xxiv. 10, &c.).

Verse 32. "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness." The righteous man has useful and profitable words ready, but the wicked not so; he can only be froward. "They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."

A selection of verses only will be made in the ensuing chapters for exposition, as many of the Proverbs are but phases of the same truth.

A. O. M.

GOD'S PLEASURE—MY PLEASURE.

"Not to please ourselves; even Christ pleased not Himself" (Romans xv. 1, 3).

I'M not my own, but Thine, O God!
Bought with Immanuel's precious blood;
Then why should I not always be
Well pleas'd with all that pleaseth Thee?

Thy perfect love and changeless mind,
The promise and the oath combin'd,
Demand that I should ever be
Well pleas'd with all that pleaseth Thee.

Since Jesus as my Surety stood,
And still works "all things" for my good,
I ought to walk submissively,
Well pleas'd with all that pleaseth Thee.

What carnal thoughts and self-repose,
This heart of mine doth oft disclose,
But, ah! there's One who said for me,
"Well pleas'd with all that pleaseth Thee."

Help me obediently to run,
And always say, "Thy will be done;"
Thine, Thine alone, I'd love to be,
Well pleas'd with all that pleaseth Thee.

THE BURNT OFFERING.

(Concluded from page 143.)

FOR YOU! Therein lies the blessedness of the acceptance, and those who realise this have the testimony of their consciences, that they are not resting in vain sentiments or opinions, but that a deep sense of perishing, as guilty before God, has compelled them to flee for life and shelter to the slain "Lamb of God." They *look* to Christ, they *trust* in Christ, they *fly* to Christ, they *appropriate* Christ to themselves, because He is God's salvation, and the sinner's only Saviour. And what can be more consoling to such souls than the divine, unalterable infallible assurance, "it shall be accepted for him;" or, in other words, "his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5).

Although my object is not an exposition of the whole chapter, still it may not be amiss to state, that there are three classes of burnt offerings in Leviticus i., each exhibiting the great principle of imputed righteousness, or acceptance in another; yet each varying as to the measure of particular instruction concerning the offering. But it is very blessed to observe, that however limited may be the degree of spiritual wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of the offerer, in each case a *life* is wholly surrendered, and it is pronounced a "sweet savour unto the Lord." Our *ground* of peace is *God's* estimate of Christ *for us*; and our *enjoyment* of His great salvation will be according as we spiritually apprehend and estimate Him by faith. Our faith may be strong, or weak: we may be rich in faith or poor, as is typified by the value of the offering. One might be able to bring a *bullock*, another only a *sheep* or a *goat*, while the poverty of others might be so great that they could only bring *pigeons*; yet God found a savour of rest in the *offering*, irrespective of the circumstances or condition of the *offerer*. Christ is equally acceptable to God for him who can only *with fear and trembling* stretch out the hand of faith to lay hold of the sacrifice, as for another who can draw near "*in full assurance* of faith;" nevertheless the consolation and enjoyment will be far less in the former instance than in the latter.

How comforting to our souls, who have often painfully *experienced* that "our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," not only to find recorded in Holy Scripture, "Their righteousness is of *ME*, saith the Lord," but

also to be instructed thus simply, as to how it is brought to pass that God is just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly that believe. Surely, beloved brethern, we can say of a truth, that God hath made Christ *unto us*, "righteousness," and that we have no hope of acceptance but "IN the Beloved." Does not the Spirit of God communicate a savour of rest to our souls while meditating on Jesus, as the One in whom God *rests* concerning us? Do we not take comfort in seeing the grace, wisdom, and power of God, all combining in Him who obeyed on our behalf, that we might be made righteous? We cannot be ignorant of the loathsome corruptions that often rise within us, nor of the pride, selfishness, and unholiness which attach to almost everything we put our hands to; then, how blessed to find God Himself directing us to a perfectly holy obedience in Another, and so graciously assuring our hearts, that His obedience is reckoned as ours,—"*Abraham believed* God, and it was *counted* unto him for righteousness." "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Oh! let us seek to renounce every thought of doing anything to recommend ourselves to God; but rather let it be our joy to behold the fulness of the riches of the grace of God, the exceeding suitableness of His salvation, and the exhaustless resources of peace and consolation His love presents to us in the Cross of His dear Son. Here let us abide, that with grateful apprehension of His perfect love towards us, we may be constrained to be imitators of Him, who unceasingly and unreservedly consecrated Himself to God. For we are not our own, but are "bought with a price;" therefore, let us "glorify God" in our "body," and in our "spirit, which are God's."

TALENTS.

"Talk not of talents. What hast thou to do?
Thy *duty* be thy portion: *five* or *two*.
Talk not of talents. Is thy duty done?
Thou hadst sufficient, were they *ten* or *one*.
Lord! what my talents are I cannot tell,
Till Thou shalt give me grace to use them well.
That grace impart, the bliss will then be mine.
But all the power and all the glory Thine."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XI.

(Continued from page 135.)

NOW look at the Lord's way as respects His Father and Himself. The contrast between chapters xi. and xii. I would put in this way. In chapter xi., when all are mourning, Christ is in resurrection joy; in chapter xii., when surrounded by earthly joy, Christ sees His own death. He looked at things from a different point of view to anyone else. It is a mark of our having His Spirit that we should not have our opinions formed by others but in the light of God. The Lord waited for a signal from His Father. When first informed as to Lazarus He abode two days still in that place: He would not let even His love for His disciple lead Him to act except in full communion with the Father. Then when the word from the Father came, He was ready, and went. Says He, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." There was no stumbling in Him, for He was walking in the light, and would not let even love to His people urge Him impatiently to act before the word came. Then when it came He was ready to go at once, wherever it would lead. That is a mark of true heroism to do that which is right, and not to be drawn either hither or thither impulsively, and to be willing to be misunderstood. Both sisters misunderstood the Lord, but He would not move until the signal came from His Father. We see Him in the same Spirit in John i., where we find him, immediately after His baptism, walking about as if waiting upon God to send Him those whom He would; and the Father brings first two disciples, and others are drawn and cluster around Him. But He, ever with His eye upon God.

And as you note this action of the Lord towards the Father, look also at His action towards the disciples. How little they understood Him. Think of the patience of the Lord in being amongst such ignorant disciples and never being impatient with them, but at once graciously and lovingly explaining

Himself. It is well for us to notice these features in His ways, that we may encourage our hearts. Now they have passed away, and we are in their place, and we are as stupid and slow as they; but He is the same to-day as yesterday. Then He comes out with that grand expression, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Observe the order: if He would be our life, it is only in resurrection; it could not be otherwise, for we were dead. And how blessed to know that if we grow dead and numb, He is the Resurrection to revive us and sustain us. The Life is in the Son, not in us, except by continual flowing. And something that endears Him even more is that He could so come down to me as that He could bring me this life. All these "I am's" are found in John, because all show that He is God. In Exodus it is "I am that I am"; something in the distance. But in John He has put His Name in full. And when we are wretched and dead, and grown cold and low in our spirit, then He puts His Name that we may lay hold of it.

Then it is said again, in verse 33, "He groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled," or better, "He troubled Himself." The change is not unimportant, for it again shows that it is the picture of His Godhead. No sorrow afflicted Him, except as He pleases Himself to be afflicted. Then we are told, He wept. Oh, those tears! They struck the beholders and made them say, "Behold how He loved Him." If those tears struck them, God grant that the Cross and its agonies may strike us. You see He calls Lazarus by name. He knows all our names: it is a mark of ownership. "I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine," and again "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." He knows us intimately, He knows our character, and how much He loves us. And so will it be by-and-by, when He calls us out of the grave, every one of us. He has called us out of our natural darkness already, to come to Him, to use Him, and to live upon Him continually, until He calls us up to be at home with Himself. Lazarus was alive before he came out of the grave, so many Christians are alive that remain in death. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." They have got life, but they appear as if asleep.

Then when the miracle was wrought—and wrought with extraordinary publicity, on purpose to afford

every one the most evident demonstration that there was no collusion in the matter—some went to the Pharisees and reported what was done ; some believed in Him, for there is always the twofold effect. Then when Caiaphas hears of the miracle, he proposes that Jesus must die. And do you see what a beautiful addition is made to His prophecy? “And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” That is an addition of the Holy Ghost Himself, showing what God meant. And He will do it ; terribly divided are they now, but blessed be God all shall be gathered together.

CHAPTER XII.

In the Lord Jesus, in this chapter, we have a beautiful specimen of heavenly-mindedness. It is contrasted, in His action, with the previous chapter. When all were cast down with sorrow, then He is seen as the Resurrection ; when others were elated, and singing Hosanna, He is looking forward to His own death.

The chapter consists of two main divisions. First, the millennial scene with the Church, the Jew, and the Gentile, each in their place, round the Lord ; and then the Lord looking onward to His own death.

Here we have, in the first place, a picture of the Church, the Jew, and the Gentile. Something similar have we in Exodus xviii.—Israel in their tents ; Moses, their great deliverer, in the centre ; then when Israel has been delivered, the Bride, Zipporah, is seen nearer to the Deliverer than even Israel. Let us look a little first at this picture of the Church of God, the family at Bethany. Here have we three representative persons—Mary, the worshipper ; Lazarus, in resurrection life, sitting in communion with Him ; Martha, the worker. In John's Gospel we have it that the Father is seeking worshippers, in the Epistle is brought out the truth that God is seeking *companions*, in light through the blood. Mary in the Gospel, Lazarus in the Epistle, so to speak ; and in the Revelation we have “His servants shall serve Him,” and that service is of very high character for the Church.

Mary, the worshipper. You know the beautiful incident of her taking the vase of ointment of spikenard, and that very costly. It has been stated that this ointment of spikenard was so exceedingly valuable

that rarely any but Kings, could afford to have it. They seem, this family, to have been in well-to-do circumstances. Thus we learn of Martha that it was her own house. Here we find that Mary could afford this vase of ointment. It may be that she had invested her share of the property in procuring at great cost this ointment, that she might devote it to the purpose here recorded. And what was that purpose? A purpose which at first sight seems, as the disciples said, to have been a great waste. She breaks the box of this costly ointment, and puts it, according to Matthew's account, upon the head, according to John upon the feet, of the Lord, the whole of it. In Matthew the King must be anointed by its being poured upon His head ; in John it is the Son of God who has it poured upon His feet. But that is not all yet. She takes her hair, emblem of beauty and of strength, and wipes those blessed feet that others thought were fit only for cruel nails to go through. She did, as it were, put her head right beneath His feet. What did she mean? She had sat at His feet and heard His word (Luke x.), and I doubt not that He who talked to Nicodemus of the Son of Man, who should be lifted up, to listening Mary also, would tell of the story of His death ; and she, having eagerly drunk it in, worships Him against His death. “Thou art to be broken up upon the Cross, and all Thy blessedness scattered through creation wide.” “Because of the savour of Thy good ointment, Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee.”

Another was looking on with evil eye. He is angry at her, but more at the Lord for allowing what she did. Evidently he was full of malice against the Lord ; but he dare not speak out against Him, so he speaks, in pretence, against her. How had he become so very bad ; was he always such? Certainly not. And in chapter xiii. we find that he went yet a stage further in his wickedness. Beloved brethren, there is nothing so ripens a man in wickedness as outward nearness to Christ. So as to the preaching of the Gospel ; the world is more steeped in wickedness than ever before. Unfortunately, Judas was not alone ; the other disciples take up the charge, and begin to murmur at her. The taint spreads. It is very difficult even for true disciples to get lofty, correct ideas of their Lord, but easy to receive low, disparaging thoughts of Him. It is a

striking fact that in each of the two chief places where we read of an action on Mary's part toward the Lord she is found fault with, in Luke x. and here. How few understand what worship is. Their ideas were that that nard should have been sold and given to the poor. Utilitarianism takes with the mass. If a person does good generally, the world will think well of him, and hand down his name as a benefactor of his race. If, as a Christian, he takes a little higher standard, and seeks to win souls to Christ, few will apprehend his work. If he takes a still higher standard, and seeks to show God's mind in gathering souls, as the Church, round His Christ, fewer still will understand him. We may take another instance of one in the assembly living immorally; every one in the assembly will see that such an one

ought to be put out. But if it is the holding of bad doctrine not so many will see it, because this last affects the Lord, while the former affects themselves, and they do not care so much about Him.

The Lord speaks instantly and heartily on her side. The homage offered to Him, if offered to anyone else, to any creature, would have been idolatry. To put her head, and evidently her heart, underneath His feet—creature could do no more. To any else it would have been idolatry; to Him it was worship, it was His due. We might get a hint of the judgment seat of Christ here. How infinitely different His judgment from even the judgment of *true* disciples. May we so live in communion with Him, knowing His word, as to anticipate His judgment.—(*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. 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 CCXXXIV.

Can you explain how it is that the "peace-offering" is not mentioned in Lev. xiv. 10-20?

REPLY.

Although pronounced "clean" (verse 7), the leper was still regarded as one to be *made* clean up to the completion of the ceremonies prescribed in this chapter—see verse 11.

The peace-offering, therefore, could not come in at that stage, according to Lev. vii. 20.

Moreover, the peace-sacrifice was specially connected with thanksgiving, vow, or voluntariness—see Lev. vii. 12-16.

Hence its fitness as coming voluntarily from the cleansed leper after all the cleansing ordinances had been completed.

The peace-sacrifice typified *communion*, and this can only be enjoyed fully when a sense of acceptance has cast out every thought of distance, defilement or fear.

QUESTION CCXXXV.

Is it scriptural or even prudent for a brother who has sinned publicly, and that seriously, and been under discipline several times, to take active part in ministry and oversight in the assembly, under the plea of zeal for the truth?

REPLY.

Our answer to this question presupposes that the expression "under discipline" signifies "excluded

from fellowship," and that this "discipline" was exercised in accordance with the Word of the Lord; being on account of such sin of practice or doctrine as Scripture demands shall be so dealt with.

Presuming this to be the case, we cannot but regard such action as unscriptural and subversive of the truth.

First, because those who exercise oversight or go before the flock ought to be "examples" to all (1 Pet. v. 3)—"blameless as the stewards of God" (Tit. i. 7), "Holding fast the faithful word," &c., the very opposite of falling and coming under its judgment—how could such "convince a gainsayer?" "Moreover, he must have a good report of those that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. iii. 7). These, and indeed nearly all the qualifications for an overseer seem to be absent in such a case. And probably if such a life were probed more deeply, other disqualifications would be apparent.

Then, oversight or ministry, in order to be profitable, must be acceptable to the saints. It is true that godly ministry *may* be resented by the carnal, and a man *may* be regarded as an enemy because he speaks the truth (Gal. iv. 16); but when those who are godly and concerned for the honour of the Lord's Name have doubts about another's fitness for a leading

place, or are grieved by his thrusting himself into it, it is clear that his (so-called) "ministry" could not be to the profit of the assembly, any more than for the glory of God.

It is hard to say whether those who encourage and acknowledge such presumption, or the ignorant and self-willed persons who so trespass against the truth have the greater guilt.

If God has given the necessary qualifications for those who are to be the guides in His assembly, how dare the saints give countenance to the ministry of those who do not answer to God's description? Is it not hypocrisy to profess to be gathered to the name of the Lord and yet so glaringly to set aside the clearly expressed will of the Lord?

QUESTION CCXXXVI.

Who are the elect of Rom. xi. 5?

REPLY.

Clearly that portion of the nation of Israel who, having believed on the Lord Jesus, were incorporated with believing Gentiles in the Church, the body of Christ; the one "new man" of Eph. ii. 15.

In verse 1 (Rom. xi.) Paul classes himself with this election of grace. In verse 7 "the election hath obtained it." What? Clearly "the righteousness which is of faith"—compare ix. 30, 31; x. 3. "The rest were blinded"—see verse 8, and compare 2 Cor. iii. 14.

QUESTION CCXXXVII.

What ought a believer to do who is residing in a place where there is no assembly gathered according to the Word of the Lord? Would it be right to remain away altogether from public worship?

REPLY.

Many of God's children are in these last days having their eyes opened to see the simple scriptural principle of gathering unto the Name of the Lord, owning no authority but that of Christ and His Word, with liberty for each one whom the Holy Spirit has qualified to minister according to their gift and ability.

The result is, that however painful the step, and however slowly arrived at, the conviction that in no other way could they glorify God, has compelled such to withdraw from the unscriptural associations of

which they were members, in order to gather where the will of the Lord could be carried out.

That this step is often taken without a due regard to its importance and far-reaching consequences is to be deplored.

But when there has been a rightly-exercised conscience, and the step taken in true-hearted obedience and faith, it will not be lightly retraced, even though residing where there is no scriptural assembly. If it is pleasing to God for His children to leave the different denominations in which they have been separated from one another and joined with the ungodly—in order to gather together around the Lord Jesus—how then can it be pleasing to God to go back to them? Is he who acts thus not building again that which he destroyed, and thereby making himself a transgressor, for ever having left the sect he was associated with?

How can those who act in this way expect God to use them in delivering fellow-saints from the bondage of sectarianism? Is it not plainly saying that the difference is only one of opinion, which can be waived at pleasure? And so the edge of the truth is blunted, and its effect on the conscience neutralized.

We believe this lack of decision and definiteness—this practical unfaithfulness to the truth—largely accounts for the powerlessness in so many assemblies to attract believers and deliver them from their denominational prejudices and bondage.

Instead of boldly declaring that sectarianism is sin, and showing from Scripture that there is only one way in which God would have His people to gather together—that every other way is a human device and a scism—the truth is held back, toned down, spoken of in an apologetic way, and so little contended for that godly persons in the denominations naturally conclude there is little scriptural ground for the "peculiar views" which lead to a position of such separation and reproach.

Therefore, we say, let those so circumstanced seek grace to stand alone until it please the Lord to grant one or more "like-minded according to Christ Jesus," with whom His will can be carried out.

The worship of saints, in the Spirit and in truth, is one thing, and public testimony in the gospel is another, but the idea of "public worship" as a service designed to suit "the public"—saved and unsaved together—is not found in Scripture.

PRIESTLY SERVICE.



HE believer has been called to communion with his God. This is the highest of all his privileges, and the crown of all his mercies. He has been brought to God, and set down before His face in the midst of that unsullied light and holiness which surround His throne, there to abide continuously. Not, indeed, that he has personally any title or fitness to be there; his natural place was without the camp, with the leper and the unclean; afar off and without God. But, by virtue of the one great sacrifice of the Lamb of God, he stands cleansed from all that unfitted him for that holy place, and encircled by all the fragrance and worth of Christ's peerless Name. His title, and his fitness for the presence of God, are found alone in Christ; and, notwithstanding his own consciousness of infirmity and unworthiness, he is invited to draw near and abide before God continually. The presence of God is his home, and there his spirit is at rest. Nor is he an uninterested dweller there; the Divine nature begotten within him, and the indwelling Spirit of God, have given him capacities for the enjoyment of heavenly things. He grovels no longer amid the things that are earthly, sensual, and devilish, as in the days of his unregeneracy he did, but, as a new creature in Christ, quickened from the dead, and as a priest called to share the holy things, his delights are now in that which occupies the heart and thoughts of God.

The priests of Israel were called to leave the waste and dreary wilderness, and enter the dwelling-place of Jehovah, there to abide and serve Him. The holy place was to be their home; the service of God their daily employment. True, they had at times to leave the calm and holy circle where the golden vessels stood, and turn their faces toward the needy and the distressed. They had a service towards the leper and the unclean, but they performed that service in the power of their anointing. Their priestly service did not cease when they were called to leave the holy place and go forth to deal with need and uncleanness amongst the thousands of Israel. The sphere of that service was changed, but not its character. It was priestly service to discern between the clean and unclean, and to put a difference between the holy and unholy things (see Lev. x. 10). It belonged to the priestly

office to look upon the plague-spot in the leper, to discern between a boil and a fretting leprosy, and to pronounce the judgement of the Lord upon either (Lev. xiii. 1-6). The believer in Christ is called to share a similar service. His privilege is to jointly-participate with God in heavenly things; to commune with God and meditate in His sanctuary; to feed at His table and to worship at His altar. But there is another sphere in which he is also called to serve as a priest. He has a place to fill in the Church, and a service to render towards his brethren there, and he has an ambassage toward the world as well. He will be called at times to deal with things clean and unclean, and to discern between things that differ. Outbreaks of evil amongst the saints requiring holy vigilance and spiritual discernment, will sometimes occupy his thoughts, and the groans and cries of a needy world will often fall upon his ear. He will have to gaze upon sights that move his heart to pity, and fill his soul with horror. There will be leprous men and things to look upon and deal with, and often and again will he require to "bathe" himself from the very memory of them. Sorrowful at best would such a service be, if it was not the service of God. But this is the tree that sweetens its bitterness; the balm that heals its woe. It is priestly service, it belongs to God, and it may and ought to be performed in the power of the holy anointing of the Spirit of God.

The Apostle Paul knew well the character of such service. In writing to the saints at Rome he says, "I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son" (Rom. i. 9). The word he uses to describe the character of his service is a temple-word. It signifies "to serve divinely"—"to serve as a priest." Whether that service was rendered in the Philippian dungeon, or amid the philosophers on Mars' Hill, or on a shipwrecked vessel in the Mediterranean Sea, it was the service of a priest in communion with his God. This was the secret of its marvellous power, and the strength that sustained him in it, amid all its vicissitudes and discouragements. It was GOD whom he served, and it was GOD whom he sought to please. His service was sometimes received and at other times rejected, by those to whom it was rendered, but he was always unto God a sweet savour of Christ (2 Cor. ii. 15). His service yielded incense-like fragrance to God, because it was the service of a priest.

He viewed the saints from the sanctuary, and knew what they required, and what was the Lord's will concerning them. He knew when to be as the "nursing mother" (see 1 Thess. ii. 7), and when to "use sharpness" (2 Cor. xiii. 10) for their edification. He had the discerning eye to see the consequences that would result from Peter's dissimulation at Antioch, and he rebuked him accordingly. He knew well what weakness would result from having John Mark as a fellow-labourer, and he refused to have him. His service for God led him into strange and lonely paths, where he missed the solace of his friends, and exposed himself to the fury of his foes. He was often misunderstood and misrepresented. His nearest friends, and those who were most indebted to him, forsook him (2 Tim. i. 17), and when the last stage of his course was reached, he stood solitary and alone, yet not alone, for "the Lord stood with him and strengthened him" (2 Tim. iv. 16-17); and as he began, so he continued and ended his course, joyfully serving as a priest in communion with God.

This character of service is sadly lacking in this our day; yet never was it more needed. Perplexities and difficulties abound on every hand. Discouragements and offences beset the path of those who fear God, and hold fast His faithful Word, on every side. Many who once trod the path have been overwhelmed by its trials, and driven to seek another with more ease to the flesh. Even amongst those who truly love the Lord, there are some who have but little sympathy with certain parts of needed truth, and look askance at those who seek to give it a place in their ministry and practice. Amid all these things, together with the consciousness of his own infirmities and failures, the spirit of the servant of the Lord is often sorely broken; but, there is a divine panacea for all his woes, and a fulness for all his needs. He has the LIVING GOD; GOD is the portion of His cup. His might, His wisdom, and His mercy are his portion. His Spirit dwells within him as the source of his strength. His sanctuary is his home. There is a superabundance of everything there, to furnish and sustain him in every exigency, and to enable him to finish his course and fulfil his ministry, joyfully serving as a priest.

J. R.

Show me a man walking in the fear of the Lord, and I'll show you a holy, lowly, Christ-like Christian.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xi. 1.

REVISED NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ."

THE Apostle seeks not a following for himself; his desire is only that the saints might through his example be led the more closely to follow after his Lord.

"Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (traditions) as I have delivered them to you." As the ordinances for Israel were delivered to that nation through Moses, so God has communicated His will concerning the ordering of the Church throughout its whole course upon earth until the Lord comes, through his servants the apostles and especially by Paul. In many respects the apostleship of Paul differs from all the other apostles.

The Lord through his epistles has addressed seven Churches of the Gentiles, just as definitely as through the Apostle John he addressed the seven Churches in Asia (Rev. ii. and iii.).

These are Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians.

In these the will of the Lord concerning His assemblies on earth is fully communicated.

There was a constant danger of the saints being turned aside from the simplicity of the will of Christ; hence, continual warnings against human traditions and human wisdom, and the frequent recalling of the saints to the Apostolic words.

To show this, turn to 2 Thess. iii. 4-6, "And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do *the things which we command you*. Now, we command you brethren in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which ye received of us." There is all the difference in the world between "the traditions of the fathers" and the "traditions" which were received from the Apostles; the former were of man, the latter were from the Lord.

They are called "traditions" in contrast to "Scriptures," because not yet written, but communicated to the saints orally, or from mouth to mouth. When

our Lord referred to "the Scriptures," it was to the Old Testament Scriptures. But later, the New Testament counsel of God was committed also to *writing*, and then ceased to be "tradition," and became New Covenant Scriptures.

The traditional form of the early teaching is shown in 2 Tim. ii. 1-2, "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." Thus from mouth to mouth was the will of the Lord transmitted and preserved by faithful men.

But in the providence of God, all that He saw needful for the Church has been committed by the Apostles to writing, and we are not cast back upon doubtful traditions, but upon the sure written Word of God.

I was once asked by a young man if I would not receive as equal authority to the Scriptures, what was written by one who had himself heard the Apostles speaking? I saw that this was only an attempt of Satan to move me from the solid rock to shifting sand. One step off the Word of God is a step into doubt and darkness.

Paul was jealous lest either Hebrew tradition or Grecian philosophy should introduce into the Church anything that would lead away from the simplicity of the Lord's instructions committed through him to the Churches. Great was his joy and hearty his approval as he found that they were still adhering, though not fully, to his teachings and example.

We know how, since then, all is changed. The "Apostles' doctrine" has been set aside, and the devices of man introduced. The world has come into the Church, and the Church has mingled with the world. The two simple ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been perverted from their true purpose and meaning. All this is around us, and proves what need there was for the warnings given.

And we may be well assured that the Lord takes pleasure in any single-hearted return to the old paths. Let us seek in a humble and true-hearted spirit to maintain and carry out the will of God, so that our Lord may be pleased with the condition of our souls towards Himself, as well as with the separate position we take from the evils around.

The Apostle then proceeds in verse 3, to give the mind of God with regard to the relative position of

the man and the woman in the assembly. "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the Head of Christ is God."

The head is that which directs and controls the whole body. Thus, the Son of God when on earth, took the place of subjection to His Father in all things. It was God who directed and controlled His whole being. "The Head of Christ is God."

Who is to direct and control the man in the assembly? The same who directed and controlled the Apostle Paul, Christ the Head. Every man is in direct responsibility and subjection to Him, and only as this is practically owned is the assembly fulfilling the purpose of God. "The head of every man is Christ."

Thus as Christ is subject to God, and as the man is subject to Christ, even so it is the will of God that the woman be in subjection to the man. "The head of the woman is the man."

This certainly does not imply that the woman is to surrender her conscience to the man, or to be subject to the man in wrong-doing, but it assigns to the woman the *subject position*, and every instruction in the Word of God as to the woman is in harmony with the place thus given her.

The Lord Jesus never sought to glorify Himself, but His Father. So the business of the man is to glorify Christ, to unveil or manifest the mind and character of Christ the Head. To show this typically, it is enjoined that in the assembly, which is designed to show forth spiritual and heavenly things, the head of the man shall be uncovered. To observe this, is not a mere custom, but an act of deference to the expressed will of a present Lord. Some may say, "Is God so particular as to care whether my hat is off or on?" Yes, God condescends to very little things, and has thought it needful to legislate for it in His Word. It is ours, therefore, simply to obey.

But the woman is to have her head covered. Why? Because "the head of the woman is the man," and on no account is man to be manifested or exalted. The covering of the woman's head is thus seen to be a typical action, expressing the great spiritual truth that in the presence of an unveiled and exalted Christ man is to occupy the veiled and subject place.

Suppose a few of us believers were sitting round the breakfast table in my house, on a Lord's day, and

that no assembly being in the neighbourhood, we purposed, after breakfast, showing forth the Lord's death in "the breaking of bread."

The moment the breakfast is removed, and the bread and wine placed upon the table in the name of the Lord, it ceases to be my table. As head of the house, the ordering of it was according to my will at breakfast; but now it is "*the Lord's Table*," and everything about it must be ordered and regulated by Him. Though there be only two or three, the ordering of the assembly and everything relating to the keeping of the feast, must be according to the revealed will of Christ.

If, at my breakfast table, the women had their heads uncovered; *now*, although in the same room and sitting round the same table, the women's heads must be covered. This, I repeat, is not a mere custom, it is an act of subjection to the will of the Lord.

And while thus dwelling on the claim of Christ as Lord to order His own table, I may add that He has the same right to order the ministry that is connected with the feast.

If the assembly be come together, and one man only is allowed to speak and conduct the service, is not this a practical denial of the authority of a present Lord, and of the varied gifts and ministry of the indwelling Spirit of God?

We are not at liberty to do as we like or as we think, but our responsibility is to keep the ordinances as they have been delivered to us.

The Apostle then goes on to show that there is a reasonableness in the covering of the woman. As in chapter x. 15 he says, "I speak as unto wise men," appealing thus to their own consciousness of what is wise or foolish; so here he appeals first to the law, and then to nature.

We have an instance of the same double appeal in chapter ix., on the subject of ministry (see verses 7 and 9).

Under the law the uncovering or shaving of the woman's head was connected with shame and dishonour (see Num. v. 18, and Deut. xxi. 12). But nature also, from the fact of the woman being provided with a natural veil of long hair, has a voice to the same effect.

Thus it is taught that the hidden, veiled place belongs to the woman, whilst the prominent public place pertains to the man. Why has the woman long

hair? God gave it to indicate that the woman was to be veiled, not thrust into public. Man, on the contrary, is thoroughly warranted to appear in public.

Then the subordinate place assigned to the woman is not here connected with the fall. True, Eve was the means of leading Adam aside, and being in the transgression, it was said to her, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee;" but before that, there was a definite indication that the woman's was to be the subordinate place. The man was not of, or from the woman, but the woman of, or from the man. Thus the manner of the woman's creation indicated subjection. Again, the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man. Thus, again, subjection is shown forth.

And all this points to the grander relationship of the Church to Christ. This is fully explained in Eph. v. Thus we see that in the most minute details of the will of the Lord there lie hidden, great, unseen realities.

CONTRAST BETWEEN GENESIS AND REVELATION.

Gen. i. 1. Earth created.	Rev. xxi. 1. Earth passed away.
i. 8. Night.	xxii. 5. No night.
i. 10. Sea.	xxi. 1. No sea.
i. 16. Sun set.	xx. 23. No need of sun.
ii. 8. Garden and home for man.	xxi. 10. City a home for saints.
ii. 18-23. Marriage of First Adam.	xix. 9. Marriage of Second Adam.
iii. 1. First appearing of Satan.	xx. 10. Satan cast out.
iii. 16, 17. Sorrow and suffering.	xxi. 4. No more sorrow.
iii. 17. Curse.	xxii. 3. No more curse.
iii. 24. Driven from garden and tree of life.	xxii. 2. Welcome back home.

J. H.

MERCY DISGUISED.—When Sir James Thornhill was painting the inside of the cupola of St. Paul's, he stepped back one day to see the effect of his work, and came, without observing it, so near the edge of the scaffolding that another step or two would have proved his death. A friend who was there, and saw the danger, rushed forward, and snatching up a brush rubbed it over the painting. Sir James, in rage, sprang forward to save his work, and received the explanation, "Sir, by spoiling the painting, I have saved the life of the painter." Similarly does the Lord, in His wisdom, often suddenly mar the pride of our glory; but who that sees the mercy He has in view, would not praise Him for His goodness?

SALVATION, SERVICE, AND REST.

Thoughts on Zechariah iii. By F. A. B.

FIRST PAPER.



HERE can be no doubt that this very interesting chapter in its primary and prophetic sense, relates to a remnant of Israel in the future. Jehovah will remove their iniquity, convey to them His mind, and they shall rest in Millennial contentment, as described in verses 9 and 10.

But while this is so, there are precious veins of truth running through this portion of Scripture of the utmost value to ourselves.

"The Angel of the Lord" before whom Joshua stands, probably represents the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jehovah's messenger we see Him in Old Testament times appearing to man in various ways. For instance:—

To Abraham, a pilgrim and a sojourner on the earth, *as a traveller* (Gen. xviii.).

To Jacob, fearful of a conflict with Esau, *as a wrestler* (Gen. xxxii.).

To Joshua, a warrior, *as Captain of the Lord's host* (Joshua v.).

How beautiful this is, showing how in condescending grace, before He became incarnate, He could adapt Himself to the circumstances and need of His beloved ones.

Before Him, then, Joshua stood a suppliant for mercy. At this point, however, the interest of the scene deepens: an opposer has come, even Satan, to show cause why Joshua should go away unblest. Joshua is wise, leaves himself in the hands of the Lord and allows Him to undertake his cause. The conflict is thus between the Redeemer and the Spoiler.

The righteousness of God requires a sinner to have "a stopped mouth," and it is only when the consciously guilty one is passive, attempting nothing in self-defence or extenuation of his sin, that salvation becomes his.

This is a simple point, but it lies at the root of all acquaintance with God. The moment a sinner enters into God's requirements as to a recognition and humble confession of sin, then, blessed be His Name, there is One to undertake the sinner's cause.

Satan may stand by to oppose the outflowings of Divine pity and forgiveness to Joshua, but the Lord will silence him.

Mark, however, the great reason associated with this rebuke—it is not "Your charges against this man are untrue," but "The Lord that hath *chosen* Jerusalem rebuke thee;" in other words, it is a declaration of *electing love*, which had its origin in the purposes of our Saviour, God. How comforting this is! When God would discover the great reason of His love for man, he finds it not in anything that man is or can do, but in His own heart.

The words, "plucked out of the fire," tell of our imminent peril and the vehement love of the rescuer. Plucked out at all hazards, and notwithstanding the inevitable suffering entailed upon the rescuer. Here, surely, is a theme for constant praise. We have been snatched out of the fire of endless perdition, and through God's mercy can truly exclaim,—

"There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me:
The torment and the fire, mine eyes shall never see."

These are words of wondrous significance, they are often on our lips, but alas, how feebly we realise their meaning! The best argument against "Non-eternity of punishment," or the old lie of Eden revived, "Thou shalt not surely die," is *to live as if we believed God* on this point, and the moral result of this, accompanied by a vigorous declaration of the Word of God, cannot fail with His blessing, to arrest the attention of the careless and ungodly.

It is very interesting to observe the process by which the Lord made Joshua to realise the reality of His grace.

- 1st.—He was stripped of his defiled garments.
- 2nd.—He was cleansed; his iniquity was caused to pass from him.
- 3rd.—He was clothed with a change of raiment.
- 4th.—He was crowned with a fair mitre.

But notice, *he was still passive*, all was done for him at Divine instigation, and up to this point he was simply the recipient of mercies grace had provided.

The process in conversion is the same to-day. *God must strip the sinner* before He cleanses him in the blood of Jesus, or covers him with the robe of Divine righteousness. We read in connection with Adam and Eve that the Lord God made coats of skins and covered them, but no one would surely imagine that

He put these coverings over the fig leaf aprons of human invention! Oh no! The stripping process began in Eden and has continued ever since, whenever the sinner has submitted to God's way. The prodigal of Luke xv. got *the best robe*, (illustrative of the righteousness of God in Christ), but certain am I, he would be stripped of the rags of the far-off country before he was arrayed therein.

Well, there stood Joshua still, but oh, what a change! Satan is robbed of his prey—is baffled indeed. If he would resist the object of God's favour still, he must find fault with God's cleansing, God's clothing, and God's crowning. Ah, that's it! and surely Joshua may be cheerful and content.

In the curse upon Satan in connection with the promised seed, (Christ), God had said "He shall bruise thy head, thou shalt bruise His heel." If this latter be applied to the mystical body of Christ, it only shows that Satan can (by God's permission), cause some trouble and inconvenience. You can *bruise the heel* without touching any vital part or affecting life, and this is the extent of the Devil's power over the Lord's dear people. Very different will it be with our adversary in our ultimate and glorious triumph. *Then, Satan himself* shall be bruised under our feet (Rom. xvi.).

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART VII.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chap. xi., verse 1. "A false balance is abomination to the Lord," &c.

Read Lev. xix. 35, 36; Deut. xxv. 13-16.—Equity of business shows equity of mind, whether in relation to the things of God or man.

Verse 2. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame;

Read 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21, how that Uzziah, lifted up with pride, was stricken; also Herod—Acts xiii. 20-23.

But with the lowly is wisdom."

Joseph—Gen. xli. 16-38, 39.

Verse 3. "The integrity of the upright shall guide them;

Daniel—Dan. ii. 20, 21. Integrity in the dealings of life is the best helmsman to steer clear of all dangers; Joseph's conduct shows this, and Daniel's again.

But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them."

Verse 4. "Riches profit not in the day of wrath;

But righteousness delivereth from death."

Verse 7. "When a wicked man dieth his expectation shall perish, and the hope of iniquity (R.V.) perisheth."

Verse 8. "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead."

Verse 10. "When it goeth well with the righteous the city rejoiceth, and when the wicked perish there is shouting."

Verse 12. "He that despiseth his neighbour is void of wisdom (R.V.);

But a man of understanding holdeth his peace."

Verse 16. "A gracious woman retaineth honour, and strong men retain riches."

Verse 17. "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul;

But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh."

Verse 18. "The wicked earneth deceitful wages, but he that soweth righteousness hath a sure reward" (R.V.).

Balaam—Num. xxii. 32; xxxi. 8.

Absolom—2 Sam. xv. 3-6; xviii.

Ahithopel—2 Sam. xvii. 1-3, 23.

—i.e., God's wrath—Ezek. vii. 19; Rom. ii. 5; Luke xvi. 19.

Noah—Gen. vii. 1.

Haman's case; see Esth. chapters iii. to ix.; the rich fool—Luke xii 16 20.

Mordecai—Esth. chap. iii. 9; Daniel and his accusers, Dan. vi. 23, 24.

Mordecai—Esther viii. 15, 16.

Athaliah—2 Kings ii. 13-20.

"Let each esteem other better than themselves;" "Be subject one to another."

"Be swift to hear; slow to speak."

Even as strong men guard their riches, so do women of grace retain honour.

—i.e., his very mercy obtains its own reward; as Joseph's kindness to his fellow-prisoners brought about his deliverance. Read of Saul's condition (1 Sam. xvi. 16, &c.)

"He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"

"Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

"Light is sown for the righteous," &c.

"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Verse 20. "They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord ;

But such as are upright in their way are His delight."

Verse 21. Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished ;

But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered."

Verse 22. "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without (or departeth from) discretion."

Verse 23. "The desire of the righteous is only good ;

But the expectation of the wicked is only wrath."

Verse 24. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth ;

And there is (he) that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

Verse 25. "The liberal soul shall be made fat ; and he that watereth others shall be watered also himself."

Verse 26. "Hethat withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him ; but blessing shall be on the head of him that selleth it."

"Let the words of my mouth, and *the meditation* of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord" (Psa. xix.).

Dan. x. 11-12 ; Cornelius—Acts x. 3-4.

The Babel builders—Genesis xi. 4 ; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—Num. xvi.

Abraham's True Seed—Mephiboseth, 2 Sam. xxi. 7—Noah's family.

As incongruous as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, for she doth but rout the filth of the sty with it ; so is the beauty of a woman who departs from that which is discreet and right—'tis a gift thrown away.

"I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. vii. 22).

"The wages of sin is death."

"A certain fearful looking for of judgment."

"To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

"Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure" &c.

"The abundance of their joy, and of their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (2 Cor. viii. 2., read also Prov. iii. 9-10).

Inhuman thrift leads to penurious ways, and to poverty in the midst of plenty.

2 Cor. ix. 6-10—Benevolence and beneficence are self-supporting and self-expanding.

The man that keeps back from selling his corn in days of famine till high prices are reached, is held in execration ; but people bless the generous seller, such as Joseph was.

Verse 27. "He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour ;

But he that seeketh (to do) mischief, it shall come unto him."

Verse 28. "He that trusteth in his riches shall fail ;

But the righteous shall flourish as a branch."

Verse 29. "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind ;

And the fool shall be servant to the wise in heart."

Verse 30. "The fruit of their righteousness is a tree of life ;

And he that winneth souls is wise."

Verse 31. "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth ; much more the wicked and the sinner."

God is "a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him" (Heb. xi.).

Balak seeking to curse Israel, was himself cursed" (Num. xxii. 6 ; xxiv. 17).

Luke xii. 11 ; 1 Tim vi. 17.

Psa. i. 3 ; Jer. xvii. 8.

Saul, 1 Sam.—A man should build up, and not vex his household.

"He that exalteth himself shall be abased."

It gives fruit always for the healing and comfort of many.

—i.e., winneth over by kindness and love ; so to attract unto the ways of God.

Rather requited—i.e., the righteous if he sins, shall be chastised, much more shall the wilful and habitual evil-doer.—1 Pet. iv. 18, gives a free rendering of this passage from the Sept.

David was punished for his sin (2 Sam. xii. 9).

Moses was deprived of his dearest wish (Num. xx, 12), for speaking unadvisedly with his lips (Psa. cvi. 33).

But what punishment awaits the sinner (Heb. x. 28-29).

ONLY BELIEVE.—"Only believe!" To me, in many an hour of darkness and extremity, has come this loving mandate, as from the lips of Immanuel Himself. I love the name, Immanuel, for in it I read the two natures of Jesus—God, with divine authority ; and Man, with human sympathy. In both these natures He speaks to me when, above the fierce clamours of the tempter, I hear that wondrous voice, "Only believe!" I have stood where floods of tribulation have rolled before me and behind me. Even then I have heard His blessed voice, "Be not afraid ; only believe!" and, lo! the waves have parted, and I have gone over dry-shod.

THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY H. D.



OW there is another emblem upon the table of our Lord besides the loaf, namely, the cup; and I would turn you this morning to some of the teaching which comes from that cup. We are by no means to think that the cup is thus used only as a grand finish, an appropriate appendage to the broken loaf. It is the same in teaching in one respect, namely, both teach the preciousness of the love of Jesus in dying for us. But though thus both alike, yet they differ, and therefore, of course, both are on the table. If you mean they are the same in what they represent, they are, but in different aspects. To Israel of old the manna, dropping itself over these twelve square miles—its little morsels over the whole area—reminds us of every crumb of this precious bread; no virtue in the loaf, but every crumb big with meaning. Did it come down to you from heaven as oil, sweet as honey, through the cooling cloud? That is what the bread seems to imply. But there was another thing for Israel; that is, the smitten rock, which poured out from its depths an increasing stream. And there was life in the manna and life in the water, but their teaching is different. The one which was spread out over all their busy tents, had to do with the surface of their necessities; but the other came from unfathomable depths. If this bread has been teaching us through the week that there was not one of my wanderings but what He died for it; and we can confess to greater preciousness in it, as we have had to do with the activities of redeemed life; surely I need also to think of the depths from which I have been redeemed.

But let us read the scriptures. 1 Cor. xi. 23. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread. . . . After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, this cup is the new covenant"—(the covenant pointed to our heart within, "I will put My law in their hearts,")—in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." The very fact of the double use of the word "remembrance," implies that there are two acts of

remembering Him. And now let us look at this second aspect. Be assured, dear younger saints, that the Lord who loves you looks to see you profit by the second as you did by the first. Here are we in His guest-chamber, and He looks into the soul of every guest, and says to my soul and to yours, "Oh My guest, hast thou supped well?" He knows the anxieties of hospitality, He is our Host, and would ask thus of all who take of His supper. What had you to say as you sat in your seat? "Hast thou supped well?" First, upon the bread: did you bless Him that not a single wandering or outward sinfulness, but you know that He died for it? Have you relished that? But you cannot, except you have a quickened apprehension that abhors the steps of sin. "I know I have failed in this or in that; Lord Thou hast died for it and 'tis put away," and so every crumb of bread teaches a mighty lesson. But what about the other part? There are two aspects in the precious death of Christ for me and for you. One is for our sins in all their countlessness and aggravated weight; "He gave Himself for our sins." But another is that, "He was made sin for us," sin in the singular, sin in its very essence. He had it not in Him, but it was laid upon Him. Now both aspects are for our souls apprehension. And even when we do not wander in the precious moments of nearness to God, when we are bearing the fruits of the Spirit against which there is no law and every step of our path yields precious fruit, the very while that we are bearing that fruit we carry within us a desperately wicked heart, and have to say "in my flesh dwelleth nothing good;" and that is never more a sorrow than when we are walking most closely with God; then it is that we cry out against the sinfulness of our nature—

"Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;"

call it cold because you know the hard evil nature in you at the time, and blame yourself because you could not bring a better

"But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought."

Let us never forget at the supper that we are not only indebted to Him for bearing all our sins, but for having been *made sin* for us. "Made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We have both of these in Isaiah liii. In

verse 6 we have this, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all." In all their numerousness, the actual sins of us all; answering to Christ having died for our sins. But go on to verse 10. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;" and from that bruising came the costly wine of this cup. "He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul,"—not His body only, nay, but—"when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin," (not sins), "He shall see His seed," He shall have you above one day without sin in you. Now this completes the blessedness of this precious feast. Not only the outside wanderings put away, but the inside sinfulness remembered upon the solemn cross. Turn again to Romans vii. and viii. At the end of chapter vii., after he has thanked God as a liberated man, confessing that in himself—that is, in his flesh—there was nothing good, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? So then, with the mind"—he has handled the outside sins, now what about the inside sinfulness?—"so then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, and am pouring out my happy heart to God; but with the flesh the law of sin." But what do we go on with? "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Not even on account of this indwelling sin. Why? "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," it could not change the hearts of Israel, because they were innately sinful—"God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"—in all the poverty and weakness of Adam's race—"and for sin"—not *sins* mark—that was settled in chapter v.—"condemned sin in the flesh," gave it all its due. Upon Christ was laid all that was due to my wicked heart, as well as all that could burden Him in my wicked life; "condemned" in the Person of my blessed Master. And now we come to the precious meaning out of the depth of the cup. Made sin for me, that as a guest at the table my cold-heartedness may not banish me from it. Mephibosheth was at the house of Saul till David called him; but nothing could change Mephibosheth's diseased feet, and if he came at all he must bring them. He could quit the house of Saul,—his outside life; but he must

bring his feet. But David did not banish him from the table for that, but made him as one of the King's sons. You are mourning your coldness, that you so little love; Jesus died for that coldness. Thus is there a double emblem at the table, for the double aspect of Jesus' dying; Who not only bore all my wanderings but was "made sin." Oh if you would fathom ocean, fathom this depth of the death of Jesus! One of God's natural parables is that ocean is deep as the mountains are high: the height of my sinfulness is met by the unfathomable depths of His death for me. Therefore it seems the deeper the cup the more solemn the teaching. Who shall say he knows the depth of iniquity in his wicked heart? Gentle Jeremiah says that the heart is desperately wicked, inconceivably so. That deceitfulness baffles you and me; it never baffled God or Jesus at the cross. God measured what to you or me is fathomless. Thus, if for any folly of last week I say Jesus had to die, then let that keep me from such folly this week, for the sake of His dear death. Was I foolish last Monday and Jesus had to die for it; shall I not ask Him to keep me from it next Monday. Therefore all the remembrance of how He died for my sins, is to strengthen me, to keep me from such sins; bread to strengthen the heart of man. Let the spiritual bread teach us to deal with the activities of spiritual life. But the sinful heart is never eradicated; therefore the cup is not to strengthen but to cheer, that we will be rid of it so soon. The bread to strengthen me for the contest with sin, the cup to cheer me as a mourner that sin is in me, till that one blessed moment which makes me like Him. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," on that morning of the resurrection. So Solomon in his proverbs cautions against giving wine to any but the poor in trouble. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel! it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." Now this is just exactly what Paul says to the Corinthian saints. Why were they behaving badly at the supper? They were living in luxury as kings, bringing all their lordly self-will to the table, and behaving in high mindedness. "*We* toil in the desert, and *ye* lie idle upon your couches." "It is not for kings to drink wine." Oh may we never come in this lordly manner of self-will to take this cup?

"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts;" and there is a sense in which saints delight to call themselves heavy-hearted till Jesus comes. "Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." "Oh Lord, my love is so poor!" "Forget its poverty, and drink of My cup." "Oh what can I bring? 'tis such a scanty feast for Thee!" "Forget thy poverty, and drink of the cup I have provided for thee."

Oh then, remember the two-fold love, which not only meets you so that there is no condemnation for outside things, or for the coldness of heart within. The moment you bewail it, He puts the cup in your hand to gladden your heart. "I know it all," says Jesus, "It cost Me much; and as I have borne all the sinfulness of thy outer wanderings, I fathomed the depth of the unfathomable wickedness of that wandering heart." Child of God, thou art never more blessed below than when saying, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine." Ah! 'tis a banquet, a foretaste of the two-fold banquet above. The moment He shouts you up you shall have lips that never say a sinful word, a voice with no tone of unhallowed harshness, eyes that can never flash a passionate look. And He had to die for all, for the unhallowed word and the idleness. But not only that; He tells us that He was made sin for us, and gives us His cup of joy. But another joy is awaiting me. Not only resurrection lips, and resurrection hands for my harp; but one other bliss beyond all—not to have sin in me. It will not exist. Pure as God is pure, as Christ is pure.

Two aspects, then, of Christ's death; two emblems to set forth that death; two joys when Jesus shouts you home. Now are we always in danger of sin; hence He gives not only the bread to strengthen, but the cup to make glad, and glad for ever.

EVEN SO, FATHER.—A deaf and dumb child, upon being asked, among other questions to which she had replied with quickness and intelligence, why she had been born thus, hesitated a moment, while the tears gathered in her eyes. Presently, however, she dashed them away, and looking up with a sweet smile, wrote upon her little slate, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XII.

(Continued from page 157.)

HAZARUS sits at the table with Him. Like as in Revelation v. we have the Church of God, represented by the twenty-four elders, sitting upon thrones round Him, the centre, upon His throne. Sometimes on their faces before Him, sometimes sitting calmly looking into His face, drinking in His love; again so overpowered rising and casting their crowns,—costlier than spikenard, for it cost His blood to place them upon their brows,—casting them at His feet and singing Worthy the Lamb.

Martha is the worker. Only pray observe that the main thought of the passage is worship. And what is the main thought in worship,—the prime idea in real worship? Occupation with Himself, to the exclusion of everything else; Himself alone filling the whole horizon of the soul. Hence we learn that worship is not only at the Lord's table. Then, it may be, we see Himself and the greatness of His love; but worship, as represented here by Mary, involves sacrifice. Might I ask you to tell the Lord candidly (you will have to do so at the judgment seat and it would be better now) what you have given up for Him, how much has His love cost you as it really cost Him? Sacrifice, if it is occupation with Himself, is costly, for He demands the whole. And have you ever once risen to the thought of worship in surrendering yourself utterly to Him, really to be taken up with Him, and to let all your soul be filled with Himself? Oh that our worship may be not only for an hour or two once a week, but that our whole life be a hymn of worship.

Then follows in the next place the account of the Jews. When thoroughly matters are settled between Himself and the Church He will yet take up the case of Israel, and Israel will sing Hosanna. But do not jumble up the call of Israel with the call of the Church. When the Church is shut in with God, and His work in the Church completed, then God will work upon the heart of Israel. So in chapter ii, a marriage in Cana of Galilee on the third, the resurrection day; then it says that Jesus goes down to Capernaum and purges the temple. But, *first*, there is the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and Cana means

“possession.” So He rides upon a colt to show Himself in this way to Israel. I am struck with the fact that the Lord never makes any attempt to bring His disciples to understand Him, as a false prophet would have done. As we may see in Matthew, there is no attempt to curry favour with John the Baptist, and persuade him that He is really the Messiah. On, and on, and on, in a lofty region He pursues His lonely way, and leaves it to the Father and to the Holy Ghost to reveal the rest. His only aim was to please the Father, and then to leave it to the Father to reveal Him.

And then come the Greeks, in verse 20, “And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast.” And the mention of the Gentiles at once reminds the Lord of His own death, and He says at once, “The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except *the* corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Christ was the first corn of wheat; the servants of God till then were trees. This passage is most important from a great variety of aspects. There was no union with Christ until death and resurrection; enough to show us that there was no Church till Christ was dead and risen. It abides *alone*. Old Testament saints were hoping in Christ, but there was no Church, no body, no bride till death and resurrection. Another way of looking at it: “Except the corn of wheat . . . die,” All know that we ought to bear fruit; but what is the divine way of bearing fruit? God wants much fruit, and purges the vine that it may bear much fruit. The idea of Christians generally is to be fussy, to work very hard, and to make plenty of display, and so to gather many around oneself. The Lord’s way is for self to get down, not for you gradually to become a great man; and the lower down you get, the nearer you get to the mind of God as to the way of bearing fruit. Jesus did not bear much fruit apparently in His life. Only one hundred and twenty souls gathered together after the Son of God’s labours! Yet, through His dying, what was the result? The whole of a saved creation owing everything to Him. Paul was many years of his life in prison, yet his teaching has been the means of instructing countless souls. Men admire success; but, “if it die,” . . . the very reverse way to the world’s. The path to glory is a subterranean path.

Not “much fruit” in the judgment of the world, but much fruit in the judgment of the Son of God. So the Lord says in the closing words of this first half of the chapter, “If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.” He did not mean that that path should be trod by Himself alone; by Himself first, to remove the curse of God and bear the brunt of the foe, but He did design that we should be truly His followers. We too are corns of wheat; through grace we are raised with Christ. Are we in association with Him? Then let us die, content that our praise should be of God. Like Mary, blamed by her sister and by the disciples, her praise came from the Master’s lips. “She hath done what she could;” very little apparently, but done with understanding and with the heart. And now is your time and mine to put our head underneath His feet, and worship, occupied with Him. Not occupied in the world’s fussy ways, but trying to get down. The Lord expounds His meaning, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.” Is it, “Do great things?” This is the answer that history records His disciples have sought to find. *His* word is, Follow Me! And do you see a play upon the words? “If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.” It is implied, if you serve Me you will get dishonour; but serve Me and My Father will make it up, though the world will cast you out. Again we have in chapter xv., “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch;” “if he abide in Me, the world will cast him out.” Following Jesus is a deal more arduous, a deal more self-denying; but “in that day,” says the Lord, “My Father will bring up that man who sunk his name and brought dishonour on himself, and will honour him.”

Now we have in the latter half of this chapter, beginning at the 27th verse, the Lord looking onward to His own death. I should say that this chapter is well known to be the closing chapter of an important section of the Gospel. From chapter iii. to xii. it is the Son of God in the world, but in chapter xiii. the Son of God in spirit takes a resurrection place. So chapter xiii. begins with, “having loved His own which were in the world,” as if He were out of it. And as we shall see, it as High Priest He washes our

feet by the Word; but He is only High Priest in resurrection. We might say that the whole chapter savours of death, for it commences with the narrative of the woman breaking the alabaster box, and we know what that emblemizes. Then in verse 27 the Lord Jesus looks as it were at the breaking of the real alabaster box, and the grace, and mercy, and love streaming out from Him.

Now in verse 27 we have first communion between Father and Son about His own death. Next, the multitude misunderstanding and Christ explaining about His death, but their persistent misapprehension. "Now is My soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." In allusion to verse 24, about the corn of wheat. The cross was coming very near; and evidently it was no trifle, not even with the incarnate, infinite Son of God. For as the cross appears in all its terrors, it makes Him, if I may so say, shudder. Beloved, do not let us forget that the cross was a great reality to Jesus, when He loved us. It had been settled between Father and Son before the world began, for it is the blood of the everlasting covenant, but now it had come close. "Now is My soul troubled." Observe what He does in view of this impending, overwhelming trouble. "And what shall I say?" All He does is to turn to His Father. No thought of deliverance, or even of sympathy, from any one else; His one look is upward,— "Father!" We may expect others to sympathise with us, but after all our resort must be in God. It is remarkable how few are His words. Two prayers, yet in very few words. The cross comes nigh, and causes a sort of shudder; then He checks Himself,—He came on purpose. It is a peculiar line of thought in the Gospel of John, that He came specially to die. In Matthew it is rather that He came to reign, as was His right; in Mark, to serve; but in John, to die. And now the time was come for Him to gird Himself to do that which He had covenanted to do. "Glorify Thy name;" "manifest Thy name." Man is glorified by things put upon him, God by His being known. He is glorified by being revealed as to what He is. Hence, "glorify Thy name by giving Me up to die; let Me be crucified." "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Observe again that Christ communes with God about the cross, but God stops not at the cross, but points

His Son and us to the glory beyond. Christ is content to obey; God points to the glory to come. Thus God points us both to the cross and to the glory. There is another scripture which does the same. "Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (xiii. 31-32). Again we have two glories; God glorified in Christ on the cross, Christ glorified in God. God's love told out to sinners on the cross, God glorified in Him. Then, "shall glorify Him," that is, the Son of Man. This is important; a Man in God, there is glory in that Man. The glory of God as displayed upon the cross, the glory of God displayed upon the throne, as Christ is there. Look again at chapter xvii. 4. "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." I have told out Thy name, Thy character, Thy love; that is, on the cross. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was;" glory upon the throne. Thus, then, are there two glories. The glory beaming from the cross,—and the way to glorify God is to take His grace. I have called these words communion between the Father and the Son; but if so, let us learn a lesson, to wit, that we are in communion with the Father as sons, we are called to communion. Let us see how this instructs us as to how we should have communion with the Father. As long as we are here we must have trouble. The Father, because He loves us very much, will not save us from trouble. What are we to do when trouble weighs us down? Father!—Not God. Father is the appropriate Name to use when we want His aid. Then if we have said thus, shuddering at any cross, at once we are to acquiesce in it; we are here on purpose to go through sorrow and suffering, on purpose to learn the name of God and how much He loves us. Then, secondly, there is the prayer. Not, "Father remove the trouble," but let Thy name be glorified. Oh that we may show the same spirit as Christ, as being more intent upon God's name being glorified, than upon our being delivered.—*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

The Church of God grieves the heart of Christ more than all the sins of the world put together.

1 THESSALONIANS III.

DESIRE to bring this chapter under the notice of brethern who have been gifted by God to minister His Word, and who are privileged to look upon themselves as gifts given by the Lord to the Church, and for the edification of the Body of Christ. In the epistle and in this chapter, reference is made to more than one or two who had been sent forth of God to minister, and it appears, from the tenor of the Holy Scripture, that their ministry was not localised, that is, was not always for the same place, and for a certain number of saints; but apparently their ministry was for not a few *gatherings* of God's people. In verses 5 and 6 we see the godly care exercised by them and how they sought to be acquainted with the state of the assembly at a distance. I fear many of the Lord's servants in the present day rob themselves of the joy which might be experienced by them, did they exercise themselves a little more as to the state and need of many *gatherings* of whom they have but little evidence if any, as to whether their faith is lacking or full.

See the holy joy spoken of in verse 9, and may it yet be the experience of many.

To be pointed, I put it in form of a question, and ask, How many are continuing in the exercise set forth in verses 10 and 11 with regard to the many small gatherings in and around London, and also in the remote country villages, where the saints but seldom if ever hear the voice of any of those whom the Lord hath sent forth to serve Him in the Church (and not in a certain district as is customary) as special gifts?

With desire that the Truth should be spread, and that those who specially are responsible for the spread thereof, should be exhorted to continue in well-doing, that in due season they may reap, these lines are written.

To show the necessity for these few remarks, I may state that for the last three years I have been attending a small gathering in the suburbs of London, and during that time I do not remember having had the pleasure of a visit from any of those who have been sent forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles to serve the Lord, either in the gospel or in the ministry of the Word.

J. A.

CHRIST IS COMING.

WHEN the Lord Himself was down here, you remember, He became a Prophet—the Prophet of His people then, as He is our Prophet now. And in John xiv.—which is His prophecy—what does He say? He had just been speaking of leaving His disciples, and they were downcast and disappointed that the kingdom for which they had been looking had not come. Have you ever thought that the Jew, not seeing His sufferings, was like a man looking at the mountain top, which the sun tips with gold, and losing sight of the intervening valleys? Too many of us—the majority of Christendom—see only the deep valleys, and fail to lift up our eyes to the mountain top. The Gentile does not see the glory, and the Jew does not see the humiliation of Christ. These disciples were perplexed and disappointed, and the Lord said unto them: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions.” You shall have a presentation as children, and then when presented you will come with Me, and you will be joint heirs in the kingdom. Do not let your hearts be troubled, : “I go to prepare abiding places for you” (as the Revised Version has it). You will be no more strangers or guests; no further vicissitudes; no more losing of dear ones. A sweet thought for those who have lost dear ones out of the family circle. Where are they? In the sweet abiding-places of God; secure and established as are the pillars in the New Jerusalem. Note, also, the expression, “And if I go, I will come again.” He is coming down personally, as he went up personally. The one is as literal as the other. Here we have a unique, a special word—something different from what we have in the prophets. We never read in the prophets of a Father's house, or a word so touching and tender as “I go to prepare a place for you.” Here he speaks His heart of love when He says He will not leave them orphans in this world's vicissitudes, its open graves and funeral knells. No,

“I WILL COME AGAIN, AND RECEIVE YOU
UNTO MYSELF.”

A friend of mine came down from a sick-room, and said that just as he was about to leave he said to the sick one, who was in fact dying, “I am going to leave

the most precious word in the Bible with you." "What is that?" she said. He quoted this word: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again." "No," she said to him with her dying lips, "that is not the most precious word; the most precious word is, "I will receive you unto Myself."

I remember hearing of a little daughter who returned home after a long absence; her mother had a number of friends to meet and welcome her. After they had all gone she flew to her mother's arms, and said: "This is what I wanted; this is what I came home for; I have got you all to myself now." So the Lord will have us to Himself, and you will have the Lord to yourself. There will be no more thought of relapsing into a distant promise.

But the subject is inexhaustible. The whole Bible is full of it. May our hearts, every one of them, get as full of it, too, as the Bible can fill them. We shall then go about as walking testimonies in these last days that

CHRIST IS COMING, AND OUR REDEMPTION
DRAWETH NIGH.

J. D. S.

GLEANINGS FROM GLASGOW CONFERENCE.



HERE is but one way to obtain the Lord's blessing—"Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God."

Our sorrows burden God more than they burden us; therefore we may well leave them with Him.

When a man gets out of his nothingness he gets into it.

Mary's college was the best—at the feet of Jesus.

The Shepherd is before us, our God above us, and the Holy Spirit within us. What need we fear?

When James and John asked for the highest place the other ten were angry. Why? Because they wanted the same place.

He who would be *great* in the Church must be servant; he who would be GREATEST must be slave of all (Mark x. 43, 44).

When Naaman turned from the door of Elisha he said "*I thought*," and went away in a rage; but when he turned from Jordan, cured of his plague, he said "*I know*," and went away happy.

Rev. xiii. 11: A lamb-like beast—Christ all over.

Three marks of Satan—liar, murderer, deceiver. Beware of these three characteristics of opposition.

The king asked Nehemiah a question and he could not answer, so counted himself "a fool," and looked to the God of heaven and got the answer.

Pray for grace to become a fool, that you may be wise.

People in Glasgow, like the people in London, are set upon becoming rich; well, here's the secret to become rich—"2 Cor. vi. 10."

Our Lord wanted to be the greatest giver that ever was, so took lowest place—born in a stable, lived in a carpenter's shop, died on a wooden cross, buried in a borrowed tomb.

Paul entered Corinth penniless, yet left the town after having made many unspeakably rich.

"Take heed, brethren—exhort one another—while it is called *to-day*" (Heb. iii. 12)—that is, until you are called home where no care will be needed. Take heed *to-day*.

The devil never comes in weakness, always in power; and our danger is to meet power with power, instead of with the weakness of our trust in God only.

There is no moment when our evil heart of unbelief is not in danger of departing from the living God, therefore it says, "Take heed TO-DAY." *Now*.

If it was the Lord's care that not one jot or tittle should pass from His Father's word, how much more should we have care to carry out every detail of that same holy word?

Fancy the children of Israel building the Lord's house, and yet forgetting the One who was to occupy it; and yet are we not in danger of doing the same?

We are all living in *drifting days*, and Christians on right hand and left are boasting of uncertainties.

If we had half the confidence in God's power, and prayer that we have in our arguments, to "convert" our brethren, what different results we would see.

Acts vii. and viii. show the Church like a ship in a storm; in Acts ix. they have rest, and are built up or edified and multiplied.

Did you ever notice that wonderful shepherd Moses, how often, when Israel came into trouble, we read, "And Moses fell on his face before the Lord?"

The most happy picture of heaven upon earth is an assembly in happy fellowship one with another.

We often get wrong by *debating*, instead of *waiting* upon God.

The storm separates the chaff from the wheat; the fire tries the gold, but purifies it; wine emptied from pitcher to pitcher is disturbed, but purified; so times of tribulation, trial, and disturbance often purify and cleanse the Church.

The worst of all wars are internal wars. How many of these have we in our assemblies of to-day?

The devil often pats us on the back with our public confessions, but never with the times we are down on our faces before God in secret.

A little dead fly in the apothecaries' ointment will cause it to send forth a stinking savour. Oh, may the Lord keep the little dead flies out of the assemblies!

God often tries His servants first with the rough, and ends with the smooth; man commences with the smooth, and ends with the rough.

A dear brother once said at the close of a series of happy and helpful meetings, "Only think of a hundred living tigers (by nature) three days together, and we have not heard so much as a growl." HYP.

"MACEDONIAN CRY" FROM INDIA.

MR. J. N. MACRAE, presently home from India in infirm health, writes as follows, and may the Lord, by His Spirit, send home the appeal to the hearts of godly men and women willing and ready to say, "Here am I, send me:"—

"Croydon, 5th September, 1886.

"Few besides those who have actually seen the multitudes of the nations living and perishing without God and without hope, can in any measure appreciate their deep need.

"I long to see many consecrated men and women going forth from your happy fellowship meetings, carrying the light and gladness of the gospel to the dark places of the earth.

"Last mail brought the sad news that dear brother Charles Beer, of Nursipur, Godavery Delta, Madras Presidency, India, has been struck down by sunstroke. This is not surprising to us who know how much he has been overworked of late, especially since his brother's death; but it is none the less saddening.

"Many will now remember his repeated appeals for help in his school work, and now that he has fallen at his post, it may be that some will have to reproach themselves, as did the brethren of Joseph—"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we *would not* hear."

"Our beloved brother was still alive when the mail left, and may, perhaps, recover; but it will be a long time before he can hope to go back to his work.

"As soon as our brother can be moved, it will be needful to send him home to this country, and, as he has a wife and six children, the expense will not be small; but the Lord, whose servant he is, will not suffer him to want. Meanwhile, I fear the schools must be closed, unless some one is raised up to carry them on in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"The Nursipur churches have been called of late to pass through many and sore trials, and I trust the Lord has a rich blessing in store for them. Let us be their helpers in prayer, that they may lose none of what the Lord designs for them, but may become instruments in making known the riches of His grace to their heathen neighbours.

"You will, I am sure, make known our dear brother Beer's case. He has no personal friends in this country, having been born and educated in India. He has laboured for the Lord in Nursipur for eighteen years, having only been out of that district twice during that time for a week or two. In such a climate the wonder is that he did not break down sooner."

J. NORMAN MACRAE.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION CCXXXVIII.

Does 2 Cor. iii. 1, or Acts xviii. 27, afford any ground for refusing to admit a stranger to the breaking of bread who has not brought with him a letter of commendation?

REPLY.

Ignorance, or circumstances over which one may have had no control, might account for a fully-approved believer presenting himself at the door of

the assembly without a letter of commendation. It is evident from Acts xix. 26 that Saul arrived at Jerusalem without one; but the circumstances recorded in verse 25 fully account for it.

And as it witnessed to their carefulness, so did it witness to the reality of their fellowship. It was no mere formal recognition, but a reception in full confidence and whole hearted. This, as well as the exclusion of the hypocrite or the heretic, was secured by the letter of commendation.

If one who has not learned his duty in this matter, but who is nevertheless in fellowship in a Scripturally-gathered and orthodox assembly, should come, surely the fact that he habitually so assembles with the saints is enough to secure his hearty reception.

If there is any *doubt* about it, better to *wait* than hastily act in doubt.

If the stranger comes from doubtful or evil associations, other questions arise calling for discernment on the part of those whom God has set in responsibility as shepherds. This involves of necessity some delay; and if carefulness was needed and practised in the early Church, how very much greater is the need for it now, seeing that on every hand the children of God are mixed up with, and have more or less imbibed the errors of the wicked?

But the *delay to receive* that is *necessitated* by carefulness and concern for the honour of the Lord and the welfare of the flock must not be regarded as a *refusal* to receive. It is only the necessary step toward a reception that shall be to the glory of God and the blessing of both receivers and received.

QUESTION CCXXXIX.

Into how many parts is the law of Moses divided? and to which part are we, as believers, subject?

REPLY.

The law of Moses embraced every department of life. The Ten Commandments were essentially *moral* in their bearing—both Godward as in the first four, and manward as in the latter six. But the law also embraced the ceremonies that pertained to an order of worship which was typical and temporary. These have been called by some the “ceremonial law.” Then, again, Israel was a nation, and as such required righteous statutes and judgments suited to their position and circumstances. These might be called the judicial law. And many other instructions are given of a social character.

But these distinctions are only the mapping out of the Mosaic law by man. God does not make any such divisions. He refers to it continually as a whole. “The law was given by Moses.”

From the law in its entirety the believer is set free. He is freed from it by having died to it. “Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” “Now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held” (Rom. vii. 4-6). The law was made for man in the flesh. But as men in the flesh, God reckons us to have died in Christ; and He would have us to reckon as He does. “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. vi. 14).

It is impossible to die to the law in one part and not to the whole. “The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.”

But although we have died out from under the law, we have not thereby passed out from the place of subjection to the will of God. God asserts His claim over us more strongly than ever—not by placing us again under the law, but by giving us unreservedly to Christ. If we are delivered from the former husband—the law, it is not that we may do our own will, but that we should be married to another, even unto Him who is raised from the dead. Christ is thus the new husband—the Head, the Lord—the absolute possessor of His redeemed people. His will is our law, as says Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 21—“Not being without law to God, but under law to Christ.”

Thus the early Church continued steadfastly—not in the law of Moses, but in the apostle’s doctrine. It was the will of the Lord Jesus, as communicated by the apostles, that dominated the saints.

The commandments of the Lord for this dispensation differ in very many respects from the law of Moses. They are adapted to the position and circumstances of a people found in every clime—heavenly strangers—scattered over the earth.

Morally, the teaching of the Lord Jesus is higher, not lower, than the law. It has been said of the teaching and commands of Christ, “Take them to live by, and they are impossible; take them to die by, and they are plain.”

PUBLISHERS’ NOTICE.—Several important Alterations are contemplated to be made in the Title, Size, Printing, Matter, and Get-up of “The Witness” for 1887, full details of which will be given in our next. Kindly show this No. to any of your friends likely to become Subscribers, and so help to ground them in the faith “once for all delivered to the Saints.”

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xi. 4, 5.

REVISED NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THESE verses have been taken by some to prove that women are as fully authorised as men to preach and pray in public, the only restriction being that the woman is to have her head covered. It has been further argued that "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28), and that, therefore, male and female are upon an equality as to public ministry.

As to standing before God in Christ, as to acceptance and access to God, all are one, indeed. But it is a mistake to suppose that this verse teaches that there is no distinction as to position, gift, and ministry in the Church, seeing other Scriptures teach the very reverse.

The very fact that a woman is to be covered and the man uncovered shows that there is a very important difference in the mind of God.

It is one of the glories of the teaching of Christ, that the woman is given her proper place. In all heathendom she is the slave of the man, to do him service, but Christianity gives her her true place as his equal and companion, called to all holy fellowship in the things of God.

Nevertheless, she is "the weaker vessel," not, as a rule, possessing the strength of the man, either physically or mentally, yet specially fitted in many ways for a sphere of service peculiarly her own.

I now wish to inquire—Is it according to the revealed will of God that the woman should be at liberty to preach and pray in public just as the man? Does Scripture generally teach this, or does it not?

In the first place, the argument for it is generally based upon the word "prophecy," and it is, therefore, needful to look a little at the meaning of the word as used in Scripture.

Those who argue from it for the public ministry of women hold that it means, or at least includes, or is equivalent to, preaching and teaching. This I deny.

The meaning of the word will be seen at a glance by reference to Luke xxii. 64—"When they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, 'Prophecy, who is it that smote

Thee?'" That is, "Declare by inspiration who smote Thee." And it will be found that in every other passage where the word occurs it means the same.

Often it refers to the foretelling of events; but it is not by any means limited to this. Prophecy might have to do with the present as well as the future. But whether designating Timothy for special gift and ministry (1 Tim. iv. 14), or concerning a future dearth (Acts xi. 28), it was equally the speaking forth by the Spirit the mind of God as communicated at the time.

Now look at 1 Peter i. 10-12. Here, again, there is the same sense—The prophets spake or wrote that which was given them at the time by the Spirit of God. They were merely the instruments by which the Spirit uttered things beyond the knowledge of man. They actually required afterwards to search into the meaning of the things they had uttered: so, definitely, was it a speaking forth by inspiration. So in Ps. xlv. 1—"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." As a prophet, David spoke or wrote that which the Spirit of God had to communicate, being the instrument of God for the time being, as a ready writer would take up a pen, and not necessarily knowing the meaning or application of the words he uttered or wrote.

Did Balaam understand what he uttered? or did Caiaphas as he prophesied in John xi. 49-52, and afterwards condemned the Lord? (Mat. xxvi. 65).

Nay, they were but the instruments taken up for the occasion by the Spirit of God to utter a prophetic message quite apart from their own understanding of what they spoke.

Then, if you will refer to 1 Cor. xii. 29, and to Rom. xii. 6-8, you will find that in both these Scriptures prophecy is distinguished from teaching.

In 2 Tim. ii. 2 we read, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The prophet spoke the word as it was given him by the Spirit apart from the Scriptures (though, of course, never in opposition to them). But the teacher's business was to give instruction in those things that had previously been given prophetically by the Spirit. In Nehemiah viii. 8 we find, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." This was teaching. But in Ezra v. 1

we find Haggai and Zechariah "prophesied unto the Jews," and their prophecies are recorded for us in the books of Zechariah and Haggai—utterances given directly apart from any previous revelation from God—given by the Spirit, and recorded for our instruction as the very Word of God.

The teacher has to do only with "the book"—comparing Scripture with Scripture, and giving "the sense" in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. He can only speak that which he understands. He is to speak only that which is the truth, but he would grievously go beyond his province if for a moment he claimed that his teaching should be regarded as having prophetic authority.

With the completion of the Scriptures, the gift of prophecy, together with that of apostles, passed away for the present dispensation.

The transitory character of these gifts is referred to in 1 Cor. xiii. All that God saw to be needful for the Church of the Apostolic and Prophetic Testimony has been preserved for us in the Scriptures. The "apostles and prophets" are in the Scriptures, and nowhere else, for us.

What remains is the function of the teacher and pastor, in order that the saints may be instructed and guided into the understanding of, and obedience to, the Scriptures.*

This is confirmed by reference to 2 Peter ii. 1—"But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be (not "false prophets," but) false teachers among you." From this we see that it is Satan's way of opposition to counterfeit the true. In the time of the Old Testament prophets, Satan raised up false or counterfeit prophets, who deceived the people by imitating the way and manner of speech of the true. So, now, since prophets have ceased, and the instruction of the saints is carried on instrumentally by teachers, Satan raises up false teachers, who deceive those who listen to them, not by openly opposing the Scriptures, but rather by wresting or misinterpreting the Scriptures, while professing to base their teachings upon them; mixing tradition and

* In 1 Cor. xiv. 3, while it is asserted that one who prophesies speaks unto men "to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort," it by no means follows that all who speak to edification and comfort are prophesying. A teacher ought at all times so to speak, and yet teachers are carefully distinguished from prophets in Scripture: see Rom. xii. 6-8; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11.

philosophy with the Word of God, and so making the Word of God of none effect.*

In the New Testament the word prophetess only occurs twice, it is applied by the Lord to Anna in Luke ii. 36, and by "Jezebel" applied to herself—"She calleth her own self a prophetess" (Rev. ii. 20). With this fact before us, it is sad to see a published defence of the public preaching of women, entitled, "A plea for Modern Prophetesses."

The question then arises—Does this verse, alluding to the prophesying and praying of women, warrant women to preach and teach publicly as men, and to lead large public assemblies in prayer?

I think it strange that any should base such a doctrine upon this single verse, in the face of such Scriptures as these.

"As in all the assemblies of the saints, let your women keep silence in the assemblies: for it is not permitted unto them to speak" † (1 Cor. xiv. 34).

"Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12). Then follows the double argument from creation and from the fall. The whole of this chapter (1 Tim. ii.) evidently referring to the order of public ministrations in the assemblies. ‡

* It has been taught and received by most of those who have spiritual discernment and intelligence, that all the Second Epistles have a character which specially bears upon the latter times of the Church. Is it, then, without design that there is not a single allusion in any of the Second Epistles to either New Testament prophets or to the New Testament gift of prophecy? Neither is there in the Epistle of Jude, which also bears upon the latter times.

† It has been recently taught that the word here rendered to speak signifies to chatter, and that it is only the disturbance of talking during a meeting that is here condemned. That the word may be so used in profane Greek writings we do not deny, but surely it is the use of the word in the Scriptures that is to determine its meaning when God uses it. It is used of Christ in Mat. ix. 18, Heb. ii. 3; of God in John ix. 29, Heb. i. 1, 2; of the Holy Spirit in Acts xxviii. 25; of prophecy in 1 Cor. xii. 3, and xiv. 2, &c., &c. It is grievous, indeed, to find such erroneous special pleading resorted to in support of an unscriptural practice, and only serves to show the weakness of the position.

‡ To pray is the part of all, but to lead an assembly in prayer is the part of the man, being a public act, and, therefore, it is enjoined upon the man in 1 Tim. ii. 8. This passage has been adduced in support of women praying in public; the words "in like manner," in verse 9, being strongly built on as confirming the same instruction to the women as to the men. But even so reliable a critic as Dean Alford denies to it this force, and quotes the parallel passage in Titus ii. 3 to show that the "in like manner" is simply a copulative. It is perfectly astounding to an unbiased mind to be confronted with such arguments upon so serious a subject.

I think it has been sufficiently shown that the gift of "prophecy" is entirely distinct from preaching and teaching, and that even if it were proved that women did prophecy to public audiences, that would not justify the woman in public preaching and teaching in the face of the Scriptures quoted to the contrary.

But let us glance at the Scriptures as to preaching. There are two Greek words rendered "preach." One is that from which our word "evangelise" is derived. It is "to declare good news," and might be public or private, and by man or woman. Every recorded instance of *public* evangelisation is by a man. Paul says, "help those women who laboured with me in the Gospel," but he carefully avoids saying "who preached with me." The expression he makes use of will fitly apply to such help in the work as was becoming for the woman.

When we read, "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts viii. 4), the word rendered "preaching" does not necessarily imply publicity. But there is a word that means *public proclamation*, and nothing else—an entirely different word, the work of a herald—"Keerusso." It is used in the following Scriptures:—Mat. iii. 1, of John the Baptist; Mat. iii. 17, of Christ; Mat. x. 7 and 27, of the Twelve Apostles. Verse 27, "that preach ye upon the house-tops," indicates that the word implies publicity. In Acts viii. 5, it is used concerning Philip; Acts ix. 20, of Paul; 2 Tim. iv. 2, of Timothy; 2 Peter ii. 5, of Noah; in Rev. v. 2, of an angel. The word occurs upwards of sixty times, but is not in one single passage applied to a woman.

True, it is said that women prophesied, but God is Sovereign, and could take up a woman and speak through her when and where He pleased; but does this afford the slightest evidence that God has assigned to the woman the same sphere of service as the man? To assert this is to overturn the entire teaching of Scripture.*

* There is no evidence, in almost any instance of prophesying by women, that it was uttered in a public way. Miriam prophesied before the *women*, and they—not the men—went out after her; this answering, in some respect, to Titus ii. 4, where the "aged women" are enjoined to teach the "younger women." Deborah, having the mind of the Lord, pronounced His judgment in all matters that were brought to her; but it does not appear that she left the shade of the palm tree where she dwelt, only she received those who came to her for judgment (Judges iv. 5). Constrained by Barak she accompanied him to the battle, but it is not recorded that she took any prominent place; on the contrary, she told him it would not be for his honour. Nevertheless, the secret of the Lord being

Is it nothing that Christ only chose men to be His apostles? And, again, when He sent out the seventy to preach the Kingdom of God, that they were men only? And that all the public preaching recorded in the Acts of the Apostles is by men only?

In 1 Tim. v. 10, we have a little *épitome* of women's acceptable service. Why is the "preaching of the Gospel" excluded from this list? Surely the silence of God in such a matter has a loud voice for the willing ear. Long ago, when I began to preach the Gospel, my grandest helper was an aged woman now with the Lord. She visited from house to house, arranged for and gathered the meetings into kitchens, and I preached to them. Would to God there were more women now willing to serve the Lord thus.* The fruit of that ministry remains abundantly to the glory of God to this day. Woman can get access where man cannot. There is no lack of service for women, and such service as they are pre-eminently fitted for.

Even in my unconverted days there seemed to me to be something out of place, out of nature's order, in a

still with her, she instructs Barak, saying, "Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand." The utmost discretion seems to have been used by Deborah to avoid, in the most responsible position that perhaps God ever called a woman to occupy among His people, even the appearance of going beyond what was strictly a woman's place. Hannah's prophecy (1 Sam. ii.) bears no evidence of having been uttered publicly. Huldah prophesied to those who were sent to her, but did not leave the place where she dwelt; retaining throughout the strictly private character of her ministry (2 Chron. xxxiv. 22). Anna, a widow of 84 years, is referred to as a conclusive instance of public ministry by women; but there is not a shadow of evidence that she acted in any such capacity. The Temple seems to have been her continual resort, and there she had abundant opportunity to speak of the Saviour, whom her eyes had seen, to those that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Such could at most have been but "a little flock," and she would, in all probability, have opportunities of speaking to them or conversing with them (for the word used does not necessarily imply publicity) as they came, from time to time, to worship; but it is an unwarrantable straining of the narrative to say that all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem came together as a congregation to be prophesied to by this aged widow. How strongly in contrast is the record of Peter's action in Acts ii. 14. Philip's four daughters likewise prophesied, and it is asserted that the way in which this is recorded indicates that they exercised this gift in the presence of Paul. It may be so; and why should they not? But where is the evidence that they appeared in a public capacity when they so prophesied?

* We believe that visitation in the homes of the poor is a sphere where women's ministry is specially calculated to be fruitful. But the moment she steps from beneath the roof of a home to the platform of a public place of assembly, she leaves the *private* sphere and enters upon the *public*; in our humble judgment, gathered from Scripture as a whole, she leaves the woman's sphere and enters upon the office of the man.

woman standing up to sing before an audience of a thousand people. Far be it from me to speak harshly of women who have taken the public place. I know something of what it cost some to crush their sensitive nature in so doing. It was a living martyrdom for a time, *until they got accustomed to it*. But the shamefacedness and modesty that is the woman's glory is becoming less and less valued in the world, and alas! among many of God's people as well.

FOLLOWING UP THE WORK.

THE season having come for taking down the Gospel Tents,* a few thoughts on following up the work may be helpful; and in this, as in everything else, let us be guided by Divine precedent. There is such a danger of falling into the snare of "measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves among ourselves" (2 Cor. x. 12), that we need to be continually exhorted to test everything by the Divine pattern.

Let us look first at the commission given by the Lord, and then at the practice of the apostles.

In the last two verses of the Gospel by Matthew we read, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world (age). Amen." Those who look at this without prejudice cannot fail to see that the conversion of sinners is the *beginning* of the work, not the *end* of it. There are some who labour only for conversions, and when they have got so many "professions" they go away like the ostrich, "which leaveth her eggs in the earth." "She is hardened against her young ones as though they were not her's" (Job xxxix. 14-16). It is evident such was not the Lord's design, nor was it the practice of the apostles, as we shall see.

It is deeply solemn to trifle with the commandments of the Lord—giving what we believe to be "essential," and keeping back what we consider "non-essential." Those who act and speak thus should remember that the commandment given to the "man of God" was to be kept "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. vi. 14). And

only those will be crowned who "strive lawfully" (2 Tim. ii. 5).

In the commission given by the Lord, baptism occupies a prominent place; and we find that at and after Pentecost the divinely-called workmen gave it the place which the Lord Himself assigned to it.

We cannot stop to point out the distinction between baptism in Acts ii. 38, where it is "unto the remission of sins," and the reception of the Holy Spirit; and Acts x. 44-48, where it is consequent upon the remission of sins, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. All we say is, that in preaching the Gospel to Gentiles the last passage is a clear precedent which, if followed, would lead Gospel workmen to teach baptism to those who give clear evidence that they have received the remission of sins, and have been sealed by the Spirit. We ought to be most careful not to keep baptism in the background when it ought to be in the front; and, on the other hand, not to baptise any without satisfactory evidence that they are proper subjects for it.

Notice, also, that while Peter, with Apostolic authority, commanded them to be baptised, he did not baptise them himself. And with this Paul's practice at Corinth agrees (1 Cor. i. 14-16). He there baptised a few who afterwards became leading men, and then he evidently left those who professed to be saved through his preaching to be baptised by others; and much confusion is wrought when this Divine precedent is set aside. We are glad to hear of people getting baptised, but we never hear of large numbers but we tremble for the future. It is a great loss when any of the children of God are left unbaptised; but it is much more disastrous when, under the impulse of emotion, people are baptised and passed off as Christians who are still unsaved. Who can estimate the damage to the truth, and to souls, when such things are done?

But in the commission we have not only the command to baptise, we have also the command to teach those who are baptised. Not only to teach them some things, but "all things," whatsoever the Lord had commanded; and also to teach them to *observe* them. And when we trace out the example of the apostles we find them doing so. Take the case of Antioch, where "much people were added unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 24). "Barnabas then departed for to seek Saul." "And when he had found him he brought

* This Article has lain over for two months owing to lack of space.

him to Antioch. And it came to pass that a *whole year* they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people" (verses 25, 26). Also at Corinth, another important place, where "*many* heard, believed, and were baptised." "Paul continued a year and six months teaching the Word of God among them" (Acts xviii. 8-11). And, again, we find Paul saying to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do" (chap. xv. 36). Again, Paul went "over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening the disciples" (chap. xviii. 23).

We never find the apostles only preaching the Gospel, and, when sinners were saved, going away and leaving them to wander anywhere and everywhere. Neither do we find them planting churches, and leaving them to go on as best they could. If we are to be guided by Divine precedent, a solemn responsibility rests on those who have been used to conversions, either to teach them or to do as Barnabas did, look out for some one to do it. And, also, those who plant churches are responsible to see how they get on.

The apostles not only taught and practised baptism, they also gathered saints into holy fellowship, and taught them how to "behave themselves in the house of God;" and their example is our guide-book.

In some places a very painful difficulty meets the spiritual workman; and that is the low condition of some churches. We are sure the question sometimes comes up to a godly evangelist, "What shall we do?" "Shall we gather new-born souls, in all the freshness of their first love, into a fellowship where their hearts are sure to be chilled, and their spiritual growth stunted? Shall we lead them where saints are 'biting and devouring one another?' to where 'envying and strife is,' and tell them this is the Lord's way?" O that dear brethren who are essaying to guide in God's assemblies would learn how much the work of the Lord is hindered through lack of *personal godliness*! What an attraction there is about a spiritual company of saints! How many a young, feeble believer might be upheld from falling who stumbles over the carnality or inconsistency of older ones, and has to be put away, or wanders back into the world, just for want of timely, godly help!

Another thing we must notice—that is, the forming or planting of churches. It seems to us that the

deep responsibility of such a step is not sufficiently apprehended. So far as our light enables us to see, we believe the planting of a church is as really the work of the Holy Spirit as the conversion of a sinner. To gather saints unto THE NAME is as directly His work as the quickening of a dead sinner. The Apostle Paul was used by the Holy Spirit to plant churches, in the same sense as he was used to the conversion of sinners. To plant a church is a much higher thing than a matter of *convenience*. Where there is no company of saints gathered according to the Scriptures within a reasonable walking distance, the evangelist who has been used to conversions has no course open to him but to gather the young converts together and teach them, or see that they are taught, the Divine principles of church fellowship. Even in these circumstances to form an assembly involves a solemn responsibility. But where there is a Scriptural meeting within a reasonable distance, such a step becomes doubly serious. Perhaps we do not write too strongly on this point when we say, that nothing has been more hurtful to the testimony of the Lord, than the hasty, loose way in which saints have in many places been gathered into church fellowship, and then left to struggle on as best they could. Many a dear Christian, who would ultimately have been a useful man had he kept a learner's place, has had his individual progress much hindered, and his soul blighted by church difficulties and responsibilities coming upon him before he had grace and experience to bear them. Then there is the sad reproach that has been brought on the name of the Lord, and on His truth, by the failures of those who have been professing to carry out the will of the Lord in a collective capacity.

And not only is there a danger of forming churches where there is no need for them, and where they rather hinder than help the edification of believers; it is to be feared that "meetings" have been formed by some, simply because they could not get enough of their own will in the fellowship in which they were. And how could we expect the Lord to bless and prosper meetings formed in such a way? While seeking to be most careful that conversions are the workmanship of God, and not our own, let us be equally careful that our churches are also His workmanship.

Just a word in closing this paper on the importance of churches being *systematically* visited and helped. We could write much on this, but we must be content

just now with a short word. When Paul was breaking up new ground, he had the special leading of the Spirit where he was to go first (see Acts xvi. 6-10); but when he was visiting the churches or the saints, he did it in a systematic way. He said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in *every city* where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do" (Acts xv. 36). Also, "he went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia *in order*, strengthening all the disciples" (chap. xviii. 23). When he was preaching the Gospel, he went where the Spirit led him; but when he was "confirming the churches," and "strengthening the disciples," he took them as they came. Wherever the Spirit of God had kindled a light in an individual soul, or a collective light in city or country, he went and trimmed it, and poured in fresh oil according to the grace given to him.

If we meditate on what the Lord says to the *seven* churches to whom Paul wrote, and what He says to the *seven* churches whom John addressed, we must be deeply impressed with the importance of *church-condition*, in the estimation of the Lord.

We believe the Lord has laid it on our heart to write these things to try and make us all feel; and especially brethren of gift, and experience, and means, that this department of service in the Lord's vineyard is being overlooked. There are companies of saints that are languishing for want of needed help, and an evangelist having a series of gospel meetings among them does not meet their need. They need to be instructed, many of them in first principles, and all need to be fed and encouraged. Is it not too true, that nearly all our energies, of both men and means, are directed towards the *world*, and the church is left to languish?

There are many now in fellowship who do not know why they are so; many who seem to look on God's *system* of gathering as merely an improvement on man's systems. In what man does there is "good, better, and best;" but, "as for God, His way is perfect." His way is not the best way, it is "the right way;" and every other way is wrong. And not only do these foundation principles need to be taught and re-taught, but the *condition* of the individual soul needs to be kept up, or collective testimony can only end in confusion. These truths also greatly affect Gospel testimony. Is not the lack of labourers for the foreign

field greatly owing to the low condition of church life at home? If ever we are to see our young men turn their backs on the world and home comfort, and devote their lives to the service of Christ in the Gospel, more attention will have to be given to "*watering*" the souls of disciples in our churches at home.

G. A.

HEART SEARCHINGS.—Let not a day pass without calling the whole man to an exact account. Hands—what have you done for God to-day? Tongue—what have you spoken for God to-day? Take more pains to keep yourself from sin than suffering. Never put off conscience with any plea that you dare not stand by in the great day of your account.

ONE THING DESIRED.



KNOW not what the years may bring;
I leave their issues, Lord, to Thee;
Yet, pleading, ask for—"this one thing"—
"That which I see not, teach Thou me!"

That which I see not—all my need
Of pardon, grace, transforming power;
His love, who deigns my cause to plead;
His care, who guides me hour by hour.

That which I see not—how to learn
In hidden teachings all around;
How best Thy message to discern,
And of Thy voice to know the sound.

That which I see not—how to cheer
The secret mourner by the way:
Christ-like, to dry the sufferer's tear.
And lowly words for Thee to say.

That which I see not—oh, withhold
No teaching, whatso'er its cost!
Nor let me weep, as those of old,
In bitter grief for warnings lost.

Thus day by day, and year by year,
Lord, to Thy feet I bring my plea;
In pard'ning, ans'w'ring love draw near:
"That which I see not, teach Thou me."

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART VIII.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chapter xii., verse 1.
"Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge ;

But he that hateth reproof is brutish."

Verse 2. "A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord ;

But a man of wicked devices will He condemn."

Verse 4. "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband ;

But she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones."

Verse 5. "The thoughts of the righteous are right ;

But the counsels of the wicked are deceit."

Verse 6. "The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood ;

But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them."

Verse 8. "A man shall be commended according to his wisdom ;

But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised."

—*i.e.*, correction (compare chap. iii. 11, 12). In this, "faithful are the wounds of a friend."

Herod, reproved by John, casts him into prison.

Daniel and Mordecai—both favoured of the Lord.

Haman.

Judas.

Herod—Acts xii. 1-3, 23.

The true woman is "the glory of the man." So is the Church of Christ.

She destroys all comfort, and wastes health and life, like as Jezebel did—2 Kings ix. 22-27.

Witness David's thoughts—1 Sam. xxiii. 9, 1 Sam. xxvi. 3-11; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Daniel—see Dan. i. 8; vi. 4.

Nathanael—John i. 47.

Jeroboam's counsel was deceit—compare 1 Kings xii. 28; xii. 26.

Sanballat—Neh. vi. 2.

Daniel's accusers—Dan. vi. 7, 8.

Herod—Matt ii. 8-16.

—or are of lying in wait. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips."

Either them—the upright—or the intended victims of the wicked.

Joseph—Gen. xli. 38, &c.

David—1 Sam. xvi. 18.

Daniel—Dan. i. 19, 20; i. 47, 48.

Mary—Luke x. 39-42.

Eli's sons—1 Sam. i. 3; ii. 17-30.

Nabal—1 Sam. xxv. 2-17.

The prodigal—Luke xv. 15, 16.

Verse 9. "Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant, than he that honoureth himself and lacketh bread" (R.V.).

Verse 10. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

Verse 11. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread; but he that followeth vain persons is void of under standing."

Verse 12. The wicked desireth the net (*i.e.*, the prey) of evil men; but the root of the righteous yieldeth (them) fruit."

Verse 13. The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble."

Verse 15. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Verse 16. "A fool's wrath is presently (*i.e.*, quickly) known; but a prudent man covereth shame."

Verse 18. "There is that speaketh like piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health."

Rank without comfort is much to be pitied.

—*i.e.*, he carefully considers the wants of all around him—even of the animals he possesses—Jacob—Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14;

But how cruel was Nahash, the Ammonite—1 Sam. 17, 34-35; and Pilate—Luke xxiii. 16; see also 1 Sam. xxx. 11, &c.

Compare Prov. xiii. 11-23; xiv. 4-23; xxvii. 23-27; and xxviii. 19.

1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 10-12.

Jacob's industry led to his affluence—Gen. xxxi. 40; xxxii. 10.

Spiritually—this verse is best explained by Ps. i., showing the cultivation of the things of God.

Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard; but Mary was satisfied with the Lord as her portion.

The Amalekite—2 Sam. i. 2-16.

Daniel's accusers—Dan. vi. 24.

Peter—Acts xii.

Lot's sons-in-law—Gen. xix. 14.

David listening to Abigail showed his real wisdom—1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

Jezebel's—1 Kings xix.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's—Dan. iii. 19.

Gideon—Judges viii. 1-3.

David—1 Sam. xvii. 28-30.

Read 1 Peter iii. 18-25. Saul—continually—1 Sam. xx. 30, &c.

Ps. lvii. 4; cxx. 8.

Abigail's gentle advice was health to David—see above, v. 15.

Verse 19. "The lip of truth shall be established for ever ;

But a lying tongue is but for a moment."

Verse 20. "Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil ; but to the counsellors of peace is joy."

Verse 21. "There shall no evil happen to the just ; But the wicked shall be filled with (the fruits of his) mischief."

Verse 22. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord ; but they that deal truly are His delight."

Verse 23. "A prudent man concealeth knowledge ; but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness."

Verse 24. "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule."

Verse 25. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop ; but a good word maketh it glad."

Whether that of individuals or of the Scripture, The Lord Jesus saith, "I am the Truth."

"Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but My words shall not pass away."

A truthful man is a trusted man.

Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to men and to God, were confuted and stricken down.

Or "devise" evil, such as Herod did—Matt. 2.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

"There shall no evil befall thee"—Ps. xci. 9-16. Peter—Acts xii.

And Herod contrasted.

"All liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Note how Jacob suffered through life for deceiving his father—Gen. xxvii.

"Thou desirest truth in the inward parts"—Job i. 8 ; Ps. li. 6.

He who deals truly with God will deal truly with man.

A wise man will hold his tongue till he see opportunity ; but a babler and a fool will regard no time. Paul retained his experience of 2 Cor. xii. 2 until there was need, fourteen years after, to use it. Eccles. x. 3.

Joseph—Gen. xxxix. 4-22.

Jeroboam—1 Kgs. xi. 28. The slothful become slaves—see Prov. xxiv. 30-34.

Illustrated by David—Ps. xl. 12 ; xxxii.

The widow of Nain, and the sisters at Bethany, by the comfort of the Lord.

A. O. M.

ARE THE LIVING WATERS FLOWING THROUGH YOU ?

THERE is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God" (Psa. xlvi. 4).

"And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1).

"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 38).

In the first of these Scriptures we have the announcement that there is a river ; and also that the streams from it shall make glad the people of God. A river, and streams from it. In the second we have the quality of the river, and the source from whence it flows. It is pure, and it proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb ; it is the river of God. In the third, we have the channel through which this river now flows to the perishing world, and that channel is the believer in Jesus. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the fountain of all spiritual life, for there is no life apart from Him. Man's sin had stopped the flow of this life, and because of sin man was, and is dead. Jesus loved fallen man, and He came and died in his room and stead. He took man's sin upon Himself, and died ; and, by His death, He has removed all hindrance in the way of spiritual life flowing into the soul of sinful man. He now says to every man, "Come unto Me and drink." He not only gives the coming one satisfaction, but He also makes him a channel of blessing to others. "He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." It is clear from this, that every believer ought to be a channel for the living water to flow to others, and if he is not, something has come in to stop that flow of living water. It will be an eternal loss to that one who allows anything to stop the flow of living water through himself to others. I desire, by the help of God, to point out some of the hindrances wherewith Christians allow Satan to stop this outflow of living water. The Word of God, in the power of the Holy Ghost, is the word of life, and the Christian is to "hold forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 16).

1st. *A want of careful watching unto prayer against the lust of the flesh.* I have seen young Christians who, when first converted to God, promised fair to become

channels of blessing to others ; aye, and God was then using them in the conversion of others. But their minds got turned to settling down in this evil world, and they must have a wife, or a husband, as the case may be, and somehow the channel got stopped up, and there was no flow of living water towards the poor dying world so far as they were concerned. There is nothing wrong in marriage itself, but they went about it in a wrong way ; they got out of communion with God, and they did not wait on Him to guide them in the matter. Consequently, they took their own way, they pleased themselves, not God, and so were rendered useless in the service of God.

2nd. *Worldliness* is another hindrance to the outflow of the living water, and it is closely connected with the first. As soon as the heart gets away from God and begins to settle down in this world, the attention is directed to the things of this world to see how they can best gather wealth together. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon ;" but many leave the service of God to try and gather together a few of the things which in this world are called riches. "But are these the true riches?" What would you think of a man who would gather to himself a lot of snakes, to be then, with their poisonous fangs, let loose against him ? Such is the one who leaves the service of God to gather earthly riches, and to make himself comfortable in this present evil world. "The love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and *pierced themselves* through with many sorrows" (1st Tim. vi. 10). Instead of the living water flowing to poor dead sinners around them, they are manifesting the outflow of sinful desires, and become a hindrance to blessing.

3rd. *Pride* and *unbelief* also hinder the outflow. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Faith cannot grow in a proud heart. How often the heart of the servants of God becomes occupied with their work, and if God has been pleased to give them a little success, the danger is that they may get to be too much occupied with it, and to forget God. As soon as the eye turns from God, pride fills the heart ; faith goes out, unbelief gets in, and they become unfit to be used in the service of their Lord. Luke x. 20 should be a safeguard in this matter of pride. The disciples had returned from some work which their Lord had given them to do, expressing joy at the

success which they had had ; but their Lord answered them and said, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you : but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." They had had no hand in putting their names in heaven, it was grace that wrote them there ; and Jesus, our Lord, would have His servants and people rejoice in *grace*, and not in *success*. Still, we are glad to see success in the work of the Lord, and it would be sinful for us not to be so. But our Lord knows the tendency of our hearts ; He knows there is the danger of pride rising in them when they are much occupied with success ; but if they are truly occupied with grace, it will lead to lowliness of heart before God. This is always the effect of grace in the heart. A *proud servant* and a *lowly Master* do not look well together, do they ?

4th. *No communion with Jesus* is another great and awful hindrance to the *outflow* of life divine. "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is one thing to be united to Christ, and another thing to be living in communion with Him from day to day ; there ought not to be any such thing, but still it does exist. Many there are who are united to Christ by faith, but who are not living in communion with Him, because of some unconfessed sin lying on their conscience. Union and communion ought to go together, and communion springs out of union ; but sin will break communion. You cannot have communion apart from union ; but you may have union, and yet no communion. *No communion!* This is a great and awful sin, for any one who has been united to Christ, to be guilty of. Solemn word, "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is a vain thing to live without Jesus, and it is also a vain thing to try and serve God, either in preaching or in anything else, without communion with Jesus. If we are to be channels of blessing to others, there must be COMMUNION WITH JESUS. We ought to let nothing hinder our communion with Him. A little honesty of heart before God would help us much in maintaining this communion. Let us hide nothing from Him ; let us tell Him everything,—our desires, our needs, our sins ; then let us seek to exercise faith in His willingness to hear and answer our prayers. It would be a blessed thing if we would just use our Lord Jesus as a dear, and kind, and loving Friend. I am sure He would be pleased for us to do so ; love likes to be made much of. He is well pleased to see us making much of His free love, by

our putting confidence in Him, and telling Him everything, and by our bringing everything to Him. "By faith Moses, 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 in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. xi. 24-26). Moses looked at the *end* of things. J. H.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XII.

(Continued from page 170.)

NOW look at the misapprehension of the people. "The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, an angel spake to Him." And look at Christ's explanation; Jesus answered and said, "This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes." First notice what full communion there was between Christ and the Father. He did not need that voice. Will you not admit that if you had spoken to God, and an audible voice had come back, it would have set you up very much? Christ was not moved. The current of communion between His soul and God was so maintained that He needed no audible voice. What an unruffled state of communion our Lord Jesus ever lived in. Ah! beloved, this is what we are called unto. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

But notice, God speaks, but the people misunderstand the voice of God. We are told twice over, in Hebrews i. and xii., that God is speaking to us, but the multitude do not hear, they think it an ordinary occurrence. Oh! let the voice of God sink into our souls, pointing us to the glory of the cross, and to the glory of the enthroned Christ. The Lord shows in what respect that voice is worthy of attention by us who hear it. First, it implied the devil was conquered; secondly, that sinners are invited. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." There has been a very foolish interpretation of this, as if it referred to

Christ. A terrible mistake; it means the devil. He is called the "prince of this world" because the cross brought out fully the power of the devil over the world: he could get men to murder the Lord of Glory. How was he cast out then if not cast out yet? It is meant righteously, as a matter of right. The devil lost his entire grip of the world when Jesus died. All that the devil is now is a usurper. The Lord Jesus has not followed up His victory and turned him out, because He is intent upon a higher object; first, to bring His heavenly people home—but the devil knows he is only here on sufferance. Then secondly, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." This is His further intent, the drawing of souls to Himself. I am reminded of that passage in Hebrews. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." Destroyed him as to his power, and bringing out poor creatures held captive of the devil. I understand by the word "all," every one who shall be saved through the precious cross; not merely Christians, but also millennial saints, anyone brought to trust in the blood of Jesus. God does not count the lost, we shall see their position presently, but He does not know them; "I never knew you." Of course this has a doctrinal and a practical aspect. Doctrinally, by the cross Jesus wins our hearts; by the cross again every day and hour we feel how precious Jesus is. Whenever harrassed by Satan how blessed to look at the wounds of Jesus. Practically, lift up Christ and souls are drawn. Men may use other means—eloquence, learning, popular names, and other things—but here it hints that God's way of winning souls is to lift up His Son, and the glories that meet in that Son of His. May we as servants of God learn the lesson, and lift up Christ to win souls. And then, do you want your soul drawn to God? Do you sometimes feel dull and dead? Look at Christ: His fulness is for the needy, the empty, the rebellious. Does He not suit you? Thus the Lord Jesus here refers to the two great objects God had in view in sending His Son; to overcome Satan, and to deliver His people. And thus is it for our sakes that this voice came.

Now look at the people's response; what an awful

condition they were in. Here was the moment when they finally rejected the light. The people answered Him, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, the Son of Man must be lifted up?" Who is this Son of Man? Mark that "Christ," as if from the bottom of their hearts they knew He was the Christ; involuntarily admitting it. The invariable way of persons who do not bow their hearts to the truth is to raise difficulties, to ask questions, as it were to be stout-hearted. Instead of giving in at once, by that terrible question at the critical moment quenching the light, and electing the darkness. Therefore the Lord winds up and concludes the section. Then said Jesus unto them, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them." The solemn closing in of the glory, and they left in utter darkness for ever. It may be they went on as before, but they did not know what a sad and tremendous crisis they had gone through. There is a time when God does harden; not that they *may* not believe, but because they *will* not believe. For see the following verses (37-40), "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." When? Not in chapter iii., but in chapter xii. "He hath blinded," blinded after rejection. "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." Of whom? Jesus. To what does he refer? To that beautiful vision in Isaiah vi. Now here John says it was Christ he saw. In Acts xxviii. we find the same words applied to the Holy Ghost. Thus we seem to get a distinct proof that when the Seraphim cried "Holy, holy, holy," the reference was to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. No one disputes that the Father is God; but John xii. says it was Christ, and Acts xxviii. says it was the Holy Ghost that spake it. But mark that in both places it was after rejection. The glory retires, because they did not want the glory. Like as when Israel sinned against God in the wilderness, and the glory as it were retired.

In verse 42 there is an explanatory word as to how that some believed in a sense. And why did they

not quite accept Christ? "But because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." They did not want to be identified with a rejected Christ, and were willing to keep their religion to themselves. And the Holy Ghost gives the solemn explanation, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

The chapter ends with the Lord referring everything to the Father (v. 44-50). "I came just as the mouthpiece of My Father, and they reject Me, and they reject My Father too." And thus the section closes with showing that the matter is between the Father and the world.—*Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

THE BOOK OF COMFORT.—Be conversant and studious in the Word of Christ. There is a fountain of living waters, whence every man may draw sufficient to refresh his fainting soul in all his troubles and afflictions. "The statutes of the Lord are right," saith David, "rejoicing the heart" (Psa. xix. 8); "Through comfort of the Scriptures we have hope," saith Paul (Rom. xv. 4). Philosophers, indeed, have taught us many ways to fence and fortify our hearts against sorrow. But when the Lord shall set afflictions home upon the soul, and put a sting into them too, there is nothing in the world that can cement and cheer us, but the comfort that is fetched out of the Scripture. We may run in our distress to other means, as Saul, when he was pestered with a melancholy humour, to the minstrel; but we shall find that nothing goes the right way, and that we grasp at nothing but some empty succours of contentment, unless we comfort ourselves with these words, as the apostle Paul speaks (1 Thess. iv.) *ult.*

WERE THE APOSTLES DECEIVED?—If Christianity be not true, the apostles were either impostors or self-deceived. Would impostors incur poverty, and persecution, and death in its most horrible forms, by maintaining that which they knew to be false? If the apostles were self-deceived, can we any longer believe our own senses? What confidence can be placed in eyes and ears, if the apostles saw not Jesus perform miracles, and heard not the gracious words which He spoke? How could they be deceived in the resurrection of Lazarus, for instance?

SANCTIFICATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. R. C. CHAPMAN
AT YEOVIL CONFERENCE.

HOLINESS means *likeness to God*; therefore the great pattern of holiness is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only to be attained by walking, as we are told in Ephesians, "Be ye therefore *imitators of Christ*." Though great uprightness may be seen in the outward walk, yet *holiness* affects the life just in the measure that Christ dwells in the heart. Mistakes arise from our confounding what is *naturally right* with what is *pleasing to God*. The law of Moses is not that of Christ; and the flesh at its best is but a tiger in chains. Holiness can only be ours *through the blood of Christ*,—"In the blood is the life." We should never be disturbed, never at a loss, never at the mercy of circumstances, if we found our rest where God finds His,—in the Cross of Christ. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, *garrison* your heart and mind" (R.V.). Is not this "practical holiness?" Mary at the feet of Jesus was, for that time at least, a more practical person than Martha. It is a false holiness which does not begin and end with pleasing God.

We must distinguish between *affection* and *emotion*. Affection is a peaceful stream, clear as crystal if for God, but enabling the soul to endure, to persevere, to bring God into everything. Emotion is a different thing. We find it in Acts, where "the disciples were filled with joy." Our blessed Lord Himself, on the Mount of Transfiguration, had emotions that were not ordinary, but His affection flowed on in unbroken strength and continuance. We all need special help from God for special seasons; this is most precious, but may surely be left to the sovereignty of Him who knows our needs. Let us remember, "Ye are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you." The "whosoever" of John iii. is most precious, but let us go on to the "whatsoever" of chapter xv., then the "whatsoever ye ask" will be ours also. Affection—not emotion—is the true test of sanctification. The judgment of the natural conscience is a most perilous thing; it is one of the devil's great engines. "The law is the strength of sin."

Read Rom. vi. 10. The command next following

this (in v. 11) will ensure a holy, blameless life in the sight of God and man. While seeing my relationship to God in Christ, I can never say or do a thing unworthy of me—His representative, His priest; so one with Him that my affections must necessarily run in the same channel. Let us carefully instruct our consciences in the unspeakable difference between mere natural uprightness, and the strong, true affection which will not rest if one of Christ's precepts be transgressed. "It is Christ that died," that is once for all, "Who also maketh intercession for us," that is continually. If walking with God we shall always say, "The good I would I do not," even when walking unblameably before our fellowmen.

Never lower the standard of holiness. "The law is spiritual, I am carnal." The Son of God could say "I delight to do Thy will, O My God!" (Ps. xl. 8). He was the only One who *needed* no allowance; He was in such a position that none *could* be made. God called Him, men called Him, devils called Him "The Holy One of God." If I cannot see myself imperfect, I fail to be perfectly pleasing to Him. Any believer who thinks he has reached a state of perfection is under sad delusion. If walking in the light of God, we shall see grains of dust which the grosser conscience cannot perceive; but shall see also that *God does not see them*. He sees us in Christ, and in Him we are perfectly well pleasing.

AFFLICTION'S BLESSING.

STARS shine brightest in the darkest night; torches are better for beating; grapes come not to the press till they come to the press; spices smell best when bruised; young trees root the faster for shaking; gold looks brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweeter in the fire; the palm tree proves the better for pressing; chamomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. Such is the condition of God's children: they are then most triumphant when most tempted; more glorious when most afflicted; most in favour of God when least in man's and least in their own: as their conflicts, so their conquest; as their tribulations, so their triumphs: true salamanders, that live best in the furnace of persecution; so that heavy afflictions are the best benefactors to heavenly affections; and where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest. B.

SALVATION, SERVICE, AND REST.

Thoughts on Zech. iii.—(Second Paper) by F. A. B.

WE have already seen how richly Joshua was blessed by the outflowings of Divine grace and mercy, and we now enter upon the consideration of another question, viz.—the responsibility imposed upon him to serve Jehovah, who had dealt so bountifully with him. God asks nothing until He has given all, and receives nothing even then that does not spring from a hearty, spontaneous appreciation of His mighty love. A man must be graced with the salvation of God before he can serve Him in any measure or sphere. This is a familiar truth to some, but alas! how many there are, who, not having learnt this elementary lesson, are found toiling and striving in the vain hope of ultimately being acceptable to God. And yet how simple the Divine order is on this point. In Matt. i., “If I be a Father,” is written before “If I be a Master,” and when Paul exclaims of Christ, “Whose I am, and whom I serve,” he plainly intimated that service follows, and does not precede, relationship with the Saviour.

Unacquainted with his father's heart, the prodigal, when in the far country, devised a formula of words with which he hoped to reach the pity and sympathy of his parent. “I am not worthy to be called thy son, *make me one of thy hired servants.*” He hoped to gain acceptance by contracting a bargain. Well, he came back in misery and want, his motives in returning being as unworthy as they could possibly be; but his father saw him, and love made the old man run to greet him. How could the son repeat his formula of words in their entirety then? Ah no! it could not be, and clasped in his father's arms, drinking in a parent's love in that wondrous embrace, all thoughts of hired service were obliterated from his mind.

But would he not serve afterwards? Yes, indeed! he would be the best servant the father had, but this would spring from a grateful recognition of the love that had enriched him so greatly.

There were no “ifs” in regard to the salvation of Joshua; these only came in when the question of service was introduced, and they indicate very strongly that it is not sufficient of itself that a man be a

Christian, whether old or young, that therefore he is entitled to be identified with the work of the Lord. No! service is conditional, strictly and solemnly conditional, and it is because this is not more generally understood and acknowledged, that we find so many aspirants to special kinds of Divine work, when often there is neither spiritual capability or sense of the gravity of the work to be done. In our horror of “one man-ministry,” humanly constituted, we are in danger of going to an opposite extreme, and hence in many places, instead of thankfully accepting God-qualified men, whether in ministry to saints or preaching to sinners, the meetings for these purposes are simply occasions when as many as possible make it a point of getting their word in. What does it matter to some if there is a brother in a local church who is truly an evangelist, if there are other “speakers” there; well, he must just take his turn with the rest, and so the meeting goes on month after month, oftener than not they get smaller, and at the end of the year the results are insignificant, if there are any at all. We would not forget that gift of any kind is not fully developed at first, and it would be the last thing in our mind to suggest any course which would hinder its growth. All we would insist on is, let God's workers do His work, and there would be an end of what can only be stigmatized as a caricature of His work, which is already producing coldness and barrenness, and which must, if it continues, bring about a state of hopeless ruin.

There are four things in Zech. iii. which deserve our particular attention in regard to service—

- 1st. God's Ways (His thoughts of things as revealed by His Word).
- 2nd. God's charge to Joshua (The particular service entrusted to the individual).
- 3rd. God's House (The dwelling-place of Jehovah, where also His government controls).
- 4th. God's Courts (The approaches to Jehovah's House).

Now Joshua, in order that he might be fitted to serve, had to walk in the light of the commandments of God,—his own ways and expedients must be discarded; and what a comfort it must have been to him to know that the Great Lawgiver had been most explicit in the manifestation of His will under all circumstances, and that all he had to do was to follow diligently and firmly in the track of that all-sufficient

legislation. Then, in addition to the essential observance, he had to remember the individual "charge" which he had received direct from the Lord; so that a reverent acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, joined with a personal gift or trust, are the two indispensable qualifications for prominent service in Divine things. This is made still more clear by the context, for in order to judge the House and keep the Courts he must of necessity know the rules of the Master, and be sustained in his impartial administration of these laws by the fact that he had been called and charged to do the work. Of course, now-a-day, oversight is not merely an individual thing; nevertheless, these principles apply to each individual who may with others be engaged in the work.

To judge the House implies Divine rule inside an assembly, for let it not be forgotten that each God-gathered company is in its locality a house or building of God. Hence in Ephes. ii. (R.V.) has it—"In whom every building (or each separate building) groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Oh, how this dignifies any company gathered to the Lord, with Him in the midst, and how it must subdue all fleshly energy and conduct. Yes, let the truth be sounded out clear and plain, that conscious of our innumerable sins and failings, and humbled on this account, yet we aspire (in our own locality) to no lower standard than to be "a building of God," a house where His Son rules and where His Spirit, unfettered by human creeds (cast in an iron mould for all time), can operate through men who are "Gifts" from the ascended Christ. This is the model, this is the place of Divine freedom, and nothing less will do. To keep His Courts may remind us of the importance of guarding the approaches to His House. In Gal. i. we see the solemn sight of Christians *bringing in* evil ones, but Jude tells us of evil ones who *crept in*. On the one hand, saints were found contributing to sorrow by a want of discernment; on the other, saints were too listless and indifferent to notice the "creepers" as they came in by stealth. We are living in trying and difficult days, and, unhappily, on some points there is not that union which is strength among us. Still, all must agree that the Courts must be kept. We would all exclude "imposters" from their sacred precincts, nor do we want what might not be inaptly called, the refuse of sects and systems, who, through personal squabbles, etc., find themselves

without a shelter; and as the next best thing to do, think they will join a meeting "where there is freedom to minister," and turn that holy freedom into an unseemly license for continual talk, not by any means to the edification of the saints. We would exclude none who desire to follow the Lord, but surely it is incumbent upon us to be watchful that no less worthy motive is in operation. Many have acted otherwise to their own sorrow, and the once happy meeting has become almost intolerable on account of unsubdued and factious spirits. Well, Joshua was to make it his business to do the work, and the Lord undertook that Joshua should have reputation and honour. "I'll give thee places to walk in amongst them that stand by." It should be the same to-day amongst God's servants, and certainly He would not fail to know them. But alas! too often our chief concern is not to do the work, but to get the "places," or, in other words, to occupy positions which we think bring honour. Ah, but God's way is the only sure way; Joseph proved it, so did David, and all Jehovah's servants in the past. Was it not so in the case of the blessed Lord Himself? In Phil. ii. it is all described, and there in that very chapter we read of two others following closely in their Master's steps, *doing their work*, and of them Paul says, "Hold such in reputation." The last verses of our chapter indicate rest. Soon our service time will be over, and we shall have to yield up our trust to Him who gave it to us. In His strength may we be faithful now, so that when we enter into our rest, it may be with His approving smile, and then shall we enjoy the full blessings of salvation, service, and rest.

"We should value the Word of the Lord when alone, and in our family circle, as well as in the assembly of God's people. Not because we have received as a tradition, that it is profitable so to do. Nor merely to follow the example of our godly parents. Nor because it is a good and universal custom to take it up at certain times. No! but because it is the channel of living waters from the upper Sanctuary, and a Divine means of meeting with Jehovah, and of feeding on Christ by faith. And so also with His table, and the prayer meeting, which we should value as meeting places with an absent Lord."

W. B.

QUESTION CCXXXIX.

MAY I say a few words regarding Question ccxxxix. as to the law.

Many, especially young believers, reading Rom. vi. 15, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace," become bewildered when those who desire to be under the law add "Then you may live, and do as you like." Not so. We are not under the "law of Moses," but we are under the "law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2). The law of Moses said, "Honour thy father and thy mother;" the law of Christ says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 2). The law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not kill;" the law of Christ says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15). The law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" the law of Christ says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. v. 28). The law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not covet." The rule laid down for saints regarding covetousness is, "Let it not be once named among you" (Eph. v. 3). Which standard is higher? Which stricter? Let my reader compare each of the commandments given in Exodus with the charges given as to the life of Christians in the New Testament, and he will see that the latter are far higher, and he will be ready to answer those who say, "Live and do as you like." "God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

CLOSING DAYS.

THE signs of the times in which our lot is cast are ominous; lawlessness in the form of Nihilism, Communism, Dynamitism prevails; the war between Capital and Labour creates distress of nations, and these are augmented by physical calamities in the form of unparalleled cyclones, tornadoes, desolation by fire and flood and earthquakes, while infidelity prevails to a vast extent even in lands having the light of the Gospel of the Grace of God, and crimes appear that were unknown to the darker ages of the world; thus iniquity abounds. On the Continent of Europe, the chief seat of the Papacy, the natural but fearful reaction from the superstitions of Rome to infidelity has set in at last, and its progress has been rapid indeed. At meetings held in Germany in favour of anarchy, and to denounce all religion, the very name of God has been received by the multitudes with hisses. *THESE FACTS and many of a similar character make the heart sad, and would lead to despondency were it not clearly seen that God's own work in this age will most surely be accomplished, and that there is no such a word as "fail" with Him.*

WHAT FAITH IS.—*It is taking God at His word:* Noah did it about a thing unknown (Heb. xi. 7). Abraham did it about a thing unlikely (Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19). Moses did it about a thing untried (Heb. xi. 28).

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 CCXL.

In giving money to labourers in the Gospel abroad, or to the poor around us, is it not more acceptable to the Lord that such gifts should come from the collective offerings of the whole gathering than from an individual who may be favoured with more of this world's goods than his brethren? and, in giving to individuals unknown to the gathering, is it not better to send it anonymously, that the thanksgiving may be to God, the real sender, alone?

REPLY.

Scripture seems to warrant both collective and individual communications with the Lord's servants and the poor, though there seems to be more frequent precedent for collective giving where practicable.

Gaius is commended for his individual charity and hospitality. 1 Tim. v. 10 refers to individual acts of mercy in relieving the afflicted. 1 John iii. 17 shows that whoever sees his brother in need is responsible as an individual, to help him.

It is true that by whatever instrumentality the supply of need is sent, it is our privilege to own it as from God, and first to thank Him.

But gratitude to God should in no way tend to diminish gratitude to the instrument used by Him, or detract from the hearty acknowledgment of the love and care that His grace has wrought in the hearts of His people. 2 Cor. ix. 12 show the thanksgiving going to God, but verses 13 and 14 shows how the hearts of the receivers went out after the givers in loving acknowledgment of the grace of God in them.

Those deceitful hearts of ours are ever ready to look to assemblies, or individuals, or societies, or anything but the living God Himself. Happy is he who sets the Lord ever before him, and so doing finds that He is ever at his right hand, that he may not be moved.

QUESTION CCXLI.

What "quickenings" is referred to in Rom. viii. 11?

REPLY.

The analogy drawn here is between the quickening and raising-up of Christ from the dead, and the quickening of those who believe in Him.

The resurrection of Christ is always attributed to God (Acts ii. 24-32; x. 40; xiii. 33; Rom. vi. 4; and many other passages).

But from 1 Peter iii. 18, it is evident that the agent in His quickening was the Spirit. So also in John vi. 63, the Spirit is the great Quickener.

In the body of the believer dwells the same quickening Spirit which dwelt in Christ, and which was the agent in quickening Him after He had been put to death in the flesh.

He that by His Spirit quickened and raised up Christ, will also, by the same Spirit, quicken the mortal bodies of all believers, notwithstanding that these bodies are judicially dead because of sin.

Body, as well as spirit and soul, is redeemed by the purchase of the blood of Christ, and is, by the Holy Spirit, taken possession of for Him, to whom we are in spirit, and by the Spirit, already united.

We do not believe that this passage teaches any supernatural action of the Spirit at present upon our bodies. It was a thing of the future to Paul, and to those whom he addressed "Shall also quicken."

EDITOR'S NOTICE.

WE have gratefully to acknowledge the mercy that has enabled us for so many years to continue issuing "THE NORTHERN WITNESS," and we would also thank all our helpers—those who have contributed with their pen, and also those who have subscribed for it and have interested themselves in its circulation. We would not forget to thank our critics—almost all of whom, however adverse, have written in a kindly spirit. We value this help, as we dread *one-sided truth*, which is often as mischievous as positive error.

We ask the prayers of all our readers, that needed truth may be given in wisdom and in love, and that every page may be glorifying to God and edifying to the saints.

The help of those who are fitted to supply *short, practical papers* is earnestly desired. The chief fault of most of our contributors is, that they write at too great length. In these busy days it is very important that our writings be as condensed as possible.

Short original pieces of really good and helpful poetry would be specially valued.

All who are interested in the furtherance of the truth are desired to help in securing for the coming year an increased number of subscribers. Those willing to help us in this way we refer to the *Publisher's Notice*, as on Cover, offering special facilities to this end.

J. R. C.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

THIS VOLUME will complete "THE NORTHERN WITNESS" in its present style and size. Next year (D.V.) the following alterations will be made:—

THE TITLE will henceforth be "*The Witness*" only, dropping the word "*Northern*," as our Magazine now circulates in all parts of the world.

THE SIZE will be *slightly reduced*, so as to make it more easily handled, both in the numbers and volumes, while the *same amount* of matter will be given monthly.

THE TYPE will be *new*, a clear old-faced letter, as used in most of the magazines of the present day.

THE PAPER will be *white*, of good quality, and specially made for our Magazine.

DIAGRAMS AND CHARTS, illustrative of Prophetic and other Scriptures, with explanatory matter, will be introduced at intervals.

THE MATTER.—The endeavour will be to make the Matter a little more varied—including select *Short Articles*, Bible Readings, Words Worth Remembering, &c.

THE PRICE AND OTHER ITEMS CONTINUE AS BEFORE.