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THE
BELIEVER'S
PATHWAY.

DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO
THE GREAT TRUTHS OF GOD'S WORD
FOR HIS PEOPLE.

EDITED BY
RICHARD LEDGER SMITH
OF DUBLIN.

1892

VOLUME I.
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LOOK OUT FOR HIS FOOTPRINTS!

“ Oh, may'st thou walk, from hour to hour
Of every passing year,
Keeping so very near
To Him whose power is love, whose love is power !
So may'st thou walk, in His clear light,
Leaning on Him alone,
Thy life His very own,
Until He takes thee up to walk with Him in white.”—*F. R. H.*

HAIL! fellow-traveller, along the believer's pathway to the heavenly country. At the opening of another year we greet thee with Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord. What a mercy to have been kept by matchless grace and mighty power, pursuing the upward journey,

'Gainst storm and wind and tide,
since the year of grace, 1891, commenced! To God be all the praise! Our hearts are full as we think of that changeless, wondrous love that keeps us day by day, and will not let us go.

A beautiful custom observed in some of the Swiss-Alpine valleys comes to mind as we think of that year whose last sun has just set upon us, and whose memories fill our hearts with songs of praise. At sunset each evening the owner of the chalet highest up the mountain-side stands at his door, and blows a full blast upon his Alpine horn, as the golden orb of day sinks out of sight.

One by one the chalets lower down take up the note, and soon the whole valley resounds with the joyful strain: and as the last note dies away, all heads are bared, from mountain-top to base, and all hearts and lips send up to God that grand doxology, “Praise ye the Lord.” We know not how far this beautiful custom is a heavenly reality or a matter of form to many of those who observe it; but this we know, that it well becomes the heirs of grace and glory to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

What more befits the tongues
Soon to lead eternal songs,
While heaven the note prolongs,
Praise, brethren, praise!

Well, through the good hand of our God we are permitted once again, as it were, to hear the silver trumpet sound an alarm to bid us “go forward” on the pilgrim journey through the trackless desert; but we dare not go without our guide;

Look Out for His Footprints!

for, truly, we do not travel upon a beaten path, for there is no road in the desert; and the old Scotch widow of eighty-four was right when she said to her two dear grandchildren, in the sweet springtime of innocent girlhood, "My bairns, this world is a howling wilderness, full of thorns and briars, and without any safe track but the footprints of Jesus Christ; and if you want to get safely through it, you must look out for those footprints, and follow them closely." Yes, dear young believer, we would echo the old Scotchwoman's advice, and say, "Look out for His footprints, and follow them closely." Just as the people of Israel, to whom Joshua said, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore," were directed to keep their eyes upon the ark, that they might know the way by which they must go. So, we also must keep the eye constantly upon Christ, or else we shall miss the way. Little do we know what trials, perplexities, difficulties await us during this present year: what cunningly devised plans may already have been laid by the devil to cause us to bring dishonour upon Him who has bought us with His blood. Let us, therefore, be sober and watch unto prayer, and let us copy our Master's divine tactics when fighting against the arch enemy, using skilfully and freely the sword of the spirit and the shield of faith (Matt. iv. 1-11).

But someone says, What do you mean by "looking out for His footprints" and "keeping the eye on Christ"? How is this to be done? Now, these questions bring us to a point of the greatest importance in reference to Christian life in the present day. Doubtless we have all observed that, in consequence of the blessed revival, during the present century of many long-neglected truths regarding the Church, its election, calling, course, communion, hope, and eternal glory, there has been very much attention given to the study of the Epistles of the New Testament and the Book of Revelation. Very blessed, indeed, is it to give close attention to the study of any part of God's precious word; but do we not observe a tendency to neglect, while we are taken up with "the Body," to give due attention to the truth concerning "the Head?" Now, the four gospels are the Spirit's photograph of the Head, while the epistles treat more particularly of the Body; and if we would preserve the balance of truth, we must give the fullest attention to these two sections of the Word. Indeed, we should constantly bear in mind that "ALL SCRIPTURE

“Remember, Sir, I am the Guide.”

is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly—that is, thoroughly or fully—furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. iii. 16-17).

But we would say, again, that it is in the gospels we get the most direct presentation of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and our Teacher, and we would affectionately urge every reader of this little paper to begin at once a fresh perusal of those precious writings, with the express purpose of discovering, beholding, adoring, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, faithfully following, that meek and lowly one throughout the present year, or during whatever portion of it He may be pleased to leave us here as His followers and witnesses; and, depend upon it, the more we gaze upon Him in the Word, the more like Him we shall become; and though we ourselves may be unconscious of it, our brethren will know it, and the world will know it too.—ED.

“REMEMBER, SIR, I AM THE GUIDE.”

SEE that strange man standing at the street corner. He looks first one way and then the other, and then turning to a book which he carries in his hand reads for a moment, shuts the book, keeping his finger in the place with the evident intention of referring to it again, and walks on as if he knew quite well where he was going. That man is a stranger to the place. He probably knows nobody there. He may not even know the language, and yet he gets along without much difficulty. Why? Because he has got a guide. That book in his hand is his guide. It has been written by one who knows all about the place, and who can be relied upon to give all necessary information; and our friend in the street is “going by the book.” He never questions it, and never thinks of striking out a line of his own apart from it, lest he should lose his way. No; he knows far better than that.

Some time ago a party of tourists were being led by an experienced guide upon a dangerous excursion. One of the party was continually suggesting new paths and new plans, much to the annoyance of the guide, who, after long patience with the conceited meddler, pulled up sharp, and straighten-

“Remember, Sir, I am the Guide.”

ing himself to his full height, indignantly said, “Remember, sir, *I am the guide.*” This put an end to the meddling, and the party went on safely; for the guide knew the way, and the meddler didn't.

Now, the tourist with his guide-book is a true likeness of the follower of Christ. The believer is not at home in this world—he is a stranger in a strange land. Here he has no abiding city and no enduring inheritance, and his aim is to get through this polluted scene as a citizen of quite another country, and as one who has nothing in common with the dwellers in the earth. His book is a perfect guide, and if he consults it continually—keeping his finger in the place, as it were—his way will be prosperous, and he will have good success. Said the Lord to Joshua, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua i. 8). And Paul, writing to Timothy, said, “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine;” and again, “Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: continue in them, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. iv. 13, 15, 16).

Beloved reader, be careful to study the book; study the whole of it; and, withal, fail not to follow it closely, without cavil or question. Be not like the conceited meddler, who would strike out a line of his own. Many have done this, and have landed themselves and their followers in the quagmires and sloughs of false doctrine and worldliness, to their own discomfort and to God's dishonour. Your book is infallible, and you may act upon every word of it without fear as to the result. But it is most important that you should become acquainted with the whole of it. For this we suggest the following plan, which has proved a very great blessing to one who adopted it some years ago:—Commence the Bible at the beginning of this year. Get a small paragraph Bible, if you can. Read as many chapters as possible each day, taking up the book at every spare moment. Continue this day after day, keeping up the connection in your mind, until you come to the end of Revelation. The

The Story of the Apostles.

whole volume can be read without undue haste in 70 or 80 hours. Try and save this time from other occupations or from other reading, or even from recreation, for this special purpose, and we say unhesitatingly that you will testify in the course of a month or two that you never spent any time more enjoyably or profitably, and you will find that your knowledge of God and His word has wonderfully increased.

Take heed to the book, for the book is the guide.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY.—1.

THE STORY OF THE APOSTLES.

IT has been said that the writer of the Acts of the Apostles closes his history leaving the reader thirsting for more; and as we believe that this remark finds an echo in every Christian's heart, we feel justified in endeavouring to gratify, in some little measure, the very natural desire of our readers for information as to the subsequent history of the Apostles, and as to the times which passed over the Church in the early centuries of the Christian era.

First:— THE STORY OF THE APOSTLES.

We learn, of course, from Acts xii. 1, 2, that James, the son of Zebedee, was the first of the twelve to suffer martyrdom. He fell a victim to Herod's ambitious desire for popularity about 43 A.D. Eusebius records a remarkable circumstance attending his death. The man who dragged him before the tribunal, when he saw the meekness and fearlessness with which he received the sentence of death, was suddenly converted to God, and cheerfully confessed his faith in Christ. He was led with James to execution, and on the way sought and readily obtained the Apostle's forgiveness.

James lovingly kissed his late accuser, saying, "Peace be to thee," and then they were beheaded together.

The other James, a man of rare godliness and integrity, respected even by those who thought it a deplorable thing that so good a man should be a Christian, lived on in Judea until A.D. 62, when he was cruelly murdered by the Jews, who had become incensed against him, owing to the vast number of Christian converts added to the Church by his constant labours and holy example.

Festus, president of Judea, died, and before his successor Albinus arrived, Ananias, the high priest, a Sadducee and a

The Story of the Apostles.

merciless persecutor, held supreme power in the interior. He called a council, before which he summoned James with some others, and accused them of breaking the law of Moses. But it was not easy to procure his condemnation, for, by his whole life, he had secured the veneration of his fellow-countrymen, by whom he had been long designated "James the just." The leading men, however, endeavoured to entangle him by urging him to mount a pinnacle of the temple and speak against Christianity to the people assembled at the Passover. Being placed aloft he delivered a bold confession of Jesus, declaring that He was then sitting at the right hand of power, and that he would come in the clouds of heaven. At this Ananias and the rulers were incensed beyond measure. They had attempted to ruin his character and failed; now they must murder him on the spot. Crying out that Justus himself was seduced, they threw him down and stoned him. He had, however, sufficient strength to get on his knees and cry out, "I beseech Thee, Lord God and Father, for them; for they know not what they do." One of the priests, moved with the scene, cried out, "Cease! What do you mean? This just man is praying for you." A person present with a fuller's club beat out his brains and completed his martyrdom.

Josephus, writing afterwards concerning the sufferings of the Jews at the hands of the Romans, says, "These things happened to them by way of revenging the death of James the just, the brother of Jesus, whom they call Christ; for the Jews slew him, though a very just man." Josephus also says that Albinus severely reprimanded Ananias, and soon afterwards deprived him of the high priesthood.

PAUL.

The history of the Apostle Paul from the time of his conversion—probably A.D. 36—to the time of his first imprisonment at Rome—probably A.D. 63—is recorded by the pen of inspiration in the book of the Acts; and a wonderful history it is.

"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf," said the dying Jacob in Gen. xlix. 27. Of the same Benjamin, said Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 12, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders."

The Story of the Apostles.

What could more forcibly illustrate the truth of these two statements than the career of that remarkable man who, in Phil. iii. 5, declared himself to be "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin?" In the morning of his life he was sanguinary and fierce as a wolf—in the evening, patient and gentle as a lamb.

When Ananias of Damascus was directed to proceed to the house of Judas in Straight Street, and inquire for one called Saul of Tarsus, he shrank in terror from the task; but the Lord said to him, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel; for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake."

The Apostle seems to have been fully conscious from the outset that he was called to a life of testimony and suffering of no ordinary character, yet he never once faltered in his course, even though his labours, and perils, and sufferings by land and sea, as set forth in 2 Cor. xi. 23-33, were more than unaided humanity could have possibly endured.

Agreeably to the communication made to him by the angel, in the words, "Thou must be brought before Cæsar" (Acts xxvii. 24), the Apostle eventually found himself in the presence of the fiendish tyrant Nero, and there, as in the presence of Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, the Lord stood with him and strengthened him; and we may assume that he was heard in a full and solemn assembly, and that the whole of Nero's court had thus the Gospel preached to them, for we read in Phil. iv. 22, of the saints "of Cæsar's household."

On this occasion Paul was delivered out of the mouth of the lion—for Nero had not yet commenced his brutal persecution of the Christians—and the prisoner of the Lord was set at liberty in the year A.D. 63, a liberty which, however, he did not long enjoy, for on returning to Rome in A.D. 65, after an interval of about two years, during which no certain account of his movements can be found—though he is supposed to have gone into Spain as he purposed (Rom. xv. 28)—he fell in with the very time when Rome was burnt, and the Christians were accused as incendiaries.

He now found no mercy at the hands of Nero, who was only too anxious to execute vengeance upon him in consequence of the success which seems to have attended his preaching even in the Imperial household. According to

The New Jerusalem.

Chrysostom, a cup-bearer and a concubine of the emperor had been converted and this hastened the Apostle's death. He was slain with the sword by Nero's order, A.D. 65 or 66.

There is a remarkable and interesting coincidence between the immediate occasion of Paul's death and the expression made use of by him in Phil. ii. 17, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." The allusion is to the little cup of wine usually poured out as a drink offering upon the vastly larger and more valuable burnt offering, and the Apostle in deep humility valued himself as only a little cup of wine in comparison with the sacrifice and service of the faith of his beloved Phillipians; and his life blood was poured out at Rome because Nero's (wine) cup-bearer was converted through his means.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Tune—"Abide with me."

WITH joyous hope, I view that city fair,
Far, far away, far from this tainted sphere;
With jasper walls, secure from every ill,
Where love divine doth every bosom fill.

With streets of gold, nought to defile the feet,
With crystal stream—our joy will be complete:
God and the Lamb, the Temple of that place,
Where we shall praise the riches of His grace.

No gloomy hours, for there shall be no night,
But God Himself shall give the people light.
No curse or lie shall ever enter there,
No pain or woe, but glory, bright and fair.

The Lamb is there—the One who died for me,
That with Himself I might for ever be;
There to adore His blessed, worthy name,
With all His own to sound aloud His fame.

And is it so, this city of our God—
This the bright home of those redeemed by blood?
Yes, there with Christ the centre of that place,
The Lamb's own Bride shall see Him face to face.

J. H. B.

LOVE'S SWEET CONSTRAINT.

OUR service to the Lord should not so much spring from mere sense of duty or hope of future reward, but rather from the constraining love of Christ and a desire to please Him.

One has said that "God observes by what springs we are moved, and measures our reward by the disposition of the heart, and not by the worth of the gift or the quality of the action. The man, then, that loves a great deal does a great deal; the man that does anything well, in that one thing does a great deal; and he does well who prefers the good of others before his own private pleasure or profit."

"Love seeketh not her own."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. ii. 4).

Our *aim*, then, should have not so much the recompense of reward as the glory of God for its end.

If the former only be kept in view, the latter will be lost sight of, and the incentive for service never rise above self, beginning and ending there.

In Revelation iv. 10 we have the door of heaven opened, and a scene of worship presents itself, culminating in the four and twenty elders casting their crowns before the throne, finding their highest bliss and rapture in the rewarder rather than in the reward, constrained by the same love that earned the reward to lay it at His feet, finding in Christ their heaven of heavens, their all in all. As Samuel Rutherford said—

"We will not gaze on glory,
But on the King of Grace;
Not on the crown, He giveth,
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

In Revelation v. we see the beloved Apostle gazing on the glory of heaven, yet he could only weep until he beheld in the midst of the throne "a Lamb as it had been slain," followed by a universal burst of worship "Unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." It will be then, as it is in some measure now, when the slain and risen Lamb of God fills our vision, that we shall realize in all its freshness the power of that love that was stronger than death, that many waters could not quench, and from which nothing either present or future shall ever separate us. The spring and impulse for all service should be the love of Christ, dwelling and continuing in our hearts by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. Our aim, the glory of God, seeking

A Good Extract.

the divine enlightenment of the Spirit, through the Word, for the exercise of our gifts, and the sphere wherein they are used.

Let me sum up in the quaint but pithy words of Rutherford—
 “Serve Christ; back Him; let His cause be your cause; give not an hairbreadth of truth away; for it is not yours, but God’s.

Then, since ye are going, take Christ’s certificate with you out of this life—‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’ His ‘Well done’ is worth a shipful of ‘good days’ and earthly honours. I have cause to say this, because I find Him Truth itself. In my sad days Christ laugheth cheerfully and saith, ‘All will be well!’”

The slave of sin and fear,
 The truth my bondage broke;
 My happy spirit loves to wear
 Thy light and easy yoke.
 Thy love, which fills my grateful breast,
 Makes duty, joy, and labour rest.

J. T.

A GOOD EXTRACT.

“**I** WOULD have you beware, my brethren and sisters, who have made a great advance in grace, and are very joyful in the Lord, of judging your fellow-Christians. I have noticed with sorrow on the part of some, whose shoe-latchets I am not worthy to unloose, that, nevertheless, they are hard towards the lambs and the lame of the flock. Because they have not reached your own high attainments, do not condemn them. If you have strong faith, you may condemn unbelief, but do not condemn weak believers, who may have beautiful points of character, although they are as yet mere babes in grace. Have you never heard of the strong cattle of whom the Lord said, “Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my flock, and they shall be no more a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.” Beware lest thou become proud of thy attainments, and unkind to those beneath thy level. I believe there is such a thing as being so long in the light, that you do not believe that others are in the dark; or, if they are, you judge them to be weak and foolish, and you are apt to scold them. Brother, you cannot scold the darkness into light! *A little sympathy will do far more than what you are pleased to call faithful upbraidings.*

THE PURIFYING HOPE.

GOD is for us. This is set forth in John xiii. and xiv. Then in John xv. we have the believer for God, and in chapter xvi. the Spirit of God in the believer. Before I can realize that I am for God upon earth I must clearly see that God is for me. In chapters xiii. and xiv. Christ washes His disciples' feet, and puts the Father's house before them, with the blessed promise, "I will come again." We are all more or less affected by *hope*. This hope was given by our Lord as He was about to leave His own in the world, and it was repeated by the angels on Olivet after He ascended into heaven. It was carried on by the inspired apostles, and in Revelation xxii. we have the threefold mention of His coming. No truth acts upon the conscience like the coming of the Lord. Oh that we may prize it more, so that our hearts and lives may be continually purified by it! If we substitute anything for this in order to purify ourselves we make ourselves wiser than God. Some would give us "perfectionism;" others death. Death and the grave may make us sad, but the coming of the Lord held in Holy Ghost power will make us both blessed and holy.

The Lord will judge His people, as in 2 Cor. v. 10, and reward all faithful service; and He will cause them to sit down with Him at His table. This will be the blessedness of heaven, and the special portion of the *watching* ones (Luke xii. 35). Then (verse 42) we have the reward to the worker, each having his appointed position in the kingdom of the Son. But in John we have nothing about the rule of the kingdom; here it is the Father's house, and the blessed Lord Himself our everlasting portion. He is coming to receive us unto *Himself*. For this He waits, for this He longs.

But I would say a word more for the heart and life. The disciples had often misunderstood their Lord; they had often failed, and they were all about to forsake Him in His dark hour of sorrow. Even Peter with all his boasting would leave His Lord alone, and deny all knowledge of Him; yet the heart of Jesus never changed towards Peter. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He had touched their consciences and washed their feet, and now He sets their hearts at rest, placing before them this glorious hope of His coming. His love remained the same towards them; and to-day that heart is unchanged towards His own, although He is upon the throne, and we are here in all our weakness and failure. His love towards

Pray, Brethren, Pray.

each one is as deep and real as when He died for us upon the cross. He told Peter that he would thrice deny Him; yet He adds, "Let not your heart be troubled." He would not forsake them or give them up until they were with Him in the Father's house.

J. B. M.

PRAY, BRETHREN, PRAY.

WE would urge, with increasing earnestness, the need of prayer in our closets, in our households, and in our assemblies. "Pray without ceasing" is not out of date nor out of season. We have been asked, and have known of it being asked of others, "What does 1 Thess. v. 17 mean?" It means, "Pray without ceasing." We have known of preachers trying to get on without it—seeking to dispense with the continued habit of prayer. The lack of spiritual power, of communion with God, is felt by the prayerless servant, and so increased physical action on the platform or pulpit is substituted. There may be great activity in service and yet a powerless ministry. More work on our knees would produce marked results in service. Agony in prayer, accompanied by fasting—soul and body in communion—are the great factors in the distinguished services of men of God. All morally distinguished servants of the living God were praying men. *One* hour on your knees before and after work will stamp a character on what you do. Oh, younger brethren, if you want to continue fresh and bright, pray, and pray, and pray. Study the Word, too. Make abundant use of your eyes in the reading of the Scriptures, and keep on your knees before God.

Avoid selfishness in prayer. Have a large and generous heart. Cultivate the habit of appreciating all that is morally good and excellent wherever found. Get into heart-sympathy with every bit of good or blessing wrought by the Spirit of God in the world.

"RUNNING OVER."

NEITHER God nor man gets anything till the vessel runs over! God wants us to be *running over*. "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (Jno. vii. 38). Head-work may be good; but it is not out of the head that these rivers flow. No; but "out of his belly." Heart work is what we want; and the living water will not need to be pumped up.

STILL ONWARD WE ARE SPEEDING.

HOW now, fellow-traveller? A month has passed away since we hailed thee at the opening of another year.

Art thou still pressing onward? What speed is the good ship making? How reads the log? as the sailor would say. Is thy face still stedfastly set towards "the city that hath the foundations," and thy back upon the city of Destruction? Remember, the Christian life is a life of diligence, not laziness. The exhortation is "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. vi. 12). *Following* implies advancement, progress; no standing still. It has been well said

"NOT TO ADVANCE IS TO GO BACK,"

and this is strictly true of the traveller on the believer's pathway. He who has paused is like a steamer whose propeller has stopped beating. She is at the mercy of the tide, a mere creature of circumstance. Some years ago, about New-Year's Day, the steamship "Duke of Argyll" started from the port of Dublin on a voyage. While still in the river she struck upon a sunken barge and went down in a few minutes. Her fires were quenched, her propeller stopped, and there she lay like a helpless log stuck fast in the mud. But soon the rising tide raised her slightly, swung her round, and then let her settle down again, with her head towards the place from whence she started the night before. A sad picture this, of too many of God's children who made a fresh start a month ago with many a good resolve! But good resolves are soon forgotten, and the head and heart are too soon, alas! swung round again towards earthly things. How is this, brother, sister? What is the cause? Is it that you have neglected to watch and pray; or that you have been trusting in your own strength to go forward, and in your own wisdom to steer clear of hidden dangers; or that you have allowed some small self-indulgence to mar communion; or that some sudden surprise of the devil has come upon you and brought the sadness of defeat into your life? Well, whatever be the cause, we would affectionately entreat you to beware of settling down into a cold, backslidden condition, "lest a worse thing come upon thee." The sunken steamship was not allowed to remain stuck in the mud, where she would soon have become a total wreck. She was repaired, pumped out, raised up, her fires re-lit, and her machinery again set going

Power for Worship, Walk, and Warfare.

with as little delay as possible. Shall it not be the same with you? Take heart of grace; for Jesus Christ has not changed. He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. He loves thee still, and wants to "see thy countenance and hear thy voice." Come back with confession upon thy lips and sorrow in thy heart. "Only acknowledge thy transgression," and He will receive thee graciously and forgive thee freely; for "He is faithful and just to forgive."

But, perhaps, the reader is one who is not conscious of having fallen into any recognised sin, but, nevertheless, is not advancing in the ways of God. To such we would give another illustration—that of

A MAN ON A BICYCLE,

who will tell you at once that "to stop is to fall." Therefore, awake, O sleeper! Arise from Delilah's lap ere the Philistines be upon thee, and thou find thyself helpless in their hands with thine eyes put out and the fetters of brass upon thy limbs. Get back at once to thy Nazarite place before God—the place of separation unto Him—and then thou shalt be in that position in which the ungrieved Spirit will strengthen thee to overcome the sudden assaults of Satan, as He strengthened Samson against the sudden spring of the lion; and He will also give thee wisdom and power to deal with the smaller and yet more subtle dangers which beset thy daily path—some on the surface, and some, like the sunken barge, hidden from view. But, above all things, never lean upon an arm of flesh for strength, or upon human wisdom for direction, but "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. iii. 5).

POWER FOR WORSHIP, WALK, AND WARFARE.

IN Psa. civ. 30, the Spirit is mentioned in connection with *Creation* and *renewal*. In John iii. 6, *regeneration* is attributed to Him, and in John iv. 24 and Phil. iii. 3 *Worship*. In John xiv., xv., and xvi., the Lord speaks of Him as that *other* Comforter who should abide with the disciples for ever; teach them, and bring all things Christ had said to their remembrance; testify of Him; convict the world; guide the saints into all truth, and shew them things to come. He was to be indeed a Paraclete to God's people during Christ's absence and rejection.

Power for Worship, Walk, and Warfare.

WHAT THEN IS A PARACLETE?

He is one who comforts, cares for, guides, instructs, admonishes, and in every way acts towards his charge as a guardian towards an orphan or a parent towards a child. He is, literally, one whom you may call to your side at any moment for guidance, assistance, or advocacy; and in 1 John ii. 1 the word is translated Advocate. The Lord, Himself, had been the Guardian of the disciples while He was with them, readily throwing the shield of His protection over them in every time of trouble, and taking their part against every foe; now He would hand them over to that other Guardian whom He would send down after His ascension. Then on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon them from heaven enlightening and empowering them for Worship, Walk, and Warfare, and He has continued with the saints ever since. His power and *that* only is recognised by God, and anything else is as strange fire before Him.

HOW THEN IS THIS POWER TO BE OBTAINED?

Let the Lord Himself answer:—"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" (John vii. 37-39). Mark the words "Let him come unto Me." We are quite familiar with that sweet "Come unto Me" in Matt. xi. 28 which invites the unconverted to come to Him for rest, but we too often forget that the fulness and overflow of the Spirit result also from *Coming to Him*. Immediately after His resurrection He breathed upon His disciples and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 22). This new-creation act probably marks the birth of the Church. In Luke xxiv. 49, He said "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you." He had said in John xvi. 7, "If I depart I will send Him." Then in Acts ii. 33, Peter says, "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and *having received of the Father* the promise of the Holy Ghost, *He hath shed forth this* which ye now see and hear."

We can now understand why Jesus said "Let him come unto Me;" for, just as in the day of Joseph's exaltation, Pharaoh said, "Go unto Joseph" (Gen. xli. 55), so now

Power for Worship, Walk, and Warfare.

the Father says "Go unto Jesus." Hence, if we desire the fulness and overflow of the Spirit we must draw the supply through Christ.

There are three beautiful emblems in scripture setting forth this truth:—

1. The laver on the backs of the twelve oxen, through whose bodies and mouths the water flowed forth in all directions (1 Kings vii. 25). To this, no doubt, the Lord alludes in John vii. 38.
2. The Vine, in John xv., with its branches and sap, the sap being, of course, the Spirit, for the fruit is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal v. 22); and,
3. The Olive Trees and Candlestick in Zech. iv.

A glance at these emblems will shew that the constant flow into the vessels—whether oxen, lamps, or vine branches—was secured by their being kept in touch with the source of supply.

The spiritual meaning of these figures is given in John xv. 5, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for apart from Me (R.V.) ye can do nothing." Hence, we conclude that true spiritual power comes to us only through *abiding in Christ*. Then comes the question,

HOW ARE WE TO ABIDE IN HIM?

Here the emblems, in some measure, fail us, for the oxen, lamps, and branches are all inanimate things, and cannot help abiding where they are; but living men and women are affected by their surroundings, and their natures; and it is to them no easy matter to abide in perpetual communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. Abiding therefore, demands constant watchfulness and prayer, together with continual waiting upon the Spirit's teaching through the word, by means of which He brings what Christ has said to our remembrance, and unfolds the grace and glory of Christ to our hearts, so as to fill us with that constraining love of Christ, whereby we shall be kept walking with Him, and, in the energy of that Spirit which freely flows to us from Him, worshipping and serving Him with power and acceptance.

Beyond all question, the men who have lived most in Christ's company have loved him most and served Him best in every age, and have manifested most of the indwelling and outflowing of the Spirit, both in their worship, walk, and warfare; and therefore we would again remind our readers that, if they, too, wish to know and have this power, they must see to it that they keep in touch with their Lord.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

HOW blessed is the communion of saints! Redeemed from judgment, and separated from the course of this world by the precious blood of Christ, theirs is the joy of a common salvation. They are brethren of the same family, for they are children of the same Father. They are "members one of another," for, being "baptized by one Spirit into one body," they are alike members of the body of Christ. Hewn out of the quarry of the old and ruined creation, and quickened by the touch of the finger of God, they are living stones of the same "holy temple," which is "builded together for AN HABITATION OF GOD through the Spirit."

Led by the Holy Ghost into fellowship with the Father and the Son, they are led by the same Spirit into fellowship one with another. Receiving grace upon grace out of "the fulness" which is in Christ, their hearts are filled with joy; they overflow with love and ascend in united praise. Thus the communion of saints on earth is a real anticipation of the blessedness of heaven.

Their joys are doubled by being shared; their sorrows are lessened by being divided. According to the Divine standard, whatever each has, he has for all; and whatever all are possessed of is possessed for each. Each has part in the enjoyment of all. One with each other, and joint heirs with Christ in his inheritance, it is truly said of them, "all things are yours." Incorporated into "one body," and animated by "one Spirit," they are bound together by the sympathies of that one living Spirit. One, therefore, prays for all, and all pray for one. The whole body is nourished by that which each member—each joint—"supplieth for the edifying of itself in love." There is no place for haughtiness or strife among real saints; for why should I envy that which is my own? why should I despise that which serves for my necessary assistance? and why should I strive against and harm him whose hurt is my own hurt? Is there any strife between the members of the natural body? By no means. They all serve and assist one another. If one be injured and suffer, all the rest sympathize with it, and lend relief, and are neither tired nor angry if the healing does not immediately follow. So should it be with members of Christ's spiritual body, each seeking to be the servant of all, and, like his Master, to take the lowest place.

Be Glad and Rejoice.

O Lord, unite thus thy saints in hearty fellowship, and in tender sympathy for each other. Remove our dissensions, and, by thy gentle Spirit, knit our hearts together in love. Suffer not self-conceit or party spirit, which is the spirit of the world, to influence the members of thy body; but let us be clothed with humility. Let the joy of each be in the prosperity of all. Make us more *like thyself*, and so *happy in thyself*, that we may love each other unfeignedly for thy sake. Then, indeed, shall it be manifested that we are thine; and may we soon be manifested with thee in glory!

BE GLAD AND REJOICE.

YOUNG converts stand in special need of the fulness of joy. I know of but one way by which they can be kept in the right path, and made to persevere: their religion must be made a joy to them. They must be made to drink copiously of "the joy of the Lord," and they will thirst no more for the pleasures of their former life; and this is the one antidote for world-lusting everywhere. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. viii. 10.)

It is said of the Sirens that their tenure of life was dependent on the successful exercise of their charms. They sang with bewitching sweetness, and so entranced anyone who heard them, that he died in an ecstasy of delight. It is fabled that Ulysses, when he approached these enchantresses, stuffed the ears of his companions with wax, lashed himself to the mast, and thus escaped. When the Argonauts, however, passed the Sirens, it is said that Jason ordered Orpheus to strike his lyre. The enchantment of his singing surpassed theirs, and the Argonauts sailed safely by; whereupon the Sirens cast themselves into the sea, and became transformed into rocks.

This was music conquering music; melody surpassing melody; joy transcending joy.

It is something like this that we Christians must find in Christianity, if we are to be kept from the power of temptation, grow in grace, and become valiant for Christ. The best thing we can do for ourselves is not to lash ourselves to the mast; and the highest service we can render others is not to stuff their ears with wax. There

What is "Believing in Vain?"

is a higher and nobler alternative before us. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." (Psalm li. 12, 13.)

WHAT IS "BELIEVING IN VAIN?"

MANY people are troubled about the quality of their faith; and the expression in 1 Cor. xv. 2, "Unless ye have believed in vain," adds to their trouble when taken out of its context and misunderstood. Now a moderately careful perusal of the next eighteen verses will show plainly that this expression refers, not in any sense to the quality of the faith, but to the foundation upon which it rests. False teachers had gone so far as to assert that there was no resurrection of the dead, and the Apostle in combating this error went to the root of the matter, and showed the Corinthians that if there were no resurrection of the dead, then the gospel which he had preached to them was false, and their faith in such a gospel must prove worthless or vain. Verses 14 and 17 are conclusive as to the Apostle's meaning.

In verse 14 he says, "If Christ be not risen then is *our preaching* vain, and *your faith* is also vain." If the preaching is vain, empty, worthless, false, of course the faith goes for nothing, or in other words, is all in vain. In verse 17 he says, "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins." All this is perfectly clear. They had trusted in Christ as the person who died for them and rose again, but if now it can be proved that he never rose at all, of course their trust, however sound it might have been, was vain.

Take an illustration: Two men are drowning in the river. Two objects are floating by, and they clutch at them eagerly, and grasp them with all their might. One has laid hold of a life-buoy and he is saved; the other, with equal earnestness, has laid hold of a walking stick, and he is drowned. His faith proved vain, because the object in which he trusted could not save him.

Faith in Christ cannot, however, prove vain; and no one who has rested upon him for Salvation can be said to have believed in vain.

ARE THE CHILDREN COMING WITH US?

THE question of "the Children and their Conversion" is perhaps the most difficult of the many difficult questions which demand the attention of Christian parents and all other adult Christians in these difficult days.

We are fully aware that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and, therefore, Godliness "does not run in the blood"—to use a common expression—but we know, beyond all doubt, that God blesses the earnest efforts of those who seek to bring up their children in His faith and fear. Who can measure the effect produced upon the child Timothy by his early instruction in the Scriptures at the hands of his mother, and perhaps his grandmother, whose faith he followed?

Would not our own joy be doubled if all our children were coming with us to the better country; and would not our Heaven be "twice Heaven" when we got there?

The following extract touches the very core of this question, and we ask our readers to give it their prayerful attention, and, by the help of God, to seek to profit by the lessons inculcated therein.

"You will find on scrutinizing the conduct of children, that pleasant associations have more influence in determining their preferences and habits,—moral, intellectual, and physical—than almost all others.

If then you take such an interest in the children around you as to secure their gratitude and love, you will form in their minds strong, pleasant associations with your character, conduct, and feelings, whatever they may be, and thus you will gain an immense ascendancy over them.

They will think as you think, and feel as you feel; catch your expressions and tone of voice, your looks, your attitudes, your habits and peculiarities, good and bad—in fact, even the things which, if they disliked you, they would mimic and ridicule. So that he who associates freely with children, and by his sympathy and regard for them acquires their love, will leave an impress of his own character upon them, which all the years of after life will never remove. This will be more peculiarly the case with those higher sentiments and opinions and principles of action which are formed in the more advanced years of youth.

HERE IS THE FAILURE OF MANY PARENTS:—

They stand aloof from their children, occupied by business

No Divorce.

and cares, or else having no sympathy with their peculiar feelings and child-like propensities. The heart of the father, therefore, does not keep so near to that of the child that there may be communicated to the one the healthy, virtuous action of the other. This place of influence is left to be taken possession of by anybody—a servant, a neighbour, or a boy in the street—and the father aims at forming the character of his son by addressing to him, from time to time, as his occupations may give him opportunity, plenty of sound argument and good advice! The boy receives them in silence, and the father hopes that they produce an impression. The downward progress which the boy's heart is making by his intimacy with sin is not perceived, but at last, when he is twenty, it can be no longer concealed, and the father discovers, to his astonishment, that all his good instructions have been utterly thrown away.

If parents, and those who work amongst children, would bear these simple principles in mind, and endeavour to win the affections of the little ones by taking them into their confidence, by praying with them and talking with them affectionately, at frequent and well-selected intervals; by seeking, in a loving, friendly way, to find out their little difficulties and trials, with the view of helping to remove or overcome them, it is certain that the work would be much more successful, not only in respect of the formation of character, but in respect of the still higher question of the salvation of the soul.”

NO DIVORCE.

FOUND guilty and sentenced in Rom. iii; Executed in Rom. vi.; Divorced by death from the old husband and married to the new in Rom. vii; we are found at the beginning of Rom. viii. one with Christ, free for ever from all condemnation; and at the end of the chapter we are assured that *from Him* there shall be no divorce.

Between the “No condemnation” and the “No separation” there may be much tribulation, much trepidation, much accusation, and many other trying experiences on the desert road, but all will certainly come right in the end; for, as the Irishman quaintly put it, “He has promised us a safe landing though not a calm passage.” O! how grand.

WORK AND PRAY.

BRETHREN, we are called to labour
In our blessed Master's name—
Called the precious seed to scatter,
Fearless of reproach or shame
See, the fields are white to harvest,
Still the labourers are few ;
Jesus calls on you, my brethren,
Something in His name to do.
Look around you—souls are living—
Heedless of the coming day,
When the things of time will vanish,
And for ever pass away.
Why not warn them of the future—
Of the place where lost ones dwell—
Of the dreadful night of darkness,
Christless souls shall spend in hell ?
Why not tell them of the Saviour,
Who was nailed upon the tree,
That by tasting death for sinners
They might be from death set free ?
Tell the worldling and the careless
Of your Saviour's boundless love ;
Tell the outcast and the wanderer
Of a home with Christ above.
Let the love of Christ constrain you
To proclaim the joyful sound
Of salvation for the guilty,
And a ransom for the bound.
Ask your Lord for grace to labour ;
He will give you all you need :
Seek the Spirit's help and guidance,
Earnestly with souls to plead.
Let the seed by prayer be watered,
Ere you strew it o'er the ground ;
With your Father's blessing on it,
It shall yet with fruit abound.
While our Lord delays His coming,
Do not idle time away :
Oh, my brethren, be not weary ;
Now's the time to Watch and Pray. R. K.

MAINTAINED COMMUNION.

IF we are to maintain fellowship with God, we must spend as much time as possible in secret dealings with our Father. If it should be only three minutes, we should get into His own presence the first thing every morning—if we start with three minutes it will soon go up to five.

The next thing is the reading of His Word—get a word from Himself every morning,

The next thing is the family altar. Note these three things—(1st) A little while in secret prayer with God; (2nd) a word from God out of His Book; and (3rd) the family altar.

Sometimes business crushes out the reading of the Word in the morning. It is a terrible thing when a child of God cannot take time to speak a word to his Father.

Some will find it a hard task, but it is God's order, and He always blesses for maintaining His order.

You will find it easy if you will only think every morning when you awake—“*God first!*”

The prevailing evil to-day among God's children is worldliness—covetousness—seeking to be like the world.

We are strangers and pilgrims here, and we shall soon leave all we have of this world to the ungodly.

Let us, therefore, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience; fighting the good fight of the faith, and laying hold on the life, which is life indeed.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY.—2.

THE STORY OF THE APOSTLES.

THE story of the Apostle Peter, from the time when his brother Andrew brought him to Jesus till we part with him at Antioch, about A.D. 50, is very fully told in the New Testament. Afterwards he is said to have travelled into Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, preaching the gospel chiefly among the Jews: for He who was mighty in Paul towards the Gentiles, wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision. And it was to the Hebrew converts of these countries that Peter wrote his two eminently comforting and practical epistles.

Somewhere about A.D. 63 he probably arrived in Rome, where he is said by Eusebius to have again met and

The Story of the Apostles.

successfully encountered Simon the Sorcerer, whom he had rebuked in Samaria thirty years previously, but who still remained in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, and was practising at Rome on a still grander scale the sorceries which he at one time appeared to have renounced.

According to Nicephorus, Peter spent two years in Rome before his martyrdom, which took place under Nero at the same time, though not in the same manner, as that of Paul. Peter was crucified with his head downwards, a position which he is said to have selected through unfeigned humility, not deeming himself worthy to suffer in the same way as his Lord had done.

Shortly before his execution his wife had been called to join the noble army of martyrs. The grace of God was remarkably displayed in her case, and as her beloved husband beheld her courage in the very face of death he rejoiced at her devotion, and, addressing her by name, exhorted and comforted her with "Remember the Lord."

Many strange and incredible legends have been invented concerning Peter, but there is one rather interesting story told by Ambrose, a man of great sobriety and intelligence; which, as it seems to form a fitting counterpart to the prophetic announcement made by the Lord to Peter in John xxi. 18, we shall insert here for the reader's information.

The persecution of the Christians in Rome was raging fiercely under Nero, and, of course, the most prominent of the saints were the first to be laid hold of and martyred. The brethren knowing this, and being also aware that the Pagans were greatly incensed against Peter, entreated the Apostle to make his escape from Rome as speedily as he could. Desirous as he was to win the martyr's crown, their affectionate entreaties so touched him that he yielded to their wishes, and prepared to leave the city by night. Coming, however, to the gate, he saw Christ entering into the city, whereupon he said to Him, "Lord, whither goest thou?" "I am coming hither to be crucified again," answered the Lord. By this Peter understood that the Lord was to be crucified again in the person of His servant, and he at once returned to the city, convinced the brethren by this account that it would be wrong for him to retreat in the hour of danger, and remained at his post until he was seized and crucified, about A.D. 66.

WITH FELLOW-PILGRIMS MEETING.

WE heard an old disciple say the other day, "The older I grow, the more I feel I cannot do without my brethren," and the sentiment was re-echoed in the heart of every believer who heard him. Why, it is in the very nature of the child of God to "love the brethren." No doubt, man is a gregarious animal, that is to say, he loves company, he loves to be in a flock like the sheep, and so God's people are often spoken of as a flock in Scripture. But, over and above the mere natural instinct, there is certainly in those who are begotten of God a heaven-born love for one another. Unhappily, the Devil has succeeded by various subtle means in raising a thousand misunderstandings between the true children of God, whereby the activities of that heaven-born love are sadly checked; but, in spite of everything, there dwells deep down in the renewed heart a well-spring of love which, however pent up through coldness or misunderstanding, flows forth irresistibly to all the members of the heavenly family when some common danger assails them, such as a persecution for the sake of their common Lord.

But is it not a thousand pities that a people, so nobly born, and so highly destined—for they are destined to *dwell together for ever* in the Paradise of God—should be so foolish as to allow their greatest enemy to cheat them out of one of their greatest privileges, namely, that of dwelling together in unity and enjoying one another's love to the full, and thus manifesting to the world the power of the love of God. Why should it not be now exactly as it was in the days of the church's youth and vigour, when the Devil sought to drown the followers of the Nazarene in seas of blood, and their love to one another was so great as to call forth from the heathen the exclamation—

"SEE HOW THESE CHRISTIANS LOVE ONE ANOTHER!"

Why should we allow that love to be pent up in our hearts in ordinary times which flows forth so readily in times of trouble? Why not let it gush out continually to every member of our Father's family? Why allow our differences of thought and judgment to become strong walls of division between saint and saint, between heart and heart? Should we not rather bring our differences together into the presence of God, and seek, as brethren, to get light from Him by means of the Word of Truth, so that with one mind and one mouth we may glorify God even the Father of our Lord

Lest I should be a Castaway.

Jesus Christ. Not that we should adopt that very questionable expedient of "agreeing to differ," or "sinking our differences"; for, in doing so, we might simply agree to allow some root, of bitterness to remain hidden among us which will one day spring up and produce the bitter fruit of division again; or we might sink some of the very principles which form the basis of all true and lasting union according to the Word of God. Let us not therefore take a short cut to fellowship, but let us seek to win the confidence of those who differ from us by first and foremost treating them as brethren, beloved of God, fellow-members with us of the family of God, and of the body of Christ, and fellow-pilgrims to the better country; and then lovingly and prayerfully endeavour to induce them to become fellow-students with us of the Scriptures of truth written for our instruction; and the result will probably be that, instead of "agreeing to differ," or merely "sinking our differences," we shall all be found gradually coming into agreement with the mind of God, and burying out of sight such of our differences—on both sides—as were contrary to the Word, and unitedly upholding the others at all costs. Then shall we be found, as the beloved Apostle Paul longed to find his beloved Philippian when he wrote, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in *one spirit* with *one mind*, *striving together* for the faith of the Gospel."

LEST I SHOULD BE A CASTAWAY.

THE famous Isthmian games—so-called from their connection with the Corinthian Isthmus—furnished the very apt similitude under which the apostle conveys his well-known exhortation in 1 Cor. ix. 24-27, the concluding words of which have caused trouble to many an uninstructed saint. The expression, "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," does not, however, in the remotest way, imply the possibility of the believer being eventually lost. The race and the fight are not for eternal life, but for a prize. Eternal life is a free gift, and "whosoever will" may have it; but

"The crown's for those who run the race,
And those who fight the fight."

In fact, the very conditions of entrance to the Isthmian com-

Lest I should be a Castaway.

petitions will shew that this is the case ; for the candidate must be (1) a *living* man—this goes without saying, for a dead man could not race or wrestle ; (2) a *free* man, no slave ; (3) clear in the eye of the law, no felon, or robber, or one against whom the law had any claim ; and (4) *free* from debt. How beautifully all this answers to the believer's position. He has got *life*—eternal life ; he is a *free* man in Christ, no longer the slave of sin and Satan ; he is free from the law, for Christ has redeemed him from the curse of the law ; and he is free from the debt of sin, for Christ has paid it all.

Well, the conditions being fulfilled, the candidate went to the master of the arena, who explained to him clearly that if he desired to be a winner he must submit to a rigorous course of training for ten months prior to the struggle, and live upon a prescribed diet, avoiding strong drink during that time. The severity of the training, and the self-denial involved, were very great, and yet thousands of young men, of the best blood of Greece, willingly endured all the hardships of those ten months in the hope of winning the little wreath of laurel, or oak, or olive, or parsley, or pine, grown near the idol temples, and held out by the judge at the end of the course. This little wreath was worth about twopence half-penny, and it faded away in a few days, yet the glory of winning it, and hearing at the same time the thundering roar of applause from the thousands who filled those tiers of marble seats which surrounded the stadium, was so great in the eyes of the Grecian athletes as to stimulate them to all the self-denial and exertion involved in the needful training.

What a lesson to those who, having through grace fulfilled the needful spiritual conditions, are entered for the heavenly race and engaged in the good fight of the faith. To such, an unfading crown is held out by the Lord, the righteous Judge, and for such is reserved a "well done" compared with which the cheers of the Grecian stadium are of no account. And shall not such outvie the Grecian athletes in their fixed resolve to endure the needful hardship and self-denial, in order to fit themselves to "so run that they may obtain." The subject hardly needs to be enlarged upon. The illustration makes the Apostle's meaning plain enough. Let each believer determine first to be a prize winner by the help of God. Let him then seek to discover the different forms of self-indulgence which hinder him in the race and the

My Heart is Bounding Onward.

fight, and at once and for ever avoid them. Let him even deny himself things which, though lawful, may not be expedient, as the Apostle himself has left us an example in chapters viii. and ix. of this same Epistle, which every reader should carefully study, and let him carefully note the rules of the contest, lest he find himself striving unlawfully, and so become disapproved by the Judge, or, in the Apostle's language, "be a castaway." Remember that the judgment-seat of Christ is not the place for settling the question of eternal life or eternal death; but many may be found disapproved in that day, and may lose what they have wrought, because they have not served God in His own way, yet they themselves shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

MY HEART IS BOUNDING ONWARD.

MY heart is bounding onward,
Home to the land I love;
Its distant vales and mountains
My wistful passions move.
Fain would my thirsting spirit
Its living freshness breathe,
And wearied steps find resting
Its hallowed shades beneath.

No soil of nature's evil,
No touch of man's rude hand,
Shall e'er disturb around us,
That bright and happy land.
The charms that woo the senses
Shall be as pure as fair;
And all, while stealing o'er us,
Shall tell of Jesus there.

What light! when all its beaming
Shall own Him as its Sun.
What music! when its breathing
Shall bear His name along.
No change, no pause, its pleasures
Shall ever seek to know;
The draught that lulls our thirsting
But wakes that thirst anew.

WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE.

BUILDERS for eternity, whose work shall be tested at the judgment-seat of Christ, will do well to ponder the following paragraphs, the first from a secular source, *The Times* newspaper, and the second from a book by one of the ablest and most successful Christian workers of the day. No comment is needed.

“It is to be feared that an immense amount of time and money is wasted in these days upon new schemes. The clergy are ready to rely upon everything rather than upon the substantial claims of their message. One party takes to gay dresses, banners, and processions, another to penny readings, political lectures, and concerts. They change from one thing to another day by day, and the result is only a weary waste of their own time, and the creation of a certain amount of social feeling which might equally be produced without the supernatural influences of the Church and of religion. Religious truths, if they are what they are believed to be, cannot need all this trivial machinery to recommend them, and religious convictions which are to be of any value must be produced and sustained by more simple and more permanent means. If we may judge by the history of the Church, both in early and modern times, a man of true religious feeling needs nothing but a room and a Bible in order to produce the greatest results.”

“All sorts of extraordinary experiments are being tried without a question concerning the Master's warrant, and one wonders with dread what the next method to reach the masses will be. . . . These delirious efforts are doing terrible harm to those who put them forth. They drink of the rank sensational cup they offer to others. Even if these methods were a great success, our judgment concerning them would not be altered. . . . But are they a genuine, not an apparent success? Our deliberate opinion, after living and labouring for many years among the class for which these efforts are designed, is that they are not. While here and there a soul is truly converted, hypocrites are bred wholesale. . . . House-to-house visitation (and not simply calling at the door with tracts), personal dealing with souls, the faithful preaching of Christ without worldly addenda, these are the methods—unattractive as many may count them—which will in the long run win the battle, and in eternity win the richest results.”

"THE MIND OF CHRIST."

(1 Cor. ii. 16.)

TO have the mind of Christ is to look at all things from the side of Christ, and judge of them as He judges of them. This should be the position and experience of all Christians; but, alas! how many look at things from a merely human point of view, and judge of them after the manner of a worldly mind, to the encouragement of worldly principles and worldly plans, which have ever resulted in fears and sorrows, inconsistencies and failures. To have "the mind of Christ" brings quietness and assurance in every circumstance of life. To one who judges with the mind of Christ, what a different aspect have trials and afflictions than when judged by a worldly mind. To have the mind of Christ gives such a different view of the world and the things of the world—its strifes, its glories, its favours, its persecutions! How powerful for preservation from unbelieving fears and murmurings it is to have the mind of Christ. How powerful, too, for separation from evil within and without. What an incentive also to patient endurance, to God-honouring service, to lowly self-denial. How great, too, the victory over self, and how great the blessing on the daily path to have the mind of the meek and lowly Jesus. Mine, then, be the aim henceforth to look at all things with "the mind of Christ," and to walk through life as one who ever walks with Jesus and thinks with Jesus.

T. M.

DOING *VERSUS* TALKING.—1.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

ASKING the attention of my readers to this very important Epistle, I would request them to do me a kindness, viz., to read these little papers with the Bible in hand, as, from the brevity necessary in this magazine, I can only refer to the verses as we go along, not quoting them, and—not less important—because my object is rather to stimulate the study of it, and suggest lines of thought to help my readers to learn the mind of the Spirit for themselves, than to enter at all exhaustively into the various chapters.

The heading gives one of the chief leading thoughts running through the Epistle which was written by James, fulfilling his office as one of the apostles placed by the Lord Jesus Christ

Doing versus Talking.

in special trust to shepherd the believing Israelites, and, for this reason, he addressed those Christian Jews who were scattered through the whole Roman Empire. Amidst the persecutions they were continually exposed to, and in their despised place they seem to have gradually become more like those round about them. The things of Christ had lost their freshness to them, the Word of God was no longer "looked intently into" by them, and they were ceasing to remember that "He that hath My commandments and *keepeth* them, he it is that loveth Me," and, while becoming conformed to this world in their ways, were puffed up in their own minds, talked much about the doctrines of the Word of God, and contended one with another with "bitter envying and strife"; and further, after the manner of this world, while envying the rich they magnified the possessors of wealth and exalted them rather than the godly in their assemblies.

To such a people, little more than serfs amongst their conquerors, and in such a spiritual state, the Apostle addresses himself, bidding them lift up their eyes and see God's purposes of love, even in the tribulations they were passing through, that by means of these He desired to work out blessed results in them. He takes up a military metaphor and tells them to "count it all joy when they fall into divers" trials or testings, because that, just as in the active campaign, the raw recruit is changed into the seasoned veteran by means of the manifold trials he is exposed to, so in the spiritual warfare he calls on them to go forward boldly, because this "proving of their faith worketh *endurance*." This word, translated "Patience," is a leading word in the Book. It is the noun of the verb translated "Endureth" in verse 12, and used again in chapter v. 11. It is not the usual word for "Patience"—that is used in chapter v. 10—but one that conveys the thought of sternly setting oneself against the opposing forces as a soldier "endures" all the hardships of a campaign, determined manfully to do his part in it. So God works in us, by means of the trials He calls on us to pass through, this grace that is absolutely necessary to us if ever we are to be "overcomers," and receive the "crown of life." Then, if with hearts set by His sustaining grace to endure for Him, no matter what assails us, He will make every experience fruitful in teaching us of Himself, letting us know the perfect wisdom of our Captain, and fitting us to be good soldiers and good

Doing versus Talking.

servants often through our blunders and failures as well as by our victories, just as by the varying vicissitudes of active warfare the analogous result is brought about in the soldier. It is not the recruit, full of zeal and ardour for battle, the general counts on to win his victories, or sustain the sufferings of a siege, but the old trained man who bears the marks of former wounds, has known what it was to turn defeat into victory, has been taught his own deficiencies in the hard school of experience, perchance has had to learn them in the sorrowful moment of defeat, has learned how to be hopeful and patient in retreat as well as bold and confident in attack, has been trained to bear his part manfully in the solitary outpost, and endure the hardness of cold and hunger. So in us, if we let "endurance have her perfect work" we shall be made "perfect and entire, wanting in nothing" for the service our blessed Captain entrusts to us, and there is no other way by which this can be brought about. There is no royal road, no "shortcut" to this goal; the trained, "perfect and entire" servant of God cannot be produced by any easier means. Our Captain Himself was made "perfect through sufferings," and, in one way or another, if we are to be such servants as He can use for His higher and more difficult services, we must yield ourselves into His hands and follow His leading while He moulds us, and fashions us, and teaches us how to rise again when we fall, how to conquer our own lusts, while He abases our pride, while He brings us into the circumstances that need His comfort, that we may learn to comfort others, and He, through all the varied experiences into which He leads us, makes us partake of His fulness that we may be good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and, at the same time, in the same difficult path, He will develop our gift according to the work He has for us, and teach us how humbly and in fellowship with His people to exercise it. And praise be to Him we are not left without a perfect Adviser and Teacher in all our inexperience and folly. Verse 5 tells us that in our God we have One who liberally gives wisdom to the foolish, and, however often we come to Him, upbraids us not for our folly. All He wants is the sense of need, such as Solomon had, that will bring us to Him to ask it from him.—J. S. D.

To be Continued.

A MAN has no more real religion than he acts out in his life.

UNFIT FOR SERVICE.

ONE night, 'twas a Saturday evening,
I sat alone in my room ;
Watching the fading daylight,
And the steadily gathering gloom.
And I longed and watched for an op'ning,
A word for my Master to say ;
Ere the twilight gave place to darkness,
And the week had died away.
I knew that there had been moments,
Afforded me through the week,
When I might have witnessed for Jesus,
But I hadn't the heart to speak.
And now when I would have spoken,
The privilege was denied ;
So I went in my sorrow to Jesus,
"And why is this ?" I cried.
Ah ! the Master knew all about it,
So He said, and I knew it was right :
"The tool is too blunt for service ;
I cannot use it to-night."
Oh ! Christian, learn well this lesson :
We can only be used by God
When communion with Him has fashioned
Our mouths like a sharpened sword.
The shaft to be used must be polished,
Must be hid in the Master's hand ;
The arrow while hid in the quiver,
Must be sharp to perform his command.
Then polish and sharpen me, Master,
Tho' painful the process may be ;
And make me an instrument fitted,
To be used any moment by Thee.—L.K.H.B

LOVE IS OF GOD.

LOVE does not know a person called Number One. She never seeks a place for herself, nor wants to let you know she is somebody. She is content to take the lowest place, and does not feel a martyr when she is there. Love does not envy a sister's new attire, nor a brother's gift or worldly position. So-and-so may be a favourite among the saints ; but, nevertheless, "Love envies not," and you

The Story of the Apostles.

cannot put the damper on her, for "Many waters cannot quench love." She always looks at the bright side of character or circumstance, and is intimate with one called Patience: so that when things go contrary at home and abroad, Love always takes "the more excellent way" out of the difficulty. In the workshop Love is everybody's servant; although she makes no profession of that kind. Like Abraham, Love allows the Lots to take their choice, and receives thankfully what may be left. At home Love is a sunbeam: she is always considering the rest (Heb. x. 24), and generally knows what you want before asking for it. Love knows what a "cup of cold water" is (Matt. x. 42); and she never asks, "Who is my neighbour?" Love is a stranger to one called Tale-bearer (Prov. xi. 13), and she never repeateth a matter" (Prov. xvii. 9). Love would rather "cover a multitude of faults"; but when she speaks, her "wounds are faithful" (Prov. xxvii. 6). Love never thinks herself as good as so-and-so; and is content to be thought peculiar. Love gets on nicely with a lot of knocking about.

She is content to keep a door, or hold a candle; and she rejoices to hear of souls being saved through any of God's servants. She "rejoices in the truth" without any compromise with error. "Love beareth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." She never faileth.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY.—3.

THE STORY OF THE APOSTLES.

JOHN appears to have clung to his native country until forced to retire from it by the outbreak of war in Judea.

He was, doubtless, present at the Council of Jerusalem about A.D. 50 (see Acts xv.).

Asia Minor, and particularly Ephesus, appears to have been the sphere of his later ministry. An interesting story of an occurrence, which took place during his residence at Ephesus, comes down to us, supported by the testimony of Irenæus, who heard it from persons who had obtained their information from Polycarp, John's disciple.

Going one day to bathe, he perceived that Cerinthus, the Heretic, was in the bath. Whereupon he came out hastily, saying, "Let us flee, lest the bath should fall while Cerinthus, an enemy of the truth, is within it."

The Story of the Apostles.

Cerinthus was one of the most prominent teachers of doctrines derogatory to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we can readily understand why he should be regarded with feelings of horror and indignation by the beloved disciple, "The Son of Thunder," who wrote those three noble epistles in which the spirit of anti-Christ is so vigorously assailed, and the divinity of the Lord Jesus so boldly asserted.

This story has been doubted by some ; but, to quote the words of an able writer, "Irenæus, a man of superior judgment, evidently believed the story himself, and surely the opinion of such a person who lived near those times must outweigh the fanciful criticisms and objections of modern authors." The same writer further remarks, "The fashion of the present age, humanely sceptical, and clothing profane indifference with the name of candour, is ever ready to seduce even good men into a disbelief of facts of this nature, however well attested. But let the circumstances of John be well considered. He was a surviving apostle. Heresy was deeply spreading its poison. Sentiments very derogatory to the person, work, and honour of Jesus Christ were diffused with great perverseness of industry. What should have been the deportment of this truly benevolent apostle? I doubt not but he was ever forward to relieve personal distresses ; but to have joined the company of the principal supporters of heresy would have been to countenance it. He well knew the arts of seducers. They were ready always to avail themselves of the seeming countenance of apostles or apostolical men, and thence to take an opportunity of strengthening themselves and diffusing their poison. Such has been their conduct in all ages. Having no ground of their own to stand on, they have continually endeavoured to rest on the authority of some great man of allowed evangelical respectability. This artful management, clothed with the pretence of charity, points out to the real friends of the Lord Jesus what they ought to do from motives of benevolence to mankind, namely, to bear patiently the odious charge of bigotry, and to take every opportunity of testifying their abhorrence of heretical views and hypocritical actions. Humanly speaking, I see not how else Divine truth is to be supported in this world ; and I scruple not to say that John's conduct appears not only defensible but laudable and worthy the imitation of Christians. I would ask any person to whom the infection

The Story of the Apostles.

of modern manners renders this reasoning difficult to receive, whether he ought more to approve of the conduct of one gentlemen who should mix in easy familiarity with a company of murderers, or of another who should fly away from them with horror? If we believe spiritual murderers, who labour to ruin souls by propagating anti-Christian views, to be still more pernicious than the former, we shall not be under any difficulty in vindicating John."

Tertullian, who is certainly a competent authority, states, that by order of Domitian, John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and came out unhurt. The miracle does not appear to have improved Domitian's temper towards John, and he at once banished him to the lonely Patmos, where he was favoured with the marvellous visions of the Apocalypse.

Having, however, outlived Domitian, he returned to Asia, and went about amongst the various churches helping them, as was his wont.

Being now very old, and unable to speak much in the assemblies, "Children, love one another," was his constantly repeated injunction, and he lived as he preached, showing in his life an example of his teaching. It is recorded of him that, on being told on one occasion of the painful backsliding of a young man in whom he had previously taken a deep interest, but who had so grievously fallen as to have become captain of a band of robbers, he started off, in the vehemence of his love, in search of the unhappy prodigal, and having exposed himself to be taken prisoner by some members of the band, he said to them, "Bring me to your master." The young captain saw him coming, and fled in shame from his presence. John followed him, crying, "My son, why fleest thou from thy father, unarmed and old? Fear not; as yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe, me, Christ hath sent me." At this the young man stood still, trembled, and wept bitterly. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back to the society of Christians, and never left him till he judged him to be fully restored.

John lived three or four years after his return to Asia, having been spared till the age of perhaps a hundred; and we cannot doubt that his closing years were largely devoted to the correction of the errors and failures pointed out in his seven letters to the seven churches, as recorded in chapters ii. and iii. of the Book of the Revelation

“KEEP TOGETHER AND FOLLOW ME.”

SOME years ago, as a party of tourists were about to enter and explore a dark and dangerous cavern, their guide gave them this word of command—“Now, gentlemen, keep together and follow me.” The command was strictly obeyed, and the guide led on, lantern in hand, and the party went safely through the darkness and soon returned unharmed to the light of day.

Now mark the two things they did. First, they kept together. Second, they followed the guide. Keeping together was not enough; they must also keep up with the guide and follow his directions. They might have kept as close together as they pleased, but if they did not follow the lantern they might all have tumbled into a pit and been seriously injured if not killed. Therefore, in our desire to enjoy the company of our brethren, blessed as that company may be, let us never forget that it is our bounden duty always to follow Christ without halting or hesitating, lest we lose our way in this dark world, and, like too many, alas! of our brethren, fall into some pitfall of the devil. But we live in a day of “many voices” and much talk, and even the “very elect” are in danger of missing, in the Babel of swelling words, the voice of the Good Shepherd and of being ensnared by what an unsparing critic calls the greatest curse of this unhappy age, “The senseless gabble of its fools.” This language is strong even when applied to the writings and sayings of men of the world, but no language can too strongly condemn the sin and folly of the men whose voices and pens have torn the Church into shreds, and filled—and continue to fill—the world with contending factions of so-called Christians, who, instead of “keeping together and following Christ,” are biting and devouring one another, and bringing dishonour upon that “worthy name by which (alone) we are called” (James ii. 7).

A man once said to us—“But I think it is a good thing that the Church is divided into sects. It is just like the different regiments of an army, all fighting under the same banner for the same end, and vying with each other as to which shall behave best.” How plausible! But how dreadfully misleading! Is it true that the various sects have nothing more than a *holy rivalry* among themselves? Nay, verily. Well had it been for this poor world had this been so for the past 1800 years. But it has been far otherwise. And although at times the professed followers of Christ have become

"Keep Together and Follow Me."

ashamed of themselves and tried to "get together" upon a common platform, the attempt has usually failed to produce a thoroughly cordial or lasting union. And why? The reason is not far to seek. Because they forgot the "follow me" Each had the hidden determination in his heart to hold by his own theories and preconceived notions, and there was no humbling of the heart because of the sin of division, and no seeking unitedly after the mind of Christ as to the basis of full and enduring fellowship among saints.

The following remarkable words on this subject, written over 60 years ago, are worth reproducing, and we trust they will move to godly sorrow every one of our readers:—
 "Such—that is, filled with strife—is the condition of the Christian Church, while in the meantime the world lies almost undisturbed in its sins. Nature, however, in this, as in other diseases, prompts to some relief. . . . This (the first) fruitless struggle" (heated controversy) "being over, it is succeeded perhaps after a short pause by one of a different kind. A fit of love and co-operation comes on. Union in measures and plans is proposed, the parties each still thinking that its own Church is the true one. They agree, however, to lay aside the discussion of the theory and see if they cannot *act* together, and they form a benevolent society, or arrange a union prayer meeting or public lecture in common. But while each portion of the Church considers its peculiarities essential, and all other organisations schismatic, what kind of a union can this be? It is inevitable that each party will be watchful and jealous. If they mean to take a high-minded and honourable course they will be anxious and watchful lest they should themselves do something to offend their allies; and if, on the other hand, they are narrow-minded and envious, they will be on the watch lest the others should do something unjust towards them. The very nature of the case shows what all experience confirms, that such alliances between the denominations, while each one considers itself the only true Church, will always be of the nature, not of a peace among friends, but a temporary and jealous truce between foes.

"Accordingly, after this has been tried a little while, the lurking alienation creeps in again. The public lecture ends in a general heartburning among the branches of the Church, instead of conviction among the impenitent; the great benevolent society resolves itself into its sectarian elements; and the

"A Time to Speak."

union prayer meeting, perhaps, breaks up in an open explosion.

"Thus the disease alternates. It is an intermittent. There is the cold stage and the hot stage—the chilly fit of controversy and the fever fit of forced and pretended love. In the meantime the Church moans in increasing weakness and suffering, and sin and Satan rejoice that an enemy which they could not have conquered in battle is conquered for them by a pestilential and destructive disease."

O! ye readers of this paper take warning. Play not into the hands of the devil by sowing discord among brethren. Neither yet slacken your pace in following Christ though others may lag behind. Nevertheless, let brotherly love continue. Preserve the balance of truth, and give the exhortations "to love one another" their full weight. God will never prosper the attempt to exalt one truth by trampling under foot another. Every word of God is pure. Keep together and follow Christ.

"A TIME TO SPEAK."

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.)

I WANT to speak about work. Three years ago I was preaching in Glasgow, and I dwelt upon the necessity of speaking individually to sinners about their souls and the responsibility that rested upon the Lord's people to do so. Well, a short time ago I got a letter from a young man, and he said—"I am a tutor in a school, and do you remember the words you spoke on our responsibility to speak to others and our cowardice in not doing so. As I went home your words followed me and kept sounding in my ears. In the same room with me there was a young Frenchman, and when I came home he was sound asleep. Something kept saying to me, 'Speak to him now.' I said, 'Better wait till to-morrow;' but the voice within said, 'Now or never; he may be dead before morning,' so I shook him up, and as he gazed at me in surprise I said, 'Have you ever come to Christ?' He replied, 'No.' I spoke to him for a little while, telling him that Jesus was willing to save him that very night, and then I went to sleep. When I opened my eyes the first thing I saw was a pale, haggard, but happy face, and never shall I forget my feelings as I heard him say, 'I have found Him.'"

"A Time to Speak."

Now do not mistake me, I do not want you to imitate that young man, and go off and wake someone out of his sleep because he did so. He was guided by the Lord to do it, and if you will wait on the Lord he will give you your opportunity and show you the time to speak and the time to be silent. Two merchants were travelling by train from Glasgow to London. One was a believer, and prayed for an opportunity to speak to his companion, a relative of mine. The opportunity came. At one of the stations the unconverted man got out for refreshments, and came back with an oath saying the coffee was too hot. The other remarked, "Hell will be hotter," adding a few words, ending with "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and then laid himself back and closed his eyes. The other gazed at him, and seeing his lips move, said to himself, "That man is praying for me." They parted. The unsaved man went his way, but the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," followed him everywhere. In bed that night he seemed to see them in letters of fire on the wall. Next morning they haunted him still. The next night he was a saved man. The word had done its work.

Before I was converted, many talked *at* me and talked *across* my face, and I despised them for it; but never while I live shall I forget the day in Paris that a young Frenchman came into my room, and in a trembling voice and with eyes full of tears said, "I want you to come to Christ." I was not converted then, but I solemnly believe that was a link in the chain that drew me to Christ, and I honoured that man for his boldness.

Even the hardest sinner may be touched by plain, honest, affectionate, and, if possible, tearful entreaty. Let us seek grace from God to be men and women of gentle and loving spirit, and to have godly courage in dealing with our fellow-mortals.

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

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

How clear was the eye of the Lord as to the joy that was set before Him! How soon we shall be with Him, to know more about His sufferings and glory.

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES.

SHORT PAPERS ON I COR. XII.—XVI.

THE various broad divisions between the different subjects treated of in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians may be easily traced by noting the Apostle's use of the words "Now" or "Now concerning," as in chapters vii. 1, 25, viii. 1, xii. 1, xvi. 1, where he addresses himself to each separate question upon which the Church at Corinth stood in need of his counsel.

The important subject of *Spiritual Ministries* is treated of in chapter xii. and continued to the end of the Epistle; and, speaking broadly, there may be a key-word named for each chapter which will express the dominant thought it contains, viz.—

- Chap. xii.—SPHERE of the Ministry.
- " xiii.—SPIRIT of the Ministry.
- " xiv.—SUITABILITY of the Ministry.
- " xv.—SUBJECT of the Ministry.
- " xvi.—SINCERITY of the Ministry.

Taking up these key-words in their consecutive order, we might consider some of the simple, though oft-forgotten, truths suggested in them, following on the subject in subsequent papers if the Lord permit.

I. SPHERE.

There are two Spheres indicated in chapter xii., within each of which Christian Ministry is particularly exercised, one of them "the Body," and the other "the Assembly."

The former is wide and general, the latter narrower and particular. EVERY child of God has a responsible place of Ministry in "the body" irrespective of sex, age, or attainments, and is placed in *direct* living union with *The Head* by the indwelling Spirit, from whom flows vital energy and power for the maintenance of spiritual life in each individual member, and for the efficient discharge of all relative duties by each member to all the others, thus preserving and fostering unity, mutual help, and sympathy (verses 12-27).

Ministry "in the Assembly" is only committed to "*some*" (verse 28) who have been set by God in their respective places, and who exercise their gifts in direct responsibility to the Lord Himself, and yet not without a due regard to the judgment and opinion of others (xiv. 29).

When these two distinct *Spheres* of Ministry are kept clearly

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in mind, we are preserved from falling into some of the common errors of the day, for example—*Woman* has her God-given and important place in the Body, and most responsible ministries to perform as a member of it, while she is absolutely prohibited from Ministry in the Assembly (xiv. 34).

Then again, not *all men*, simply because they are men, are fitted and called upon to publicly minister the Word, for chapter xii. 29 plainly teaches us that "*all*" are not Prophets and "*all*" are not Teachers, thus clearly limiting those who are responsible for this service to such as have received a spiritual gift for it.

Many have sadly misunderstood and misused the precious doctrine of *the liberty of the Spirit* by supposing that any or every man in the Assembly is at liberty to act upon the first impulse he feels in his mind and rise to give vent to it in speech, which, alas! has sometimes created what a friendly critic has described as "*a hubbub of experimental performances on the Lord's Day Morning.*"

The real truth is that the Risen, Ascended, and Glorified Lord is Supreme Ruler in His Church, and He must be left free to act, by His Spirit, when, how, and through whom He pleases; but both Holy Scripture and Christian experience teach that it is through those whom He has appointed and gifted for the special work that He is graciously pleased to act, and upon them rests the solemn responsibility to be in a spiritual and prayerful condition of soul, and in deep subjection of heart to the Lord, seeking to know His will whether as to speech or silence.

It is deeply interesting to observe how the Blessed Trinity shines out in verses 4, 5, and 6 of chapter xii. The differences of "*Gifts*" being attributed to the *Holy Spirit*, the divers "*Ministries*" are connected with *The Lord*, while the source of all these gracious operations is shown to be the Glorious and Blessed God Himself, who worketh all in all.

That a deeper sense of holy responsibility in connection with the exercise of spiritual gift in the Assembly may increasingly rest upon all who have been called to it, and also, that in the unity of that mystical body of which Christ is *The Head*, and each one of His beloved people the divinely placed members, we may in all things, by love, seek to serve one another is the writer's earnest prayer.

H.W.F.

[*To be continued.*]

DOING *VERSUS* TALKING.—2.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER i. verses 6-8. We were looking at the willingness of God to give abundantly of His wisdom to His needy children, but here we are met by a qualification of this —“But let him ask in faith.” The thought is not so much the full confidence in the asker that God will give what he asks, as the purpose of his heart in asking. A man whose heart is set on God, and the purpose of whose life is to please God, is a man of faith. When, therefore, we go to God for wisdom, let it be with a single eye, with a stedfast purpose to use it for Him, not doubting as to whom we will serve; not at one moment wishing to please God and at the next thinking we cannot yield up the world, its pleasure, its gain, its honours, its goodwill. He that thus “doubteth is like the surge of the sea”—a little piece of foam, a frothy thing—“driven by the wind and tossed,” now on the crest of the wave, now in the trough. “Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord, a double-minded man unstable in all his ways” (R.V.). We find the opposite of this in Psalm xvi. 8—“I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand *I shall not be moved.*” The Finisher of faith here tells us how His course was run. No uncertainty of purpose, no doubt as to whom He should please, no double-mind, one object always before Him—to do the will of Him who sent Him; therefore, He could always with a stedfast heart rely upon His Father, and all the powers of hell could not move Him. How different it is with us. Yet the same almighty power is ours if only with like true heart we set *Him always* before us, not at one time thinking we will do His will and then halting between two opinions lest we injure our business or forfeit the friendship of some of our fellow-men, or because we cannot make up our minds to forego some indulgence that we know does not please Him, because we cannot submit to some sacrifice of our pride or self-esteem.

Verses 9-11 Newberry reads, “Let the brother of low degree glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation.” Let both rich and poor glory in what the grace of God has done for them. Let not the poor man envy the rich, but let him glory in the exalted place into which God has brought him spiritually. Let not the man of high degree plume himself on his social position or despise the poor man, but let him

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rejoice that God has brought him down as a lost sinner to be taken from the dunghill and, by His grace, set among princes. Let him remember too that riches are a mere casual circumstance, and that, as the flower of the grass withers under a burning sun, so under the judgment of God riches and their carnal use in self-love and luxury will but cause the man who walks in *these* ways to "fade away," the exact opposite to those who cast their riches into God's treasury, and thus, according to 1 Tim. vi. 17 to 19, lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, regarding their riches as entrusted to them by God to be used for Him.

Verse 12.—If we compare this verse with verse 2, we shall see that here there is another aspect of temptation presented to us, viz.—that from Satan direct. He who *endures* is blessed, and at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be "approved," receiving, not life *as a crown*, but a victor's crown for a life spent for God. The Lord has promised this to everyone who loves him after the pattern of John xiv. 21.

Verses 13 to 18.—Here the Apostle addresses himself to one of the sins we most easily fall into. We may not say in words, "I am tempted of God," but we lay our failure on our surroundings. We say, "Oh! if I were only like A. or B., whose parents are Christians, I would not fall into these snares;" or, "If I were like C.D., and had not to go to that workshop, I should be all right, and should boldly confess Christ and refuse to join in worldly ways;" and so in a thousand forms, instead of realising that all sin is simply the yielding of our own evil hearts to Satan's "drawings out," and that we sin because we let our lusts go out after his enticements; and our lust, conceiving by what he introduces into our minds, gives birth to the action which is sin, and which when finished—matured—bringeth forth death. Thank the Lord, *He* stops us before this latter termination comes. He reproveth and chastens, and by every means interferes to prevent His people going on in a career of sin, and He always succeeds. However, if when Satan presents his temptation we resist stedfastly, and turn to HIM in whom our strength is, instead of receiving Satan's suggestions and parleying with him, we shall have the victory over him and be among those whom God counts "enduring" and calls "blessed."

J.S.D.

[To be Continued.]

A SONG IN THE DESERT.

Numbers xxi. 11—17.

NEARLY now the last stage trodden of the desert way ;
 All behind them lies the darkness, all before the day !
 But some hearts were weary travelling, murmuring at the road,
 Half forgetting their deliverance by the mighty God.
 "Nought," they said, "there lies around us, but the desert sand ;
 Oh ! to see once more the rivers of Egyptia's land !"
 Then God's heart of deep compassion sent the message free :
 "If the people look for water gather them to Me !"
 Forty years of desert wandering ! proving man was vain ;
 Turning back in heart to Egypt when a pressure came.
 Forty years of desert wandering ! mercies sweet and new,
 Every day their path surrounding—proving God was true !
 Now the journey almost over, trial well-nigh past ;
 He would have them, as when starting, raise a song at last !
 Nought but desert-sand around them, not one spot of green ;
 But the glory of His presence lighting up the scene !
 Desert weariness forgotten by that mighty throng ;
 As around that springing water voices rise in song !
 Not a song of "Victory" only now their voices fill,
 But the deeper, blest experience "God is with us still."
 Nearly now the last stage trodden of the desert way ;
 All behind *us* lies the darkness, all before the day !
 Wondrous day of glowing promise dimming all beside ;
 When the One who died to win us, comes to claim His Bride !
 And while watching for His coming waiting here below ;
 He would have us in the desert find the waters flow ;
 Streams of sweet and deep refreshment gladdening all the throng ;
 Giving us, when gathered round him, blessing and a song !

A. S. O.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY.—4.

THE STORY OF THE APOSTLES.

ANDREW was brought up as a fisherman, and he continued at that occupation till he was called to be a fisher of men. Little is said of him in the New Testament, but, judging from the places in which he is specially mentioned (Mark xiii., John i., vi., xii.), it would appear that, like James, Peter, and John, he enjoyed more than an ordinary measure of intimacy with the Lord, whom he approached without hesitation both to ask for information and to act as spokesman on behalf of others.

The Story of the Apostles.

Tradition has much to say concerning him, but tradition is not always to be relied upon. It is, however, generally believed that, in his pursuit of his spiritual calling as a "fisher of men," he travelled through Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Thessaly, and that he died at last by crucifixion at Patræ, in Achaia, his cross being made like the letter X, hence styled St. Andrew's Cross. Dying, he prayed and exhorted his hearers to continue steadfast in the faith of Christ. The date of his martyrdom is doubtful.

Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Scripture is silent as to his parentage and occupation. Little is said of him in the Gospels, but from that little we may infer that he was an ardent lover of his Lord and Master, and an earnest inquirer after truth. His later history is so confounded with that of Philip the Evangelist as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the one from the other. It is thought that he laboured in Upper Asia till towards the end of his life, when he came into Phrygia, where at Hierapolis, he was cruelly martyred.

Bartholomew is believed to be identical with Nathanael of Cana in Galilee.

"Bar-Tholomew," the son of Tholomew, bearing the same relation to the name of Nathanael as "Bar-Jona" does to Simon. This may be fairly inferred from the fact that Philip and Bartholomew are mentioned together in the roll of the Apostles in the first three Gospels, whereas Philip and Nathanael are brought together in John i. That Nathanael was an Apostle is evident from the mention of him in John xxi.

It is generally believed that this Apostle travelled as far as India preaching the Gospel, and that after returning into Asia and visiting several places he reached Albanople, in Armenia the Great, where he was arrested by the Governor of that fearfully idolatrous city, and subsequently crucified.

Matthew, otherwise Levi, was a publican, or tax-gatherer, before his call, and his position was undoubtedly a lucrative one. Nevertheless, at the sound of the Master's "Follow me" he at once gave up all and became a devoted follower of the despised Nazerene. His conversion was unmistakable, as may be seen from the earnest efforts which he immediately put forth to win others to Christ; for it is said that he "made Him a great feast in his own house, and there was a great company of publicans and others that sat down with them."

The Story of the Apostles.

No doubt the object of this feast was to endeavour to bring the publicans to the Saviour, so that, like Levi himself, they might become lovers and followers of Him who was not ashamed to be called their friend.

Matthew is believed to have written his Gospel for the special benefit of the Hebrews. Its date is supposed to be earlier than that of any of the other three Gospels.

Concerning his life and labours little that is reliable can be collected, but it is generally supposed that he preached and wrought miracles in Ethiopia with such success that large numbers of people were converted from idolatry and formed into churches through his means.

Thomas was one of the most devoted of the Lord's followers—albeit he gained for himself an unenviable reputation by his refusal to believe in the resurrection from among the dead until he had tangible evidence of the fact. He appears to have been what might be called a hard-headed character, not easily convinced of that which seemed to him improbable; but withal he was a soft-hearted, affectionate man, ready to accompany his beloved Lord in the hour of danger rather than allow him to go alone (John xi. 16). Of his parentage and birthplace nothing is said in scripture, but according to tradition he was born at Antioch. He is supposed to have carried the Gospel into Persia, and perhaps to India, and to have been at last slain with a lance, but the date, and indeed all the particulars of his later history are uncertain.

Simon Zelotes is only named in the lists of the Apostles in the Gospels and the Acts. He was probably a member of the sect of "The Zealots," an odious faction who, though numbering among them a few conscientious men "zealous for their God," as was Phinehas, their adopted leader (Numbers xxv. 7-13), were nothing more than a fierce and blood-thirsty band, who did not scruple to charge innocent persons with notorious sin in order to furnish a pretext for their immediate execution and the division of their property amongst the wicked conspirators, through whose pretended zeal they were cruelly slain.

Simon is supposed to have laboured first in the East and then in the West, travelling into Britain, where, amid great trials and difficulties, he preached the Gospel, worked miracles, and suffered martyrdom.

Judas, or Jude, called also Thaddæus and Lebbaeus, was brother of James and one of our Lord's kindred. Not much is said of him in the Gospels or Acts, but we may judge from his solemn, though brief epistle, that he was a valiant champion

Questions and Answers.

of the faith once for all delivered to the Saints. It is noteworthy that he calls himself a "servant of Jesus Christ," and uses the expression—"Our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (R. V.), evidently sinking his earthly relationship, and knowing Christ only in the new creation (2 Cor. v. 16). Jude is believed to have preached first in Judea, then in Galilee, Samaria, Idumea, Arabia, and finally in Persia, where he was martyred.

Matthias was not one of the Apostles sent forth by the Lord while on earth. He was elected by lot to fill the place of Judas Iscariot. The lot was a divine institution in the past dispensation, but we do not hear of it after the day of Pentecost. Matthias, according to some traditions, preached and was martyred in Ethiopia; according to others, Cappadocia was the scene of his labours and martyrdom. Truly the pioneers of the cross endured hardness for their Lord. May the readers and the writer of this little narrative be encouraged to do likewise.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question 1.—What Christians are spoken to in 1 John ii. 28?—E. T.

Answer.—Probably, in the first instance, all the saints in Asia among whom John had laboured; but the exhortation in its widest application concerns all saints everywhere throughout the dispensation. John appears to have caught the endearing term "Little Children" from his Master (see John xiii. 33). Note that the "we" in this verse refers doubtless to John himself and his fellow-labourers. Compare 2 Cor. i. 14, Philip ii. 16, 1 Thess. ii. 19-20, Heb. xiii. 17.

Question 2.—Can you help me to understand Mark ix. 49.

Answer.—In this and the two kindred passages—Matt. v. 13 and Luke xiv. 34—suffering for Christ's sake is mentioned in the immediate context, and we cannot help thinking that the Lord's meaning is that, as the sacrifices of old were rendered savoury by the salt (Lev. ii. 13), so the lives of His people are prevented from becoming insipid by the trials which He permits them to endure. No saint is exempt from the discipline of trial; and if he were, he would probably lose his saltness, for prosperity and exemption from trouble in both nations and individuals produce a state of independence of God, which brings judgment on them sooner or later. It is better, therefore, to endure, and even to submit ourselves willingly to, the fire of trial for a little while now, than to risk the fire of hell hereafter for all eternity.

LET US FOLLOW HIS STEPS.

(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.)

“THESE are days in which religious fleshly excitement and human gift are uniting to form alliances which, according to their own account, are to “win the world to Christ” and so forth. I own the desire; surely it is what Jude felt when he said what we read in John xiv. 22, but there is no self-judgment with it, no true knowledge of the failure of the dispensation, no taking the place of a remnant separated to God and waiting for the Lord from Heaven. The Saints who in any way have had their consciences awakened to the fact of the utter failure in man's hands of everything committed to him, and whose hearts have been stirred to cry, both in hope (Godward) and in hopelessness (manward), “Come, Lord Jesus,” ought to come together now, and, more than ever they did, speak to one another; for the Lord will hearken and hear.

“It may be, and surely will be, the case that our hearts will be broken for us if we look at the Church as God's witness here from the standpoint of Heaven, but it will do us good—of that be sure. To live in the clear atmosphere of truth, although we may see things that crumble us to dust, is better than to creep about in the false and delusive mists of error, seeing nothing aright and holding to nothing long. I hope I do not indulge in any feeling of disregard for the earnest labours of Evangelists and Missionaries for our Lord, whether personally known to me or otherwise. On the contrary, I greatly honour them for their labour and toil. Such poor sympathy as I can bestow they have freely; and I am sure they will not lose their reward. But I am inclined to think that in that day, when things and terms will be rightly placed, we shall hear little of *work* done *for* Christ, but much more of *work* done and *suffering* endured *with* Him; for surely this is a dispensation of suffering and sorrow. We sow in tears if we sow the good seed at all. The thing I dread is the “*we-willism*” of the age. We will do great things for Christ is the utterance of many a dear true-hearted man and woman, to whom I would say tremblingly, “The greatest thing you can do is to fall down at, and keep close to, His feet, in all the helplessness of reality like the Apostle John in Patmos. He can do something *with* you then, and that is best.” It is so well to get right views, not only of service to Christ in itself, but of what success in service is in God's account. In looking at the path of the Perfect One down here, as told us in

“The Gods can see in the Wall.”

John iv., we see that there was a time in His life when He was the most popular of all who had arisen in Israel—exceeding John the Baptist in the multitudes of His disciples; but instead of the Lord marshalling, organising, or making any demonstration with these masses, we find him withdrawing from the scene altogether. He did not want to be made a hero like many in these days, for he left a great work in Judea without organisation—a something to command the observation of men, but he made no use of it. Marvellous this! But where do we find Him who could so turn His back on all that religious men prize and seek after? Why, sitting at an old well in Samaria, telling the glad tidings to a wretched far away Samaritan, who shall gather a few as disreputable and alienated as herself to come and hear His word; and well did He know when He took that step that it would be at the cost of His own good name, for henceforth they will call Him “a Samaritan.” And well also did He know that the multitudes of converts in Judea, baptised though they had been, would melt away like snow before the sun. But what was that to the Blessed One if His Father was pleased and satisfied with His service? His was the deep joy in His Father that nothing could touch. May we all know more of it.

“And of His beloved servants, some of whom I might at first seem to judge a little hardly, I would say to them earnestly, ‘The Lord God of your fathers made you a thousand times more than you are—and bless you’ (Deut. i. 11). May we all better know His mind.”

“THE GODS CAN SEE IN THE WALL.”

A GRECIAN Sculptor was once fashioning a statue to be placed in the wall of an idol temple, and as he was observed to bestow great care upon the back of it, somebody said to him, “Why do you waste so much labour upon that part of the figure—it is to go into the wall?” “Because the gods can see in the wall,” he replied.

What a rebuke to many of those who profess to believe that “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do!” The poor heathen sculptor was determined to make his work thorough and real because he believed that the gods could see through everything. And shall not we, who know that our God is not mocked and cannot be deceived, be careful that whatsoever we do shall be done heartily as *unto the Lord* and not unto men?

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES—2.

SHORT PAPERS ON I COR. XII.—XVI.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MINISTRY—LOVE.

Chapter xiii.

IN our last paper we were considering THE SPHERE of Ministry as indicated in chapter xii., and we now come to the solemnly important subject of its SPIRIT, which is contained in one sweet heavenly word, breathing the very Spirit of Christ Himself—"Charity"—Love.

Without this Divine grace the most brilliant and attractive gifts are but as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," useful, perhaps, where an imposing demonstration is desired, but utterly valueless as respects any abiding spiritual effect upon the hearers.

Knowledge also, and the understanding of all mysteries are reckoned as "*nothing*" when not associated with and penetrated by this Heavenly Love.

There is in this chapter a clear intimation of the temporary and transient character of miraculous gifts in the Church, those very things in the display of which the childish Corinthians took such pride and pleasure, were "to *fail*," "to *cease*," "to *vanish away*," verse 8. They were given for special purposes in the infancy of the Church, but when the Revelation of God had been "*perfected*" and committed to writing in "The Holy Scriptures," "knowledge" and "prophecy" in any special and miraculous sense failed, the gift of tongues ceased, the period of infancy was passed, and the Saints, individually and collectively, were supposed to have attained to maturity, and, "speaking the truth IN LOVE," were continually "to grow up into Christ, The Head, in all things" (Eph. iv. 15).

In sharp contrast, however, with all that was but transient, the Apostle insists upon the permanency of three things—*Faith*, *Hope*, and *Love*, and the pre-eminent and eternal character of the last named, "for the greatest of these is love" (verse 13).

Let it then be laid seriously to heart by each member of the Body of Christ that no effectual service can be rendered to any fellow-member save in the spirit of Love—long-suffering, kind, humble Love. Alas! alas! how frequently this is forgotten, and "what is due *to me*" is the prominent thought in the mind, rather than "what I owe to others;" and if a

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kind service is rendered, how often it is completely spoilt by the harsh and discourteous manner in which it is done.

There is, however, a special necessity for considering this subject in connection with the Ministry of the Word in the Assembly. Those whom the Lord has fitted and called to this responsible work should ever remember that no amount of fluency of utterance or knowledge of the word can compensate for the lack of Divine Christlike Love in him who speaks. It is the presence of this in the soul that gives unction, tenderness, and power to what is ministered, and causes it to lay hold of the hearts of the hearers; while, on the contrary, a ministry of orthodox correctness, or of brilliant ability, if lacking this "one thing needful," will fall flat and unprofitable upon the flock. What we want is a Ministry of *Heat* as well as *Light*, that which will warm and gladden the heart as well as instruct the mind. The moonbeams are very clear, but *cold*. Let us aim at having more of the warm sunshine in our Assemblies—lightsome, healthful, and fruitful—in this Ministry of Love.

The vital question now arises, How am I to become possessed of more of this sunshine, this generous heat, this helpful widely radiating Love? The answer lies in the closing words of chapter xii., "*Earnestly covet*" it. Seek for it from Him who alone can give it. Open your own heart unreservedly and fully to Him, let Him fill it with His deep, mighty, compassionate Love. Be much in His presence. "Abide in Him" in "the secret place of the Most High," ask Him, by the grace of His Holy Spirit, to check and restrain the harsh, censorious, and unloving thoughts that may lurk secretly in the heart, or the vain, proud, self-assertive spirit, which is so characteristic of these days, and in its place to give "the spirit of power and of LOVE and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. i. 7). Even the spirit of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart."

A Ministry exercised in Love will be one of fragrance, power, and acceptability. It will be one far reaching in its influence and abiding in its results. Moreover, it will be very provocative of love in others, for like produces like.

May this Grace, the prime "fruit of the spirit" (Gal. v. 22), be more abundantly manifest in the life and ministry of each of Our Lord Christ's true servants for His name sake.

H.W.F.

God has put no standard of holiness before us but His own.

A BOOK TO LIVE AND DIE BY.

ONE of the wealthiest bankers in Great Britain was near the end of life. His medical man had given him warning that his life hung upon a slender thread, which might be snapped asunder without a moment's notice.

Addressing himself to one of his family, he said, "Read to me, my child."

"*What book* shall I read, father?"

"There's only one book for me, now, my child; **THE BIBLE.**"

The millionaire did not call for his ledger, his bill book, or his rent roll. *These* could give no comfort now. He called for the only book in the world that can give solace in a dying hour: God's precious gift to man—**THE BIBLE.**

When Dr. Chalmers lay upon a dying bed, a Christian friend of considerable experience in spiritual things came to see him. They had some blessed conversation for awhile, but the dying preacher, feeling that after all there was nothing so sweet to the dying ear as God's own voice, said to his friend, "Now, give me a little of the bare Word."

Ah! yes, the bare word is that which gives comfort to the departing saint; for, while it tells him of his own worthlessness and poverty, it tells him of the unbounded riches of the love of Christ.

But the Bible is not merely a book to die by, it is also a book to live by. It is intended to be "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path," all the way through life.

Coming down a mountain side in Achill, from a cottage meeting, on a dark night some years ago, we were guided by a lantern, held before us by a kindly cottager, who led us on quite safely through fields and gaps, and miry places, by throwing the light well in front of us, and sometimes on our very feet, so as to enable us to pick our steps, and thus avoid the sloughs and quagmires, into which, otherwise, we should most certainly have fallen.

The Bible is God's guide book, given to man to enable him to know, as he otherwise could not know, the grace, the love, the holiness, and the purposes of God; and anyone who fails to read that Word cannot live and act so as, in all things, to please *Him*. There may be much outward profession of religion, and much naming of the name of Christ, but without knowing the will of God as revealed in the Book, the outward profession may be all in vain.

Rejoicing in Hope.

A copy of the New Testament was shown, some time ago, to a Jew, with the remark that it was from that Book Christianity was taken. He opened it, and read a few portions at random; then, contemptuously turning upon the owner, he said, "No! what has Christianity to do with this book?"

He saw at once that the miserable caricature presented by the formal professors of Christianity, with whom he had come in contact, was utterly unlike the lovely picture he had glanced at, though hastily, in the Book.

Dear young friends, make the word of God your companion and guide all the days of your life; and then, walking in communion with its Author, you may have this testimony, that "you pleased Him."

O! book of wondrous depths and heights,
Of wisdom ever new,
Which, in ten thousand various lights,
Brings Jesus into view.

'Tis sweet in prayer on God to call,
While He my voice doth hear;
But sweeter when His sayings fall,
Upon my opened ear.

Dear book of treasures all divine,
My precious, priceless store,
How rich I am since thou art mine!
How poor I was before!

REJOICING IN HOPE.

Rom. xii. 12.

IN Uganda, three young men were bidden to renounce their faith in Christ or die. The young converts choose martyrdom. Their arms were cut off, they were bound to a stake and a slow fire kindled about them. Then they were taunted and ridiculed. As the flames slowly crackled about them, these dusky boys broke out in joyful melody,

"Daily, daily, sing to Jesus;
Sing, my soul, His praises due,
All he does deserves our praises
And our deep devotion too."

The flames crept higher and the lips were for ever hushed. Then the executioner turned sorrowfully away and found the missionary, and begged to be taught how he might learn about the God who could make one rejoice while undergoing such torture.

“PASSING AWAY INTO SUNLIGHT.”

PASSING away into Sunlight my fragile bark speeds away,
But I know who is at the helm, so fear not to lose my way ;
And the mariner launches bravely, nor heeds the surging tide,
Swiftly crossed is the River, then reached is the shining side.

Passing away into Sunlight, I'm hopeful, and restful, and glad !
For the future is clear as the noonday, how can I be lone and sad ?
For hath He not sweetly promised with words sealed “yea” and “Amen,”
That the glory-home just yonder is unshadowed by sorrow or pain ?

Passing away into Sunlight, I look back on this scene of woe,
And wonder, how ever my spirits could tremble and sink so low !
While the future is so resplendent ! and while as the Psalmist said—
“I shall be satisfied” waking with the sight of my Risen Head.

Passing away into Sunlight, far-strained is the eye of Faith,
And I see behind me the last of the cold, dark shore of Death :
And before, with its gates of splendour I'm catching a distant gleam
Of the turrets and walls of the City no mortal eye hath seen.

Passing away into Sunlight, I turn from the joys of earth,
Strangely drawn by a longing to rest from its cares and mirth,
For my soul and heart feel weary of the ceaseless, aching toil,
And yearn for the bark to anchor on my Father's genial soil.

Passing away into Sunlight, the danger is over now !
Though I feared the rocks and quicksands, my Saviour is at the prow ;
Now know I my Royal Captain as I never knew Him before ;
I have proved His care to the utmost—can I ever doubt him more ?

Passing away into Sunlight, my oars unimpeded glide
Through the surf and spray of the billows that at morning will subside.
They roll their worst towards evening—'tis ended—and then the calm,
The home-shouts of the faithful, and the clasp of a Saviour's arm.

Passing away into Sunlight, I have not embarked alone,
For dear ones are sailing with me, their steady eyes fixed as my own,
And to heavenly ears are wafted some notes of the songs we raise,
The murmur of happy voices, the echoes of prayer and praise.

Passing away into Sunlight,—had I entered it long ago
I had missed the heart-ache and sorrow of many a year I trow !
But my Lord had need of His servant, to work through the long, dark night,
Ere the morn of perfect beauty should dawn on her raptured sight.

Passing away into Sunlight, the glory is nearing now,
And methinks I see the angels standing to crown my brow ;
And the music, still faint, is thrilling ! the far Hallelujahs roll !
And One, with His arms outstretched is waiting to welcome my soul.

Passing away into Sunlight, one by one going home,
Though now by distance severed crossing the same sea-foam ;
And so we are close in spirit, and joy as we near the throng
Whose weeping is chang'd to gladness, their mourning to endless song.

A. C.

A Christian defined is a man in Christ.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—3.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER i. 16.—Let us not err in thinking that God, the loving Father, who of His own will begat us when we were dead in trespasses and sins that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures, will tempt us with evil; on the contrary, just as no darkness comes from the sun—the father of lights—nor even “variableness or shadow that is cast by turning” as with the moon, but the sun always pours its full light upon the earth, however that light may be intercepted by clouds. So from our Father comes every good and perfect gift in continuous rich flow, and all the hindrances to our enjoyment of them come from ourselves.

Verse 19.—“Wherefore let every man be swift to hear” the blessed words that come from Him who so bountifully bestows His gifts; just as a plant drinks in long the sunlight and matures its luscious fruit ere it gives it for man’s use, so let us have our ear continually inclined to Him to receive rather than be ready to give out what we think; let us be listeners rather than talkers, nor let our anger rise which will deaden our ear to His voice, and produce but bitter fruits instead of the sweet and wholesome fruits matured in the light of His presence. Would that this command were always observed, and heed given to God’s caution that not by angry energy can we work His righteousness. Let us, therefore, lay aside all the evil growth of our own natural hearts, and with meekness receive what our God will plant in us if we allow Him—viz., His own word, which, “line upon line, precept upon precept,” He will, by the Holy Spirit, implant in the heart of the diligent meek one who abides in His light, making every truth a seed to produce likeness to Himself and “save our souls” from all the corruptions that surround us. But if this is to be so we must be *doers* of the word, not mere *hearers*, deceiving ourselves with the idea that we are making much progress in divine things merely because our heads are becoming filled with truth (verse 22). Only such truth as is implanted in our hearts and brings the flesh into subjection, making a real change in us and our ways, produces any fruit to God. Just as I may look in a mirror and see dirt on my face and pass on and forget all about it, so only the one who looks, and continues to look, intently into the blessed Word of Christ—that “perfect law of *liberty*,” which, unlike the law of bondage, brings with the revelation of sin

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the full knowledge of that power which gives us the victory, and brings us into the "glorious liberty of the sons of God," being, not as a "forgetful hearer," but as one whose heart is set to do what is set before him, this man *shall* be blessed in his *doing* (R.V.), for the one who implants the word loves to impart the power to do it.

Verse 26.—No matter what a man may *seem* to be, except he bridle his tongue (we will refer further to this in chapter iii.) and show by practically following the example of the blessed Lord that he is a *doer* of God's word in keeping himself unspotted amidst the defilements of the world, and in doing that Christlike service that is not merely open to every one of His followers, but laid upon us as His solemn command—that man's religion is vain. In other words, if a Christian will not serve as he can the fatherless and the widows that are about him, he need not think that in any other service he will be owned of God. If the heart is really set on pleasing God he will gladly do the unobtrusive service that He opens up for him; if he will not do this he shows there is some other motive underlying his actions, and the God who reads the heart counts all his seeming devotion as vain.

[*To be continued.*]

J.S.D.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—5.

PERSECUTION.

IT has been well said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." It is God's way to bring life out of death, and to make even the wrath of man and the rage of devils to praise Him. The lion of Hell first attempted to destroy the Lamb of God on Calvary's tree, and then he put forth all his power to destroy the followers of the Lamb, but in both attempts he signally failed. Indeed he only succeeded in sealing his own destruction, for through death Christ destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is the devil;" and then through the death of Christ's martyred followers the kingdom of Satan received a fatal blow, for the conduct of those who suffered for Christ's sake, and sealed their testimony with their blood, was so convincing to the beholders, and so encouraging to their brethren, as to draw numbers of the ungodly to the Saviour, and to make the brethren wax confident in their God. The case of

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Stephen, the first in the noble army of martyrs, gives proof of this. His death, and the persecution which followed it, resulted in the scattering abroad of the disciples, and the consequent scattering far and wide of the good seed of the Kingdom.

It may seem strange how it happened that the Jews, who a little while previously had not the power of life and death, and dared not to murder the Lord without the permission of their Roman conquerors, should now have taken the law completely into their own hands, and stoned Stephen without asking anybody's leave. But the truth is that Pontius Pilate had been disgraced, and Judea appears to have been without a regular procurator; and Vitellius, the Governor of Syria, was exceptionally favourable to the Jews, and left them very much to themselves in matters of religion. Hence the outbreak of this persecution, which at one time seemed to threaten the Christians with the fate of the followers of Theudas and Judas mentioned by Gamaliel. But no; the work was of God, and the devil could not overthrow it.

Troubles and trials of various forms were the common lot of the Saints from that time forward, but they suffered no legalised persecution until about the year 64 A.D., when the burning of the City of Rome was attributed to them by the wicked Emperor Nero, in order to avert from himself the suspicion of that awful crime. But to quote the words of another:—"No steps that he could take were sufficient to do away with the suspicion. There was, however, a particular class of people so singularly distinct from the rest of mankind, and so much hated on account of the condemnation which their doctrine and purity of life affixed on all except themselves, that they might be calumniated with impunity. These were then known at Rome by the name of Christians. We can scarcely conceive how odious and contemptible they were. Tacitus calls their religion 'a detestable superstition, which at first was suppressed, and afterwards broke out afresh and spread, not only through Judea—the origin of the evil, but through the metropolis also, the common sewer in which everything filthy and flagitious meets and spreads.' If so grave and cautious a writer as Tacitus can thus asperse the Christians without proof and without moderation, we need not wonder that so impure a wretch as Nero should not hesitate to charge them with the fact of burning Rome.

Persecution.

“Now it was that the Romans legally persecuted the Church for the first time, and those who know the virulence of man’s natural enmity will rather wonder that it commenced no earlier than that it raged at length with such dreadful fury. ‘Some persons were apprehended who confessed themselves Christians, and by their evidence,’ says Tacitus, ‘a great multitude afterwards were discovered and seized, and they were condemned not so much for the burning of Rome as for being the enemies of mankind.’ A very remarkable accusation! It may be explained as follows:—True Christians, though the genuine friends of all their fellow-creatures, cannot allow that men who are not true Christians are in the favour of God. Their very earnestness in calling on their neighbours to repent and believe the Gospel proves to those neighbours in what a dangerous state they are then apprehended to be. All who are not moved to flee from the wrath to come will naturally be disgusted, and thus the purest benevolence will be construed into the most merciless bigotry. Thus the Christians incurred the general hatred to which the conduct of neither Jews nor heretics rendered these obnoxious; and the same cause produces similar effects to this day.

“Their execution was aggravated with insult. They were covered with skins of wild beasts and torn by dogs; they were crucified and set on fire that they might serve for lights in the night time. Nero offered his gardens for this spectacle, and exhibited the games of the circus. People could not, however, avoid pitying them, base and undeserving as they were in the eyes of Tacitus, because they suffered not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of a tyrant. Nero ordered them to be covered with wax and other combustible materials, and, after a sharp stake was put under their chin to make them continue upright, they were burnt alive to give light to the spectators.”

This frightful persecution lasted, probably, for three or four years. In the year 68 the persecutor himself died an awful death, and then the Christians appear to have obtained some respite from their sufferings; for we hear no more of their persecuted state until the reign of Domitian, who succeeded to the Empire in the year 81.

To deny God’s ability is to deny God’s existence. God expects to get something out of His children.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question.—How does the servant of Jehovah justify by His knowledge? Isa. liii. 11.

Answer.—He knew (1) God's righteous requirements, (2) man's utter sinfulness, (3) the only sacrifice which God could accept in order to the sinner's justification. Having this perfect knowledge He gave *Himself* for our iniquities. The reference to John xvii. 3 in some Bible margins is misleading. Isa. xi. 1-5 is more to the point.

Question.—Why does Rev. xx. 5 say, "This is the first resurrection" if the sleeping Saints are caught up before this?

Answer.—Scripture seems to recognise only two resurrections, namely—(1) of the just; (2) of the unjust—see John v. 29. The just, though not all raised at the same time, belong to the first resurrection, the unjust are all raised together.—Rev. xx. 5, 12.

Question.—I would like better to understand the meaning of Acts xvi. 6—"They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia."

Answer.—This seems to show how completely the Holy Spirit had taken charge of the Lord's servants on this special mission. They were sent forth by Him (Acts xiii. 4), and He evidently over-ruled their movements as they went. He forbade them to wait in Asia or to turn aside to Bithynia (verse 7), probably because He had work for them to do at Philippi, as may be seen from the remainder of chapter xvi.

The growth of grace is like the polishing of metals. There is first an opaque surface; by and by you see a spark darting out, then a strong light, till at length it sends back a perfect image of the sun shining upon it.

Don't be afraid to go down to the valley—God will raise it.
Don't be afraid of the mountain—God will bring it down.

It is a deep truth to know what it is to die with Christ; it is a deeper truth still to know what it is to be kept in the place of death.

Fleshly hearing draws out fleshly speaking, and fleshly speaking is not of the Holy Ghost.

There is something glorious in a human heart so conquered by grace that it can stand till the Master calls.—John x. 28.

BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY.

WE affectionately commend to our readers the following extracts from a letter written 1800 years ago by Clement, whom Paul calls his fellow-labourer, and whose name is in the Book of Life. The exhortations are no less needed now than they were then, and we trust they will be taken seriously to heart:—

“Christ is theirs who are poor in spirit and lift not up themselves above the flock, but are content to be low in the Church.”

“Let us obey our spiritual shepherds and honour our elders, and let the younger be disciplined in the fear of God. Let our wives be directed to what is good, to follow chastity, modesty, meekness, sincerity. Let them evidence their power of self-government by their silence, and let them show love, not in the spirit of a sect or party, but to all who fear God.”

Again, “Let not the strong despise the weak, and let the weak reverence the strong. Let the rich communicate to the poor, and let the poor be thankful to God for those through whom their wants are supplied. Let the wise exert his wisdom, not merely in words, but in good works. Let the humble prove his humility, not by testifying of himself how humble he is, but by a conduct that may occasion others to give testimony to him. Let not the chaste be proud of his chastity, knowing that from God he has received the gift of continency.” “Have we not all one God, one Christ, one Spirit of Grace poured upon us, and one calling in Christ? Why do we separate and distract the members of Christ, and fight against our own body, and arrive at such a height of madness as to forget that we are members one of another?”

“Is any among you strong in faith, mighty in knowledge, gifted in utterance, judicious in doctrine, and pure in conduct? The more he appears exalted above others the more need has he to be poor in spirit, and to take care that he look not to his own things, but that he study to promote the common good of the Church.”

“Every one, whose heart has any good degree of the fear and love which is the result of our common hope, would rather that he himself be exposed to censure than his neighbours, and would rather condemn himself than break that beautiful bond of brotherly love which is delivered to us.”

Lord, make us each more holy,
In spirit pure and meek,
More like to heavenly citizens,
As more of heaven we speak.

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES—3.

SHORT PAPERS ON I COR. XII.—XVI.

THE SUITABILITY OF THE MINISTRY.

Chapter xiv.

THE twelfth chapter of this Epistle may be called THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS of Ministry in the Assembly, while this fourteenth chapter may be styled THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS, for in it we have clearly defined the *persons* who are to minister the Word, and also the *character* of what they are to minister.

As to the persons, *Women* are at once and completely shut out : verse 34, “ *Let your women keep silence in the churches ;*” they must not be permitted to speak, but, on the contrary, “ to be under obedience as also saith the Law.” The *persons* are still further limited to those who can speak by “ *revelation,*” “ *knowledge,*” “ *prophecy,*” or “ *doctrine*” (*i.e.*—teaching), verse 6, and these special gifts were clearly not possessed by all in the Assembly, for we have already seen, in chapter xii. 29, that “ *all*” were not prophets, etc.

If this limitation was laid down by Divine Authority in the early Apostolic Church, how much more needed did it become afterwards, when, some at any rate, of the gifts which were of a miraculous and temporary character “ *ceased*” and “ *vanished away.*” (See chapter xiii. 8.)

Let us seek then to “ *rightly divide the word of truth*” on this subject, and while recognising the blessed *variety* of the Ministry given by OUR ASCENDED HEAD to His Church by the Holy Spirit, so that, instead of a single voice all the year round from the pulpit or the reading desk as in so many places, we have “ *two*” or “ *three*” divinely gifted men speaking as The Lord may lead them ; yet, on the other hand, we must peremptorily decline to consent to the lawless notion that every man, simply because he is a *man* and not a woman, possesses the right to minister in the Assembly.

The “ *ye may all prophesy*” of verse 31 clearly means all the *prophets*, as the context of verses 29 and 32 proves ; and to this agrees Ephesians iv. 11, where we learn that The Ascended Lord gave “ *some*” (not *all*) to be prophets, “ *some*” to be evangelists, and “ *some*” pastors and teachers. But we have in this chapter divinely given limitations as to the subject character of the Ministry as well as of the persons who are called to minister, and we therefore hasten to call attention to the *Three Golden Rules* laid down in this Epistle as governing all ministry.

Spiritual Ministries.

“Let all things be done unto edifying.”—xiv. 26.

‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’—xiv. 40.

“Let all your things be done with charity.”—xvi. 14.

Edification is the great aim of all true Ministry, and, this being so, the Apostle forbids speaking in an unknown tongue unless someone is present to interpret. He who speaks in the Assembly should, therefore, be careful to make himself heard and understood by all present, else he can be to them but “a barbarian” (verse 11). He should also take pains to convey his thoughts in “*words easy to be understood*” (verse 9), and study to present God’s truth in such a way as that the simplest soul present may take it in and profit by it.

If owing to lack of spiritual gift or to some natural defect or inability a man cannot do this, then “*let him keep silence and speak to himself and to God*” (verse 28), for he that speaketh “UNTO MEN” should speak “*to edification and exhortation and comfort*” (verse 3).

Directions are also given in verses 27 and 29 as to the number of speakers who may profitably exercise their gifts upon any one occasion, and probably in verse 30 as to the length or duration of any one address, for the Saints after all are but flesh and blood, and it is well to remember that even under the powerful preaching of the Apostle Paul one Eutychus went to sleep and met with a serious accident. (Acts xx. 9.)

It is important to distinguish clearly between WORSHIP and MINISTRY—the former is Godward, while the latter is manward. All Saints are fully fitted to offer the former as a Holy Priesthood—women as well as men “*having boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus*” (Heb. x. 19), and in this respect all God’s children are upon an equality; whereas Ministry of the Word has for its object the feeding of the flock, and none are called to this special work save those who have the Divine Gifts and qualifications which it requires.

It behooves those who are Ministers of the Word so to “*wait upon their Ministry*” (Rom. xii. 7), to “*give themselves to it*,” to “*meditate upon these things*,” that their “*profiting may appear unto all*” (1 Tim. iv. 15). There is a vast difference between “the talk of the lips which tendeth only to penury,” and the words of the wise which “feed many.”

One should consider not only the *soundness* and *scripturalness* of an address, but its *suitableness* also; suitableness both as to time and place and the spiritual condition and capacity of those who are listening to it.

H.W.F.

“YOUR FATHER KNOWETH.”

PRECIOUS thought, my Father knoweth,
In His love I rest;
For whate'er my Father doeth
Must be always best;
Well I know the heart that planneth
Nought but good for me;
Joy and sorrow interwoven,
Love in all I see.

Precious thought my Father knoweth,
Careth for His child;
Bids me nestle closer to Him,
When the storms beat wild.
Though my earthly hopes are shattered
And the tear drop fall,
Yet He is Himself my solace,
Yea, my “all in all.”

Sweet to tell Him all He knoweth,
Roll on Him the care,
Cast upon Himself the burden
That I cannot bear,
Then without a care oppressing,
Simply to lie still,
Giving thanks to Him for all things,
Since it is His will.

Oh, to trust Him then more fully
Just to simply move,
In the conscious calm enjoyment
Of the Father's love,
Knowing that life's chequered pathway
Leadeth to His rest,
Satisfied the way He taketh
Must be always best.

L.W.

BRING THEM TO JESUS.

THERE are many of the Lord's people who are weeping and groaning over their loved ones on earth who are out of Christ. Parents for careless, hard, and often heart-breaking sons and daughters; brothers and sisters for brothers and sisters; sometimes, though less frequently, children for loved parents; husbands for wives, and wives for husbands, and friends for friends cry out to God; and seem to cry in vain. Some of these occasionally say, It is of no use to go on praying; and others, who would recoil from such a thought, yet have little or no expectation that the Hearer of prayer will answer their cry till some far distant day: and there are many other modes of it that show that there is little intelligence of God's way, and, consequently, but very little or very feeble faith, even where the cry still goes up to Him. Deeply sympathizing with their sorrow, we would offer a word on this subject.

Truly, dear friends, you have a resource under this burden which you carry. Let us look at this resource. First of all, we would ask you, concerning your Christless loved ones, Do you really feel that their condition, as sinners, is a sorrow so deep that their salvation, to the glory of Christ, is now the *great need* which in you cries out to Him who alone can help? Now let us ask another question. When you found your *own* soul's salvation to be your crying need, what did you do? You went with that need to Jesus, as the leper or the blind beggar did. Did He turn you away? Did He not say, "I will, be thou clean;" or, "He had compassion on thee, and touched thine eyes"? Well, is Jesus the resource of a soul only for personal salvation? Does He, having saved us, care nothing about our after-need? The salvation of my wife, my child, my brother, or my friend may *now* be a need as agonizing as ever that of my own soul was. What shall we do with such urgent desires? What did people who believed in Jesus do with their diseased ones when He was here? "Brought them to Jesus." What did mothers do whose hearts were crying out for blessing from Him upon their children? "Brought them to Jesus." And what shall you do with your children or others over whom you weep? Bring them to Jesus.

But, you say, we bring them to Him every day—we always pray for them. Yes, but can you confess that their case is a need which not nature, but the Holy Spirit has awakened in

Bring them to Jesus.

your soul? Is it yours to take them to Him because His name will be exalted and His saving power glorified in their conversion? And having put this need of yours in the hands of Jesus, do you *believe* that you receive? His word is, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24). "Believe that ye receive them"—believe when you *see* or *get* what you asked? No, "*When ye pray.*" "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask *anything according to His will*, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." I John v. 14, 15.

How is it then with your souls in all this? What we need is first to have such an one's soul's salvation laid on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Then our cry will not be merely that of nature, but will be fellowship with Christ—nay, Christ's cry in us; surely "according to His will." Secondly, we need to ask in faith; and if indeed the Holy Spirit has taught us to cry out for any soul, we will surely ask in faith. To ask in faith is to believe that we have what we ask, seeing that we know that He hath "*heard us;*" and that is enough about any thing "according to His will." And, third, we ought to leave it with Him, *expecting* it to be done—and, in this expectation, not ceasing to ask for the *manifestation* of His having heard us. If thus, by grace, we ask and expect, we shall doubtless in measure follow Him in thanksgiving, who, *before* He called Lazarus from the tomb, said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me." We shall give thanks in advance of the manifestation of His answering love.

Here, however, let it not be forgotten that we are called to testify the grace of God *to* those who are the subjects of our prayers, as well as to pray *for* them. Rahab, having secured an answer of grace to her cry that her "father and mother, and brethren and sisters, and all that they had," might be saved from death in the destruction of Jericho, yet was sent to tell them that the only place of safety from that destruction was in her house, within the "scarlet line." (See Josh. ii.) So are you called to testify to those for whom you cry to God, as to all else with whom you have opportunity; for to this end are you left here—to witness for Him that loved you and gave Himself for you.

Here we might close; but we cannot refrain from relating a

Bring them to Jesus.

recent instance of our Lord's condescending grace, in hearing and answering the cry of His saints, which may very well illustrate all that has been said above, and the relation of which may serve to encourage the heart and strengthen the faith of some weary, burdened saint.

A servant of Christ had called, for the first time, on two venerable saints, husband and wife, for the purpose of making their acquaintance. While enjoying an interview that partook of the heavenly in a large degree, their daughter sat listening apparently with some interest. But at length she rose, begging to be excused, as she had an engagement. As she shook hands with the visitor he said to her, "Excuse me, I am a stranger to you; but let me ask you one question before you go. Are you a child of God?" She instantly replied, "No, indeed, I must candidly say I am not." The stranger addressed a few solemn words to her, stating the good news for sinners, which she heard with apparently respectful attention, and then left.

The aged saints and their friend bowed the knee, and, it need not be said, the daughter was not forgotten.

Next day the father called on the Christian brother who had been his visitor of the previous day, entreating him to agree with him as touching asking for life in Christ on behalf of his daughter. They two, having thus agreed, knelt together and simply told their Father all about it, and got very near the mercy-seat. There was very little said, but the unutterable groaning ascended.

A week or two passed away, and again the same parties met in the same room as at the first interview: and again the visitor sought an opportunity of testimony to the young lady. He said, "Allow me to ask you, Are you still where you were, or have you come to Jesus?" Her answer was one which might be thought very discouraging. She said, "Really, sir, I am sorry to say it—sorry, because I know it will pain you; but I must say, I am just where I was; and though I know it is very bad, I have no feeling about it for myself. You know I cannot believe on Jesus when I like—you yourself preach that. I love the world very much, and I enjoy it. Do you know I enjoy it so much that I often wish there were no such thing as death, that I might live here and enjoy it for ever? And as for heaven, I could not be happy there you know; for *I don't love God, and I don't love Christ.*" Again

Bring them to Jesus.

the word of God was addressed to her, announcing God's grace in Christ.

It was a solemn moment to all present. Her father laid his trembling hand on his friend's shoulder, saying, "Dear brother, shall we not kneel together?" They knelt again in prayer, and not only was life asked for her, but they were enabled to give thanks that the Lord had heard, and would surely make her manifest as His. Yes, they gave thanks in advance that she would be numbered among His own. In less than two hours after this, the subject of their prayers and tears sought to arrange an interview with the servant of Jesus. They met by appointment on the second day after the thanksgiving; and before the interview closed she, who neither felt for herself, nor loved God or His Son Jesus, with joyful heart confessed Jesus as God's anointed and appointed Saviour, wondering at "Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan," and rejoicing in the blessed knowledge that she, believing on Jesus, had life through His name. The visitor went to the house soon after, saying to the aged father that he had come to join him in giving thanks for his new-born daughter, when the proposal was met by him with, "But, my dear brother, you know you gave thanks for it on Saturday night."

Believer in Christ, may you have grace to enter into all this, and whosoever you long after, bring him to Jesus. Pray, but believe when you pray. Seek grace from Him to advance to the exercise of faith which links you to His throne, so that you must give thanks as one who has obtained your suit. Then will you so expect the manifest answer, that you will testify the Gospel to those you love, expecting Him to own it, whatever may be your feebleness of testimony—nay, just because your feebleness affords the occasion for the display of His power. And let all this suggest to you, should there be delay, whether that delay is not just arranged *by* Him, to bring you *to* Him, in some more blessed exercise of simple faith. How know you but that He withholds the manifest answer till you shall have been brought to the confession that all your resource is in Him, or to thanksgiving that you have been heard, or to faithful testimony *for* Him *to* those who are the subjects of your prayers? Let every apparent delay but lead us to self-judgment. It will often be found that when this is accomplished in God's pleading ones, the time for gracious answers has come; that which in us hindered the

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display of His grace and power is judged and removed ; and then He can come forth to act according to all that He is. "Delight thyself in the Lord ; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." C. C.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—4.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER ii.—As soon as God's people become carnal they begin to speak as men and follow the world's ways ; and so these Hebrew Christians, after the manner of this world, began to act towards one another in their assemblies according to social position, and not according to the "Royal Law," which, like the great Law giver Himself, is no respecter of persons. Hence they exalted the rich who belonged to that very class whose leaders were the fiercest persecutors of the Saints and blasphemers of that worthy name by which they were called, and they degraded the poor whom God had chosen to be heirs of the kingdom and possessors for ever of the only true riches. In thus introducing the spirit of the world into the Church and paying homage to rank and wealth, they committed sin, and were convicted by the law as transgressors. Let us watch against this spirit, for it always denotes a sad departure from the mind and ways of God.

In verse 12 he returns to the beautiful thought he had brought before their minds in the previous chapter about the difference between the spirit of the former and that of the present dispensation—"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty"—a law whose every command is accompanied with power to do it for every willing heart, instead of the stern, unbending, rigorous law that showed the right path but gave no power to walk in it. We shall be judged by the law of grace and power, God expecting the more from us the more He has bestowed on us, and where we show mercy and act according to the spirit of God's dealings with us, God will show Himself as the God of grace and mercy towards us ; but if we, forgetting how continually we are ourselves dependent on God's forbearance and mercy, deal hardly with others, perhaps He will mete out His judgment towards us without mercy to break down our hard unloving spirit. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Doing versus Talking.

In verse 14 we have again the subject of *profession* without the *possession of the reality* taken up, and the hollowness of mere talk exemplified. If a man *say* he hath faith, and his works do not evidence its possession, it is as empty as a mere benevolent wish would be to a starving person unaccompanied by any more solid evidence of kindness. It is plain that there was at that time, as at present, much of this sham profession that was accompanied by no fruit in the life, and the Apostle presses home the truth that faith cannot exist without shewing itself in works; that mere intellectual acceptance of divine truth is no more that the devils themselves have, even to a degree sufficient to make them tremble—(*Faith* always brings *submission*). He takes two striking instances from the Old Testament in which previously existing faith was demonstrated by works. First, in the case of Abraham. When God revealed Himself to him, Abraham believed in Him and accepted Him in his heart as the *Almighty* God. *God*, who saw his faith accounted him righteous. Man could not read his heart, but the time came when it was to be proved by the sternest test that what God saw when He pronounced him righteous was no mere idle thing, but a principle so deeply rooted in Abraham that, when his beloved son was demanded of him, he could unhesitatingly yield him up, being *fully* persuaded that the *Almighty* One who gave him 18 or 20 years before could bring him again even from the ashes of the sacrifice, and so he “fulfilled” God’s word spoken concerning him many years before by showing that his faith in God was a real thing. God grant us grace, my brethren, to in like manner vindicate God’s grace in saving us through faith in His Son, by single-eyed, ungrudging obedience to all His commands.

Next he takes Rahab. Who would have believed in Rahab’s faith had she acted like the rest of her townfolk when the spies came, or had she, later on, when the city was besieged, paid no heed to their words as to tying the line in the window and keeping within her house? Nay, but she showed how thoroughly she believed all she professed to believe by gathering her kindred together under the same roof. Had she done otherwise, she would have perished like the rest. Any *talk* about believing in God and His word would not have stood between her and judgment. It would have been but a dead, useless thing, like a body without a spirit.

[To be continued.]

J.S.D.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—6.

PERSECUTION.

DOMITIAN does not appear to have persecuted the Christians till towards the end of his reign. Like his father, Vespasian, he sought out those who belonged to the Royal family of David, with the view of discovering whether he had anything to fear from them in the shape of a design upon his throne. Some of the grandsons of the Apostle Jude were brought before him as claiming direct descent from David, and he demanded of them a statement of their circumstances and their prospects. They stated that they were nothing but poor men, and were obliged to maintain themselves by their labour; and as to their future prospects, they looked for a heavenly kingdom at the return of their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, at the end of the age, when He should appear in His glory and reward every man according to his works. Domitian satisfied himself by an examination of their hands that the statement as to their humble circumstances was true, and he dismissed them with derision, believing that men of their humble mien and pretensions were not likely to aspire to his throne.

In A.D. 95, towards the end of his reign, however, he increased in cruelty, and renewed the horrors of Nero's persecution. He put to death many persons accused of atheism, the common charge against Christians owing to their refusal to worship the pagan gods. Among these was the consul, Flavius Clemens, his cousin, who had espoused Flavia Domitilla, his relation. Many others were likewise condemned for embracing Jewish customs; some were put to death and others spoiled of their goods, and Domitilla herself was banished to the island of Pandataria. These two noble persons—Clemens and Domitilla—appear to have been genuine Christians called out by the grace of God from the world, and enabled to turn their backs upon the dazzling splendour of Cæsar's court and to suffer death or exile for the sake of Christ. Clemens is charged with indolence by a godless writer of his time, but this simply does honour to the heavenly-mindedness of the man, whose spirit could not mix with the evils of secular ambition or with the vices of the imperial court.

In the year 96 Domitian was slain, and his successor, Nerva, published a pardon for those who were condemned for impiety, recalled those who were banished, and forbade the

To be Particularly Noted.

accusing of any man on account of impiety or Judaism. Others who were under accusation or recent sentence now escaped through the mildness of Nerva. Only one person remained unbenefited by the pardon. Domitilla was still left in exile, probably because she was a relation of the late tyrant, Domitian, whose name had become hateful throughout the world.

During Nerva's reign the Church had comparative rest, but this interval of tranquillity was soon closed, for the commencement of the second century saw the renowned Trajan at the head of the Roman world, determined to extinguish the very name of Christian if it lay in his power to do so. He was a man of illustrious character by reason of great talents and great exploits, but stained with flagrant vices and extravagant ambition. He conceived an unaccountable prejudice against the Christians, and freely indulged his persecuting spirit towards them, and it was not his fault that they and their principles were not exterminated. But God was for them, and they were not forsaken.

Next month we hope to give two letters—one from Pliny to Trajan, and the other from Trajan to Pliny—giving an interesting account of this persecution.

TO BE PARTICULARLY NOTED.

IF you won't be a worker, don't be a grumbler.

It's a bad practice to come late to the Place of Meeting.

If you wish the church to prosper never be absent from the Prayer Meeting.

Healthy Christians always endeavour to attend the Week Night Services.

Touchy persons are very disagreeable people.

Those who are always finding fault with others generally do so to hide their own faults. To be perpetually finding fault is not becoming to a Christian.

Tale-bearers and mischief-makers are the pests of society.

A very dear friend of mine remarks: "A little dust in the eye makes many tears, a little stone in the shoe makes great blisters, and a little prick in an egg-shell kills the chicken. Mind the small things, and the big concerns will go all right; the wheel will not come off if you see to the linch pin. Mind this, and mind you *do mind it.*"

"TRY THE OIL OF LOVE IN LARGE DOSES."

CONTINUANCE IN PRAYER.

“Severed from Me ye can do nothing.”

“I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.”

MAN is a dependent creature. He cannot prolong his life at will; he cannot take a breath without the help of his Creator. His daily needs, too, must be met by Him who supplies every living thing with food. In these respects man is only on a higher level than the brute creation, in so far as his superior intelligence gives him advantages which mere instinct cannot supply.

His dependence is constant; in God he lives and moves and has his being. His needs are constant also.

The Being who created him, and who supplies his constant needs, is the Being to whom he must constantly look for help. “I will look to the hills from whence cometh my help: my help cometh from God who made heaven and earth.”

This looking finds expression in prayer; and as the needs never cease, so prayer must not be occasional, but incessant. I do not mean that a man must always be on his knees, although the Apostle exhorts us to “pray without ceasing.” What then, is meant? Just this. Never for a moment forget that you are a dependent creature: never forget that there is One who can keep you every moment from falling and who can supply all your wants. You will then be constantly looking to that One. In other words, you will every moment trust God; and that trust will, whenever suitable opportunities occur, find expression in audible prayer. David managed to find such opportunities at least three times a day. Every Christian must determine this point in his conscience. Whether the opportunities of speaking to God in prayer occur frequently or not, the heart should ever be in the attitude of trust.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath. He can no more truly live without prayer than he can exist without breathing. Breathing never ceases whilst there is natural life; and I make bold to say that prayer, in the sense I have mentioned, never ceases where there is spiritual life. The life of the Spirit is necessarily Godward. But there must be stated times for prayer. The psalmist says, “Evening, morning, and at noonday will I pray.” This indicates a habit of prayer.

If there be stated times, need there be stated places? Not always. The Christian, it is true, loves the place where prayer is wont to be made; he loves the house of prayer—the

Continuance in Prayer.

place where God meets with His people. He will not forsake the assembly of saints. He knows well that where two or three are gathered together there the Saviour meets with them, and he finds it good to be there. But he knows too that the Saviour is not limited to any one place, and therefore he lifts up his heart in prayer by the wayside, in the shop, and in the busy crowd. He can continue in prayer wherever duty calls him.

Some Christians dishonour the Lord by putting off the time for prayer. Pleasure is sometimes allowed to interfere with it: company, sometimes: sleep or idleness, sometimes. If the believer would honour Christ and prosper in his soul, he should never engage in anything which would make prayer out of place. Nor should company in a Christian's house be allowed under any circumstances to hinder family worship.

How often it is otherwise. A few friends meet: they have a pleasant evening together: the conversation, whilst Christless, is innocent and even edifying: the amusements entertaining and harmless. The hour for family prayer approaches. Somehow there is a general disinclination to pray. The master of the house raises the question: it is received without any mark of approval. Some are inclined to think him righteous over much. It may be the members of his own family, who regularly join with him, think him too strict. All his guests are professing Christians, but, strange to say, the very exercises which should be the most agreeable and delightful of the whole evening—namely, social prayer, is sometimes the most distasteful.

This should not be so. It argues an unhealthy state of soul, and I fear shows that to "continue instant in prayer" is not their normal state. If the heart is right with God prayer is always in season—always a delight—"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit."

We are encouraged to continuance in prayer by the fact that our *God is unchangeable*, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Our earthly benefactors are often the very reverse of this: one day they may befriend us, the next day forsake us. Not so our Father in heaven. He waits to be gracious. Nothing delights Him more than to see His children going to Him for blessing. He always receives them with open arms. He

Continuance in Prayer.

never frowns upon them. He bids them seek His face continually. Oh the joy, the unspeakable joy, of approaching so loving and tender a Father!

Well might the Psalmist say, "I will seek His face ever more."

Again, we are encouraged to pray continually, because "we have *many great and precious* promises." Our God does not merely bid us pray, but He attracts us to Himself with promises which drop fatness from heaven itself.

When on our knees the Lord passes by, making all His goodness to be seen and proclaiming Himself to be "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." What more can we need? Try to measure this wonderful proclamation, and you will find you cannot grasp it. Nay, it exceeds all that can be conceived. Lord, may we ever continue in prayer, that we may experience more and more of the fulness of this exceeding great and precious promise!

Then we have a *mighty, an all-prevailing Advocate* before the Throne, ever interceding for us. Why, then, should not we continue in prayer? We can go to Him as a loving tender friend, who sticketh closer than a brother, and who can help and save to the uttermost.

The *Holy Spirit, too, helps* our infirmities—unfolds to us our needs, and teaches us how to pray and what to pray for.

Oh! how great and how many are our encouragements to continue instant in prayer! Let us prove God and see whether He will not open the very windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that there will not be room to receive it.

Looking up to Jesus,
On the Emerald Throne,
Faith shall pierce the heavens,
Where our Lord has gone.

Lord, on Thee depending,
Now, continually,
Heart and mind ascending,
Let us dwell with Thee.

T. H.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." Some Christians endeavour to exhibit the godliness without the contentment. It is wonderful if the worldling doubts their having found great gain?

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVENED MEAL.

By the late Dr. TREGELLES.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened” (Matt. xiii. 33).

WHATEVER this parable may mean, it implies the spread of some principle throughout a certain body, until its influence becomes universal. Does this then mean good or evil? Many would reply that “the kingdom of heaven could not be compared to anything evil.” But observe that the similitude has respect to the whole parable: the parity is not connected with one word or thing, but the *whole* similitude. So in the last parable of Matt. xiii. the kingdom of heaven is likened to a *net*, not in itself, but in certain circumstances and connections. There will be a day when Christ shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and then “the kingdom of heaven” shall be only comparable to what is good. Thus it is from the parable itself, and its connection, that we must judge as to whether this is a similitude of good or evil.

The notion of universality in its aspect seems to exclude the idea of good being here intended. Those who thus interpret apply the parable either to the spread of the gospel—the diffusion of Christianity—or else to the results wrought by the regenerating influence of grace on the individual Christian.

The first of these interpretations would be in entire opposition, not only to the testimony of the Apostles in their epistles, as to the spread of evil in the latter days of this dispensation, but also to that of the parable of the tares of the field. The interpretation of that parable shows that evil will *continue*, and the prophecies in the Epistles show that it will *spread* and *increase*. As to the second interpretation, it is manifest that these parables do not refer to individuals separately; but even if they did, it is not true that certain principles of grace introduced, ever do, or can, so transform a man as to change the carnal mind and the flesh into something good and holy. The carnal mind remains as really in the holiest believer as in the most abandoned sinner; it continues to be “enmity against God; for it is not subject unto the law of God, neither, indeed, can be.” In the case of the believer new principles of life and action are introduced; spiritual powers are bestowed for *keeping under* the flesh, but the flesh remains up to death.

The Parable of the Leavened Meal.

or the resurrection state. To apply this parable, then, to regeneration, is wholly opposed to the nature of the gospel, and to the remedy which it proposes to fallen man.

It is thus impossible to understand this parable as teaching the diffusion of good, without contradicting the whole analogy, as well as the direct statements of revealed truth.

BUT WHAT IS LEAVEN?

It is the incipient corruption of the mass of kneaded flour, in which that fermentation commences to work. A small portion of this, if put into wetted flour, will produce incipient corruption of exactly the same kind, and so leaven the whole lump. And thus leaven is always spoken of in the Old Testament. It invariably means, when used there as a symbol, that which is corrupt and productive of corruption. The disciples knew the Old Testament far too well to suppose that they were now to take this term in a good sense, unless they were expressly taught to do so. But is the New Testament use of the term "leaven" different? In Matt. xvi. 6 (and the parallel place, Mark viii. 15, and in Luke xii. 1), the Lord warns against "the *leaven* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." The disciples imagined that He referred to bread, until He showed them that He meant the doctrine—the evil doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Luke xii. 1, He says, "The leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"—certainly not a good thing. Twice in the Epistles of Paul do we read, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." In the one case it refers to practice, and in the other to doctrine. In 1 Cor. v., Paul speaks of the necessity of putting away from fellowship in the church the notorious sinner whom the Corinthians were inclined to uphold. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us: therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The toleration of moral evil was *leaven* introduced, and this would leaven the whole lump with its corrupted and corrupting nature. In Gal. v., after the Apostle had said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace," he adds (verse 9), "A little leaven leaveneth

Doing versus Talking.

the whole lump." The introduction of anything, however little, as relating to a believer's acceptance, besides faith in the finished work of Christ, is then a doctrinal leaven—a leaven which has worked, as we know, extensively and grievously. These are, then, all the occurrences of leaven in the New Testament, besides its being mentioned in the parable itself; and in all there is one consistent meaning connected with the symbol, the same idea of corruption as is found in the Old Testament. It would be, indeed, strange if our Lord had, in the parable, introduced a meaning the exact opposite of every idea connected with the term, and had used what not only symbolises corruption, but is corruption, as expressive of something good.

Thus, not only the universality expressed in the parable, but also the corrupt and corrupting thing, leaven, would lead us to see the similitude as one of evil. Do we not see that 2 Tim. iii., &c., shows us how Christendom will be leavened with evil? And do we not *now* see this to a great degree? Let an intelligent Buddhist or Mohammedan come into Christendom, and he will see the mass of the nations holding fast *corrupted* doctrine, and presenting this corruption of truth (in Scripture language *leaven*) to the attention of external nations.

Thus do the three parables, spoken to *the multitudes*, show us what Christendom would be in its darker characteristics, as *truth* would testify against its doctrinal and moral condition.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—5.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER iii.—“Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment: for in many things we all stumble” (R.V. and Newberry). Such is the exhortation with which the Apostle commences this very solemn chapter, and I think it shows that the *primary* reference of the chapter is to those who take part in the ministry of the Word, especially in the assemblies. It is an injunction to such to weigh carefully what they do, and not to be too ready to take a foremost place; for those who teach others shall be judged by a higher standard, because God expects them to be doers of what they teach; and it is

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES—4.

SHORT PAPERS ON I COR. XII.—XVI.

THE SUBJECT OF THE MINISTRY.

Chapter xv.

THE great subject of all true Ministry is Christ Himself—not merely truths *about* Him, but He Himself in the deep mystery of His person, the preciousness of His atoning death, the profound truth of His sacred burial, and the glorious fact of His triumphant resurrection and ascension.

Paul brings this out in chapter xv., and he calls it "The Gospel," and it is the same Gospel both for sinner and Saint, though, of course to the latter it opens out in all its fulness, passing beyond the simple elementaries; but in both cases it is "The Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ" (Rom. i. 1-3). God is its author and Christ its subject, and the resurrection from the dead is the unanswerable proof of His divine Sonship, and of the acceptance of His sacrifice.

Most of the current false notions about the Gospel arise from approaching the subject in the first instance from the man-ward side, instead of from the God-ward, and man's needs and conceptions are consequently thrust into the foreground, and Christianity turned into a philosophy, and sought to be used as a means by which humanity may be elevated and inspired, while the claims and holy requirements of almighty God are but little considered.

It is therefore solemnly incumbent upon all those who preach and teach the Gospel to understand it in all its aspects and bearings, and to avoid the shallow and crude ideas put forth by many present-day speakers.

It will be observed that the Apostle divides the Gospel he preached into three special sections—

1. THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS:
2. THAT HE WAS BURIED:
3. THAT HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY:

and he particularly mentions that in each case it was "*according to the Scriptures,*" and then goes on to record the fact that upon SIX DIFFERENT OCCASIONS the risen Lord showed Himself to His wondering and rejoicing disciples, thus placing the testimony to His resurrection upon unquestionable authority for the establishing of His people's faith during all the dispensation.

We must notice that the Gospel presents in the foreground,

1. The Person of our Lord in His divine majesty;
2. The nature of His death "for our sins;"

Spiritual Ministries.

3. The certainty and consequences of His resurrection; and these vital truths lie at the very foundation of Christianity, and form "THE FAITH" which was once for all delivered to the Saints, and which Satan and his servants have ever since been diligently attempting to undermine and destroy.

The *Person* who died was "*the Christ*," the anointed One, thus presenting Our Lord in the aspect of His Eternal Deity rather than as *Jesus* the Man of Sorrows—this surely contains precious teaching for the heart!

Then again, His death is shown to be vicarious and atoning in its character—"for our sins"—and not solely as an example of self-sacrificing love. The special emphasis laid upon His BURIAL shows that some wondrous truths underlie this fact, truths connected with our blessed Lord's descent into "*the lower parts of the earth*" (Eph iv. 9), and His entry into the domain of death and of Him that had the power of death, the Prince of Darkness Himself; and from that unutterable depth rising on the morning of the third day A TRIUMPHANT VICTOR over all His foes and ours, and leading them captive in His train.

Shallow, if not erroneous, views of the divine Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the profound nature of His precious death, are everywhere current in the present day: in the religious press, in the pulpit, on the platform, and even in simple gatherings of God's people for worship and ministry, so that it is of the utmost importance that he who desires to be "*a good Minister of Jesus Christ*" should patiently and prayerfully seek to understand the Gospel as it is presented in "the Holy Scriptures," and faithfully preach it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Too much of present day preaching is made up of scraps of personal experience, rough and ready exhortations, and ringing the changes upon some isolated texts. Most of this is good enough in its way, but there is a sad lack of real exposition of the Word, and of the opening up of Apostolic Doctrine in all its divine harmony.

This being so, it is little wonder that many of God's people are being carried away by "*divers and strange doctrines*," and are unable to discriminate between what is true and what is false.

Be alive then, oh! preacher of the Word, to the solemn importance of the work to which you have been called, and seek to be able to say, "We preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake."

H.W.F.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—7.

PLINY'S LETTER TO TRAJAN AND THE ANSWER.

C. Pliny to Trajan, Emperor.

HEALTH.—It is my usual custom, sir, to refer all things of which I harbour any doubts to you. For who can better direct my judgment in its hesitation, or instruct my understanding in its ignorance? I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians before I came into this province. I am therefore at a loss to determine what is the usual object either of enquiry or punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried. It has always been with me a question very problematical whether any distinction should be made between the young and the old, the tender and the robust; whether any room should be given for repentance, or the guilt of Christianity once incurred is not to be expiated by the most unequivocal retraction; whether the name itself, abstracted from any flagitiousness of conduct, or the crimes connected with the name, be the object of punishment. In the meantime this has been my method with those who were brought before me as Christians—I asked them whether they were Christians: if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them twice afresh, with a threat of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance I ordered them to be executed. For of this I had no doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrate. Some were infected with the madness whom, on account of their privilege of citizenship, I reserved to be sent to Rome, to be referred to your tribunal. In the course of this business, informations pouring in, as is usual when they are encouraged, more cases occurred. An anonymous libel was exhibited with a catalogue of names of persons who yet declared that they were not Christians then, nor ever had been, and they repeated after me an invocation of the gods and of your image, which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be brought with the images of the deities; they performed sacred rites with wine and frankincense and execrated Christ, none of which things, I am told, a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. On this account I dismissed them. Others named by an informer first affirmed and then denied the charge of Christianity, declaring that they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so; some, three years ago, others still longer, some even twenty years ago. All of them worshipped your image and the statues of

the gods, and also execrated Christ. And this was the account they gave of the nature of the religion they once had professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error—namely, that they were accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as to God, and to bind themselves by an oath with an obligation of not committing any wickedness; but, on the contrary, of abstaining from thefts, robberies, and adulteries; also, of not violating their promise or denying a pledge, after which it was their custom to separate, and to meet again at a promiscuous harmless meal, from which last practice they, however, desisted after the publication of my edict, in which, agreeable to your orders, I forbade any societies of that sort. On which account I judged it the more necessary to inquire by torture from two females, who were said to be deaconesses, what is the real truth. But nothing could I collect except a depraved and excessive superstition. Deferring, therefore, any further investigation, I determined to consult you, for the number of culprits is so great as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against of every age and of both sexes, and more still will be in the same situation. The contagion of the superstition hath spread, not only through the cities, but even villages and the country. Not that I think it impossible to check and to correct it. The success of my endeavours hitherto forbids such desponding thoughts, for the temples, once almost desolate, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnties, which had long been intermitted, are now attended afresh; and the sacrificial victims are now sold everywhere, which once could scarcely find a purchaser. Whence I conclude that many might be reclaimed were the hope of impunity on repentance absolutely confirmed.”

Trajan to Pliny.

“You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry which you have made concerning Christians, for truly no one rule can be laid down which will apply itself to all cases. These people must not be sought after: if they are brought before you and convicted, let them be capitally punished; yet with this restriction, that if anyone renounce Christianity, and evidence his sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected he may be for the past, he shall obtain pardon for the future on his repentance. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be attended to, for the precedent would be of the worst sort, and perfectly incongruous to the maxims of my government.”

THE SOUL-WINNER.

THE pursuit of the believer should be soul-winning; for "he that winneth souls is wise."

Wherever Christ is not trusted, and the Spirit has not created a new heart, and the soul has not come to the great Father, there is a lost soul. But here is the mercy—these lost souls can be won. They are not hopelessly lost; not yet has God determined that they shall for ever abide as they are. Is it not yet said, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still;" but they are in the land of hope where mercy may reach them, for they are spoken of as capable of being won. They may yet be delivered, but the phrase hints that it will need all our efforts. He that *winneth* souls. What do we mean by that word win?

We use it in *lovmaking*. We speak of the bridegroom who wins his bride, and sometimes there is a large expense of love, many a pleading word, and many a wooing act, ere yet the valued heart is all the suitor's own. I use this explanation because in some respects it is the very best, for souls will have to be won for Christ in this fashion, that they may be espoused unto Him. We must make love to the sinner for Christ; that is how hearts are to be won for Him. Jesus is the bridegroom, and we must speak for Him, and tell of His beauty, as Abraham's servant, when he went to seek a wife for Isaac, acted as a wooer in his stead. Have you never read the story? Then turn to it and see how he talked about his master, what possessions he had, and how Isaac was to be heir of it all, and so on, and then he finished his address by urging Rebecca to go with him. The question was put home to her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" So the soul-winner's business is to commend his Master and his Master's riches, and then say to souls, "Will you be wedded to Christ?" He who can succeed in this very delicate business is a wise man.

We also use the term in a *military* fashion. We speak of winning a city, a castle, or a battle. We do not win victories by going to sleep. Believe me, castles are not captured by men who are only half awake. To win a battle needs the best skill, the greatest endurance, and the utmost courage. To storm fortresses which are regarded as almost impregnable men need to burn the midnight oil and study well the arts of attack; and when the time comes for the assault not a soldier must be a laggard, but all force of artillery and man-

The Summer Holiday.

hood must be brought to bear on the point assailed. To carry man's heart by main force of grace, to capture it, break down the bars of brass, and dash the gates of iron in pieces, requires the exercise of skill which only Christ can give. Those whose souls are as cold as the Arctic regions, and whose energy is reduced to the vanishing point, are not likely to take the city of Mansoul for Prince Emmanuel. If you think you are going to win souls you must throw your soul into your work, just as a warrior must throw his soul into a battle, or victory will not be yours.

We use the words "to win" in reference to *making a fortune*, and we all know that the man who becomes a millionaire has to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, and it takes a deal of toiling and saving, and I know not what besides, to amass immense wealth. We have to go in for winning souls with the same ardour and concentration of our faculties as Astor of New York went in to build up that fortune of so many millions which he left behind him. It is, indeed, *a race*, and you know that in a race nobody wins unless he strains every muscle and sinew. They that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize; and that one is generally he who had more strength than the rest; certainly, whether he had more strength or not, he put out all he had, and we shall not win souls unless we imitate him in this. C.H.S.

THE SUMMER HOLIDAY.

IT has been well said that a man's real character is best known by the way in which he spends his leisure hours.

Most men are busily occupied with earthly affairs for the greater part of their time, and they are compelled by force of circumstances to do many things for the purpose of gaining their daily bread which affords us no real insight into the true bent of their minds. But when they get free at the close of business engagements which chain them to the post of duty, or when they go off for a summer holiday, you can very soon tell whether their hearts are really set upon the things that be of God or those that be of men.

It is true that the Christian, as well as the unconverted man, has a body subject to the wear and tear of life, and in need of occasional rest and relaxation for the purpose of repair, and to him an interval of freedom from hard work is

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quite as welcome as it is to the man of the world; but it must never be forgotten that the follower of Jesus Christ has taken service under a Master whom to know is to love, and whom to love is to serve, and that with an earnestness which knows no holiday in the earthly sense of the word. Hence the true servant of Christ, if he goes to the seaside or to the mountain top in search of health, will not cease, even there, to act the part of Christ's faithful bond-servant—His captive in the chains of love—but he will remember that his first business wherever he goes is to uphold his Master's honour and to witness to His Grace.

There is, however, a strong temptation to take things easy during holiday times, and it is to be feared that not a few of the Lord's people yield to this temptation, and consequently fail to embrace the opportunities presented to them in strange places of testifying to their fellow mortals of the kindness and love of God. Beware of this my dear fellow-servant of the best of Masters. The days are evil, and we must buy up every opportunity which presents itself to us wherever we go. But not only is there the loss of opportunities in such cases, but, unhappily, there is too often a loss of spiritual energy in consequence of the temporary setting aside of the regular meditation upon the word of God which we are wont to have when at home. Private prayer also is often neglected in the hurry of holiday-making, and so the soul is starved while the body and the earthly mind are pampered. What wonder then if we can trace much of the backsliding and lukewarmness of the present day to the annual holiday.

One of the awful features of the ungodliness of the last days is described in 2 Tim. iii. in the words, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." How true this is! Do we not see all round us multitudes of people whose days and nights are spent in pleasing themselves to the complete exclusion of God from all their thoughts. Fellow Christians beware. The children of God are by nature exactly the same sort of people as the worldlings all round them, and it is a well-known fact they very easily catch the spirit of the world if they are not closely and constantly in communion with God, and closely and constantly meditating on His Word. Merely being on one's guard against the spirit of the world, or indeed against sin in any form, is not enough. With the best intentions imaginable we may fall into the very sin we

Doing versus Talking.

desire to avoid. But let us seek after those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; let us *set our minds* "on things above;" let us, wherever we go, whether on the business of life or on the annual holiday, give God the first place in our hearts, and all other things will fit into their places in due order.

In conclusion, as to opportunities for service, these are to be had everywhere. Fellow-travellers can be spoken to, and if we look to the Lord for right words we may accomplish much in this way. Then, tracts can be distributed, the children on the beach can be chatted with, and in smaller or larger numbers got together to listen to the sweet words of our Lord Jesus and the simple stories of the Old Testament. Cottages can be visited and their occupants spoken to and supplied with good reading. All we want, beloved, is the burning love to our Lord which comes of close acquaintance with Himself, and love is the most ingenious thing in the world in finding methods of gratifying its object. R.L.S.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—6.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

In verse 13 the Apostle plainly indicates the signs that distinguish the man who should be looked up to as a guide. It matters not what he may *profess*, what wisdom there may be in his *words*, nor what knowledge of truth he may display, except he "show by his good life *his works* in meekness of wisdom," except his *works* be the outcome of a heart that has in meekness bowed to learn God's ways—for still "The fear of God is the *beginning* of wisdom"—let him have no place as a trader amongst God's people, nor let them submit to his guidance. If there be "bitter jealousy and faction in the heart" (as there probably was amongst those to whom the Apostle wrote), then to take a leading place is but lifting up the rebellious forehead against God, and to lie against His truth. This wisdom never was learned from God—far different are its sources, and solemnly should we ponder the three roots, as it were, from which it is drawn. First, "EARTHLY," according to the wisdom of men, the maxims that rule the men of this world. How often has our conduct been so directed! Second, "SENSUAL" or "natural," from the dictates of my own nature, impelled by my own pride and vain glory, just as I would have acted had I been unconverted.

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Does not our heart condemn us that we have often so acted! And third—awfully solemn thought for a child of God—“DEVILISH,” from hell itself, inspired by Satan. Oh! may God enlighten our eyes that we may see as He sees the roots from which spring those things that mar the testimony of His people and bring dishonour on His holy name! And when jealousy and faction (R.V.) thus come in, with them come confusion and every evil deed. Let us not listen to men's talk, but see what their deeds are!

But oh, what a contrast in the next verses! “The wisdom that comes from above is first *pure*,” that word that always brings our thoughts to the light of God's presence, that implies a clear sky between our souls and God, that speaks to us of His searching eye looking into our motives and purposes—nay, our whole hearts. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Then “peaceable,” the opposite to that which produces “strife and every evil deed.” “Gentle,” because it has been learned from Him who is “meek and lowly in heart.” “Easy to be entreated,” because such an one knows how much he has himself needed God's pardon and grace continually, and has learned to imitate *Him*. “Full of mercy and good fruits,” because these are the outcome of the Spirit of Christ ruling in the heart: “Without variance” (“doubtfulness”—R.V. margin), because the life of one who walks before God will be steady, not changeable and uncertain. And lastly, “without hypocrisy”—this cursed leaven cannot exist where the heart is continually open before God, where “Search me, oh Lord, and know my heart” (Psalm cxxxix. 23) is the constant prayer. Mark the difference, brethren, between the spirits held up before us in these few verses. May it be ours to have the wisdom which is from above in each of our hearts by our gracious God, and then we shall have the beautiful promise of the last verse fulfilled to us—“The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.” That the fruits of such an one's life are sown by the God of love, to be reaped again by Him in continual blessing—often to be reaped after many years and the full harvest, to be reaped in eternity, “and that your fruit should abide” (John xv. 16). How sad to think that all the division and strife amongst God's people arise from the absence of this “wisdom from above.” May it be the blessed portion of the writer and reader to be of those “that make peace.”

SPIRITUAL MINISTRIES—5.

SHORT PAPERS ON I COR. XII.—XVI.

THE SINCERITY OF THE MINISTRY.

Chapter xvi.

THE offering of money to God for His work or the help of His people, when given in the right spirit and from a pure motive, ranks amongst some of the highest acts of Divine Service.

There is not, as some seem to imagine, a discordance between instruction upon precious spiritual truths and exhortations respecting money matters connected with the service of God, but on the contrary, a scriptural harmony.

The people of God need to be taught and exhorted concerning the "*grace*" of giving (2 Cor. viii. 7) as upon every other Christian duty, and we therefore find that the Apostle passes at once from the precious revelations unfolded to us in chapter xv., to the practical and emphatic directions "*concerning the collection from the Saints*" in chapter xvi.

It will be profitable to refer to what the Holy Spirit has taught through the same Apostle on the same subject in 2 Cor. viii. and ix., where it will be observed that he appeals to the most powerful motives that can move the human heart in order to stimulate the Saints to a freeness and liberality of giving.

He holds up to them the example of others (chapter viii. 1); presses them not any longer to delay in the fulfilment of their promises (chapter viii. 11); warns them of the injury that a penurious spirit will assuredly do them (chapter ix. 6); and dwells much upon the blessings, both spiritual and temporal, which follow upon bountiful liberality (chapter ix. 10); but he grounds his highest and strongest appeal upon their knowledge of the Grace of Him who, though the richest of the rich, became the poorest of the poor, and that "*for your sakes*" (chapter viii. 9).

In considering the special instructions contained in the Scripture now before us (chapter xvi. 2), we may notice that it opens out under *five distinct heads*, viz.—

1. PERIOD—"Upon the first day of the week."
2. PERSONS—"Every one of you."
3. PRACTICE—"Lay by him in store."
4. PROPORTION—"As God hath prospered you."
5. PURPOSE—"That there be no gatherings when I come."

Spiritual Ministries.

Surely no child of God can quietly sit down before such a clear and searching word as this without feeling its force and authority, for although the particular circumstances which drew out the command have passed away (Rom. xv. 26), yet we have DIVINE PRINCIPLES laid down which are meant to govern and regulate the contributions of God's people at all times and in every place.

When the heart is rightly exercised before God, and the conscience properly enlightened by His word, the placing of a coin in the collecting box or plate upon the first day of the week, in the Assembly of Saints, will be regarded as a solemn offering presented to the Lord, and as a very real part of the united homage and worship rendered to His Holy Name.

The laying aside periodically of a fixed proportion of one's wages, salary, or income, as in a special sense devoted to the service of God, in no wise contradicts the wider truth that ALL we have belongs to Him, but acts as a special test of our obedience and sincerity; provides a fund always at hand out of which one can draw what may be felt to be right to give towards each particular case as it arises; and cultivates the delightful sense of the privilege of giving ungrudgingly and without pressure.

The *principle* applies to all, irrespective of amount, and whether it be a penny or a pound that is offered, how wondrous it is to remember that that which God looks upon as "*filthy lucre*" when used for selfish and ungodly purposes, He accepts as "*a sacrifice well pleasing unto God, an odour of a sweet smell,*" when presented to Him from a grateful and humble heart.

It has been well said that the true character of most individuals can be discerned in the way in which they use, or misuse, money. The Christian's purse should be tied with a bow rather than a double knot, for talk is cheap and the sincerity of one's belief must be tested by the sincerity of one's actions. May God mercifully stir us up to a fuller consciousness of our privileges and responsibilities in this matter of "CHRISTIAN MINISTRY," "*distributing to the necessity of Saints*" (Rom. xii. 13), and grant unto each one of His beloved people that most excellent gift of an unselfish heart for Christ's sake.

H. W. F.

The truest self-respect is not to think of self.

LEARN TO BE SILENT.

“INCLINE THINE EAR AND HEAR THE WORDS OF THE WISE; FOR IT IS A PLEASANT THING IF THOU KEEP THEM WITHIN THEE: IF THEY BE ESTABLISHED UPON THY LIPS” (Prov. xxii. 17-18, R.V.).

Learn to be silent, and by silence learn
The value vast of language fitly used:
True thoughts are living—they both breathe and glow
Within the bosom, till upon the lips
Established, they do speak and shine in words
Of light and life.
Wait thou the thoughts that hang upon the lips
Like burning coals, until they break in words
Of fire and fervour.
Restrain thine inner self: put bands and bars
Upon the restless mind, until thy thoughts
Are ripe for language.
Thus shalt thou bear bright golden messages
In golden words; but on both thought and word
Imprint thou Christ.

THIS is a day of clatter, chatter, and talk. Those who have nothing to say are those who generally have the most to speak. There is always real power in the silence of a disciplined soul. It is the power of a man who thinks. Silence is in reality twin-sister to thought. If a man cannot be silent, he cannot be anything but weak. No one can give unless he gathers. If he attempts to give without gathering, it is pouring out of an empty vessel.

It is painful to hear, at what are called open meetings, some men display their capacity for spoiling the silence. Diluting some precious and beautiful scriptures by an admixture of hap-hazard, ill-sorted, common-place platitudes; the words thereof are sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

See what the divine Word of God says in this remarkable passage, “Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise.” “Incline thine ear”—take the place of a *learner*—and then you will be a ready *listener*, and your heart stocked with wisdom. Wise words dropped into the heart fructify into golden thoughts, becoming minted upon the lips in golden messages for others.

Paul in his first epistle to his son (in the faith) Timothy, gives him advice which men of all ages, who aim at teaching others, of necessity must take. He says, “Give attendance (heed) to reading, exhortation, and doctrine.” *Reading* God's Holy Word that the heart, the faculties of the mind, and all the powers God has given may be saturated with His blessed truth. Meditate on it, let it be your study. *Exhortation:*

Hear it, apply it to yourself; let it stimulate, rebuke, comfort, and help you. *Doctrine*: Get the truth, master its details.

How many well-meant discourses are mere religious jumbles, simply because truth is mixed up in the mind in indescribable confusion. Be assured, if you are in mind confused your words will be confused—what is not clear in thought will be muddled and confused in utterance.

Classify each truth in its department, then carefully put it away in your heart, so, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, brain, memory, heart, and tongue will act together. Above all, let them revolve round as a centre *the Lord Jesus Christ Himself*.
S. T. F.

LIFE!

WHAT is Life? A shadowy dream, uncertain—
Delusive phantoms—unremitting strife;

A little moment—softly fails the curtain,

Our part is acted—such, ah! such is Life!

What is Life? One long, low, piteous wailing,

A veil with groans, and sobs, and salt tears rife:

Shipwrecked souls on a dark ocean sailing,

And then the final death-wave—such is Life!

What is Life? A wrenching one by one

Of those dear ties—child, parent, husband, wife;

Our idols shattered—Love's sweet mission done,

Lengthening shadows—such, ah! such is Life!

What is Life? A summer sky o'ercast,

Whereon the drifting clouds are met in strife,

Loud thunders peal—the voice of God at last!

Stand on the height, behold it! such is Life!

What is Life? The fowler's tangled net

Too strong to cut with Wisdom's sharpest knife;

Satanic powers for awful battle met,

I say it, even weeping—such is Life!

What is Life? A dawning, grey, or glowing—

A funeral-march—a strain of flute and fife—

A harvest-field where every soul is sowing,

To reap in joy, or sorrow—such is Life!

Oh! spend thy life in holy preparation

For those fair joys, beyond all sin and strife;

Say, art thou tried? be this thy consolation,

To know a suffering Saviour—this is Life! A. CRAMPTON.

STATE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH.

PAPER I.

THERE has been unusual activity in Gospel work at home and abroad of late years, for which we heartily thank the Lord. "Preach the Gospel to every creature" is not the least of our Lord's unrepealed commands—one involving weighty responsibility on the part of every true believer in any wise fitted for such work. Such individual truths as justification from guilt; the present possession and enjoyment of eternal life; an immediate salvation; and eternal and unqualified forgiveness of sins, necessarily become prominent, and have been taught with more or less clearness to the joy of many thousands.

But while the Gospel and its claims and wide circle of *individual* truths are with many eagerly welcomed, we must not lose sight of the Church and its responsibilities, and equally blessed circle of *corporate* truths. All *Gospel* and no Church checks the progress of the saved, stunts their spiritual growth, and relegates to the background some of the most precious thoughts of Scripture. On the other hand all *Church* and no Gospel manifests the most consummate selfishness, and a callous indifference to the needs of the perishing. The grace of the Gospel softens one and enlarges the heart, whereas a rigid ecclesiastical procedure and the assertion of High Church claims are often the outcome of narrow minds and of a hard and sectarian spirit.

Wherever an evangelistic spirit prevails blessing is sure to follow. We frankly allow that great activity in Gospel service is attended with special danger. Unless there is care and a jealous regard for the holiness of the Lord's house, looseness in principle and action, and a general indifference to evil are apt to characterise our assemblies. The moral ways and character of all who publicly minister should be free from reproach, else the ministry is blamed and God dishonoured (2 Cor. vi. 1-10).

The Gospel and the Church, then, have each their respective claims: the breadth of the former being every creature on earth; the latter being every member of Christ's body, and that irrespective of denominational or sectarian difference. Our safety and blessing is in maintaining both in their due proportions and mutual relationships.

If the professing Church is tested by the rich grace bestowed on her in the early years of her history (Acts ii.-v.;

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1 Cor. xii.); or afterwards by the glory of the hope set before her (Rev. xxi.), we can but sorrowfully regard her as a huge failure. The Church has neither answered to the grace nor glory of God. All *was* bright; all *shall* be bright again. The beautiful picture—God's handiwork—witnessed in the opening chapters of the Acts, has faded. The vessel of God's favour on earth lies shivered and broken. The professing Church is a ruin. The closing picture presented in the Revelation shews the Church in her coronation robes and married to the Lamb (xix. 7) whose precious blood is the ground of forgiveness and justification. As we look forward, our eyes gladly rest on a scene in which there will be no breakage or failure. "Yet was not the net broken" (John xxi. 11). The present break-down in Church testimony is like "the net which brake" on the Galilean sea (Luke v. 6).

In the panoramic picture of the professing Church as viewed in chapters ii. and iii. of "The Revelation," the down-grade movement is traced through its successive stages, from coldness of heart to Christ (chap. ii. 4), till He and His grace are proudly rejected (chap. iii. 17, 18). What then remains but absolute rejection by her deeply grieved and injured Lord. There is no recovery of the professing Church (verse 16), but individuals may enjoy His love and favour (verse 20).

Three incontrovertible facts will establish the truth of our statement that the Church is a huge ruin. First, her *unity* is gone. We neither witness the organic unity effected by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 13)—"One Body," nor the moral unity of the disciples as prayed for by our Lord (John xvii. 21)—"All One." Both *were* displayed for a brief season only; both *will be* witnessed in perfection in glory. For the former see Eph. i. 22, 23; for the latter see John xvii. 23. What meets our sight at present is sad and painful. The Church is torn into shreds, the spirit of division rampant—broken into about 1,300 pieces—like Paul's voyage and shipwrecked vessel on the Mediterranean Sea (Acts xvii.), of which it is a striking figure. The wolf has scattered the sheep (John x. 12), but, blessed be God, he cannot pluck even one out of the hand of the Son (verse 28) nor out of the hand of the Father (verse 29). And although the Church-vessel has gone to pieces, every soul who has sailed with Paul will certainly reach the land (Acts xxvii. 44). One sad feature of the

Nuggets of Gold.

matter is, that instead of putting on sackcloth, sitting down on the ashes of a ruined testimony, and deploring the evil as God sees it and feels it, division is actually pleaded for as tending to promote an honourable rivalry amongst the opposed and opposing Churches as to who will accomplish the most good in the world. Thus one evil leads to another. Will God accept service professedly done to Him—the fruit of such unworthy motives? W. S.

NUGGETS OF GOLD.

The Lord's portion is His people, and He is His people's portion.

When a Saint comes to die, his greatest grief is that he hath done no more for God, and His greatest joy is that God has done so much for him.

God doth not only deliver truth unto His people, but He also delivers His people unto truth.

Some men set their hearts on that on which God would that they set only their feet, namely—the earth.

The house in which no altar to God is raised wants both foundation and roof.

The most powerful way of teaching truth is to show what it has done for you.

The closest walk with God is the sweetest Heaven that can be enjoyed on earth.

No man is a better merchant than he who lays out his time upon God, and his money upon the poor.

A word of kindness is seldom spoken in vain. It is a seed, even if dropped by chance will spring up a flower.

The secret of strength is distrust of self.

There is nothing so powerful as example. We put others straight by walking straight ourselves.

To see the hand of God in the present, and to trust the future in the hand of God, is the secret of peace.

Behind every storm of trial, and every cloud of sorrow is the heavenly blue of Christ's unchangeable love—a love stronger than death.

The discipline to which you are subjected in your lot is the discipline you need to bring out the beauties and graces of true spiritual life.

He who sendeth the storm steers the vessel.

“HE IS OUR PEACE.”

“**H***E is our peace.*” Then if He is our peace—if He in His own Person is our peace—our peace possesses all the qualities which are characteristic of Himself. It is *unchangeable*, for He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” It is *abiding*, for though everything else decays and passes away, of Him it is said—“But Thou remainest.” It is *secure*, for “who shall ascend to bring Christ down from Heaven.” Is it necessary to go farther? Will not a contemplation of the blessed glorious fact that “*He is our peace,*” bring joy and gladness to the heart of any saint who, by the Spirit’s help, for the first time grasps this truth in its fulness.

The Lord Jesus has finished the actual work of peace-making—(“having made peace by the blood of His cross”)—and He is now in heaven as the actual embodiment of the peace He has made.

This peace—our peace with God as to sin, which is eternally put away—is above our reach to make or mar. The peace which depends upon our walking in obedience to our Father’s commands, we enjoy in a greater or lesser degree as we are obedient or the reverse to those commands. But the peace which we speak of now particularly—our peace with God, because there is no longer that awful mountain of sin between our souls and Him—that is the portion of everyone who bears the name of Christ, and who is trusting to Him for salvation, although their walk may not be all that it should be.

Everything connected with our eternal security is in God’s keeping, and has been established by Himself in heaven. The title-deeds—if we may so speak—of our inheritance are in *heaven*, we have no coffers on earth capable of holding them securely, and God has not placed them or anything connected with our eternal security in our own hands. Everything is in Christ in *heaven*—our life is *there*, “hid with Christ in God; our “treasure” is *there*, we are called with a “*heavenly*” calling—and He who combines in Himself every security and guarantee for our safety in His own person, He is *there*. The One who made our peace, whose blood is the guarantee of our peace; He who is Himself our peace, is *there*. Our peace *He* is, and *He* is beyond the reach of harm, that is why that peace is so certain and secure. God *will* not alter it, and devils *cannot*, for “*He is our peace,*” and *He* is at the “right hand of the Majesty on High.” F. T.

IS THE LINK ON?

ARE we disquieted by the risings of an evil nature which, we may have been led to believe, would trouble us no more when we came to Christ? Painful as the experience is, perhaps we should not regret that sin is ever present in our Adam nature, because through it we learn to say, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

As we look more closely at Romans vi. we see clearly that God neither purposed nor promised that sin should die in the believer while in this mortal body, but that the believer should die to it. Christ died unto sin once; we are to account ourselves as having died to it in Him. This is God's reckoning in which we are called to share.

Let us look, by way of illustration, at that man lying there whose time has been wasted in unsatisfied strivings after gain. Let us gather the coveted wealth for which he spent life's best energies, and lay it beside him. It awakens no energies now. Has it lost its power? Not so. It is the same gold for which millions are striving still, throwing soul and body into the struggle for that which cannot profit. We draw a little nearer. The man is dead! There is no life in the clay hand to clutch the treasure. The gold has all its power to lure. It is the man who has died to it. This can only be our experience spiritually, as we have fellowship with Him who for us died unto sin. It shall lose its hold of us, not because it is dead, but because we have died in Him.

The Apostle opens the argument in Rom. vi. by speaking of the believer as having thus died, and goes on to show how we go down under the waters of baptism, like as Christ for us passed beneath the waters of judgment—God's awful judgment on our sin. That as He died unto it judicially once, so God accounts our fellowship with Him as though we too had died—not as to freedom from its judgment only, but from its control.

Therefore, in Christ, victory is as really our inheritance as is "no condemnation." We have passed in Him from death unto life, as fully as though the judgment, borne by Him, had already passed on us. Now let us remember that by the same Divine law we are equally freed from its dominion (verse 5) "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." God has thus provided for an unbroken life of victory,

Is the Link On?

because, "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him," and as is our fellowship in His death, so is our fellowship in His life in God's account. But there is a difference in our experience, because *we* have to do with the life, and, therefore, it is changeful and uncertain; and it is here that faith comes in, bringing "the victory that overcometh." Let us mark the Divine logic of the argument. "He liveth unto God." "If we died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him." Therefore, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin"; and "yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead." The power given to us for this fulness of victory and blessing we find in Ephes. i. 19 and 20. The power is never lacking, but the link may not be on.

We see a huge engine lying in the station, steam all up. Presently the whistle sounds, and it begins to move. We notice a whole train of carriages drawn along just as fast as the engine. They have no more capability of motion than those left behind, and yet they are borne along with the utmost ease by the steam power in front of them. Ah! there is one thing more beside the steam. The link is on. This is our part, beloved young believers. God will see to the power. Let us see to it that the link is on. Let us not be discouraged by the Adam life. It is but the struggling of a conquered enemy, not yet slain. Only let us keep close to Christ, and we shall be more than conquerors in Him that loved us, until the blessed day, so soon coming, when the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet for ever.—A. E. W.

DON'T WASTE TIME.

EVEN those who have a clear sense of their stewardship before God, as regards many other matters, do not grasp it very clearly as regards time. Many think little or nothing of wasted hours and days. Whole mornings, afternoons, and evenings frittered away cause them no trouble of conscience at all. Very many who would never willingly waste their money, waste their time without a thought.

ONE of the deepest secrets of rest is to take everything, without questioning whether it seems good or evil, direct from the very hand of God, as the first great Cause of all.

STATE OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH.

PAPER II.

THE professing Church has made havoc of *Holiness*. The wickedness of Paganism (Rom. i.) is being reproduced in Christian lands (2 Tim. iii.); all garnished over with the *form* of godliness (verse 5), for its life and power are nigh gone. The Church and the World are walking hand-in-glove. The World's entertainments and amusements, consisting of dramatic performances in theatre and church, of combined sacred and secular concerts in hall and chapel, of bazaars, raffles, and the like, are openly patronised by Christian (?) men and ministers, and are regarded as a necessary adjunct and powerful auxiliary to Church success. The money of the uncircumcised is needed to fill her coffers. How are the masses to be attracted to the Church? How is she to maintain her hold upon the people? Attractive and bright services are provided; Church ordinances are thrown open to the religious public. The time was when a broad wall of demarcation separated the Church from the World. It exists no longer. The Church is *in* the World, and the World is *in* the Church. Direct faith in God and in His Word is almost gone. "We need money to build gorgeous chapels; we need money to support our Churches and pay our ministers; we need money to send the Gospel to the heathen, and liberally endow our missionary and other religious societies." Such is the Church's appeal to the World, not to *God*. And the World pours of its gold into the lap of the Church. Conscience is gone and the rights of Christ are sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. The Church hugs the World for what she can get, and the World returns the embrace in grim satisfaction that she is no longer regarded as an enemy to God (James iv. 4). The Church opens wide her doors, and the World opens her purse. At what an awful cost to each is this unholy alliance! "Holiness becometh Thy House for ever" is a forgotten text. The claims of holiness, of Him who is "Light" are frittered away, considered too exacting. Compromising the demands of God on the ground of His love is the order of the day. Open sin such as shocks the conscience of the World is protested against, but Church discipline, save in cases of grave public scandal, is a laughing-stock to the enemies of the Cross. The hearers in the cushioned pews must not be subjected to expressions which fitted a rude and barbarous

State of the Professing Church.

age; not the old-fashioned word "sin" but "moral evil" best suits the educated ear; "hell," if referred to at all, is spoken of as "*that* place"; and the "lake of fire" must on no account be breathed as being exceedingly rude and vulgar. Saint and sinner are indiscriminately mixed in Church fellowship and privilege and indiscriminately addressed as "brethren," and together invited to join in "public worship." Christian England sends rum and the Bible in the same ship to Africa. The missionary and opium land together on the shores of China. The very men who subscribe liberally to missionary societies send the vile poisonous rum which is ruining millions in Africa. The Christian governments of India and England *forced* the importation of the soul and body destroying opium upon the Chinese, and thousands of professing Christians are engaged in this iniquitous traffic, which they *deliberately know* is slowly killing millions of people. England is a *Christian* country. China is a *Heathen* one. Christian England for the sake of a yearly revenue of five millions sterling compelled the heathen country of China to receive the hateful drug amongst her people, compelled the heathen Emperor by bayonet and war ship to submit. Sorrowfully, he added, "It is true I cannot prevent the introduction of the flaming poison; gainseeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality defeat my wishes; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people." Poor Emperor, he has since been driven to do what he so scorned. He now derives no inconsiderable amount of revenue from the cultivation and sale of opium.

We are satisfied we have not gone beyond the sober truth in the foregoing description. We have written plainly, but not under a morbid or diseased imagination. There is no use in shutting one's eyes to plain, palpable facts. May God give us each one to listen to, and obey the Spirit of God: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).
W. S.

—————

Anything that is large enough for a wish to light upon (and surely a worry either) is large enough to hang a prayer upon.

A will satisfied in the will of God, while all else is taken away, is the purest of all loves.

THE CONTRAST.

Ever ! forever
With Jesus, while eternal ages roll,
Or Satan and the lost, an unsaved soul,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
To "see Him as He is," and "like Him be,"
And know the fulness of His love to me,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
At peace, within the "Father's house" to dwell ;
Or "outer darkness" with the lost in Hell,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
With joy to draw from God's exhaustless store,
"The river of thy pleasures" evermore,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
O precious soul, beware ! consider well ;
With saved or unsaved, thou must ever dwell !
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
To be with Him whom now our souls adore ;
And, O ! to grieve His tender heart no more,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
To be with Him who fully met thy claims ;
Or Satan's dark abyss "devouring flames ?"
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Where death no longer wields his mighty sway ;
Life reigns triumphantly ! through endless day,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Still to exist with unabated breath,
In lake of woe, "which is the second death,"
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Where no more fall the sombre shades of night ;
Eternal day ! "for God shall give them light,"
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
To praise Him perfectly ! supreme delight !
Or mourn thy loss, "tormented day and night,"
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
To see Thy face, Thou blessed and adored ;
Thy likeness bear—"Forever with the Lord,"
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Thy awful doom, O soul ! to still deplore,
Or magnify thy Lord for evermore,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Where sin's devastating blight is no more known ;
Sinless as He who sits upon the throne,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Beyond the reach of God's redemption plan ;
His mighty love to guilty, fallen man,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Where no more drops of grief bedim the eyes,
Or "weeping, wailing, worm that never dies,"
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Each step along my pilgrim path to trace,
And see all through, His wise, unerring grace,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Where no more sun, nor moon ("the lamb, the light"),
Or regions of the damned, eternal night,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
Where grief is not, nor pain, nor woe, nor sigh ;
Where lips shall no more frame the sad goodbye,
"Ever ! forever !"

Ever ! forever
At home in harbour calm ; life's voyage past,
The desert journey o'er, sheltered at last !
"Ever ! forever !!"

W. G.

23rd March, 1892.

DOING *VERSUS* TALKING.—7.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER iv.—What a sad picture is presented to us here ! Those who were to be known everywhere as the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, in contrast with all others, by their love one toward another, coveting, fighting, warring among themselves, and—what is sure to accompany this state of affairs—leagued with the world ! And they seem even to have persuaded themselves that the Spirit of God in them was working in them to cause this ! (Verse 5, R.V., which quite changes the meaning from that given in the A.V.). How easily we allow Satan to deceive us, and make us think we are zealous for the truth, and true to the Lord when we are actuated by pride, desire for pre-eminence, jealousy, or other equally unworthy motive. Amidst all this they sought not God's blessing, and what they did seek was not granted to them, because they asked "amiss." They sought not blessing from God with pure motive, but with the object of ministering to their lusts. Many a weak child of God is troubled by this passage, through not examining it in its connection. None, who really with honest heart, seek blessing from God can ever "ask amiss." God hears and answers the feeblest prayer of a real seeking heart ; but the "double-minded" (chapter i. 7, 8) receive not from Him. Let us never fear to stretch up our empty hands to Him as a little child does to its parent, but let us see that our motives are such that He can look into our hearts and see that there is nothing that we seek to conceal from His eye. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" is as true now as when the Psalmist wrote it. In verse 4 we have a solemn warning against alliance with the world. The Apostle is compelled to address these Christians, as God had to address their fathers according to the flesh centuries before, as "adulteresses" who had turned aside in heart from Him and "joined affinity" with God's enemies who murdered His Son, whom we own as our Lord, the one object of our love and loyalty. Notice the wording of the passage, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Like Israel, who sought the friendship of the nations round about her, only to be treated in the end with scorn, so God's people now seek after the world to be but an object of reproach and derision to them ; but none the less, God marks the disloyalty of heart

Doing versus Talking.

and withdraws the enjoyment of His presence. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him."—1 John ii. 15.

Praise, eternal praise, be to our loving Father, that even in such circumstances He is still the "Father of lights in whom is no variableness, nor shadow that is cast by turning," and still He appears in grace to such unworthy children. "He giveth more grace." He *must* resist the proud, but to every one who will humble himself before Him, no matter what his backsliding, no matter how he may have grieved Him, there is yet His free grace—grace to restore the joy of His presence, to make His love again fill the heart, and even in the matter of testimony in the Church and the world, to lift up the fallen one. It is therefore the one resource left to a backsliding child or church to submit themselves to God and draw nigh to Him, resisting the Devil, whose behests have been followed before this—those who have been indulging in actual transgression, *cleansing their hands*, and those whose hearts are not honest, *purifying their hearts*, and in honest humiliation in the Light of the Lord, seeking a lifting-up from Him, and it never will be sought in vain.

The Apostle (in verse 11) speaks of one of the great causes of such a sad state of things as he has been dealing with—viz., speaking evil one of another. Even the law that they as Jews especially revered said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; and those who speak evil one of another, "judge the law," deny that it is good, that its precepts are just; and instead of bowing to its righteousness, set themselves up in judgment of it as though they were wiser than it, albeit the One to whom judgment belongs, and to whom we must each answer, gave, in the beginning, and ratified in the days of His flesh, as His new commandment, the second table of the law. Well, therefore, may He say to us, "Who art thou that judgest another."

In verses 13 to 16 of the chapter, the Apostle reproves those who self-confidently speak and act as though they had control of their future, instead of humbly, in all their ways, "acknowledging" the Lord, and seeking to make all their plans in subjection to His will.

And then he enunciates the solemn principle, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to Him, it is sin." We cannot leave undone God's truths and be guiltless; we are not our own, we are bought with a price. J. S. D.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—8.

PERSECUTION—*continued.*

PLINY, governor of Bithynia, whose letter we recently placed before our readers, was one of the most amiable of historical characters, a good and virtuous man according to the Roman ideal. How comes it then that he stooped to link himself with so vicious a character as Trajan, in persecuting those who, according to the information supplied to him, were the best and most virtuous people in the whole Roman empire? The explanation is that virtue, as understood by Pliny, was a very different thing from virtue as taught by Christ. In the former case it meant a proud, self-exalting, vainglorious spirit, which, while elated with its own rectitude, would scorn to accept the Christian teaching as to the total depravity of man, and the absolute necessity of being saved by the blood of Christ alone. In the latter case the object of all true virtue is the glory of God, and its basis is humility, a grace for which the Pagan has not even a name in his language. The former thwarts neither pride nor lust; the latter humbles the one and mortifies the other. Hence, in all ages, the most amiable of men, if destitute of true holiness, have been, and ever will be, at enmity with the Gospel.

Persecuting edicts appear to have been in force before the correspondence, to which we have referred, took place between Pliny and Trajan, and Nerva's toleration seems to have ceased; but the Christians, under all their trials and sufferings, were still meek and passive as Christ Himself had been, and as Peter had exhorted them to be. In Asia, Arrius Antoninus persecuted them with extreme fury. It is not certain whether his persecution belongs to the reign of Trajan, but as there was an Antoninus very intimate with Pliny, the following story of him may be given here. The whole body of Christians, wearied with constant hardships, presented themselves before his tribunal. He ordered a few of them to execution, and said to the rest, "Miserable people, if you choose death you may find precipices and halters enough."

About this time two most venerable men, who were prominent amongst the saints, were called to suffer martyrdom, namely, Simeon of Jerusalem, and Ignatius of Antioch. In many books on Church history, these are styled respectively "bishop of Jerusalem," and "bishop of Antioch"; but as we see no warrant in the New Testament for calling any one

Gleanings from Church History.

person *the* bishop of any one church, we cannot adopt this mode of describing them. Indeed, the evidence from the New Testament is all the other way: for we read of the elders (plural) of Ephesus (called overseers, that is, bishops, Acts xx. 28), and the bishops (plural) at Philippi, Philip i. 1. It is possible, of course, that some one particular overseer may have become specially prominent in some cases, either through superior Godliness and diligence, or through an unholy desire "to be the greatest"; and a simple people all too ready, as Israel was, to make somebody king, would give him the chief place in their assembly, which in a short time would be called, as in many similar instances in our own times, Mr. So-and-so's meeting, or Mr. So-and-so's church. And thus would come in a condition of things, which, though unhappily too common nowadays, has no parallel that we can trace in the Scriptures of truth.

Simeon was accused by some heretics of being a Christian; and at the age of a hundred and twenty was brought before Atticus, the Roman governor, who caused him to be scourged many days. Atticus was astonished at the old man's hardiness and firmness, but was not moved to pity by his suffering, and he eventually ordered him to be crucified.

Ignatius was martyred by order of Trajan in A.D. 107. Like many other Christians of the period, he was filled with an inordinate desire for martyrdom, so much so that he strongly urged the Christians at Rome to refrain from all attempts to save his life by using influence with the Emperor. He was evidently a good man, and an ardent lover and follower of his Lord: but "the best of men are men at the best," and we must be careful not to take for our guide and model the words and acts of even good men, ancient or modern, unless those words and acts are in strict conformity with holy Scripture.

The following dialogue between Ignatius and Trajan will interest our readers. Being introduced into the emperor's presence, he was addressed as follows:—Traj.: What an impious spirit art thou both to transgress our commands and to inveigle others into the same folly to their ruin! Ign.: Theophorous ought not to be called so, forasmuch as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God: but if you call me impious because I am hostile to evil spirits, I own the charge in that respect: for I dissolve all their snares

through the inward support of Christ, the heavenly King. Traj. : Who is Theophorous? Ign. : He who has Christ in his breast. Traj. : And thinkest thou not that gods reside in us also, who fight for us against our enemies? Ign. : You mistake in calling the demons of the nations by the name of gods : for there is only one God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them ; and one Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, whose kingdom be my portion ! Traj. : His kingdom, did you say, who was crucified under Pilate? Ign. : His who crucified my sin with its author, and has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under the feet of those who carry Him in their hearts. Traj. : Dost thou then carry Him who was crucified within thee? Ign. : I do : for it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Then Trajan pronounced this sentence :—"Since Ignatius confesses that he carries within himself Him who was crucified, we command that he be carried, bound by soldiers, to great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people."

The sentence was now carried out to the letter, and Ignatius was thrown to the lions, whose "bodies became his grave," according to his earnest desire.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

HOW many griefs and troubles which come to us in this world are purely the result of misunderstanding. We think people say what they never did say, or mean what they never did mean. We count men unreasonable and harsh; we fume and fret about matters which do not go to our liking; we complain about what men have said or done; and all this while the persons whom we are blaming meant nothing of the kind that we surmise, and know nothing whatever of our tribulations.

This is one reason why persons who have grievances should go at once to those concerned. They are often the only ones who know the truth, who can explain the misunderstanding, correct the error, or right the wrong. They can tell what they intended to say, or intended to do; and in a great many instances we shall find, on going to the proper parties, that we have utterly misapprehended the facts in the case, have judged others unkindly, and have made ourselves miserable for nothing. In many a case we shall find that we have taken offence where no offence was intended; that we have counted words harsh which were kindly meant; that light and tripping phrases which were carelessly thrown off, have been taken to heart as they never should have been; and that we have made ourselves and others miserable, when there was no need of it whatever.

“WRAPPED IN A CLOTH BEHIND THE EPHOD.”

WHAT was it that was so carefully wrapped up and put in such a sacred place, where no profane hand might touch it? A sword—the sword with which the stripling David had slain the giant foe of Israel: there it was—kept as a trophy under the hand of the priest of the Lord. But of what use was that sword? As long as it lay hidden behind the ephod, treated it may be with a kind of reverential awe—it was practically useless: no foe would turn aside from its keen edge, no practised hand could wield it in the battles of the Lord: it was hidden. Ah, Christian! how often does our sword—“the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”—lie practically useless in our homes? We treat it as a sacred Book, we wrap it round carefully and tenderly with a covering of respect, we resent the tone of familiarity and the breath of detraction—but we put it aside nevertheless behind the ephod. Why there? On the stones set in the shoulder pieces, and on the breastplate worn upon the ephod, were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the high priest bore those names before the Lord: thus we rest in the knowledge of sins forgiven—of our position in Christ—we are content with this, and we do not trouble about the *sword*; the sword means fighting, and we prefer ease; it means conflict, but we wish for rest. So we place our sword behind the ephod, and occupy our hands and our minds entirely with the affairs of this life. Oh, for the spirit of David as he cries to the priest:—“There is none like that, give it me.”—and how well he used it; how his foes learned to dread that sword—a sharp sword in a practised hand. And in a greater sense, how the enemy of souls turned aside from the sword of the Spirit when its keen and living edge was turned upon him by our Lord:—“It is written.”—Matt. iv. Let us love our Bibles, let us read our Bibles, let us study our Bibles, and let us *use* our Bibles.

God's Word is not meant to be hidden (save in our hearts, that its truths may become experimental), but is for daily, hourly use in our lives.

M. F. H.

Soulwinning at home will be best done, not by frowning at and scolding all about us, for the very reason that they are unconverted and act accordingly, but rather by setting before them the bright, attractive, and self-sacrificing loveliness of the really happy Christian life.

THE ORDINANCES AS DELIVERED.

PART I.

IN 1 Cor. xi. 2 the apostle Paul praised the Corinthian saints for keeping the ordinances *as he delivered* them to them. The apostle Jude exhorted the true children of God to contend earnestly for the faith which was *once for all* delivered unto the saints (Jude 4, R.V.), for certain ungodly men had crept in unawares, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is absolute finality implied in the words "once for all" used by Jude, and we do well to remember that what God has delivered to us in this absolute manner must not be permitted to suffer violence at the hands of ungodly men, however deep their learning or subtle their reasoning.

That the apostle's exhortation was needed has been abundantly proved, as we shall see by considering the ordinance of baptism and how it has become corrupted.

Now baptism, as taught by the Lord and His apostles, meant complete immersion in water. Baptize is a Greek word, meaning to immerse, dip, submerge; and this in itself shows that the mere sprinkling or pouring of a little water upon the body is not baptism according to Scripture. And an examination of the passages in which baptism is referred to will clearly prove this. In Matt. iii. 6 it says that they "were baptized—immersed, not sprinkled—of him (John) *in* Jordan." In verse 16, "Jesus, when he was immersed, *went up* straightway out of the water," showing clearly that He had been submerged in the water. In the case of Philip and the eunuch in Acts viii. 38, it is said that "they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized—immersed—him, and when they *came up out of water, &c.*" But someone says, "Oh, then, you want to make it a question of the quantity of water. I, for my part, consider this a point of very little consequence indeed." Friend, beware! God has made it a question of the quantity of water, and the man who makes light of God's arrangement takes up a dangerous position. What saith the Scripture? See John iii. 23, "And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was *much water* there: and they came and were baptized." So you see the quantity of water does affect this question. In fact, there can be no baptism without a sufficient quantity of water for complete immersion, for the

The Ordinances as Delivered.

idea of sprinkling or pouring is altogether foreign to the ordinance as established by God. If sprinkling were intended to be allowed, a different Greek word, *rantizo*, would be used. But no; the word is *baptizo*; and even where this word is rendered "wash," the idea of dipping or plunging in water is still conveyed, as in the case of the washing of the hands by plunging them in water, and also in the case of cups, &c. Indeed the word is actually translated "dip" in John xiii: in reference to the dipping of the sop.

And then, if we consider the expressions used in the epistles in reference to the spiritual meaning of this ordinance, we shall see how very important it is that we be perfectly clear as to the *mode*. In Rom. vi. 4, "Buried with Him by baptism into death"; and in Col. ii. 12, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with Him, &c." Where then does the idea of sprinkling or pouring find a place here? The dead are not buried by sprinkling a little earth over them. They are completely covered up and put out of sight. And this, in fact, is the lesson which God would have His children to learn by their baptism—a lesson which the Devil is determined they shall not learn if he can help it. God wants intelligent men and women—not unconscious infants—to understand that when they receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith they, there and then, become dead to the world, dead to their old Adam condition, dead to sin, dead to self, dead to all that charmed them while they were *dead in sin*; but now alive unto God, henceforth to follow Christ and turn their backs upon their old master the Devil. What wonder, then, if Satan exercises all his ingenuity to corrupt this strikingly instructive ordinance! But, mark his subtlety. He does not lead men to think lightly of baptism, for he knows that such tactics would never succeed against a doctrine so plainly and prominently set forth in the New Testament. Rather does he magnify the ordinance into a means of gaining eternal life; and thus he succeeds in destroying the significance of the figure, and in reviving at the same time the ancient pagan doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which has probably proved to be the deadliest of all the "damnable heresies" privily brought in during the history of the Church of God. Who can estimate the millions upon millions that have been robbed of eternal life through resting in the delusive hope conveyed in these dreadful words, "At

New Carts.

my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." Can any sane man or woman, not absolutely blinded by the Devil, believe that this marvellous change takes place in the baptized, or rather, sprinkled, infant? And yet it is well known that regeneration by baptism is a fundamental article of the churches of Rome and England, though not of the Church of Scripture. It is not, however, so well known that the doctrine is also essentially Babylonian. Some may perhaps wonder at the idea of regeneration being known in the Pagan world; but even to-day, in India, we find that the bigoted Hindoos, who have never opened their ears to any kind of so-called Christian instruction, are as familiar with the term and the idea as we are. The Brahmins make it their distinguishing boast that they are "twice born" men, and that as such they are sure of eternal happiness; the same was the case in Babylon, and there the new birth was said to be conferred by baptism.

[To be continued.]

NEW CARTS.

"And the children of the Levites bare the Ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord. And it came to pass when God helped the Levites that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams."—I Chron. xv. 15, 26.

ALL of us have felt sad as we have read the disastrous failure and tragic termination of David's first attempt to bring up again the Ark of God. The secret of that failure is not far to seek. To bring up the Ark was good: it was in the way in which they set about it that the fault lay. David and the people were guided by that *which seemed* good unto them. The record was not searched that the will of Jehovah might be known. So it came to pass that man's *way* and not God's *will* ruled. Hence the *new cart*—very beautiful doubtless, and in every way adapted to the work—was sent for, and God's way, the shoulders of the Levites, was lost sight of.

And to-day is there not a great temptation to repeat this mistake; the substitution of the new cart for the shoulders of the Levites? A temptation not the less because God does not see fit to manifest His displeasure in the unmistakable

New Carts.

way he did to David. Nor are the results less disastrous because they are not so clearly brought home to us.

The new cart was a labour-saving machine, the very idol of the nineteenth century. The shoulders of the Levites necessitated *personal* labour.

Work for the Lord done by deputy is of the new cart order. As spiritual power in an individual or assembly ebbs, so do new carts come into favour.

In Gospel service, because of coldness and worldliness, the freshness that once drew and held the people is lacking. Something must be done. A new cart is the ready answer of the energy of fleshly activity. Some fresh form of sensationalism, some human device; be it the "pleasant Sunday afternoon," or "service of song," or what not. God's way is that the Levites, those who are born to serve, and only those, should stoop down and take the burden on their own shoulders. More prayer, more self-denial, more visiting, more labour. Do you object that it is such hard work? If the Levites had that thought, if they cast wistful eyes at the new cart, how rebuked they would have been when, having stooped to lift up on their shoulders that heavy Ark, they realised that God was helping them! What an honour! Jehovah joined them in their labour. He shared with them the toil. Oh precious moments of service that brought them into such personal contact and relationship with the Most High.

And He has not changed! So shall we prove, as turning from every new cart, we do His work in His way, with His help to support us and His promises to cheer. W. H. S.

PATIENCE, LOVE, HOPE, CHARITY.

"A little bit of Patience often makes the sunshine come,
And a little bit of Love makes a very happy home;
A little bit of Hope makes a rainy day look gay,
And a little bit of Charity makes glad a weary way."

While there is any permitted disobedience, the slightest thought or habit knowingly indulged which His truth would condemn, tempers manifested inconsistent with our belief, we cannot expect much "joy and peace." These, it is true, are vouchsafed to us "in believing," but a faith which is not united with simple obedience will never know any real joy in the Lord.

“BE THOU FAITHFUL.”

Rev. ii. 10.

LORD, Jesus, keep me faithful
To Thy most holy name,
As Thou art true, unchanging,
For evermore the same.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
To my own soul, I pray ;
Let not self-confidence or pride
E'er lead from Thee astray.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
Unto Thy Church and cause ;
Oh! may I ne'er dishonour Thee,
Or break Thy holy laws.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
Amid this dark world's night ;
Oh! let me ever be for Thee
A bright and shining light.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
In all I do or say.
Thus may I lead some wanderer
To seek the better way.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
In sickness and in health ;
Oh! make me true and steadfast
Midst poverty or wealth.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
Wherever I may be,
At home, abroad, on land or sea,
Where'er Thou ledest me.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful,
That all around may see
That I belong to Jesus,
That Jesus lives in me.

Lord, Jesus, keep me faithful
Throughout this earthly strife,
Till Thou shalt call me to receive
The promised crown of life.—C. M.

AFRICA STRETCHING OUT HER HANDS.

“ETHIOPIA SHALL HASTE TO STRETCH OUT HER HANDS UNTO GOD.”—*Ps. lxxviii. 31, R. V.*

O Church of God, awake from sloth, turn from the clash of creeds ;
Awake to acts of sacrifice—not words, but noble deeds ;
To Africa, hear, hear the call, the door is open wide,
For love of God, for precious souls, for Jesus' sake, who died.
Ye Christian men of Britain, with you to-day she pleads ;
Think of her awful sufferings, her dire and dreadful needs ;
Think of the slave, the lash, the brand, her woes that, like a flood,
Have swept her fields and villages with blasts of fire and blood.
O God, when'er I think of these, my heart cries out, “ How long ”
This frightful tale of horror, and this bitter tide of wrong ?
Shall now be as the days gone by, the future as the past ?
Shall Arab band sweep through the land with burning, blighting blast ?
I hear a cry come moaning up from dying human souls,
Like a surging, rushing river, its mighty volume rolls ;
'Tis the cry of myriad bondmen—'tis the cry of human blood
Rising upward, mounting upward to the Holy Throne of God.
Oh Saviour, Lord, what love was Thine, may Thy deep love inspire
Full many a heart with ardent zeal, with fervent, sacred fire ;
With high resolve, great things to dare, for love, O Lord to Thee,
So by the Gospel's wondrous power the brand, the chain shall flee.
A vision lighteth up my heart, a dream of days to be—
A dream of peacefulness and rest, when Afric's sons are free ;
Of holy calm, of sabbath psalm, of happy, gladsome days,
When from above the Saviour's love shall fill their hearts with praise.
God of all power, how weak these words, how feeble is my pen !
Speak *Thou* the word, and forth shall go devoted, earnest men—
Women and men whose hearts shall cry, “ Lord, 'here am I, send me,'
For this great work I give myself, and all I have, to Thee.”

THE dark cloud that has so long hung over Africa has at length lifted. Without war or devastation, a third of the world's surface, densely populated, is now open to the reception of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The discovery of her treasures of gold and silver will ere long bring thousands to her shores. Oh that many would go to win treasures more precious than gold or gems for Christ's sake. The matter is urgent. Time is flying, the moments are passing. Already hundreds of active agents of a corrupted Christianity are pressing forward to gain foothold on her shores. Shall those who wish to bring the Bible and its pure and simple gospel be less in earnest ?

We are in debt to Africa. She has been long neglected. Her sons have been scourged with the burning whip of slavery. In days past we have not been guiltless in this matter. Fire and sword, musket and knife have done their cruel work in

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her villages. The branding iron and chain have desolated and destroyed. Oh for God-sent men who will dare great things for Him in this vast field of work! Without doubt this text has a fuller prophetic meaning, but is it not true in a remarkable manner at this moment that "Ethiopia *is in haste* to stretch out her hands unto God."

Remember we are not advocating an indiscriminate exodus of Christians to this dark land so long forgotten. No, there must be a direct call from God. There must be physical, intellectual, and, above all, spiritual fitness for the work. Men with vital powers that, humanly speaking, will successfully battle with the fierce foes which, alas! too often make Africa a graveyard for the devoted children of God, who have sought to carry the Gospel to her benighted land. There must be *Love*, intense love for men's souls. *Patience* in apparent non-success. *Tact* in dealing with the contradictory character of the African tribes. And a certain definite training necessary for the work. An eminent missionary has said: "A missionary needs to be a butcher, baker, cook, farmer, gardener, smith, seamstress, machinist, washerman, doctor, trader, magistrate, teacher, surgeon, builder, and fifty other things if he would succeed as a missionary in Central Africa," "He must know how to *do*, and how to *be* above all, and through all *an Evangelist*."

One remark more:—there are those whom duty calls to remain at home—those who have others dependent upon them. Those in professions and businesses, and many others who are evidently ineligible for this work. They can help to support those who are braving the difficulties, dangers, and climatic influences of this land. Above all let prayer, earnest, continuous and pleading, be made to God that those whom He has chosen may yield themselves for this work, and go forth to the land which now seems in "*haste* to stretch out her hands unto God."

S. T. F.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—8.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER v. opens with a solemn denunciation of judgment against the rich of this world. There is an important principle running all through the Scriptures, viz., that those who are in leading positions are the first to be visited by God's judgment, and that every gift, earthly or

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spiritual, adds to the responsibility of the possessor and increases the punishment of such as misuse it. We saw this in the case of spiritual gifts in speaking of chapter iii. 1 : and in earthly things, though God is not dealing nationally with the people of the earth as in the last dispensation, He nevertheless takes note of all that is going on, and, as there is no power but of Him, He will bring to strictest account everyone who uses any power he may have in things little or great for oppression or cruelty or the selfish gratification of his lusts. From the Sovereign who holds supreme power, down to the "sweater" who grinds the poor who are dependent on him for their daily bread : from the wealthy firm who employs its thousands, to the comparatively poor man or woman who treats a maid-servant unjustly and cruelly, God marks all, and will surely visit with vengeance all oppression, all injustice. No cry from an oppressed one, no matter how degraded his state or how low his condition, fails to enter into the ears of Jehovah of Hosts, who is mighty to avenge. Much of what now passes as "smart" business will be found before the Great White Throne to be cruel oppression. Many a great fortune that, perhaps, has procured a peerage for its possessor and made him the envy of multitudes will then "eat his flesh as it were fire." Not only that, but those entrusted by God with riches which they have hoarded up while multitudes have perished from hunger, "the rust of them shall be a witness against" those who, instead of using them in mercy, kept them up for themselves. This I consider to be the force of the word "rust." Things do not rust that are in constant use. The heaping together of treasure is in itself an evidence of the selfish disregard of the miseries of others. It will be a terrible day for those who have "lived delicately on the earth and in self-indulgence" (as the word "wanton" means); who have "nourished their hearts as in a day of slaughter" (a day when oxen and fatlings are killed); who have lived here as though life were a perpetual feast, as though self-indulgence were the one purpose in life worth living for. It will be a terrible day, I say, when they are brought face to face with all the misery they might have relieved, with all the distress they might have assuaged, while they have lived in selfish blindness to it all. For God will hold them accountable for all they have failed to do.

In verse 6 we have one last culminating charge in this

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awful indictment—viz., the persecution of those so dear to Christ that He could say of them to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou *Me*," when He accused him of persecuting His people. The word "just" is in the singular, the R.V. reads "just man," and I believe the force of the word is what I have suggested—viz., that every act of oppression and persecution against a child of God is counted as done to Christ, and in this the rich have always been the leaders. The last clause of the verse, "He doth not resist you," proves, I believe, that it is Christians who are referred to.

Before leaving these six verses I would guard my readers against an error I have frequently heard advanced—viz., that these verses apply primarily to Christians who have riches. I do not see how any attentive reader of the passage could advance such a doctrine. Dare we call a man who would defraud his labourers and persecute God's people a Christian: and notice it is here as everywhere else the *abuse* of riches, not the *possession* of them, that is referred to. Undoubtedly if a Christian is partaker in any of the evils mentioned God will chasten him, but no one could call any to whom the description given in these verses could be applied a "Christian." Let us, however, beware lest that hateful class jealousy that is so rapidly increasing in the world should warp the judgment of any and cause them to "use deceitfully" the word of God.

J. S. D.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—9.

HERESIES.

TOWARDS the close of the first century, when the effects of the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit had become less manifest than at Pentecost and the first love of the Saints began to wane, the false teachers whose rise and progress had been predicted by the Apostles came to the front with their "good words and fair speeches," which were in reality but a cloak for the most "damnable heresies." Satanic subtlety and human depravity were leagued in a hellish conspiracy against the preaching of the cross; and the result was a whole crop of heretics of various names and hues, divided and sub-divided according to the peculiar doctrines of their choice: but united in the main against the true-hearted and simple followers of Christ who adhered to the

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lines laid down by the Lord and His Apostles.

Corinth was early the scene of conflict with these deceitful workers, or "false apostles" as they are called. Colosse had its teachers of heathen austerities and superstitions, as well as its teachers of Jewish ordinances and observances which belonged to the past dispensation. Philippi had to be warned against a brood of professing Christians, who were in reality enemies of the cross of Christ. Galatia was invaded by Pharisaic teachers who endeavoured to introduce the leaven of self-righteousness and to lead back the saints into bondage. In fact, wherever the good seed had been effectually sown the enemy took care to sow tares as diligently as possible, so that every company of believers was troubled either directly or indirectly by the Devil's emissaries; and even while the Apostles lived, there were growing symptoms of that sad departure from the faith foreshadowed in 1 Tim. iv., and 2 Tim. iii.

The doctrine of justification by faith, implying as it does the utter depravity and helplessness of man, has always been fiercely opposed or basely abused.

The memoirs of the earlier heretics inform us of some who, as if to shew that this doctrine was erroneous, professed an extraordinary degree of sanctity, and pretended to be entirely abstracted from the flesh, living in a state of excessive abstemiousness; while others, as if to show their Christian liberty, indulged in the most licentious gratification of sensuality and lived in sin greedily. (See Jude's epistle.)

Lists of heretics with accounts of their teachings have been carefully compiled by ecclesiastical historians, and these have been divided by Tertallian into two classes, called the Docetæ, or Gnostics, and the Ebionites. Theodoret also divides them in the same way.

Simon, commonly called Magus, who was rebuked by Peter in Samaria, and who afterwards became one of Satan's greatest instruments of mischief to the Church, is said to have been the father of the Docetæ and the author of a number of heretical opinions and practices in the first century. This sect held that the Son of God had no proper humanity, and that He died only in appearance. The Ebionites, on the contrary, regarded Him as a mere man born of Joseph and Mary, but a man of most excellent character. They denied the virtue of His atoning blood, and laboured to establish

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justification by works: they rejected Paul's epistles, and accused him of antinomianism because he taught justification by faith in the atoning blood of Christ without the works of the law; and they adhered to the observance of Jewish rites. Thus they showed themselves to be in reality a Jewish sect, and as such they wrought considerable mischief among the Jewish converts.

These two heretical schemes, the one opposing the humanity the other the divinity of Christ, were the inventions of men leaning to their own understandings, and unwilling to admit the great mystery of godliness—"God manifest in the flesh." The doctrine of the atonement was opposed by both: by the Docetæ in their denial of the real human nature of Jesus, and by the Ebionites in their denial of the divine nature which stamps an infinite value on His sufferings.

Jerome says that John wrote his Gospel at the desire of the elders of Asia against these heretics, and his statement would seem to be corroborated by various internal proofs.

This Gospel begins with an authoritative declaration of the deity of Christ; the confession of Thomas—"My Lord and my God"—stands single in this gospel; the particular pains taken to assure us of the real—and not merely apparent—death of the Saviour, and the issuing of real blood and water from His side would seem to indicate a desire to counteract the error of the Docetæ. In John's epistle also, much stress is laid upon the deity and humanity of Christ.

These two heretical factions have their counterpart in the Arians and Socinians, or Unitarians, of our own day. The former have radically the same ideas as the Docetæ, though it would be unjust to accuse them of the abominations which defiled the followers of Simon. The latter are the very counterpart of the Ebionites.

One thing remains to be said about these people—namely, that there is no evidence that they ever suffered persecution for Christ's sake. Retaining the name of Christian, they yet glorified man's righteousness, wisdom, and power—"they spake of the world and the world heard them." We have the testimony of Justin Martyr that Simon was honoured in the Pagan world even to idolatry. In our own times persons of similar stamp would willingly ingratiate themselves with real Christians, and yet at the same time avoid the cross and whatever would expose them to the enmity of the world.

“THY COMFORTS.”

PSALM xciv. 19.

WHAT abundance of consolation do we find in these words—“Thy comforts.” When our souls are bowed down within us, and perhaps wearied with the journey, we sit down faint and discouraged; how, when we meditate on what has been done for us by our gracious Lord, are our souls revived, our spirits cheered, and our hearts made again to sing praises to our God. These words, “Thy Comforts,” remind us of Him who is the God of all comfort. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul.” (Ps. xciv. 19.) The Psalmist finds comfort in the remembrance of what God has done for him: and, beloved, may not we to-day as we sit down and think of all the kindness of our Lord to us find that delight spoken of here and be refreshed, being drawn by such remembrances closer to Him who is the spring of all joy and peace and rest. The words “Thy comforts” suggest a few precious thoughts to us.

First, there is the comfort of salvation, that greatest of all comforts, deliverance from the bondage of sin, from the power of Satan and the terrors of eternal judgment. O! what comfort this should give to our souls. When we look back and consider the hopeless and helpless condition we were in, how our hearts should be made to rejoice as we think of the rich mercy and grace of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, “became poor that we through His poverty might be rich.” Truly the comfort of salvation should delight our souls to-day.

Then there is another comfort—the comfort of being “kept”; kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and O! how much this should comfort our souls within us, for how much we owe to our gracious Lord for not only saving us from our lost estate, but, since then, keeping us by His grace and power: how many have been the pit-falls He has kept us from; how fierce the foes of our souls have been, and how subtle the many wiles of our arch enemy the devil; and from all we have been “kept.” How well the great Shepherd of the sheep has guarded His flock, and how our souls should delight in the sweet and comforting thought that He who is able to save is also able to keep us from falling, and to present us without spot before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24.) Beloved, may our souls find truest comfort from this also, the comfort of being kept.

The Ordinances as Delivered.

And then another and still greater comfort is suggested to us by these words of David; even that great anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, held out to us by the Apostle in 2 Thess. iv. 18, the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. Can we not to-day, as when he wrote those words to the sorrowing saints at Thessalonica, find truest, sweetest comfort in this blessed, blessed hope. Well might the Apostle write, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words," words that told them of the moment when He who tends with unceasing care the flock for which He bled will appear in all His glory and receive us to Himself. How, amidst the din and turmoil of this groaning creation: the jarring strife of tongues and tumultuous heavings of the sea of life, these words can quiet and silence every fear, and, pointing beyond it all, cause our hearts to rejoice. "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, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." How sweet! What a meeting! What an ending to all our heart-aches; the drying of the last tear of sorrow, the blest and happy re-union with those who have gone before and entered into rest, and the blessed, blessed change from faith to sight as we see Him whose visage was "more marred than any man," and be like Him and with Him for ever. "Thy comforts," O! how they delight the soul, as we, like the sweet singer of Israel, meditate on all our God has done, is doing, and will yet do for us. May we, too, find delight to our souls from the consideration of these three simple thoughts suggested by these words "Thy comforts," and be able to comfort others with the same comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.

J. F.

THE ORDINANCES AS DELIVERED.**PART II.**

Our own Pagan ancestors, who worshipped Odin, are known to have practised baptismal rites which, taken in connection with their avowed object in practising them, show that originally at least they must have believed that the natural guilt and corruption of their new-born children could be washed away by sprinkling them with water or by plunging

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them into lakes and rivers. (See Mallett on Anglo-Saxon Baptism. Antiquities, vol. I., p. 335.)

If the question arise, How came it that the Babylonians adopted such a doctrine as regeneration by baptism? we have light also on that. In the ancient Babylonian mysteries, the commemoration of the flood and the ark and the grand events in the life of Noah was mingled with the worship of the Queen of Heaven and her Son.

Noah, as having lived in two worlds, both before the flood and after it, was called "Diphues," or "twice born," and in those ancient Babylonian mysteries it was necessary in some way or other to identify Nimrod with the great patriarch Noah, who was the father of all, and who had so miraculous a history.

Some may wonder how it is that the Church of Rome holds this doctrine: the answer is as follows:—The body of nominal Christians first attached themselves to the *Heathen World-Kingdom* (literal kingdom), which was under the influence of "Mystery" Babylon, and then suffered her, the Mother of Abominations, to lay hold of them and use them for her own purposes; for the Initiated—that is, those who were initiated into the mysteries of the ancient Babylonian worship—having once begun to *profess* Christianity, diplomatized so skilfully that they presently succeeded in procuring the Bishopric of Rome for Damasus, one of their own leaders. This was effected in the years 366-367 A.D., when, after his faction had engaged in a bloody conflict with that of his rival Ursicinus, and had on one occasion stormed a building called a church, out of which they dragged some 150 corpses, he—Damasus—found himself in secure possession of the episcopal chair, and forthwith proceeded to complete the union of the Christian and heathen communities.

In the year 378 A.D., the Emperor bestowed upon him the title and office of Pontifex Maximus, which title is still retained by the Pope. Means were then taken for subordinating the universal Church to the See of Rome, just as the whole heathen world was subject to the Grand Master of the Initiated, and all who refused to acknowledge Astarte under her new name of the Virgin Mary (who is called now by Rome "Queen of Heaven," and represented as a fair, golden-haired damsel, not a dark Jewess), or who would not deny the second coming of Christ in His glorified flesh, were regarded as heretics.

The Crimson Canopy.

In 381 A.D. the second general council met at Constantinople, and by its decrees the Pontifex Maximus was recognised as head of the universal Church; the amalgamation thus became an accomplished fact, and before the year 400 A.D. the Tonsured Priests of Isis, sworn to celibacy, were being received as ministers of Christ; then all the doctrines of Paganism began to be preached with a little change in the nomenclature, and were declared to be Christian—baptismal regeneration, justification by works, the sacrifice of the mass, extreme unction, prayers for the dead, and many others—and the wafer of Astarte was substituted for the broken bread.

Everything was Pagan except the bare names: the vast conspiracy to convert Christianity into heathenism had succeeded so far as the bulk of professing Christians were concerned—from this it has not yet got free.

This is why the Church of Rome holds the old Pagan doctrines, and practises them now; and at the Reformation those who came out from the Roman Church, contending for the beautiful truth of Salvation by Faith, brought with them doctrines which they had previously held, and in like manner the Nonconformists have brought away some of these from the Reformed Church so-called.

E. J. H.

THE CRIMSON CANOPY.

BENEATH the crimson canopy of Jesus' precious blood,
I hide before the terrors of the solemn day of God;
Where judgment cannot penetrate, forevermore kept out,
Where spite of all its threatenings, "free grace" I boldly shout.

Here, as in rainbow's varied lines, in manifold displays,
My Sovereign-God unfolds to me the beauties of His grace;
Grace that designed, sought, found, protects, until my eyes behold,
With all the desert journey past, the city of pure gold.

The crimson blood has raised me from sin's dreadful mire and clay,
From midnight darkness brought me to God's own unclouded day;
From pauper changed me to a prince, from enemy to child,
Securing an inheritance which cannot be defiled.

O! how shall I describe it all, this strange and wondrous sight,
Where judgment kisses mercy's cheek, where love and truth unite,
Where cherubims and seraphims, amazed, fail to explore
Love's sea without a bottom, love's ocean without shore.

But by-and-by when all is gone that now obstructs my sight, [night;
Earth's changing scenes, earth's vain employs, earth's clouds, and mists of
Beneath the crimson canopy of that most precious blood,
With resurrection tongue I'll sing the wondrous love of God. M. I. R.

IS IT "I LIKE" OR "WHAT CHRIST LIKES?"

OUR union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection is indeed beautifully shown forth in believers' baptism, but this, though very precious, is by no means all we learn from this divinely appointed figure.

It tells out that we have a new Master, whose claims we own, and to whom our allegiance is now due.

It further proclaims that we fall in and agree to the sentence of death on the old self-life, and that henceforth at least our desire is to walk in newness of life. (Rom. vi. 4.)

When the child of God, by any act, lives again the old self-life, he by that very act contradicts the confession of his baptism. (Rom. vi. ; Gal. iii. 27 ; Col. ii. 12.)

It is at once obvious that the act of baptism must be an act of intelligent faith on the part of the one baptized, otherwise it would be mockery to appeal to baptism as a reason why the walk should be in newness of life.

In a house where the parents objected to baptism, though professed believers, a daughter desired in this manner to obey the Lord. After a little while consent was obtained, and the young convert was baptized. On her return home the evening she was baptized, her mother greeted her with the words—"Now, Mary, we shall expect to see the new life." Quite so, and the expectation was just. But who would thus have addressed a tender babe unable to understand, or even an adult if still in the flesh, and therefore unable to please God?

Newness of life! But what does this mean? What does it call for? The guiding principle of the old life is "*I like*," of the new "what Christ likes." To please self, the aim of the old. To please Christ, of the new. Thus the standard is either what would please self or what would please Christ. In a word, self or Christ becomes the centre of life.

This is true as much of my religion as of my pleasures. It marks as much the duties of life as its mere enjoyments. Thus we hear on all sides amongst religious people the phrase, "*I like*." This appears to be the test which is considered final. "I like, for my part, people who love charity," says one. Another likes that which appeals to the intellect. Another prefers the emotion and sentiment to be wrought upon. In all this there is no room for the appeal to "What Christ likes?" It is after all the old life and not the new. Again, when those who are real Christians fall back upon their ideas and fancies and set aside the word of God, they are living out the

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old life ; they are, in the very measure in which they do this, denying the truth they set forth in the act of baptism.

The essence of the new life is denial of self, because we own Christ as Lord. Dead to self because alive to Him.

This is hard to unbelief, but easy and joyful to faith. Unbelief says, "It is so hard to give up." Faith says, "If *He* denies me one thing, it is that He may grant me many things ; His will is my good." A little girl had a purse given her with a penny in it. She was very proud of her new possession. It was much to her. When her father came home, she ran to tell him all about it. He asked her for it, and then slowly opened the purse and took the penny out. It was almost more than the little one could bear, until her father said, "Why do you think I want the purse and the penny?" Then a bright thought struck the child, and she cried, "Please, father, I suppose you want to put something in." "Of course that is it," said the parent, and putting in a shilling he returned the purse to the little girl. After that she did not mind her father taking her purse. When we know how our Father delights to give, we are not afraid of what He will ask from us. When we know our Master we do not shrink from taking up His yoke, for we find it easy and His burden light. David could say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord." (Ps. xxvii. 4.) Paul echoes the words when he cries, "But this one thing I do. . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 13-14.)

How simple our life becomes when we have but one object, one purpose, one idea ; even to please Him.

Life is no longer a puzzle. The perplexity of "May I do this?" or "May I go there?" is over when we let this settle everything—"What would please Christ?"

This new life is the simple, happy, joyous one. May it be ours by grace continually to live it. May the steps of our pathway not deny the act of our baptism, but may it be ours ever to walk in the newness of life. W. H. S.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—9.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER v. 7.—Now what is to be our attitude in the presence of God's solemnly pronounced judgment in the previous verses? "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord." It is to be noted that God

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never gives us any place in the execution of His vengeance on sinners. "Judgment is mine." He has committed to us a very limited power to carry out His judgment *in the Church*, never outside it, and there is but one attitude in this world under injustice, misrule, or even downright oppression that honours Him—viz., Patience. The patience of those who know that God marks all that is going on; of those who have "committed their souls to Him in well-doing," as our Lord did; of those who know Him whom they have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to guard that which they have committed unto Him against that day, after the example of Paul; and, above all, the patience of those who "love His appearing" and are looking for Him. Nothing more emphasises the difference between us and the unconverted than the fact that, in the darkest hour, the knowledge that He is coming brings hope and joy into *our* souls, while with them their brightest hours are clouded at the bare thought of meeting Him. And as with the farmer the early and latter rains are needed to bring to perfection the fruit of the earth, and he patiently waits through the months in which it slowly matures, so God is using all these troubles and persecutions to bring forth His fruit in us, and it becomes us to patiently wait His time, when *we* shall enjoy that which *His* grace has brought forth. Therefore let us be patient and establish our hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand, when all the trouble shall be over, and the abundant harvest of blessing, brought out of all the shade and sunshine, the brightness and the cloud of these waiting years, shall be enjoyed for ever in His presence. Meanwhile, if our attitude as regards this world is to be that of patience, how much more are we to avoid discord amongst ourselves. "Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged," and the solemn warning is added, "Behold the Judge standeth before the doors." (R.V.) The idea implied is that He stands with His hand on the latch. Compare Matt. xxiv. 49-51, Luke xxi. 34-36, where the Lord warns His disciples that even in the terrible day of the "great tribulation," when, if ever, His disciples should be watching and acting like those who wait for their Lord, there is the danger of their being found striving one with the other, lording it one over the other, "the hearts overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life," so that "that day come on you suddenly as a

“Delight Thyself also in the Lord.”

snare.” So here the like danger is pointed out to us, that the Lord warns those of, who shall be called on to pass through that period, that most of us believe we shall be saved from, through being called to meet him in the air before it. Oh, brethren, what a sight for angels and devils to behold! Sinners redeemed with blood going to spend eternity with the One who gave Himself for them, who profess to be waiting for Him to come speedily to take them to Himself, to be murmuring one against the other. Don't let us shut our eyes to what God says—We *shall* be judged! Nay, brethren, *His judgment is upon us!* Whence the continual cry as in the days of Haggai, “We have sown much, but we bring in little.” “We have looked for much, and, lo, it has come to little;” and how often ought we to consider our ways as we find God “blow on it,” when we thought we had accomplished something. Whence diminishing Assemblies? Whence half-empty Gospel meetings, or Gospel testimony wholly abandoned? Whence Bible readings given up and prayer meetings so dry that few care to come to hear one or two long, doleful sermons addressed to God? Judgment has already begun with us, and, still more solemn for each one of us, the Judge Himself stands with His hand on the latch.

J. S. D.

“DELIGHT THYSELF ALSO IN THE LORD.”—1.

WHILE it is true that the ordinances of the law have become obsolete and have vanished away, the great truths and doctrines which were intended to be pre-figured and set forth are still present. The shadow has fled away, but the substance still remains to bless and profit our souls.

Perhaps few of these ordinances are more worthy of our prayerful and reverent study than that of the Nazarite as we find it brought before us in Num. vi.

We must notice first that the vow of Nazariteship was a voluntary act. It is not a matter of meeting the claims of God's righteousness. This has been fully accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, the True Nazarite. He willingly died in our stead, and provided for us a stainless robe of righteousness. We are out of the place of condemnation and accepted in the beloved. But that is not all: He presents himself as a satisfying portion to our hearts. Do we delight ourselves in Him?

Our eternal portion is sure (1 Peter i. 4), but our present enjoyment of the riches laid up for us in Christ, and consequent

“Delight Thyself also in the Lord.”

power either to serve or shine for Him will depend entirely on the measure of our fellowship with Christ. Hence we can see the importance of the truth set forth in the Nazarite's vow.

It is most precious to observe that it was open to either a man or a woman to undertake the vow. There were many things a woman could not then, and cannot now, do according to the Scriptures, but she can *Love*, and what is set before us in Nazariteship is just this—“Delighting in the Lord.”

Separation unto the Lord is the essential characteristic of the vow. Not separation for special service like that of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii.), but the voluntary turning away of a soul from everything that would be in anywise a hindrance to its full enjoyment of the Lord, a heart that is so satisfied with Christ that it can give up everything for the sake of fellowship with Him. When we have been in His banqueting house, stayed with His flagons, and His comforts have delighted our souls, separation from that which is here typified by wine and strong drink is an easy matter.

There was nothing intrinsically sinful in the fruit of the vine: in fact it was part of the promised blessing of Israel. But the Nazarite was to abstain from everything that came of the vine, from the kernel to the husk: and so it is now; the soul that longs for closer fellowship with Christ than what others may content themselves with, will be willing to turn away from many lawful things that others may find pleasure and gratification in, but truly it will be to find that in Him they have a goodly heritage. His love so fills the heart, His comforts so delight the soul, that there is room for nothing more.

But let us never forget that this separation must be the voluntary act of a heart made willing by love. It is worse than useless to impose it upon either ourselves or others. If it has not this spontaneous character, it will surely be found that, while we are abstaining from wine (earthly joy and pleasure), we are indulging largely in vinegar; but the Nazarite abstained from both. Vinegar points to that which is sour and cynical, harsh and censorious in nature, and it is very easy, with the help of Satan, to get up an affected Nazariteship with a loud-mouthed profession of indifference to the very things which, perhaps, the heart is craving after all the while, and a hard judging spirit towards others, all of which is the very opposite of the loving and gracious spirit which is ever begotten of close fellowship with Christ.

Heresies.

The next point we may notice is (verse 5), "All the days of the vow of his separation shall no razor come upon his head." We have a good deal said in Scripture about shaving off the hair, from which we learn that it was a sign of deep sorrow and mourning (see Job i. 20, Jer vii. 29); and travellers in eastern lands tell us that this is the case in many places even to this day. We also learn from 1 Cor. xi. that long hair was a sign of dependence upon and subjection to the authority of another. Taking these two thoughts together, we learn from the unshorn head of the Nazarite that, while he eschewed the wine of earthly joy, his was no sad lot: he had a spring of joy in God Himself, and while he disowned all his own rights and power and dignity in nature, the Lord was his strength and power and only source of supply.

What blessed truths are here for our souls to learn out in full experience. Naturally we seek our joy from earthly sources, and depend for power on earthly forces; but, thank God, in our new relationship to Christ we are indwelt by the spirit so that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, which is so precious to God. It is only as we are walking closely in communion with Him that we shall bring forth "much fruit," the fruit of joy (divine joy) and faith which worketh by love.

Then, like the Nazarite, we shall be marked and known, because the beauty of the Lord our God shall be upon us, and there shall be reproduced in us the characteristics lamented after by the Prophet Jeremiah, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow. They were whiter than milk. They were more ruddy in body than rubies. Their polishing was of sapphire." (Lam. iv. 1.)

S. R. W.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—10.*HERESIES—Continued.*

BEFORE leaving the subject of heresy, it may not be out of place to make a few remarks as to the causes which led to the rise and progress of heresy in the early years of the Christian era. By heresy, we mean doctrine contrary to and subversive of the "teaching which is after godliness," and which is now handed down to us in the Scriptures of truth. Heresy means that which is chosen or adopted—a choice—and a heretic is a man who chooses his own way instead of God's way, and his own thoughts instead of

Heresies.

God's thoughts. He questions the truth of God's statements because they do not fit in with his own conceited notions, and he sets up his carnal opinions against the plain teaching of revelation. And if he chance to live in a day when the people of God who come within the sphere of his influence are growing worldly and cold, he will probably gain a little following from amongst these as well as from amongst nominal Christians, who are only too eager to take up any theory which has the effect of lowering the standard of godliness and the divine ideal of Christianity as set forth in the Word of God. Then this man and his followers become a sect—that is, a company of choosers—for “sect” and “heresy” are the same word in the original tongue, and refer to the case of persons who choose their own doctrines and follow their own favourite teachers.

However, through the mercy of God, the true believers in every age have mostly been proof against those who “bring not the doctrine of Christ,” and although a few simple souls have now and then given heed for a little season to the specious pretensions of fanatics and imposters, it is the opinion of the best authorities that few, if any, real Christians have ever been enlisted amongst the heretics.

During the lifetime of the apostle John the heretics of the first century were discountenanced and shunned by the saints, and although Cerinthus and others earnestly craved recognition as Christians, they were never recognised by the Church as anything but the enemies of Christ.

But Satan never gives up, and when he is foiled at one time he returns to the charge at another; and so he goes on reviving exploded heresies from time to time as the condition of the Church of God becomes favourable for the sowing of tares.

In the second century the heresies of the apostles' days were revived by various men of the usual conceited and ambitious stamp, and although hardly any of the children of God—having “an unction from the Holy One”—were permanently seduced, yet the Church generally was troubled and injured by these attacks of Satan.

One of the men whom Satan used at this time, and who was summarily excommunicated from the Church, was named Theodotus, whose character affords a good idea of that of heretics in general.—“This Theodotus was a citizen of Byzantium, a tanner, but a man of parts and learning.

Heresies.

Heretical perversions of Scripture have often been invented by such persons. Pride and self-conceit frequently have a peculiar ascendancy over men who have acquired knowledge in private through their own industry. This self-taught tanner speculated, felt himself important enough to be singular, and revived the heresy of Ebion. He was brought with some other Christians before persecuting magistrates. His companions honestly confessed Christ and suffered: he was the only man of the company who denied Him. In truth, he had no principle strong enough to bear the cross of Christ. Theodotus lived still a denier of Christ, and being afterwards upbraided for denying his God, 'No,' says he, 'I have not denied God, but man; for Christ is no more.' His heresy hence obtained a new name, that of the God denying apostasy."

In this century, too, the Church of Christ was internally shaken and much disfigured by the heresy of Montanus. This is the account of it given by Apollinarius of Hierapolis, who took pains to confute it. "Being lately in Ancyra, in Galatia, I found the Church filled throughout, not with prophets as they call them, but with false prophets; where, with the help of the Lord, I disputed many days against them: so that the Church rejoiced and was confirmed in the truth, and the adversaries were vexed and murmured. It originated in the following manner:—There is a village in Mysia, a region of Phrygia, called Ardaba, where we are told that Montanus, a late convert in the times of Gratus, proconsul of Asia, gave advantage to Satan by being elated with ambition. The man behaved in a frantic manner, and pretended to prophesy. Some who heard him checked him as a lunatic, and forbade his public exhibitions, mindful of our Saviour's predictions and warnings against false prophets; but others boasted of him as endued with the Holy Ghost, and, forgetting the divine admonitions, were so ensnared by his arts as to encourage the imposture. Two women were by Satan possessed of the same spirit, and spake foolish and fanatical things. They gloried in their own supposed superior sanctity and happiness, and were deluded with the most flattering expectations. Few of the Phrygians were seduced, though they (the false prophets) took upon them to revile every church under heaven which did not pay homage to their pretended inspirations. The faithful throughout Asia examined and condemned the heresy."

“IT IS ONLY TILL HE COME.”

WHAT a comfort it is amidst the cares and sorrows and oft-times blinding griefs of this present life to have something to look forward to—a hope to cheer and brighten our pilgrim journey. So thought I when speaking the other day with a lonely orphan girl about certain troubles which had lately come upon her. Her mother, with whom the girl lived—and, indeed, whom she had lived for several years—had been recently taken from her, and now she felt almost alone in the world. She was not, however, friendless nor altogether without relatives, but her dearest relatives were nearly all away in distant places. One of them was a much loved soldier-brother, who had promised to come and make a home for her at the end of his term of enlistment in the course of about another year. This expected coming of Charlie—for that was his name—was the bright sustaining prospect which this dear girl had before her, and so fully had it taken possession of her mind that whenever anyone alluded in conversation to her altered circumstances and the trials and worries she had to endure, she would always reply, “Yes indeed, it is very sad; but it’s only till Charlie comes.” Yes, only till Charlie comes. All her difficulties, all that was connected with her present lonely condition would vanish at Charlie’s coming. So thought she; and hence she could smile in the day of adversity and sweeten her bitterest sorrow with that joyous thought, “It’s only till Charlie comes.”

Fellow-believer, is there not in this touching little story of this dear orphan girl a solemn and blessed lesson for you and me? Many trials and sorrows beset us here: our pilgrim way is sometimes blocked to all appearance with difficulties insurmountable; sickness, pain, and suffering press heavily upon us; persecution, privation, peril threaten to overwhelm us; but midst it all is there not this one glorious vision to cheer and sustain us, the vision of the coming back of “this same Jesus” who has promised—not to make us a home down here—but to take us to His home up there, where He is even now preparing for His bride-elect? Ah! yes, and well may we say in the midst of all our sorrow, “It is only till Jesus comes.”

“Clouds and darkness round us press,
Would we have one sorrow less;
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is lost;

Until the Day Break.

Death and darkness and the tomb,
Pain us only till He come."

Charlie was coming in about a year,

"We know not the hour when our Lord shall come:"

and hence it becomes us to be on the alert continually for the sound of His footfall : for not only will this expectation of His speedy return help us to bear with patience the trials of the way, but it will help us so to live from day to day as that we may be found walking and acting so as to please Him when He does return. How awful to be found engaged in any way that we would be ashamed of before Him at His coming ; enjoying ourselves it might be with His enemies, those that rejected His love, that would none of Him. And, alas! alas! how many of God's dear children to-day are so doing ; enjoying themselves with the rejectors of their Lord. Oh that we may be watching and waiting ready when Jesus comes !

M. E. L. S.

UNTIL THE DAY BREAK.

(Song of Solomon ii. 17).

WHEN the day breaketh, and the shadows flee
From this dark world of sin and grief and woe,
When we shall Jesus' full salvation see,
When tears of pain and sorrow cease to flow ;
When Christ Himself shall come to claim His own,
Redeemed from Adam's fallen guilty race ;
When we shall bow in rapture at His throne,
And see our blest Redeemer face to face.
When the day breaketh, and the shadows flee,
And sin no more obscures our mental sight ;
But clad in glory, perpetually we
Shall dwell in scenes of radiant, dazzling light ;
When doubts and fears forever all are gone,
And feeble faith shall be replaced by sight ;
When we shall know even as we are known,
And praise our God unceasing day and night.
When the day breaketh, and the shadows flee,
Lord, hasten in Thine own good time that day ;
When from earth's ceaseless conflict we are free,
And life's perplexities shall pass away.
But till that longed-for, blissful hour draws near,
We ask for grace to serve Thee, and to wait
Till Thou shalt in the clouds of heaven appear,
And open wide for us the golden gate.—C.M.

"WHERE IS THE GUEST CHAMBER?"

A SATURDAY EVENING'S MEDITATION. LUKE xxii. 7-13.

WHAT response does each heart give to this searching question?

The man to whom it was first addressed was not unprepared. The room was furnished. Scripture unfolds nothing of this man with the pitcher of water. His past, his future, are alike a blank to us, but this we do know, his was the honour to provide a guest chamber for the blessed Lord. Throughout eternity he will rejoice in the use his room was put to that day. No act of his life so blessed as this to provide the guest chamber where the Lord shall hold communion with His loved disciples.

Do we envy him? We need not, for still the question comes as personal and direct as ever. "The Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat . . . with my disciples?"

O! my soul, how dost thou reply? Is it thy joy and chief concern to have thy chamber always furnished and ready? Art thou on the alert to cast out every uncomely visitor, and put away all that would offend His holy presence? When He sends this message we may be sure He follows close behind. Yet alas! how often does the message find us all unprepared and with little desire to make ready. Like one of old we complain, "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" (Song of Sol. v. 3.) It is the happy privilege of every believer at all times and all seasons to enjoy the continual realized presence of the Lord. Yet there are occasions when in a special sense the blessed Lord would hold communion with us. Such an occasion is the weekly feast of remembrance. As we go up to the feast let us listen to the enquiry, "Where is the guest chamber?" How good it is when we can reply from our innermost soul, "Blessed Master I can welcome Thee to the prepared place." "Let my Beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits." (Song of Sol. iv. 16.)

The room cannot be furnished without trouble, nor made ready at a moment's notice. We cannot jump into communion as we may into our Sunday clothes. How do we spend the Saturday afternoon and evening? Do we retire late with a tired body and wearied spirit, quite too worn out to give the Good Shepherd time or opportunity to restore our souls? What wonder then if we take advantage of its being Sunday morning to take a little longer rest.

"Where is the Guest Chamber?"

Time goes on quickly, we are astonished to find how little we have left ourselves for a hurried toilet, a hasty meal, and a rapid walk ere we take our seats at the heavenly board. Out of breath, we just manage to slip in during the singing of the first hymn. Do we hear the still, small voice whisper, "The Master saith to thee, Where is the guest chamber?" Does our conscience accuse us, and do we let the sword of the spirit strike home, or do we seek to evade its force by cheap excuses, or, worse still, try and cast the blame of a poor meeting on our brethren? The risen and glorified Lord from off that Throne of Glory sends a message to each of the seven churches, and almost the last words of the last message read like this—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me." (Rev. iii. 20.) How sad, the Master outside! How beautiful, He stands at the door that He may come in at the first opportunity!

Which, think you, is the most amazing, our folly or His grace?

He desires to have supper with us. The evening meal, when all the family meet, then the work is over and each has time to tell of the day's joys and sorrows. It is the meal of fellowship. That is the meal He fain would take with us. He will share in all our experiences. May we see to it that we have none we dare not share with Him.

Blessed Jesus! Thou did'st ever seek fellowship. Thou did'st come to Thine own, but Thine own received Thee not. Earth had no room for Thee. Thou wast ever the rejected One. No room for Thee in the inn; Thou wast born in a stable and cradled in a manger. The tidings that at last David's heir had come brought no joy to the royal city. We only read the alien king was troubled and all Jerusalem with Him. (Matt. ii. 3.) So it ever was. The Scripture that records His first act of public ministry in His native town, tells also of the first attempt to murder Him. Foxes had holes, the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head. Every man might go "to his own house," but Jesus went to the "Mount of Olives." Soon was the prophecy fulfilled. "He was cut off out of the land of the living." Nevertheless, His delights are still with the sons of men. Having loved His own, which are in the world, He loves them unto the end. "If a man

Gleanings from Church History.

love Me, he will keep my words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.)

Oh! my soul, make it thy chief business to be ever a Bethany: a house of refreshment, a house of rest for thy blessed Lord.

Like the man with the pitcher of water, be ever ready to show the room, ready and furnished, when the Master shall ask, "Where is the guest chamber?"

W. H. S.

MY GUIDING STAR.

BRIGHT Star of the morning,
Hope's zenith adorning,
Break through night's clouds that so oft intervene;
Show me Thy beauty,
And teach me love's duty,
To walk in Thy light through this wilderness scene.
Teach me, in weakness,
Humility, meekness,
While at the throne of Thy Grace now I bow;
Shine in and on me,
Let grace be upon me,
With peace, like a halo, encircle my brow.
O guide Thou me ever
O'er mountain and river;
Guide to the manger, the cross, and the grave,
Guide, I beseech Thee,
Till I even reach Thee,
Thou who for me once Thy life freely gave.

GLEANINGS FROM CHURCH HISTORY—11.

TRAJAN died in the year A.D. 117, during his great military expedition in the East. His successor, Adrian, does not appear to have issued any persecuting edicts against the Christians, but he allowed to remain in force, at least for a time, Trajan's wicked edicts, under which death was inflicted on Christians *as such*, apart from any moral guilt. Nevertheless the Gospel spread rapidly through the Empire, and even extended to the regions beyond; for many of the saints, animated by the same Spirit that energised the

Gleanings from Church History.

apostles, and filled with the love of Christ, distributed their substance among the poor and travelled into regions where Christ was not named. Large numbers were converted on hearing the Gospel for the first time, such was the power of the Holy Spirit which attended the preaching of these self-denying and God-honouring pioneers of the cross. Thus the faith was planted in many lands; the disciples were instructed to observe all things commanded by the Lord; churches were formed such as we read of in the Acts of the Apostles; churches already in existence, but languishing from one cause or another, were helped and greatly comforted; and then these ambassadors of Christ passed on to other places.

How beautiful is all this, and how nobly it contrasts with the money-loving, self-seeking, ease-enjoying spirit of our own times, albeit we live in a day when travelling, whether by sea or land, is a positive luxury compared with second century modes of transit!

One of these distinguished men, Quadratus, on reaching Athens found the church in that city in a dilapidated condition owing to the persecutions. He laboured hard to restore order and discipline and lively godliness amongst the saints, and succeeded marvellously through the goodness of God, so much so that Origen, in writing against Celsus, cites the case of this very church as a proof of the efficacy of the Christian faith in producing good order, constancy, meekness, and quietness as contrasted with the factions and tumult which prevailed in the best political and other assemblies.

Adrian came to Athens in the sixth year of his reign, and as the persecutions were still vigorously carried on, Quadratus at length presented an apology to the Emperor defending the Gospel from the calumnies of its enemies, and referring particularly to the miracles of our Lord—notably those of the raising of some persons from the dead who were alive in his own time.

Aristides, a Christian writer at that time in Athens, also addressed an apology to Adrian on the same subject. These apologies are believed to have effected some change in the Emperor's mind in favour of the Christians; but a letter from Serenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, is supposed to have moved him still more. No Roman governor had previously dared to give expression to views opposed to Trajan's wicked maxims, but this man courageously wrote that it seemed to

Fellowship with God.

him "unreasonable that the Christians should be put to death merely to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial, and without any crime proved against them." Upon this, Adrian issued the following rescript addressed to the successor of Granianus, whose government seems to have concluded shortly after his letter was written.

To Minucius Fundanus.

"I have received a letter written to me by the very illustrious Serenius Granianus, whom you have succeeded. To me then the affair seems by no means fit to be slightly passed over, that men may not be disturbed without cause, and that sycophants may not be encouraged in their odious practices. If the people of the province will appear publicly and make open charges against the Christians, so as to give them an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamours. For it is much more proper, if any person will accuse them, that you should take cognisance of these matters. If any then accuse, and show that they actually break the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime. But, by Hercules, if the charge be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of such calumny, and punish it as it deserves."

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

I WILL tell you what has been *very strongly* impressed on my soul during the last few months—that it is not so much *working* for God, or *speaking* for God, as *living* in the *secret of His presence*, which most glorifies Him.

If we do live *before Him*, and *with Him*, we *shall* work and *shall* speak; but then half the effort and half the words will bring forth a thousand fold larger harvest of results, because all will come with the Spirit's power and unction and presence.

Have you ever been in the presence of a superior mind and heart—a mind with which your own was *in touch*, so to speak—and have you observed how (almost unconsciously at the time) your whole being was *controlled*, yea, and elevated beyond, above itself, and you felt as though you were a better and greater man, under the benign and higher stimulus of that presence? I have felt it.

Well, we must seek so to *realise our Saviour's presence* with us and in us, that our whole being shall be hushed and

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quietly elevated and *controlled* in every *little* thing, and *little* word, thus we shall glorify Him, and shall become a *power* in His hands among men, and a testimony, yea, even when silent, to all with whom we associate.

Here is the secret of a holy life and a useful one! Shall *we too* strive after this blessed realization of His presence? I *am* seeking and I *will* seek it with all my might. God will give it to me; yea, *does* in some *very small* measure.

Forgive a reiteration of the thought that to become a blessing we must be *holy*—we must cultivate our *hearts*. Considering my strength, my life has not been a very idle one since I left school. Bible classes, cottage meetings, work-house and district visiting, &c., or an outward life of service, but *very little of an inner life of love*.

REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS—1.

CHAPTER I. 1-6.

THE Epistle to the Romans is divided into three parts, viz. :—

1st. Chapter i. to end of chapter viii.—the general principles of the Gospel of God.

2nd. Chapter ix. to end of chapter xi.—treating of the dispensational dealings of God with Israel and the Nations.

3rd. Chapter xii. to end of Epistle—setting forth the practical effects which these truths should produce in the souls and ways of the Lord's people.

Taken as a whole, the general design of this Epistle is to establish the fundamentals of Christianity, and therefore the Holy Spirit has introduced it in a most befitting way, by first giving expression to that which constitutes the very basis of these fundamentals themselves, as, indeed, of all Divine revelation—namely, the glorious authority of our ever blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is, in His own Person, essential substance of all truth. To Him, then, as the needle to the pole, all Scripture points as the Alpha and Omega of every promise. Every thought in the infinite mind of our blessed God centred and substantiated itself in His Son.

The Gospel, which originated in the purpose of His love in ages past, and was subsequently declared at the judgment of the Serpent at the fall of Adam, was concerning His Son. The head that devised that fall should ultimately be bruised under the heel of the woman's seed coming forth as the

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Deliverer of His people through the tasting of death for them—the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil.

Subsequently God communicated this purpose of His concerning His Son by promise to Abraham and David, which two were the depositaries of promises concerning the nation and their land, and the nation and their kingdom, respectively. Of these the prophets have testified in the Scriptures, ever setting forth Messiah as the *substance* of the promises and the *security* of their fulfilment. The same is true of the peculiar counsels of God concerning His heavenly elect outside the sphere of mere earthly blessing; for whatever be the character of promised blessing, whether earthly or heavenly, throughout all, as a golden thread, we have Christ in His essential fulness personally, whilst in some particular phase of His glory, officially, as the embodiment of all blessing.

The first promise was “to Abraham and to his seed.” Isaac, as the heir of promise, passing through death and resurrection in a figure, foreshadowed “Him that was to come.” All promise centred here. Two great divine principles were necessary to the laying hold of the promise and to the realisation of its fulfilment, viz.—*faith* and *resurrection*. We see both of these in the case of Abraham. Faith triumphed over the knife and the altar in counting upon the God of resurrection. (See Heb. xi.) By faith Abraham, knowing that the true Son of promise should enter into the world through Isaac's lineage, could rise above the then present trying circumstances, persuaded that not only would God *fulfil* His promise, but that He would do so in the *way* He promised. Of course this entailed resurrection. Faith having laid hold on God and honoured Him, God communicates to faith the mighty security of every word He had spoken. Death could not hinder His purpose, and so Abraham “rejoiced to see” Christ's day. “He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.”

The promise declared in God's unconditional covenant with Abraham has a double fulfilment—first, with reference to Israel and their land, as the natural seed; and next as to all who in every subsequent age would embrace God by living faith, the spiritual seed. (See Gen. xxii. and Rom. iv. with Gal. iii.) As to the first of these, although both the nation and their land are in desolation because of disobedience, yet the person of Christ Jesus is their memorial before the face of

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their covenant-keeping God. His cross has ratified all the covenant of promise for them, and His resurrection has given a full earnest of complete fulfilment. And this though they now reject Him! What a testimony to His faithful love! And whilst as a sequel to their sorrowful history they must enter into a horror of great darkness in the future days of Jacob's trouble, yet they shall see what Abraham saw (Gen. xv.), even the oath and the covenant secured by the blood for them. If the Lord will, we shall have to say somewhat as to Abraham's spiritual seed in a future page.

E. L.

DOING VERSUS TALKING.—10.

SHORT PAPERS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

LET no one think that because God's vengeance will never fall on us, His children, since "there is now no condemnation" for us, that there will be no judgment, no searching into our lives, and into our conduct in the Church; no scrutiny before the judgment seat of Christ of the inconsistencies that are stumbling God's saints on every hand, and keeping them mixed up in the things that dishonour Him because they see such carnality in us who profess to own Him as Lord and have "come out" to Him. None of us realize what a solemn searching into of everything, even to the "thoughts and intents of the heart," is before us in that day. May He give us grace to humble ourselves before Him, and judge ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord! May the blessing of verse 11, chapter v. be ours! May we, after the example of the prophets who in persecution without and declension amongst those who professed to serve God "endured," keep our garments unspotted both by the defilements of the world, and of those who go after the traditions of men, and by what is still more hateful to God, the carnality of every kind that is coming as a flood into our Assemblies.

I cannot pass by the end of verse 11—"The end of the Lord" in the afflictions of Job and the blessing that he gained by "enduring." No matter how dark the circumstances or how sorrowful the lot in which we are placed, "The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy," and when His end shall be known it will never be other than abundant blessing, so far outweighing the suffering, that we shall with all our heart say it "is not worthy to be compared" with the blessing.

In verse 12 we have directions about oaths, of which I will

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only say that personally I do not believe they refer to the oath required in a court of justice: but in this "let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Verse 13.—Let the suffering pray! Let the cheerful praise! Both the sufferer and the joyous ought to keep in the continual enjoyment of God's presence.

From verse 14 to the end of the chapter is, I think, one subject—viz., as to one who is suffering in chastisement for some misconduct. In the first place, notice that if enjoined on the saints as the usual practice in all sickness, it is remarkable that we find in such cases as Timothy's sickness (1 Tim. v. 23) and that of Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 27) no reason to believe that this course was followed. In the next place, notice that there was no idea in the mind of James, or those to whom he wrote, of a miraculous manifestation of healing power being given in the immediate raising up of the sick one, as so many are ignorantly expecting now, confounding what we have here with the gifts of healing referred to so often in earlier epistles, and the Gospels, and Acts (which, I would suggest, were all belonging to the *kingdom* work of the Holy Spirit, and ceased as the testimony became purely that concerning a *heavenly* people, gathered out to the Head in heaven). Lastly, I would ask each one to consider, Is the anointing with oil spoken of here a mere superstitious rite used as the ignorant still use "charms"? or does it not rather refer to the then universal practice of covering the body with oil in most, if not all, cases of sickness. The passage here puts before us a solemn scene, when one who has sinned and lies perhaps at death's door under the chastening hand of God sends for the elders of the church, confesses his sin, and they, praying in faith to God for His forgiveness and for restoration to health, have the answer given them in the raising him up—God using the curative means (as in Hezekiah's case) that He has put within the reach of the sick one. Even if we do not confine the privilege granted here to such cases as I have indicated, we must all recognise that the passage gives no licence for the self-willed travesties of it we are becoming familiar with since so-called "Faith-healing" became one of Satan's ways of deceiving the unwary. Prayer is as mighty as ever it was. God's ear is as much open as ever. Faith in Him is as real as ever, and in answer to godly, believing prayer, I have little doubt sick ones are constantly restored:

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and if there were more of the godly oneness and fellowship that this passage implies, and more heart-searching and simplicity in confessing sin on the part of those whom God is seeking to exercise by His chastisements, we would, I am sure, see far more cases of Elijah like prayers, answered as his was. Just as I believe, with more of the spirit of our Master, as shown in John xiii., we should have the joy of seeing many more backsliders restored, and perhaps save many a transgressor from being cut down as a cumberer of the ground. Oh for more spirit-exercised, Christ-trained seekers after the erring ones! There would be fewer unconfessed sins going on to the judgment-seat of Christ, and fewer unrepented of to bring reproach on Christ before an ungodly world.

Now, brethren and sisters, I have come to the end of these disconnected papers. I have made no attempt to go exhaustively into this very full Epistle. I have even left many things unnoticed, and where I have not done so the Lord knows best how imperfectly I have brought out the truth. But if I have been able to suggest explanations where there are difficulties, or have stimulated any to search for themselves into the solemn truths set before us, my object has been fulfilled. May the Lord make you and me "Doers of the Word," "enduring" until the day of Christ! J. S. D.

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STILL round and round revolves the wheel of time, and soon, if God permit and Jesus come not, we shall see the close of another year.

From various quarters cheering testimony—entirely unsought—has come to us from friends who have received help and blessing from God through our pages. We have endeavoured, and shall continue to endeavour by the grace of God, to do all things unto edification, and we shall greatly value the prayers of saints that special help may be given to us in this effort.

Those who value our little paper are affectionately exhorted to pass on their copies to others when they have read them, so that no single copy may ever be found lying amongst the waste paper in any house. There are many believers in lonely places who long for such reading, and their desire can easily be gratified in any part of the world at the cost of a half-penny stamp. Anyone who wishes to preserve the paper for future reading or for lending can easily obtain the annual volume at the prices named on cover. EDITOR.