
THE FAITH
AND
THE FLOCK,
1915.

S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO., LTD.,
21, OLD BAILEY, LONDON, E.C.,
Price 3/-, less discount.

INDEX.

	PAGE
A CONFESSION.—F. J. J.	223
A MORNING WITHOUT CLOUDS.—William Olney	181
A PRAYER.—F. J. J.	235
ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES, THE.—Russell Elliott 60, 88, 114, 131, 163, 208, 236, 262, 281	
ALL IS WELL.—I. G. W.	128
ANNOUNCEMENT	284
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS	118
BALANCES OF THE SANCTUARY, THE.—Russell Elliott	25
BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING.—S. B.	37
BEAUTIFUL JEHOVAH PSALM, A.—Walter Scott	33
BOOK OF PSALMS, THE.—Walter Scott 106, 129, 147, 182, 197, 233, 241	
CHRISTIAN AND THE NATION, THE.—William Jeater	41
CHRISTIAN AND WAR, THE (Correspondence)	22
CHRISTIAN JOY.—W. R.	188
CORRESPONDENCE	22, 52, 236
DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS, THE.—E. Stacy-Watson	280
EMMANUEL'S LAND.—E. Stacy-Watson	181
EXTRACT	284
FRAGMENTS . . 8, 11, 21, 32, 33, 40, 48, 59, 63, 66, 68, 69, 79, 81, 87, 107, 261, 271, 276, 279, 280	
FRIENDSHIP.—William Jeater	82
FUTURE EVENTS.—W. W. Fereday 9, 34, 53, 76, 108, 134, 159, 185, 201, 220, 245, 277	
GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.—E. Adams	70
GREAT WAR, THE: AND ITS LESSONS.—Russell Elliott	169, 193

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK.

INDEX—*continued.*

	PAGE
HOLINESS: ITS BASIS AND INFLUENCE.—P. Willis	272
HYMNS OF THE SEA.—William Luff	212, 239
I TURNED THE PAGES OF THE YEAR.—William Luff	276
JESUS ONLY.—William Luff	18
JOTTINGS 154, 168, 180, 200, 204, 219, 247, 255, 256,	261
LETTERS FROM THE PAST	230
NAMES.—William Luff	158
1908-1915.—Editor	217
1915.—PRAYER.—Editor	1
NOTES AND COMMENTS	49, 73, 121
"NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE."—M. E. R.	205
OBSERVATORY, The.. .. .	64, 155, 205
PATIENCE, EXTRACTS FROM AN ADDRESS	140
PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST: TWO LETTERS	141
PILLAR OF CLOUD.—H. D.	67
POETRY 17, 37, 87, 128, 158, 181, 205, 229, 235, 256, 276,	280
PRESENT PASSIVITY AND THE FUTURE ACTIVITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.—Walter Scott	15
PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION	191
RESTING AND USING	47
REVELATION, THE.—Russell Elliott	97, 123, 149, 215
ROYAL GUESTS OF HEAVEN, THE.—Dr. Morris	69
SIDELIGHTS ON PRAYER.—E. Adams	257
SIX TITLES OF THE LORD IN HEBREWS.—William Luff	138
SOUL DECLENSION.—Russell Elliott	248
SPURIOUS SPIRITUALITY.—Russell Elliott	224
"STRENGTHENED WITH ALL MIGHT."—Russell Elliott	80
SUITED MORAL CONDITION FOR PRAYER.—Wm. Bousfield	111

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK.

INDEX—*continued.*

	PAGE
THE LORD'S RETURN	12
THE PATHWAY.—P. W-L-S.	229
THERE SHALL BE NO MORE SEA.—M. E. R.	87
TRIALS.—M. E. R.	17
UNACQUAINTEDNESS WITH CHRIST.—William Olney	256
"UNTIL THE TIME THAT HIS WORD CAME."—Russell Elliott	147
WAR TELEGRAMS.—William Luff	57
WAR, THE.—Editor	265
WAY OF SALVATION IN AN EVIL DAY.—Wm. Bousfield	38



The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 1.

JANUARY, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

1915.

PRAYER.*

“ Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples ”
(Luke xi. 1).

“ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men ; for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. . . . I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting ”
(1 Tim. ii. 1-2, 8).

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

PRAYER! Do we think sufficiently of the wonder of it? Are we rightly impressed with its value? Do we realise all that it means, and what it can obtain? Is it the outstanding habit of our lives? and is it the atmosphere which imparts a character to all we do?

With these questions in our minds, let us look at the various references to prayer which head this article. Another year is before us. Tremendous events are happening on every side. War, with all its dread consequences, is upon us. The wounded, the dying and the dead remind us of its terrible nature. Loved ones may be far away, and possibly in danger. A vacancy in many a family has already occurred, and the mourners go about the streets. We need to realise, as never before, the power and the place of prayer.

* Can be had in separate form, price Sevenpence per dozen, Post Free, 34, Cliff Road, Hyde Park, Leeds.

For further thoughts on Prayer by the same author see *Some Thoughts on Prayer*, A. HOLNESS, 14, Paternoster Row, E.C. Price 5d. post free, three copies for 1/-.

“*And it came to pass as HE was praying in a certain place.*” This alone should make us think much of prayer. He is our Example in all things. By His own act and habit He has consecrated prayer for evermore. When we pray, we are doing what the Lord Jesus did. He had become man, and so He prayed. This fact seems to tell us that prayer is part and parcel of human life.

“*When He ceased.*” This seems to imply that He had prayed within sight of His disciples. Where the “certain place” was, we are not told. That it was in a house, seems unlikely. There was no closed door, on this occasion, for it would seem as if our Lord intended His disciples to see Him. What a place where Jesus prayed! but it is not the place so much as the fact that He *prayed* there, that is of importance. We can only wonder at, and try to imagine, what the disciples must have witnessed. It seems to have made a great impression; for “when He ceased, *one* of His disciples” made a request. We are not told which one it was. At all events, we owe this one disciple a debt we can never pay. Through his instrumentality we have not only gained a prayer, which has inspired millions of other prayers—a prayer which Christ Himself put into the lips of those disciples—but we have also gained much instruction as to how we are to pray.

For, notice the request: “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” Not, teach us a prayer, simply. The Lord did that, and He did more; He laid down certain principles which govern all prayer, and show us the reason for it. Think, then, of all we owe to “one of His disciples,” whose name remains for ever unknown. We learn from this how much good one disciple, who is in earnest, may do; especially who is in earnest about prayer. How much we owe to some whose names have never been recorded, we shall never know; unless it is manifested at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We are not to suppose that the disciples had remained prayerless up to this moment. Far be the thought that they were prayerless men. Prayer, in itself, was nothing new. How many records they possessed in their Scriptures, not only that men prayed, but of their very prayers. The ninetieth Psalm gives us the prayer of Moses, the man of God. The seventy-second Psalm tells us “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” While throughout all the Psalms prayer is continually implied and referred to. There are

the prayers of Daniel and those recorded in Nehemiah and Ezra. No, it was not that the disciples were unacquainted with prayer ; it was the sight of Jesus in the act of prayer invested this practice with such meaning and wonder that they could no longer refrain from crying out, " Lord, teach *us* to pray." " *As John also taught his disciples.*" What prayer John taught we do not know. No record is given of when, where, or what, he taught them ; but it is pleasing to know that John did teach his disciples to pray ; for it adds emphasis to the importance of prayer, and is further proof that all men of spiritual mark and distinction give it a large place.

We would dwell for a moment upon the prayer our Lord taught His disciples, more by way of noticing what a model prayer it is than with any intention of dwelling upon its details. There is, first of all, the reverence due to God. In all our prayers let our first thought be of Him. Next, come His interests. These must ever take precedence of ours. Then a spirit of subjection : " Thy will be done." Following this, our own needs are mentioned. Lastly, a sense of our shortcomings, and a request to be delivered from temptation. We should do well to frame our prayers according to this model. How short the petitions, yet how comprehensive ; and although we are not limited to any form, for we are exhorted to pray in the Holy Ghost, yet an attentive study of this prayer will be of the greatest use in teaching us how to pray. It is interesting to note that the words, " which art in heaven," do not occur in some of the best MSS. of Luke's gospel, though in Matthew they are undisputed. But most, if not all, recent English versions omit them from Luke. It is certainly in keeping with the character of each gospel that they should appear in the one and be absent from the other. In Luke it is simply " Father." That is how the prayer opens ; and anything more impressive, and in keeping with the true Christian position in which grace sets us, could not be. We can say " Father," for we have perfect nearness as well as liberty of access. He is our Father and our Friend, able and willing to supply all our need ; and this is what underlies the rationale of prayer. We have nothing, and He has everything. Of ourselves we are unable to meet the daily demands. He can meet them all. This is the lesson underlying the parable which immediately follows the prayer ; with this added instruction, that we are to take no refusal, and not be easily denied. Are we conscious of our need ? Then let us

press our suit until the request is granted. "Ask," "seek," "knock," is the advice our Lord gives.

II.

FOR WHOM WE ARE TO PRAY.

Prayer is invested with a double interest when we see that we may not only pray for ourselves but for others. Had God said, You must ask only on your own behalf: prayer would have been deprived of half its value. Blessed be His Name, He not only permits us to pray for ourselves and for others, but invites us to intercede for the highest in the land: "For kings, and for all that are in authority." In fact, we are exhorted to pray for "all men," so that no one on earth is placed outside the pale of our petitions.

And why are we thus to pray? "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Let us remember this to-day, when quietness and peace seem to have forsaken the earth. Here is the Christian's part amid the strife. Amid the conflict of nations and the din of war he kneels and prays; and his prayers will do more than anything else to restore peace. Those of us who believe more in the weapon of "all prayer" than in arming for battle, must see to it that we are not slack in this matter, but willing to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and leaving our comfortable beds in the early hours of the morning, before daylight breaks, spend as much time as possible in pleading with God. If we cannot go to the front, let us go to God's footstool; if we fight not against flesh and blood, let us stand against the onslaught of spiritual principalities and powers and wicked spirits in heavenly places—the rulers of the darkness of this world. For these are the real forces to contend with—the forces that are really leading men on to destruction; and it is in "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" that we overcome them (Eph. vi. 12-18).

The apostle places this in the forefront of everything. "I exhort, therefore, that *first of all* supplications, &c., be made for *all men*." Prayer lies at the root of all success and all achievement. For this reason, that it brings God in; it recognises that He moves in the affairs of men; and that He can act upon men and through men. A thousand invisible agencies serve His will, and He can

at a word accomplish what He pleases. And all this He does in answer to His people's prayers.

Do not let us forget to make our petitions large and all-embracing—"All men"—from the highest to the lowest; and it includes enemies as well as friends.

III.

CONDITIONS OF OBTAINING AN ANSWER.

Everywhere in His word God lays down conditions upon which alone He answers prayer. The first and foremost is *holiness*. "I will therefore that men pray everywhere"—but how? "*Lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*" Let us see to it that our hands are holy, before we lift them up to God. And if this is to be so, the heart must be holy; for "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." What a solemn challenge is this. When we pray, God looks down to see what kind of a person he or she is who is speaking to Him. He not only reads the petition presented, but the heart of the one who presents it. Do we reflect sufficiently that every time we pray to God He searches our hearts, and values our prayers according to what He finds there? "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? *He that hath clean hands.*"

But there is a further requisite:—"Without wrath." It is an immense help to prayer to keep the heart free from ill feeling and anger. There is no wrath in God's heart against us; there must be none in ours against any man. If we are to represent men before God in intercession, we must also represent God before men in our behaviour; for we are God's house, in the sense that He dwells amongst His people; and it is in that connection prayer is here introduced. And one effort of Satan will always be so to affect the spirit in our dealings with our fellow men that we shall have little inclination or power to pray for them when we come before God. Our prayers, then, must be without wrath.

They must also be without *doubting*. Faith is the prime requisite in prayer. Prayer without faith is like powder without shot; it hits no mark, and brings no result. We do well to remember in this connection the admonition of the apostle James, "Let him ask in *faith*, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like

a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that He shall receive anything of the Lord." How encouraging, that God not only bids us ask, but to ask in faith. He tells us to expect to receive what we ask for. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24). The answer may be delayed, a long waiting time may intervene, but let us never waver in our expectation of an answer.

These, then, are some of the conditions of prayer : holy hands ; and a heart free from wrath, and full of faith.

PROMISES AND PRAYER.

Some of the most lavish promises, ever given, are linked with prayer. In John xiv. 13-14 we read :—

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it."

Again :—

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7).

Once more :—

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Ch. xvi. 23-4).

But we must be careful to notice the exact connection in which these promises stand, or we may be disappointed. The first, is in relation to Christ's own interests and work in this world. Ver. 12 is the key to vers. 13 and 14. It is in response to our prayers that Christ does these greater works through His people, and in order that "the Father may be glorified in the Son." This is the very highest form of prayer, and has to do, not with our interests as individuals, so much, as with what the Son is doing for the glory of the Father : "*That will I do.*"

The second passage has more relation to ourselves, and here there are two distinct conditions attached to asking. In the former passage there are no conditions, of the same kind. The conditions are, abiding in Christ, and His words abiding in us : and these conditions fulfilled, it is added, "Ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you." There seems no limit to the

possibilities of prayer here: the words, "what ye will" seem to give us a free hand and unlimited scope. But we must not forget what is involved in the conditions. Abiding in Christ means that we are not living a separate life from Him, but in closest union, even as the branches in the vine. He lives in us, in fact, if we abide in Him, precisely as the life of the vine is in the branches. And to have His words abiding in us means that we are acquainted with what His will is. If these two conditions are fulfilled, therefore, asking what *we* will means asking what *He* will. We would not care to have anything in which He had no part, or that He did not wish us to have. Yet within the circle of His will—and oh, how wide that is!—we may ask, and it shall be done. For, "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" (1 John v. 14-15).

The third passage we have quoted is different again. Here the emphasis is on asking the FATHER. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." In neither of the other passages is asking the Father particularly mentioned, but here the Lord lays special stress upon it. Christ wishes them to know what direct access to the Father through Him means, and that He (the Father) will supply all their need. "*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*" We can go to the Father in all the sense of what the Son is to Him, and that we are loved accordingly. And in our prayers we are permitted to plead all that the Son is to the Father as a reason why our petitions should be granted. This, and nothing less than this, is what it means to ask in His Name. "The Father Himself loveth you," are words which tell us that no interest of ours can be overlooked, no need forgotten. Only let us grasp the thought of such love, and the asking, as well as the answer, will indeed make our joy full.

And, then, finally, there is permission to make our requests known, whatever *their* nature, or *our* condition. No care is to darken our life, no need cause us anxiety. Here the heart can find relief in prayer, even though the petitions may never be granted. Whatever is weighing us down; be there anything, no matter what, that is causing an anxious thought; our first duty is to

speak to God about it. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Such prayer will mean relief; but it will mean more: though no promise is made as to granting our requests, something is promised which exceeds them all, viz., "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Instead of care, there shall be peace.

While conflict rages around us, and many disturbing influences are at work, may there be peace within—the peace which prayer brings: and may the potency of prayer, and the promises connected with it, be a means of strength and joy to ourselves and blessing to others.

R.E.

"And they who by His indwelling become moulded to His likeness, show forth His gracious loveliness, and are 'in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man nor waiteth for the sons of men,' and their recompense is themselves also to 'be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.'"

* * * *

"It is when the heart awakens to God that true peace and joy are known. Nor should this seem strange; if God made us, He must be greater than the thing He made, and that which He made can find its true end and bliss only in the One Who formed it. And if He is holy, and good and all powerful, having first claim over us, the heart reaches the true secret of existence only as it opens itself to His influence and seeks always to obey His will. Once admit that God is infinitely happy, and it follows that we can be happy only as we are like Him. And He is perfectly happy because perfectly good."

* * * *

"Worship is the drawing near to God in the appreciation not only of what He does, but of what He is. There is this that always prepares the way for worship, the full simple knowledge of our being brought near to God."

TWO NEW BOOKLETS BY THE EDITOR.—34, Cliff Road, Hyde Park, Leeds.
An All-sufficient Saviour, Sevenpence per doz., or 3/6 per 100, post free.
Soul Declension (reprinted), One shilling per doz., or 5/- per 100, post free.

FUTURE EVENTS.

I. THE BLESSED HOPE.

THE outlook for the world is of the gravest possible character.

Its advanced civilisation, of which it has been so complacent, has utterly failed to preserve it from the most colossal and the most barbarous conflict of the ages. The world's vaunted civilisation has, indeed, completely broken down, and its priests and prophets can only bewail its ruin. From the present mighty upheaval a new order of things must needs emerge. A reconstruction in practically every department of human affairs will take place. But what the result of it all will be—how it will operate—no one can say. There is ample room for anxiety on the part of rulers and statesmen everywhere.

It is no part of the duty of the Christian to occupy himself with the immediate future. The Spirit of God would concentrate our attention upon a certain fixed point in the purposes of God, when everything will reach its climax. We refer to the great day of the Lord, which will be ushered in by the public manifestation of the Lord Jesus from heaven. Of that day prophets and psalmists have spoken and sung in ages past. That day will bring about a total reversal of the order of things which it will find here. It will bring to an abrupt termination "man's day"—this period of human pride and self-will—in order that the will of God may prevail. When "the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15) is established, righteousness, peace and blessing will fill the earth. Until then, the anguish must needs deepen day by day.

The day of the Lord, however near it may be, will not open just yet. Many prophetic events (which will doubtless be crowded into a very short space of time) must be accomplished before its inauguration. But there is a preliminary event (inseparably connected with the "day"), which may take place at any hour—the Lord's descent into the air to call up to Himself His heavenly elect. It is the divine intention to bring forth "the saints of the heavenly places" in the same glory with Christ when He appears. He will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that have believed in that day (2 Thess. i. 10). In order that this may be, He will first gather up His own, and fit them for the great display.

This is what the apostle in Titus ii. 13 calls "the blessed hope." The Church is to see the Lord as "the bright morning star" before Israel and the world behold Him "as the Sun of righteousness" (Rev. xxii. 16; Mal. iv. 2). This will be the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise to His disciples on the eve of His departure: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). That there is no thought of death in this familiar passage is sufficiently proved by John xxi. 22-23.

Our feeble minds can scarcely comprehend what is told us concerning our Lord's return. He will descend, His mighty voice will be heard, sleeping saints will be raised, and living ones changed *in a moment* (1 Thess. iv. 16-17; 1 Cor. xv. 51-52). This morning occupied with our usual toil; this afternoon, it may be, at home in the Father's house for ever. What an expectation!

The question may arise with some: "Will every saint be taken?" Unquestionably. It is "the hope of righteousness" (Gal. v. 5). God has connected the hope with the righteousness with which He has invested us in the risen Christ. He whom God has justified must needs be also glorified (Rom. viii. 30). It would be a dishonour to the work of the Lord Jesus if one of His saints were omitted in the day for which we wait. Even to the ill-behaved Corinthians the apostle wrote: "*We shall all be changed*" (1 Cor. xv. 51).

The expectation of Christ should mightily influence us during "the little while." The Spirit brings it before us in Scripture in connection with all the circumstances of daily life. It is *an incentive to holiness*. "Every man that hath this hope on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). It is impossible to cherish the thought that we shall be conformed to His image presently without longing to be more like Him morally now. The apostle in his prayer for the Thessalonians, in 1 Thess. iii. 11-13, looked forward to the Lord's coming as the consummation of a blameless and holy walk in them.

It is *comfort in sorrow*. Thus to the perplexed and the bereaved the Spirit, in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, presents the hope for their comfort and encouragement. The Old Testament believer looked for reunion with departed ones in the realms of the dead (2 Sam. xii. 23);

the New Testament saint looks to meet in the air, in resurrection life and glory, all those to whom he has said farewell in the faith of Christ.

It is *cheer in persecution*. The Hebrew believers had suffered much, both in property and person, for the name of the Lord Jesus. The apostle earnestly desired that their faith should not droop by reason of their afflictions. Accordingly he says: "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). The loss would soon be over, and then the everlasting gain!

It is *support under oppression*. To those who were enduring tyranny, whose good service was neither appreciated nor rewarded by those who held them in bondage, James wrote: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord . . . the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James v. 7-8). His eye sees all that comes upon His own during their pathway through the world, and He will adjust their every wrong at His return. He is a *righteous Lord*.

It is *encouragement in service*. Thus we read in 1 Thess. ii. 19-20, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Does the tried heart of the worker sometimes feel overcharged by the unbelief and waywardness of those amongst whom he labours? Let him encourage his heart with the happy thought that the full fruit of all true service for Christ will be seen without fail when He returns.

Above all things, the Spirit of God would produce in our hearts longing to see the Saviour's face. To work for Him is good, and will receive its reward; to wait for Him is better, and the reward is correspondingly more wonderful, as Luke xii. 35-38; 42-44 testifies. May our hearts be so completely detached from everything here that in response to His "Yea, I come quickly," we may be able joyfully to respond, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20).

W. W. FEREDAY.

"Discordant actings, strifes and divisions in the Church of God spring from unsanctified hearts. We should always begin with self reform. The divisions in the Church of God proceed from this, we begin with reforming others, and not ourselves. The one gives room for pride, the other for humility."

THE LORD'S RETURN.*

The subjoined letter was recently sent to the Editor of a religious weekly.

To the Editor of the _____

DEAR SIR,

Having read your report of the recent Conference at Notting Hill on "The Lord's Return," may I say a few words as to the fundamental difference of opinion which seems to exist amongst certain sections of believers upon one important aspect of this subject?

We can all rejoice in the revived interest in the Second Advent, and it is the more regrettable, therefore, that believers should be divided into two opposing camps upon points which are of considerable importance. Let us state briefly, what are the views advanced by each school of interpretation, as we understand them.

There are those who maintain that Christ's coming for His own and His manifestation to the world form one event, taking place at one and the same moment. Both, it is asserted, form part of what is called The Day of the Lord; and when He comes in Judgment, He also comes to remove His own from the earth. The Church passes through The Great Tribulation and is left down here during the preliminary judgments spoken of in Rev. vi.-xix. Those who hold these views set their faces very strongly against what is known as The Secret Rapture Theory.

On the other hand, it has been taught for a long number of years, by many enlightened and godly brethren, that our Lord comes for His own before He appears to the world; that a certain definite period (some think seven years) must elapse between the two; and although both form part of the Second Coming, each is quite distinct. They find in Scripture support for this view in the fact that it is repeatedly stated that when Christ returns to the earth His saints return with Him; and they ask, How can this be unless He first comes for them? In that most impressive passage in 1 Thess. iv., the whole point of the special revelation there given is to show

* For further information on this important subject see two articles by Mr. Philip Mauro in our March and April issues (1914): "Tribulation or Rapture—which first?"

how the Lord will come for His own in order that God may bring them with Him (ver. 14). The Apostle there speaks of Christ's coming as it affects the saints—dead and living—without so much as a reference to the world, and shows how all will be caught up to meet Him in the air. That this is in view of His manifestation, is not only explicitly stated in this passage, but is confirmed by others. In Col. iii. 4 we are told, "When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also *appear with Him in glory.*" And in Rev. xix. 11-16, we see this actually taking place. While just previous to this is the celebration of the Marriage of the Lamb. How does the wife of the Lamb come to be in heaven unless 1 Thess. iv. has already taken place? And if so, could anything be clearer than that there is a period of time between the Rapture and the Appearing, for Christ does not appear until after the Marriage, and then He is seen with His saints.

These truths of Scripture seem to present an insuperable obstacle to the reconciliation of the two systems of interpretation we have indicated. Will those who have adopted the first tell us how they dispose of these plain statements of fact? Will they explain how the Lord can come *with* ten thousands of His saints unless previously He has come *for* them? (Jude 14.). It seems to us, not only is there clear testimony in Scripture to what is called the Rapture (there is no need to lay stress upon the word "*secret*"), but is there not a spiritual necessity for it? Is Christ coming for His own in the aspect of a Judge? or is a Judgment scene a fitting one for their first meeting? Such an idea, so alien to the affections and desires Christ has awakened, finds no support in the New Testament, and seems utterly incongruous. What we find there is the prospect of meeting the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv.); our translation to the Father's House (John xiv.); a Judgment for rewards (2 Cor. v.); the Marriage Supper (Rev. xix.); and then, following upon all this blessed consummation of His and our bliss, the coming forth with Him, as part of His train, when He comes to put down His enemies and possess the Kingdom.

The tendency with those who advance the other view is to make prominent—the looking for certain events to happen; the fulfilment of prophecy; times and seasons. I mean, of course, as to the immediate future.

Is it possible that we misunderstand one another's standpoint, or is there some radical difference? It is well that we should know. We do not wish to misjudge anyone, but the two aspects we have dwelt upon can scarcely both be true.

I am, dear Sir, &c., _____

[We ask the careful attention of our readers to the above communication, and that it may be read in conjunction with the article appearing in this same issue entitled, "The Blessed Hope." To teach that the Lord is coming for His own at the same moment as He appears to the world creates confusion, robs many passages of Scripture of their distinctive meaning, and does injury to the Lord's people. To hold and teach such views is detrimental to the proper hope of the Lord's Coming, and would not be possible except for defective views regarding other truths; especially such as relate to the special character and calling of the Church. If union with Christ were seen, no one would talk about "two translations," the very thought of which is incongruous, for it not only destroys the unity of the Body, but separates Christ from some of His members. Nor would the thought of Christ being manifested to the world at the same time as He comes for His people be entertained, if the heavenly position and calling of the Church were grasped, and our complete association with Him realised. This is what gives added importance to these questions, and makes them matters for serious consideration. The truth of the Rapture was taught in conjunction with the recovery of the truth as to the Church, and those who deny the former have never received the latter.

In Rev. xxii. 16 Christ speaks of Himself as the bright and morning star. In Malachi iv. 2 He is referred to as the Sun of Righteousness. Is there no difference between the two? Has not each title some special meaning of its own? Do the morning star and the sun appear in the heavens together? or does one precede the other? Yet those who hold the views we are opposing would have us believe that Christ appears at the same moment as the Morning Star and the Sun of Righteousness. If this is so, in what sense can He be the Morning Star? He can no more appear in the two characters at one and the same moment than the literal morning star can appear at the same moment as the sun. The latter would render the former invisible. If God is pleased to use these figures He surely uses them to some purpose, and in keeping with what is in harmony with actual fact. We know that the morning star is seen in the heavens as dawn is about to break—it is the herald of the day. If this has any application to Christ, it surely must mean that He will be seen by His own in the character of the Morning Star before He appears to the world as the Sun of Righteousness. Moreover, the one can be seen at its own appointed time and place quite as distinctly as the other. But they cannot properly be seen together. Those, therefore, who attempt to make our Lord's coming for His own synchronise with His appearing to the world rob the figure of the Morning Star of all meaning and utility. Whereas, from the other standpoint, its meaning is clear and obvious.

Turning from what is figurative to the direct teaching of Scripture on this important subject, we find the apostle Paul in his two epistles to the Thessalonians makes abundantly plain the distinction between the Lord's coming as it affects the children of God and the children of this world. "God hath not appointed us to wrath," he declares, "but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; Who died for us that whether we watch or sleep we should live together with Him." And again, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him: that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled . . . as that the day of the Lord is now present." In these passages we are told plainly enough that believers are not appointed to wrath. And the wrath spoken of here clearly has to do with the time referred to in ver. 3; and this covers the period of "the great tribulation" and the judgments preliminary to the manifestation of the Lord. It is distinctly declared we are to obtain salvation from these. And, in addition, it is asserted that we are to "live together with Him." In harmony with this the subsequent passage declares that the Day of the Lord cannot be present until we are gathered together unto Christ. Scripture testimony, whether by doctrine or figure, is thus clear and unequivocal. May our hope be to meet Him in the air, be received into the Father's house, presented to Himself a church in glory, taste the joy of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and then come forth to share His triumphs as the KING of kings and LORD of lords.]

THE PRESENT PASSIVITY AND THE FUTURE ACTIVITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

By WALTER SCOTT.

THE ministry of the Lord on earth is the subject of a four-fold testimony, *i.e.*, the four Gospels. His life and service were characterised by five things:—

1. *Absolute devotedness.*
2. *Thoroughness in detail.*
3. *Rapid action.*
4. *Intensity of feeling.*
5. *Infinite savour.*

The Lord in going to the Cross to bear our sins substitutionally, and to endure Divine Judgment, brought to that mighty work the dignity of His Person and the moral excellencies of His life. Thus is secured a sacrifice of infinite and eternal worth. The Cross is the

rock of rest for guilty consciences. All is *done*, not doing ; *finished*, not finishing. The intercessional cry on the Cross was for sinners (Luke xxiii. 34). The intercessional service on high is for saints (Rom. viii. 34). The work which saves the soul, in connection with its justification, is absolutely finished. The veil rent and Christ raised are the Divine evidences that the great sin question has been settled on the Cross for all who believe. We are saved by the finished work of another.

Now He sits in glory at God's right hand, *because* His sacrificial work is over. " This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God " (Heb. x. 12). Jehovah said to David's Lord and ours, " Sit thou at my right hand UNTIL I make thine enemies thy footstool " (Ps. cx. 1). The heavenly ministry of our Lord, which is one of intercession for saints, is quite in keeping with His present seated position. This lengthy session at God's right hand of 2,000 years has been one of rich grace to a guilty world.

In this dispensation of God's long suffering the Holy Ghost is the great actor—unseen of course. But when prophecy is resumed, then Christ rises from His seat, and all is activity. In prophecy, Christ is the great Actor. So long, therefore, as Christ sits at God's right hand, or in His Father's Throne, no prophetic action takes place. When He rises, He begins to work in political action and government amongst the nations. So long as He *sits*, prophecy is in abeyance. When He *rises*, prophecy is again taken up.

The main factors in the prophetic programme are, Israel as a people, and Jerusalem as a City. These two are essential in a scriptural adjustment of the prophetic situation. But during the dispensation of grace Israel is nationally set aside, and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles. Prophecy necessitates the active intervention of Christ. *Now* He is passive. In Old Testament times we witness the activity of Jehovah. In the time covered by the Gospels we are called to view Christ as the worker. In the period covered by the Epistles the Holy Spirit carries on a mighty work of grace in the Gentile world. In the prophetic crisis nigh at hand, and in the one thousand years' reign, the Lord Himself is prominent in all the scenes of Judgment and succeeding glory.

Ere direct prophetic action begins, there is witnessed a grand sight in heaven (Rev. v.). The Lamb slain—majestic and meek—*stands* in the centre of glories and grandeurs unutterable. The question, therefore, is a simple one: what is the present attitude and position of Christ? Seated or standing? If the former, then there is no present prophetic dealing. If the latter, then prophecy has been resumed. Now there is *one* fact which will enable anyone to settle this question satisfactorily. *The Church—the Body of Christ—is yet on earth.* Its removal, which may be momentarily expected, entirely alters the position of Christ. He ceases to *sit* and immediately *rises* for prophetic action.

TRIALS.

The sculptor, in yon rugged rock,
Discerns an angel fair;
To bring it forth, the eye to please,
The rock He does not spare.

But skilfully, with tool prepared,
He works, and brings to light
The image his own heart conceived,
A fair and beauteous sight.

E'en so our Father takes away
All that would *veil the Son*
In us, the children of His love:
How gently is it done!

Ah, often have we prayed that we
Might Christ's own image bear,
Yet thought but little of the way
That God would answer prayer.

The very trials that we meet
Are answers to us giv'n;
Answers to many an earnest prayer
Sent up from earth to Heaven.

Then, may I see in every cross
Only my Father's love;
And bear it cheerfully, until
My God doth it remove.

Without a burden, how could I
Prove half the Saviour's grace?
Could I without annoyances
Reflect His patient face?

Nay, rather would I welcome scorn
Than be without the Lord;
Rather have care and discipline
Than lose my bright reward.

JESUS ONLY.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Author of "Royal Records."

"And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only" (Matt. xvii. 8).

TH**ERE** had been six men: three from heaven and three from earth; but after the vision was over, the disciples "saw no man, save Jesus only": "The Second Man, the Lord out of heaven."

There was a tendency to put Moses and Elias on an equal footing; but a seventh person spake, saying, "This is my Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."

What a high position is here given to Moses, proving him to be no myth, but the divinely acknowledged law-giver, the man who himself broke the law, and was forbidden an entrance to the Promised Land: but here he stands where law could never place him.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 2-4).

Elias, the prophet, is also thus honoured, and here he may stand as the representative of all the prophets. Was he ashamed of his prophecy? He appeared the honoured of heaven, centuries after his prophecies had been spoken.

Moses and Elias, representing the Law and the Prophets, appearing thus side by side with Jesus prove the oneness of the Old and New Testament. Luke tells us they "spake of His decease": not His life, His miracles, or His teaching; but His death, as if to show His blood-shedding was the most important matter of all.

This appearing of Moses and Elias throws light upon another subject. Though both had been long dead, they still existed in a conscious existence: they had not gone into a long sleep, nor does any believer, or unbeliever either.

With these remarks concerning Moses and Elias, we will now content ourselves with considering "Jesus only."

JESUS ONLY IN RELATION TO SIN.

1. *Jesus is the only sinless One.* He Who would remove the sins of others, must be without sin Himself. Such a person is not to be found, save Jesus only. 2. *Jesus is the only Sin-bearer.* Some one was wanted who could and would bear the sin-burden of the world. Who could do it save "Jesus only?"

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in."

3. *Jesus is the only Sin atonement.* He who would bear the sin must also bear its punishment, and His bearing the punishment must be equivalent to the guilt, so putting it away. Who could do this save "Jesus only"? 4. *Jesus is the only Sin forgiver.* The Law broken is God's law; the penalty is God's penalty; the atonement is God's atonement; the forgiveness is God's forgiveness. Who can forgive sins but God only? This excluded all priests, save "Jesus only." 5. *Jesus is the only Sin cleanser,* Who not only forgives the guilt, but removes the stain from the conscience. Only Jesus can do this. 6. *Jesus is the only Sin deliverer,* giving us power to overcome sins, which have long overcome us. Our dearest friends cannot do this; none, save "Jesus only."

JESUS ONLY IN RELATION TO SERVICE.

It would save much trouble and much failure if Jesus only were the motive and object of all we do. 1. He is the only Master to *acknowledge.* "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8). 2. Jesus is the only Master to *give knowledge* "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6). 3. Jesus is the only One to *take knowledge.*

"Go, labour on, 'tis not for nought;
Thy earthly loss is heavenly gain;
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;
The Master praises—What are men?"

If we work for man, man will soon offend us, and we shall give up. Those who work for "Jesus only," nothing shall offend them.

JESUS ONLY IN RELATION TO SUFFERING.

There are trials and sorrows in which no human sympathy is available. Clouds overshadow us, in which Moses and Elias disappear, and we SEE "Jesus only."

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15).

"Only Jesus feels and knows
All the weight of human woes."

JESUS ONLY IN RELATION TO SOVEREIGNTY.

God has purposed

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even in him*" (Eph. i. 10).

Someone wrote in Mr. Moody's bible:—

"The light of heaven is the face of Jesus.
The joy of heaven is the presence of Jesus.
The melody of heaven is the name of Jesus.
The harmony of heaven is the praise of Jesus.
The theme of heaven is the work of Jesus.
The employment of heaven is the service of Jesus.
The fulness of heaven is Jesus Himself.
The duration of heaven is the eternity of Jesus."

Thus:—

In salvation, Jesus is the only Mediator.

In service, Jesus is the only Master.

In suffering, Jesus is the only Minister.

In sovereignty Jesus is the only Monarch.

"When I soar to realms of glory,
And an entrance I await,
If I whisper, "Jesus only"
Wide will ope the pearly gate:
When I join the heavenly chorus
And the angel hosts I see,
Precious Jesus, 'Jesus only,'
Will my theme of rapture be."

A Christian friend with whom we have travelled thousands of miles in Christian work, wrote:—

"About 1860 I heard C. H. Spurgeon preach from the above text, and was so impressed with the utterance: 'I wouldn't mind preaching *only* from that text for a thousand years,' that soon after, in speaking for the first time, I took it, and came to an end of my thoughts in ten minutes. A few years later, by my invalid sister's dying bed, I learned my subject better. For ten years she had suffered greatly, and her quiet trust all through had been in Jesus, and one at least had learned to trust Him through her Christlikeness. But a change had come; the quiet had given way to frequent speaking, and as one and another went to see her, one thought, one sentence came with gladness—'Jesus only.' 'Jesus only.' 'Jesus only.'

"The whole of that day and night 'twas the same message, not in haste, but in quiet cadences. It was a life-remembered time when, as through the quiet night we watched her, the only sound was 'Jesus only.' It was as though she had been gazing on the once thorn-crowned King of Glory, and in rapturous praise her tongue could speak of Him alone. All the next day it was 'Jesus only,' until the frail tongue could speak no more."

" When wounded sore the stricken soul
 Lies bleeding and unbound,
 One only hand, a pierced hand,
 Can salve the sinner's wound.
 When sorrow swells the laden breast,
 And tears of anguish flow,
 One only heart, a broken heart,
 Can feel the sinner's woe.
 When penitence has wept in vain
 Over some foul dark spot,
 One only stream, a stream of blood,
 Can wash away the blot.
 'Tis Jesus' blood that washes white,
 His hand that brings relief,
 His heart that's touched with all our joys,
 And feeleth for our grief.
 Lift up Thy bleeding hand, O Lord ;
 Unseal that cleansing tide ;
 We have no shelter from our sin
 But in Thy wounded side."

" If God be not known, He cannot be obeyed, for obedience is ever founded upon knowledge."

* * * *

When we are charged with neglecting our own work, and with doing work which we are told we are " not able " to accomplish—as was David—our best plan is to prove by our action—as he did—that God has fitted us for such work. Surely Goliath's head in David's hand (1 Sam. xv. 57) was a far better proof to his elder brother and to Saul that he was fully qualified to " overcome " Goliath, whom they were unable to slay, than any attempt to justify himself by words would have been.

A. G. W.

* * * *

" One great aim of Satan is to get *good* people to do *bad* things."

* * * *

A babe knows nothing about how the atmosphere enters its lungs ; it breathes, lives, and gives evidence in sounds and movements. So we know nothing as to how the Spirit of God brings life to our souls, but there are both internal and external signs ; and the evidence is that there is faith, with new aspirations, purer thoughts, nobler desires, benevolent designs, and tender and compassionate deeds. " The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit " (John iii.8).

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CHRISTIAN AND WAR.

To the Editor of "The Faith and the Flock."

Your article on "Shall we smite with the sword?" is both good and timely, and as you invite communications on the question I venture to write you a few words. There are several scriptures that seem to me to help the believer to a right answer, albeit they contain no specific reference to it.

First of all—Matt. v. 43-8—a passage in which the Lord unfolds the gracious character and ways of our Father in Heaven, Who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good and teaches us to manifest that we are God's sons by acting in a like spirit, displaying thus the family characteristics.

Then in Romans xii. 19-21 we are taught that we are not to avenge ourselves, leaving that in the hands of Him Who says, "vengeance is mine, I will repay," but on the contrary to overcome evil with good.

In 1 Peter ii. 23 we read concerning the Lord Jesus: "When He was reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not," etc. "Leaving us an example that we should walk in His steps." The world cannot manage its business on these lines, we freely admit; but our concern is not with that but with the proper course for a child of God to pursue as one who seeks to manifest the Spirit of Christ. That obedience to the powers that be is not to be mere blind obedience to whatever the powers that be might ask for is evident from Acts iv. 19. There is a higher power whose precepts must have precedence. War is never spoken of as "murder" in the word of God, nevertheless, it seems to me that it is not for the believer to be engaged in killing his fellow-men. I close by copying the words of a veteran missionary written to a friend of mine about a month ago with reference to the War:—

"I am entirely of your mind that it is not for a disciple of the Lord Jesus to be engaged in killing his fellow-men. I do not forget the debt we owe to the State. Having lived in this land now for many years and witnessed the misgovernment of this country, I have become more than ever a lover of the country of my birth, and more ready than ever to honour the king and to render to all in authority their dues with thankfulness; also to intercede for them that they may be so guided that a quiet and peaceable life may be secured for all subjects of the king. They bear the sword for our protection and so are the ministers of God for us. They do a work which we are not called upon to do for ourselves; we are bound, therefore, to acknowledge it with thankful hearts. But to take the sword ourselves, even for the punishment of evil doers in the land, much less to enlist for war, seems to me a sad coming down from that heavenly service of our Lord, Who was the Man of Sorrows, and who went about doing good, Who came not to destroy men's lives but to save.

" I am sure, however, that we have need of prudence in speaking of this subject, and to see that we do not hinder the authorities of the land getting the men they need for their service, or we shall place ourselves in an entirely false position, in opposition to those for whom we pray and whose good we constantly seek. Men may accuse us of being unpatriotic and selfish, that we are glad enough to enjoy the safety of our homes, for which others have to fight and die. That I think we must bear, and wait for occasions to show that we are not careless concerning the welfare of the land of our birth. The caring for the wounded who fall on the battlefield is after the pattern of the Master. He healed those who were oppressed of the devil. And what a devilish thing is war. Springing from pride and ambition, and setting loose all the cruel passions of our fallen state.

" The world is evidently passing through a very grave crisis, and more or less we are affected by it. But the Lord liveth and He sitteth o'er the waterfloods."

R.F.

Mr. H. D. Woolley writes :—

Apart from entering the army as a profession, and short of compulsion on the part of the powers that be, as regards the duty of, say, an Englishman to enlist at a special time like the present, may it not be accepted as a matter of simple righteousness that one who has been cared for and protected by a beneficent State should at a time of national peril come, if desired, to the aid of that State in any way not forbidden by the law of God ? It may be replied, Yes, that is right for an *Englishman*, but we are speaking of a *Christian*. But unless a man loses his nationality by becoming a Christian, the said Christian is an Englishman. St. Paul is the pattern Christian, and it is he who specially teaches New Creation truth, unfolding the " mystery " of the Church, with the heavenly portion and position of the Christian company. He thus, pre-eminently, occupied the " highest ground " to which you refer on p. 248. " Our citizenship is in heaven," he said, but he was voicing the waiting Church of Christ. When it was a question of himself, he said : " I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus . . . a *citizen* of no mean city " (Acts xxi. 39). Clearly we are to distinguish between what a believer is as a member of the Body of Christ, and as a converted man having to finish his responsible life. The Apostle of the Nations teaches that as *identified with Christ*, or as *in Christ*, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, and *neither male nor female*. So if such scriptures are resorted to as disproving in every sense earthly citizenship, we shall prove too much, not only getting rid of those family relationships whose claims have so large a place in the Epistles, but of sex itself—a *reductio ad absurdum* !

The God Who owns the family is styled the " God of the nations " (Greek). He " made " them (Acts xvii. 26) and it is of its families a nation is composed.

So far as I can understand, therefore, a man does not, and cannot, lose his nationality by becoming a Christian. To do anything contrary to God's commands could never have been his *duty*, but whatever that duty was remains his duty.

There are truly the two lines—the individual line and the church line ; but would it not be a poor thing to accept and enjoy ease, comfort and prosperity under the former, and when there might be corresponding hardship, trouble and stress, to plead immunity under the latter ?

I fully believe the teaching and precepts of the Sermon on the Mount apply directly to the present Dispensation, but abstaining from “ resisting evil ” there refers to one’s *personal* affairs or quarrel, whereas to act as a special constable, or to fight for one’s king and country, is not that at all.”

Mr. John James (Toronto) writes :—

I have just read your article in *The Faith and the Flock* for November, “ Lord, shall we smite with the sword ? ” If every question or doctrine, as to which there exists diversity of view, were treated in the same manner and spirit as you have treated this one, it would tend greatly to promote oneness of mind, as to such subjects. Those who acknowledge Scripture as the only authority should surely be able to refer everything to it, as you have this question, without the bias that preconceptions and habits of mind so often cause.

In regard to Luke xxii. 36, let us quote, not only what the Lord says about the sword, but the whole passage. “ When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything ? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip ; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.” Then follows the reason for the Lord speaking in this way. “ For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me. And He was reckoned amongst the transgressors : for the things concerning Me have an end.” When He sent them without visible means of support they lacked nothing because His care was over them ; He saw to it that their every need was supplied. But now the circumstances were changed, and He no longer guaranteed them against lack, and the question was, could they still trust Him when He was nothing in the eyes of a hostile world but a man crucified ? If not, then they had better take purse and scrip, and perhaps even a sword. But, on the other hand, if they remembered His own words, “ Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake,” as well as His positive command, “ But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also ” (Matt. v. 11, 39) then they would be content to go out and take things as they came, without any guarantee against privation and suffering, as Paul did, and many another besides. In that path they might be “ troubled on every side,” but they would be able to add, “ yet not distressed ” ; they might be “ cast down,” “ but not destroyed.” It is a matter of personal faith, but if that is not in exercise there is nothing else for it, you must lean upon the arm of flesh, and buy a sword. Which would you think it advisable to do ?

We are in the kingdom of heaven ; its principles are laid down in Matt. v. to vii. What then is the path of obedience for us ?

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 2.

FEBRUARY, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE BALANCES OF THE SANCTUARY.

By R.E.

*"Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have."
"A just weight and balance are the Lord's; all the weights of the bag are His work"* (Lev. xix. 36; Prov. xvi. 11).

THE above words shew us God's delight in what is just and equal. There must be no deceit; no taking undue advantage; everything must be exactly as it is represented. Also there must be due proportion. We are told God "weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." In the divine economy one thing stands in relation to another. It is said, where the mountains are loftiest the ocean is deepest. We wish to apply these principles to our judgment of matters in the moral sphere. In our estimate of truth; and in our beliefs and opinions, are we not often found wanting? No just balance; no just weights: the weights in our bag are not the Lord's work. How wanting in due proportion are our views, oftentimes; the scales and the balances have never been used; and certain ideas are held out of all relation to other ideas. Not only do they lack proportion, but they are independent and isolated, having, apparently, no connection with anything else; just as if they were the whole of the truth instead of being a part only.

Have we not seen a pair of scales with all the weights on one side, and noticed how ungainly it looks as the empty scale kicks the beam, and the other side sinks with its overweight? How out of proportion, how purposeless, how useless! Perhaps some of us would be astonished to find that, in regard to certain views of truth, our state of mind is represented by these scales. There is no balance; we have placed all the weights on one side. In other words, we look only at one aspect of a truth, and treat it as if it were the whole. We listen to only one view, and think that nothing else can be said. We have forgotten to "weigh the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." On one side we are overweighted,

and on the other underweighted; the "just balances, just weights, a just ephah and a just hin" have not been remembered; and many a person who would scorn to act thus in business affairs has never realised that this is precisely how he is prone to act with regard to how and what he thinks. But, surely, if balances and weights—and *just* balances and *just* weights—are necessary in the lower sphere, they must be in the higher.

What is it lies at the root of most of the controversies and divisions of Christendom but just this very mischief?—the mischief of overloading one side of the scale, or of assuming that our pound of truth is equivalent to a hundredweight; and our neighbours' pound equal to but a featherweight. We see but one scale instead of two, and we fill that one to the breaking point. The high Calvinist sees only the sovereignty of God and the deadness of the sinner; and lays all the weight on that side; the Arminian puts his weight in the opposite scale; he sees human responsibility and the power of choice, however limited; and instead of both seeing that these two scales compose the one balance of truth, and rejoicing in it, each persists in looking exclusively at his own side. It is the same with almost every controversy.

The foregoing thoughts have arisen as we have pondered the correspondence on Christians and War which has lately appeared in these columns. It may be asked by some, what help there can be in publishing views which seem to conflict. The benefit is two-fold: direct and indirect. There is a direct benefit if we are enabled to realise that we had not, so far, seen the whole of the truth, and we are thus led to alter, or at least to modify, our previous conceptions; or, on the other hand, it may serve to strengthen and confirm our former convictions. And there is an indirect benefit in the exercise entailed in weighing statements which seem opposed, and accepting or rejecting that which we consider for or against the truth. One of the greatest lessons we have to learn is to take a comprehensive view of things. We are so apt to allow our thoughts to run along a groove; until the groove deepens into a rut; and we become imprisoned: the slaves of our opinions, instead of the masters of them.

GRACE AND GOVERNMENT.

1. One thing the correspondence has impressed upon us is, the need of remembering that there is government as well as grace.

The argument repeatedly used is that because this is the day of God's grace, and He is shewing grace to men, therefore we must do the same. Against this principle, *as far as it goes*, we have nothing to say. It is perfectly true; *but it is not the whole truth*. There is government as well as grace. Even with regard to God's children it is certainly not *all* grace. In the very epistle which, more than any other, unfolds the truth of the family, we read these solemn words: "There is a sin unto *death*" (1 John v. 16). And Paul writes to the Corinthians: "*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord.*" What is all this but government? To say that God acts in grace to men, and therefore we are to do the same, is to utter only half a truth. For if this matter of government applies in God's own family, much more does it apply in the world. Of one who rules it is said: "He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil . . . for he beareth not *the sword* in vain." Is the sword grace? Yet the power of the ruler is attributed to God. Therefore grace cannot be the only way in which He is acting towards men. The fact is, that, in certain quarters, there has been such a rebound from the lamentable mixture of law and grace with regard to man's salvation, prevalent elsewhere, that there is an equal danger of losing our balance in an opposite direction. Let us then, brethren, remember there is such a thing as God's government in the present day, and that the Christian cannot ignore it. It concerns him both as regards his own Christian life and as still having part in the *affairs* of this world. And it has a very distinct bearing upon the subject of the correspondence we are reviewing.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

2. The Sermon on the Mount is often made use of as though under all conceivable conditions its admonitions and instructions were to be carried out to the very letter, *without reference to time, place or circumstance*. Did our Lord ever intend this? Did He not treat men very differently from mere machines? He called upon them to behold the face of the sky, and the signs of the times, and to judge. Did He mean us, in a blind unquestioning obedience, to take the precepts He gave, and carry them into effect, without ever asking about their appropriateness under given conditions?

One precept in the Sermon is : " Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." But we find that Christ Himself did not act in this way when before the High Priest. " One of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of the hand." But instead of turning the other cheek, our Lord rebuked the offender. We are not told the reason of this ; but in a judicial assembly the carrying out of the precept referred to would seem to have been entirely inappropriate. And although Paul, in Acts xxiii., when before Ananias, was not by any means so perfect as His Master, yet neither did he offer the other cheek after being smitten. It would not have been suitable under the circumstances. It might have been construed into an acknowledgment of guilt. But all this shows that we are not bound by the letter, but God expects us to take time and place into account. Like David, when he eat of the shewbread. This was not *in itself* a lawful act. But David recognised that the particular circumstances and pressing demands of the occasion placed him above a ceremonial law. And Christ vindicates his act (Luke vi. 3-4). Are there not sometimes vast principles at stake that cannot be overridden by a particular precept which may not have its application to those special circumstances ? We can look only to God and cast ourselves upon His grace. Happy is the man who, like David, feels sufficient confidence in Him to do so.

STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

3. Do we not need to revise our thoughts about citizenship, and to be more precise in our conception of what it means to be a stranger and pilgrim ? There lies before us a letter (which we cannot find room to publish) and its opening remarks are as follows :—

" Allow me to suggest that much of the difficulty in the minds of your readers as to enlisting, &c., is occasioned by not seeing our position *entirely outside the order of things down here.* (Italics ours). Our citizenship is in heaven. Like those of old we *seek* our country. Then how can we claim citizenship in this world ? We are here but as pilgrims and strangers."

The above quotation sufficiently illustrates the point we have been pressing all along, viz., the danger of treating a truth as if it were *all* the truth ; and insisting upon *one* view to the exclusion of every other. The writer of the foregoing paragraph states that our position is *entirely outside the order of things down here*, and he leaves it there, as if nothing else could be said. Every day he lives he is giving a practical denial to his own assertion. As regards the

sphere and character of our *blessings as Christians*, these are entirely outside the order of things down here ; but each *individual* Christian has duties and responsibilities on earth. Nor is citizenship on earth incompatible with citizenship in heaven. How that citizenship is to be carried out, each one must decide for himself before God. The argument, which is sometimes employed, that because a man cannot be a citizen of two separate countries on earth simultaneously, therefore he cannot be a citizen of both earth and heaven, is fallacious. It arises from overlooking the fact that a Christian does stand, at one and the same moment, in two distinct relationships, heavenly and earthly. There is what God has made him in Christ, and also what he is as to his responsible life down here. And it would be as true to argue that because God is my Father in heaven, therefore I cannot have a father on earth, as to contend that heavenly citizenship does away with earthly. It is the mistake they fall into who argue that because Israel is the Bride, therefore the Church cannot be ; forgetting that one is earthly and the other heavenly.

We are not suggesting for a moment that a Christian is to figure prominently in the political arena or to attempt to shape the policy of any earthly kingdom. As we have already said, each one must learn from God what his duty is. But that, under certain circumstances, he has duties, cannot be denied. Wherever there are privileges there are corresponding duties. The New Testament, undeniably, admits an earthly citizenship. No one understood better the heavenly position and relationship of the Christian than St. Paul. Yet over and over again he speaks of himself as a citizen of earth, claiming its rights and privileges. This is not done merely once, or in a moment of forgetfulness, but on various occasions, with long intervals between ; showing that it must have been done with the utmost deliberation and with absolute conviction (Cf. Acts xvi. 37 ; xxi. 39 ; xxii. 3, 25-8 ; xxv. 10-11).

What has the Bible to say about our being strangers and pilgrims ? What is the true character of such an one ? Here, again, there seems to be a good deal of misconception. Let us turn to 1 Pet. ii. 11. In this passage we find the apostle Peter saying, " Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The way we walk will manifest whether we are really pilgrims and strangers. It is not any particular act, so much, but *how* we act. Are we

superior to the ordinary desires and aims of the world? To think that to be a pilgrim and stranger is simply an affair of standing aloof from military service, or some overt act of that kind, is a very imperfect conception of it. Indeed, an individual may feel called to serve others in this capacity, and become more of a pilgrim and a stranger than ever. Is not Abraham the outstanding type, in both Old and New Testaments, of the pilgrim and stranger? Yet he went to war to deliver his nephew, and the Bible, from cover to cover, never hints that in doing so he was less either one or the other than when he was tending his cattle or sitting in his tent door. The test of being a pilgrim and a stranger was not whether he took up arms or not, but his attitude towards the King of Sodom. And if we wish to hear the voice of a true pilgrim, we hear it in these words: "*I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread, even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.*"

The war in which we are all to engage is with that which wars against the *soul*. The war against the *body* is a very small matter, in comparison. And if any feel called to engage in the latter, under the pressure of exceptional circumstances, they need not neglect the former, or depart from being a stranger and a pilgrim, for never was the Father of the Faithful a brighter pilgrim than when returning from the slaughter of the kings he declined the proffered bounties of Sodom's lord.

We are not in favour of war, but the reverse. We are only showing, from the example of the most conspicuous pilgrim in the Bible, that the plea so many use as to being pilgrims and strangers is really no argument against the taking up of arms. We must found our objections on better grounds than that.

"A MAN IN CHRIST."

4. We should be greatly helped in regard to many points by a clear conception of the distinction between the truth of "in Christ," and that which relates to ourselves as still living our life in the flesh. The one individual has to do with the new and the old creation at the same time. The two aspects we are speaking of are presented with great vividness in the well-known passage in 2 Cor. xii. There Paul takes account of himself as "a

man in Christ " caught up to the third heaven and hearing unspeakable words. But whether in the body or out of the body he cannot tell. " Of such an one will I glory," he says, " yet *of myself* I will not glory." He is conscious of another man, beside the man " in Christ "; one conscious of being in the body, as the thorn in the flesh made him know full well. How can we possibly confound these two men—the man " in Christ," and that which Paul designates " myself " ? or how can we, with any intelligence, ignore either one or the other ? " In Christ " all things are of God, we are a " new creation " ; in ourselves we are filling up the term of our natural life in connection with the old creation. The higher influences the lower ; but the higher does not displace the lower. It has been attempted, at times, with disastrous results. And many who never carry their theories into actual practice, yet speak as though the man who is a Christian could be viewed only from the standpoint of being " in Christ." Paul knew better. At the same moment as he remembered what he was before men, and spoke of himself as " a Jew of Tarsus, a *citizen of no mean city,*" he did not forget what he was before God. " *Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*" As he stood before a Roman tribunal and appealed unto Cæsar, he was also conscious of being seated in heavenly places in Christ. To God he was beside himself; to men he was sedate and sober and practical; in one word—a man. He knew the ecstasy of being caught up into paradise ; he knew in his body the agony of an impalement.

A DUE SENSE OF PROPORTION.

Lastly, in our conception of things we need, perhaps more than we think, *a due sense of proportion*. The heavenly city, John saw, was foursquare—the length and the breadth and the height of it were equal. In the composition of the perfume, as recorded in Exodus xxx., each ingredient was to be of a like weight. Would that we carried this heavenly principle into all our ideas and sentiments. There have been certain remarks in some of the letters sent to us (not necessarily those published) which have been altogether out of proportion. One sincere and earnest man writes that soldiers are sent to " commit wickedness." Seeing that they are servants of the Government, this is tantamount to charging the Government with wickedness. How differently both Peter and

Paul speak. To them the sword is the symbol of government ; and those who bear the sword are " the ministers of God " (Rom. xiii. and 1 Pet. ii. 13-17). It would be almost as reasonable to say that policemen are sent to " commit wickedness " ; for in a fray many a person has been either maimed or killed by these guardians of the peace. Those who make such remarks have lost all sense of proportion ; they forget that there is government as well as grace ; that there is the wrath of God now against evil doers, as well as by and by (Rom. xiii. 4).

The fair face of truth is many featured, and to make one feature out of proportion with all the rest is to produce a caricature. Why should we be content to hop on one leg when two have been given to us, so that we may move with ease and grace ? Surely there is some lesson to be learned from the fact that we have *two eyes, two ears, two arms and hands, two legs and feet*. Why is this but to achieve perfect equipoise and secure symmetry ? Why then should we be one-sided in our *ideas* ? Why dwell upon our heavenly citizenship as though there were no responsibilities on earth, or they were limited to ourselves and our families ? Why talk of grace to the exclusion of government ?

The correspondence on Christians and War will not have been in vain if it leads us to regard the matter from all points of view. The writer of this article has himself learned much from it, for it has brought certain facts, which were in danger of being overshadowed, or completely lost sight of, into greater clearness. And, as a result, he is more than ever persuaded that, with regard to the matter under discussion, no rigid law can be laid down for *all* Christians under *all* circumstances. Nor does the fact of a Christian being a heavenly citizen and a pilgrim and a stranger decide the matter. The question must be brought closer home, and decided upon less abstract grounds. Each one must enquire the will of God for himself, and he must act according to his own conscience in the light of that will.*

" Faith is made up of two things—a very mean opinion of ourselves, and a very high opinion of Christ."

* Will the reader turn to the article in this same issue, " The Christian and the Nation." The two articles should be read in conjunction.

A BEAUTIFUL JEHOVAH PSALM.

Psalm xxxvii.

By WALTER SCOTT.

THE name of covenant relationship, JEHOVAH, with its pronouns, occurs about thirty times in our psalm. But, Who is Jehovah? He is the Eternal God (Gen. xxi. 33). The essential idea connected with GOD is creative power, might. The primary thought in that of JEHOVAH is conscious, eternal self existence. GOD stands in relation to creation. JEHOVAH, as such, puts Himself in connection with the redeemed part of creation. JEHOVAH helped Jehoshaphat. GOD wrought upon the captains of the King of Syria (2 Chron. xviii. 31). The essential Being of Jehovah is expressed to Israel as "I AM" (Exod. iii. 14). To Gentiles, unacquainted with the true God, the name Jehovah is explained as "Him which IS, and which WAS, and which is TO COME" (Rev. i. 4). The first member of this text signifies *Eternal Existence*; the other two express His relation to the *past* and to the *future*.

<i>Trust</i> in Jehovah	..	..	..	..	verse	3
<i>Delight</i> thyself in Jehovah	..	..	..	..	"	4
<i>Commit</i> thy way unto Jehovah	..	..	..	..	"	5
<i>Rest</i> in Jehovah	..	..	..	..	"	7
<i>Jehovah</i> upholdeth	..	..	..	..	"	17
<i>Jehovah</i> knoweth	..	..	..	..	"	18
<i>Jehovah</i> loveth judgment	..	..	..	..	"	28
<i>Jehovah</i> forsaketh not	..	..	..	..	"	28
<i>Jehovah</i> shall keep	..	..	..	..	"	40

Jehovah is *for* the godly in all ages, and under all circumstances. Jehovah is on the Throne, and that is enough to still the anxious, beating heart and mind. Storm and commotion are on the increase. A vast, a universal catastrophe is *at hand*, predicted in Rev. vi. 12 17. But we fear not, for Jehovah is *on* the Throne and Jehovah is *for* His people.

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19), was Paul's message to saints who in "deep poverty" (1 Cor. viii. 2) contributed to his need.

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

II. THE ELDERS IN HEAVEN.

THE history of the professing Church having been unfolded before him in the epistles to the seven assemblies, the Apocalyptic seer next heard the call, "Come up hither," and immediately he found himself in spirit before the throne of God. John is here the representative of us all. The same Voice that saluted his ears in Patmos will presently be heard by the whole household of faith, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall find ourselves, not in spirit merely, but in person, in the midst of heaven's glories, in the presence of God and the Lamb.

Grouped around the throne of the Eternal, John saw four and twenty thrones (not "seats" as in the A.V. of Rev. iv. 4), with four and twenty elders sitting upon them, clothed in white raiment, with crowns of gold upon their heads. From the first mention of them in chap. iv. 4 until the last in chap. xix. 4, the book of Revelation represents these elders as characterised by spiritual intelligence. They understand the divine purpose in connection with creation (iv. 11), they give interpretations to the apostle in v. 5, vii. 13-14; they sing with appreciation of the blood of the Lamb in v. 9-10; they celebrate the divine assumption of the Kingdom in xi. 16; and they acquiesce in God's judgment of the great whore in xix. 4. Who are these favoured ones?

Let it be distinctly understood that chaps. iv., v. of the Revelation do not give us a picture of what *is*, but of what *will be*. Heaven, at present, wears no such aspect as that which is portrayed in these chapters. Not until the present enterprise of God's Spirit is completed will heaven thus prepare itself for the work of judgment. It is important to keep this fact in mind if we would understand what beings are shown to us in the enthroned and worshipping elders.

Note, first of all, that they are a representative company. The elders, both in the Old and New Testaments, stand (or act) for the whole company of God's people (Ex. iv. 29; Deut. xxxi. 28; Acts xi. 30). The number corresponds with the divisions of Israel's

priesthood in 1 Chron. xxiv., xlv. The twenty-four chief priests were representative of the whole priestly family. The elders of the Revelation are manifestly priests, their robes (iv. 4) and censers (v. 8) indicating this. They have also a royal character, for they are both crowned and enthroned. They are not angels, for the angelic host is everywhere shown as a company apart (e.g., v. 11); and, moreover, angels are not called to occupy thrones, rule being no part of their office (Heb. ii. 5). Nor are the elders the spirits of departed saints awaiting the resurrection, for their number remains the same throughout—there is no increase. Who then can the elders be but the whole heavenly priesthood, viewed under this representative symbol? By the heavenly priesthood we mean all those who are glorified at the moment of our Lord's descent into the air—the saints of the Old Testament dispensations, and the Church "which is His body" (Heb. xi. 40). All these, whatever differences there may be in their position and relationships in other respects, can unitedly and joyfully sing: "Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5-6). I find myself amongst that holy throng!

These kingly priests are all seen enthroned in peace and rest in the presence of God and the Lamb, before God "arises to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. ii. 21). And "not the earth only, but also heaven" (Heb. xii. 26). Not until chap. vi. of the Revelation does the Lamb commence to break the seals of the fateful book. But the judgment is manifestly preparing, for "out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices" (Rev. iv. 5). The elders are seen in holy calm. Not even the thrice "Holy" of the living creatures dismays them, as a similar cry distressed Isaiah so long ago (Isa. vi. 5). They are in the presence of God on the ground of redeeming blood, and they know it. Judgment there must needs be, for the long-suffering of God is now ended, but judgment means nothing for those whose hope and confidence is the blood of the Lamb.

What a scene is described to us when the Lamb takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne! John was weeping sorely because no one in heaven or earth was found competent to open (or even to look upon) the book, in answer to the angel's

challenge. Told of a Lion—the Lion of the tribe of Judah—he looked, and behold a Lamb, and He bearing the marks of having been slain. It is the same glorious Person as the Son of Man of Dan. vii. 13-14, who is there seen approaching the throne of the Ancient of Days in order to receive the investiture of the Kingdom; in Rev. v. 6-7 He takes into His hands the book of the divine counsels as the only One in heaven or earth capable of carrying them into effect. The book is completely filled—“written within and on the backside”; no purpose of God will ever require revision or addition. All that is required is One to put everything into execution.

The Lion, speaks of irresistible power; the Lamb, of redeeming grace. God's ultimate object is blessing. Accordingly, when judgment has done its work, redemption will be known in earth below even as in heaven above. We get the celebration of this in vers. 13-14 of our chapter. When Judah's Lion rises up “man's day” will be brought to a close, and the day of the Lord will set in.

The sight of the once-slain Lamb in the midst of the throne moves all heaven profoundly. The elders rise from their thrones, and, with the living creatures, they fall low at His feet and chant His praise. The songs of earth wax old; heaven's “new song” never. God will never weary of listening to His redeemed proclaiming the worthiness of the Lamb; both to Him and to them that song will have eternal freshness. The language of the new song is not correctly given in our Authorised Version. It should run thus: “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals, because Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth.” (Darby's Translation). The language is not personal, but general. They speak not so much of those who derive benefit from the Redeemer's work, as of the work itself. Its wondrous value is their theme. It goes without saying that they are themselves blessed in virtue of it, and so likewise are the saints who are suffering at that time upon the earth; but, we repeat, it is the work, rather than the beneficiaries thereof, which they proclaim before the throne of God.

The angels then express themselves. The elders sing *to* the Lamb; the angels speak *of* the Lamb. With a loud voice they say: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches,

and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." All heaven is thus in sympathy with the heart of God; every tongue proclaims the worthiness of the One who died. At last a Person has been found to whom power and riches can be safely entrusted, and who will use them for God and His glory.

But the circle of praise expands yet further, until heaven, earth, and sea, in glad unison, say: "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." It is a prophetic anticipation of the complete deliverance of the whole creation (so long groaning in bondage) as the fruit of the Redeemer's work. The four living creatures respond with their deep "Amen." and the four and twenty elders fall down and worship.

Wonderful thought! we may find ourselves in the midst of all these glories ere another day dawns.

BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING.

Oh child of God, why that deep heart-drawn sigh?

What is it weighs thy spirit down to earth?

Is it the cares of life, the pressing need?

Dost fear the future, and a time of dearth?

Oh shame, when God Thy Father hath declared

That though young lions roar and lack their prey,

Yet they that fear His name shall nothing want,

He will supply their need from day to day.

He notes the sparrow's fall, and thou His child

Art dear to Him, He counts thy every hair;

All He sees good for thee He'll surely give,

He bids thee cast on Him thy *every* care.

Is it that friends to thee unfaithful prove?

Or thine own failure God to glorify?

Or does the failure of the church at large

Cause that deep sadness, and thy tearful eye?

Well mayst thou grieve, and yet thy Lord commands

That thou rejoice in Him *whate'er* betide;

His peace thy portion is through all the days,

If only in His presence thou abide.

In everything by prayer to God make known

Thy needs, the earnest longings of thy soul;

And His own peace, His word declares, shall guard

Thy heart and mind, and every thought control.

Lift up thy head, then, child of God, and show

How blest a portion thine is, even now,

Rise to the source of all thy joy above,

And peace shall set its seal on lip and brow.—S.B.

THE WAY OF SALVATION IN AN EVIL DAY.

By WM. BOUSFIELD.

“ Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.”
(Ezekiel xiv. 14).

IN this dark period of our national life, and in these last days of the Church's history on earth, we do well to realise our need and our resource ; and that what the Church needs, perhaps more than anything else, is *salvation*. Not salvation in its ordinary restricted sense, but in its fullest measure.

In this remarkable chapter, we have suggested to us some of the characteristics of those who in a day of trouble obtained *deliverance*. We are distinctly shewn that this salvation is an individual, personal matter ; mere outward relationship or ecclesiastical position, however correct or privileged, will not bring us into the good of it. “ They shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they only shall be delivered ” (ver. 16). And three times over this statement is repeated.

Yet in the 22nd verse there is suggested to us that sons and daughters shall come to birth who have all the characteristics of the delivered ones, and who by “ their ways and their doings ” are a comfort and an example to others. This reminds us of what St. Paul says in his second epistle to the Corinthians (chap. vi.), when he speaks of separation from evil (not from one another) and the consequent promise : “ Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” That is, sons and daughters in its spiritual, practical and real sense, and not in name only. Do not let us shelter behind our ecclesiastical position, and say, “ we have Abraham to our father.” God's answer to that is, He is able “out of these stones” to raise up children to Abraham (Matt. iii. 9).

What is surely needed to-day is the development of Christian character. This is what God, by His Spirit, would form in us, and is what Paul “ travailed ” in birth again for on behalf of the Galatians, that Christ be formed in them. Christian character is Christ likeness, and is the only thing we shall take with us into the glory ; all else we must leave behind ; but what God by His Spirit has formed in us here will abide through the eternal ages.

How necessary then that we should yield ourselves to this formative work of the Spirit of God. This will enable us to live the overcoming life, and to quit ourselves like men, and be able to help others also, and in the dark days to come to prove the practical reality of a living faith in a living God.

Let us thank God for the privilege of living in these closing days; only let us rise to our responsibilities and privileges, and find that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

We cannot doubt that the names of these three wonderful men are suggested to us in order that their special characteristics should be to us a pattern and example, so that the deliverance so frequently spoken of in this chapter should become a living reality in our lives; also that we should not be so much occupied with the *effect* of the terrible sorrow we are passing through as the *cause* of it, and have the realisation of the precious promise of the last verse: "Ye shall *know* that I have not done *without a cause* the things I have done in it."

Let us glance at what specially characterised these three men of God, and let us seek grace from God to be imitators of their faith.

(1) Noah. *Faith in Active Obedience.*

Hebrews xi. and 7th vers. tells us, "being warned of God" he was "moved with fear," and "prepared an ark." Well for us when we are divinely impressed with the intense solemnity of the day in which we live and the imminence of the coming storm, that in obedience and faith we may find a safe refuge.

(2) Daniel. *Purity of Life and Power in Prayer.*

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat; and this purity of life, singleness of purpose, and separation from evil things was one great secret of his power in prayer; so that a time of danger found him prepared for the emergency; he was "not afraid of sudden fear," and he went to prayer as "was his wont"; it was the habit of his life, his continuous attitude before God. With this holy confidence and trust in God there was that bright hope ever before him of a restoration of God's people to their beloved land, which led him ever to have his window "open towards" the City of Jerusalem. Prayer, persistent and consistent, "changes things," and Daniel knew the

secret, so when the hour of testing came he experienced, in an amazing way, God's power and deliverance.

(3) Job. The *Vision of Faith* and the *Endurance of Faith*.

Job was stripped of everything, and this noble and well loved patriarch is seen scraping himself in the dust with a potsherd, but all the time he was morally superior to his detractors, and his faith was maintained at a high level, in all the depths of sorrow through which he passed. Truly we "have heard of the patience (endurance) of Job"; and "seen the end (purpose) of the Lord," which was that Job himself might be brought into a very fulness of spiritual blessing, and all his blessings intensified and *doubled*; while he on a high plane of spiritual power is able to plead with God for his accusers. He got, what we want to-day, a fresh vision of God.

"I have heard," but "now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor MYSELF and repent in dust and ashes." God resists the proud but giveth grace to the lowly, and to get this vision of God is for self to entirely disappear, and God alone fill the whole range of our vision. With the disappearance of self all the works emanating from self disappear with it, and, like Job, we too can get this deliverance, and, instead of living the defeated life, we shall live the overcoming, victorious life, and our lives will be a power and a blessing to all with whom we come in contact.

Paul got a glorious vision of God on the way to Damascus, and to this he "was not disobedient" with the result that he had vision after vision, until whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. Is not God prepared to shew Himself to the dependent and obedient Christian to-day in a way he perhaps little realises? Let us seek it, and we shall know what it means to deliver our own souls in this most blessed sense.

From 1 Chron. xiv. 10, 14, we learn the necessity of waiting upon God to-day for instruction regarding to-day's work instead of acting upon instruction received yesterday, even though we received such instruction direct from God. While His command for yesterday was "Go up," His command for to-day may be "Go not up," hence the wisdom of "enquiring again of God" as did David.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE NATION.

By WILLIAM JEATER.

TO say that the nation is passing through a time of crisis is to write a platitude, and to put it in the baldest possible fashion. The fact is that no amount of embellishment or of emphasis could adequately state the gravity of the present national position. There have been times of great peril in the past history of our nation, and doubtless the people of those days thought that never could there be a menace so great, or a crisis so terrible. Yet history has nothing to show like the present world-war, with its incidence upon our own country. The scale of it altogether exceeds the happenings of the past. The crisis of to-day, in all its issues, far outweighs any that has come upon the nation in times gone by.

The word "crisis" is one that indeed aptly describes the circumstances. It means a sifting, separating, judging. And that is the position to-day. As a nation we are being sifted and tested. It is not merely that an external peril threatens us—the possible loss of freedom and liberty, the cost to us of millions upon millions of treasure and thousands upon thousands of the best of our manhood. The crisis is a spiritual one also, and the question is: What will be the effect upon our national life and how shall we emerge from it?

A book that has attracted a good deal of attention since the War began is the late Prof. Cramb's lectures, *England and Germany*, with their startling revelation (to many of us) of Germany's aims and ideas, particularly in relation to this country. But that deals with only one phase of the question. If only someone, a prophet in the Bible sense of the word, would deal as startlingly with that other phase, *England—and God!*

Doubtless some brethren regard their "Christian standing" as removing them from all interest in the national life. A few days after the declaration of war, the writer heard an address in which the speaker said: "Many hearts down here are being ruffled by the things that are happening on the Continent, but Heaven is not ruffled." And the address proceeded on the lines of suggestion that we had no interest in "the things that are happening." Most of us are more or less "ruffled," by a position that involves life or death. And that is the position, nationally. Yet the speaker

referred to would, doubtless, say: "We are not of the world. The affairs of the nation have no concern for us who are a heavenly people."

There is a confusion of thought here. "Nation" and "world" are not interchangeable terms. We can say we are not of the world; we certainly cannot say we are not of the nation. We share in its blessings and in its fruits of peace; we are affected by good or ill government; its misfortunes and sorrows throw their shadow on the Christian just as surely as they do on the most irreligious, though it is true the former has a light in the darkness that gilds the clouds. The confusion of thought is analogous to one that was current in certain quarters some years ago, when the Pauline teaching that we are to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin was perverted into the doctrine that we are "dead to nature." A little cold common-sense would have guarded against the error—an error that had some deplorable results. A better safeguard would have been the more careful and reverent study of the Spirit's teaching as given us through the Apostle.

We are a part of the nation. As a nation we have a place in the government of God. The coming of the New Testament Dispensation, with all that is involved in it of the calling out of the Church from the world has not annulled the action of God whereby He set the inhabitants of the world in families and in nations (Gen. x. *passim*). The Most High divided to the nations their inheritance (Deut. xxxii. 8). The teaching of the Old Testament was reiterated by Paul on Mars Hill when he said that God had made of one blood all nations of men, and had appointed the bounds of their habitation (Acts xvii. 26).

When by grace a man is brought into a place of blessing in Christ, it does not cancel his relationship and his obligations to his family. It sanctifies that relationship and exalts his obligations. These become charged with a new spirit and a new motive. It may mean a tremendous readjustment of his life, the taking up of new duties that may become a very cross, or (on the other hand) the development of new joys that will make his home a heaven upon earth. But whatever the result to him, the natural relationships of son or husband or father abide, to be treated with greater honour and dignity, and to be brought within the power and life of a new affection.

So is it with a man's place in the larger family, the nation. He cannot dissever himself from it. If he on his part takes up the attitude of an "alien," howbeit a heavenly alien, the State at least will not admit his right to do it, and the King's writ (if occasion calls for it), and the periodical visits of the collector of taxes, will be prosaic reminders that a man cannot, while remaining in this country, renounce his nationality at his mere volition. It is true that his new discipleship may call for a large modification of whatever part he has taken in national affairs. The nation, happily, is larger than any political party—larger than all the parties put together. And in the work of the national life there is room for the servant of God. What his work is, each must learn for himself.

It would take more space than could be given to show from the Old Testament how strictly the principle of nationality is observed. Israel is a unit, and blessings and judgments are national in character. The innocent and the guilty—(the expressions can only be relative)—alike participate in weal and woe. So with the nations whose life touched that of the people of promise. Amalek and Assyria, Edom and Egypt, came into view, not as groups of individual men, but as nations, having national qualities and national sins, and were dealt with in the government of God as nations.

If this phase of world-history is not emphasised in the New Testament, it is not that God has abdicated His throne; He still governs, though His "governance," in common with all His dealings, is discerned by the spiritual eye rather than by the mere statesman or politician, be he never so shrewd. The alternative is that God takes no hand in the course of the life of nations, that He has let go the reins, and has handed matters over to blind chance, or to the control of evil—that He marks neither iniquity nor goodness. This is unthinkable. "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever" (Ps. xxix. 10).

St. Paul's appreciation of his place and his blessings "in Christ" far exceeded our realisation of the blessings upon which we too have entered, yet it is instructive to see how his heart was touched at the thought of his nation's history, and his nation's future (Cf. Rom. ix.-xi.). Had it been within the limits of what was lawful, he could have wished to be anathema from Christ for

his brethren ; his heart's desire and prayer for Israel was for their salvation. God had not cast away His people, and Paul looked forward to the time when God should again graft the natural branches into the olive tree. "And so all Israel shall be saved." Paul indeed boasted of being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and doubtless this was a greater honour in his mind than his Roman citizenship. He says, truly, that our citizenship is in heaven, but in the same epistle he charges those to whom he is writing so to order their earthly citizenship as that it should be worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Phil. i. 27). Nor had he any hesitation in claiming the privileges that belonged to his "freedom" of the Roman Empire (Acts xvi. 37 ; xxii. 25-28). His assertion that he was a Roman was disloyal neither to his beloved land nor to that heavenly citizenship of which the earthly was a figure.

As naturally as the Pauline epistles deal with the Church, just as naturally "the patriotic prophets" (as they have happily been called) deal with the nation, and the Christian finds much in them both to comfort and guide in a crisis like that through which we are passing. Isaiah and Jeremiah, Hosea and Amos (to name only some of them), lived in times of stress and strain, when invasion threatened, or captivity was an accomplished fact. In the truest sense they were patriotic ; the love of people and fatherland was a consuming passion. Yet there was something that held their eyes and weighed upon their hearts more than the external perils and distresses. It was the *drift from God* that in their view was always the cause of national misfortune and the retarder of blessing. The burden of their preaching was summed up in the word "Return !" Again and again it falls from their lips, speaking sometimes for themselves, sometimes in the words of Jehovah, "Remember, O Jacob and Israel return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee." So Isaiah. Even more frequently and, if possible, more urgently, Jeremiah has the same message to the nation : "Return, thou backsliding Israel !" (iii. 12, 22) and the burden on his heart was : "O Lord . . . they have refused to return" (ver. 3). In like manner Hosea, not less worthy than Isaiah of being called an "evangelical prophet," stretches out his hands in pleading, and puts into a penitent nation's lips the words : "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for He hath smitten and He will bind us up" (vi. 1). Amos is rather the Doomster than the Evangelist, and the

solemn refrain he utters five times in as many verses (iv. 6-11) is that word of condemnation ; " Yet have they not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. Therefore," he adds after the fifth time, " prepare to meet thy God, O Israel ! "

We repeat : These prophets were not insensible to the calamities that threatened or had already come upon Israel ; they would not be without interest in any steps taken to avert disaster ; but antecedent to deliverance and recovery there was for them the outstanding question of " the return to God." For this they laboured and pleaded and prayed. *That* accomplished, deliverance would be sure ; the spiritual return would be followed by a return to the land, when Israel should be " in rest and at ease, and none should make him afraid " (Jer. xlv. 27).

In passing it may be noted that the most solemn, as well as the most comforting and evangelical, messages of the O.T. were spoken, not to individuals but to the nation as a whole. The familiar gospel text : " Come now, and let us reason together," is addressed to the " sinful nation." Its sequence is : " If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land ; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword." It is only by an " accommodation " that it can be used as a gospel message for to-day. It can be so used, because there is that both in the nation and in the individual which is amenable to the call of God, and the principles of God's action are in many respects alike as regards both a person and a people.

Has not the message of the prophets of old an application to our own circumstances ? Burke has said that it is impossible to indict a nation. But who will deny that we, as a nation, have been drifting from God, and that we have forgotten the goodness so abundantly shown in the past history of our land ? Like Jeshurun, we have waxed fat and kicked. Let it be granted that in a community so complex things will not be either altogether evil nor altogether good ; yet how heavy is the tale of evil that needs to be confessed ! Few will deny the materialistic temper of the times ; the practical forgetfulness of God if not the denial of Him. " The vanishing sense of sin " has become a commonplace of preachers and writers. Scornful reference is made to those who in former days indulged in " ridiculous and fantastic notions " of their sinfulness. The churches for years past have had to bewail dwindling figures

in their membership, and with every passing year the difficulty increases of raising the necessary funds for home and foreign missions. In too many cases methods are resorted to for attracting congregations and raising funds that would make St. Paul, if he were here, outrun even the vigour of his Galatian denunciations. These are matters for sorrow among those who bear the Christian name. Then there are the grosser sins that defile our national life, such as the spread of intemperance, which even now, and particularly in its ravages among women, is so sorely perplexing the authorities. Let it be said emphatically that there is much in the attitude of the nation, *if patriotism, self-denial, sympathy with distress were all*, that makes us proud of our country. But when our thoughts move from the land we love,—“this precious stone set in the silver sea”—to God and His claims, and our response to His claims, then to us, as to Daniel, “belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Him.”

Yet the suggestion that a Day of Humiliation should be appointed evoked surprise even among Christians. In such a matter it is the Christian folk of the country who are called upon to be “the Lord’s remembrancers” and the representatives of the nation. Upon them falls a double duty: Daniel-like to make confession and intercession as the burden presses upon their heart; and in the true prophetic spirit to seek to win others to that repentance and returning which was the burden of the prophets of Israel.

It may be said that this falls short of Christian blessing. The writer is quite conscious of it. A nation that in all its members has entered into the enjoyment of the blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus has never yet come upon the stage of history. Those blessings are personal and individual and can only be personally appropriated. Perhaps only ideally can we even speak, as the Psalmist does (xxx. 12), of “the nation whose God is the Lord.” But as already shown, there is a national relationship to God, and the “return” of the nation in confession and prayer, and in acknowledgment of the discipline that has come upon us, will turn the present awful scourge into blessing. Moreover, the mood of mind and heart that would prevail in such a condition would constitute a soil prepared for the more intimate message of the Gospel of Christ.

To the believer of humble mind the endeavour to win a nation may seem a task both huge and hopeless. God will not look to him to do more than lies within his "sphere of influence." Certainly within that sphere he should be instant in season and out of season. *The encouragements are ample and the promises are rich and heartening.*

"Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him,
Upon them that hope in His mercy;
To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.
Our soul waiteth for the Lord;
He is our Help and our Shield."

RESTING AND USING.

WE are ever hankering after rest in the things of time and sense. But *God* is the home and resting-place of the redeemed soul, and He loves us too well to allow us to rest in the things that belong to this time state. If we have not a strong enough principle to keep us from resting in the things down here, our ever-watchful divine Teacher will drive us out of our nests by means of adverse circumstances.

In 1 Cor. vii. the apostle mentions a twofold principle by which the believer is to govern his life with reference to earthly things. Firstly, we are to see that we use the things of the world in such a way as to leave us as free as possible to attend to eternal things (see vers. 32 and 35); and in the second place, we are reminded that the things of this world are only temporary, and therefore are to be viewed with comparative indifference (see vers. 29 and 31).

Natural interests we all must have, in some measure. They would seem to serve a similar purpose to that served by those fibrous substances which enter largely into the composition of our food. These substances do not nourish the body, but are needful to distend the stomach so as to enable the organs of assimilation to functionise the more efficiently. While down here we are not fitted to give *exclusive* attention to things spiritual. Natural interests might also be compared to the instruments used to sharpen our tools—the faculties of body and mind—and so enable the

workman to produce better work. But in view of the tendency to rest in natural interests and find a home in them we are helped by the following principle—a principle which the apostle Paul constantly alludes to in both his letters to the Corinthian saints :—
“ Use the world so as to gain ultimately the most spiritual profit.”
 The pleasure which is incidental to using the world in this fashion is not sinful, but may even be helpful, for God “ has given us all things richly to enjoy.”

The two words, “ rest ” and “ use,” aptly sum up the way in which we are to avoid worldliness on the one hand, and an unwise asceticism on the other ; we are to USE the things of the world, things material, things temporal ; we are to REST our affections on things above, things spiritual, things eternal.

Mr. R. E. Brider (The Gospel Book Mission to the Army and Navy), 6, Stirling Road, Bristol, will be glad to receive back numbers of *The Faith and the Flock* which any of our readers are able to send him.

* * * *

Mr. Frank W. Chapman, 20, Tapton Crescent Road, Broomhill, Sheffield, writes as follows :—

“ There is at the present time a large demand made by Soldiers serving in the British Army for copies of the New Testament, and I have already distributed a large number at my own expense.

“ I receive daily letters from Soldiers in many regiments, posted in all parts of the country, asking for copies of God’s Word, and feel that these *must be supplied at all cost.*

“ Would some of the readers of *The Faith and the Flock*, who desire the salvation of souls, assist in this most important work by contributing to the cost?

“ The Testaments are strongly bound and cost £3 7s. 6d. per 100.”

Any donations sent to Mr. Chapman at the above address will be acknowledged, and he will give the names and addresses of the men to whom Testaments have been sent, if desired.

“ If we do not encounter so much of the hatred of the world as the Holy One, it is because we are so little like Him. May we esteem His reproach to be riches indeed, and expect it while we follow Him.”

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 3.

MARCH, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Help of the Throne.

WHAT a blessed thought, that, to the saint, the Throne of God is a throne of grace, and a throne of grace means a throne of help!

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Help from the throne is what all believers can have. What a bounteous provision is thus made for us! What an all-sufficient supply is open to us!

What has been done in order thus to change the aspect of God's throne? To the sinner it will be a throne of judgment; what has made it a throne of grace? Christ by His sacrifice has purged the sins of those who believe on Him, and no sins remain for the throne to take account of. The government of God, instead of being against us, is for us. Moreover, Jesus, the Son of God, Who made purgation of sins, is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, our representative and intercessor. How can God be against us, when He was once against Him on our account? It is because He is no longer against us, but for us, that His Throne has become a Throne of grace. This is why we are invited to come boldly to it, for God looks upon that finished work and upon Him Who accomplished it, and not upon our merits. And so all the help that Throne—the Throne of the Eternal—can give is ours, if only we come. Again, we say, what a provision for the wilderness journey—this “time of need.” However weak we may feel; however incompetent and erring; there is mercy for us. *It is not a question of sins, here.* There is provision elsewhere for the sins of believers (see 1 John ii. 1). Sins are regarded, here, as taken away, and the provision is for our weakness under all the burdens and trials of life.

There is both mercy and grace. Mercy on account of what we are—we feel weak, perhaps, depressed, unable to overcome the

trials of the way: these do not call forth rebuke, chiding, anger, but mercy. God compassionates us. But, further, there is grace, grace to help in time of need. That we need continual help after we are converted is one of the great facts of Christian experience. Here is the help we require. Whatever our need, in whatever way help is required, be it in sickness, sorrow, bereavement, trial, loss, temptation, there is the help of the Throne for us. The grace that is forthcoming is limited only by all that the Throne stands for.

Let us come then boldly for help; let us expect it when we come; and one of the sweetest and most blessed of experiences will be ours, viz., to have obtained help of God. Why does it say, "come boldly unto the *throne*," instead of to God. It means, of course, to God—the throne is His; but we are to realise what the Throne stands for:—Sovereignty, supremacy, power, authority and rule; and so it symbolises that which is the guarantee of all needed help being given.

Is there anything, of its kind, more wonderful than these two things: a *Throne* of grace, and grace to *help*? God has thought of our *needs* as well as of our sins; and He has yoked our need to His very Throne. And oh, unspeakable grace! we have direct access to the Throne, and through One Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Are your needs great at the present moment? However various and however great, think of the greatness of the Throne. The very government of God is on your behalf, and every agency which is at His service is at yours. Do not miss then the help that is provided for you. What encouragements to come: there is One there Who knows your need and has felt the same: we are exhorted to come *boldly*; not rebuke or condemnation, but mercy greets us; and there is grace to help. In our daily life, and in the midst of ever recurring need may we know what the help of the Throne means.

God's Word and His Name.

"THOU hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name." There is no competition, no rivalry, here between the Word and the Name. It is not that God's Word is higher than His Name. The word "above" is not used in the sense of superior. That could

not be. Nothing can be above God's Name in that sense. God's Name stands for all that God is. What can be above that? The word translated "above," here, also means "upon"; and one meaning of this passage may therefore be, that all God has said rests upon what He is—His word can no more change than He Himself. It cannot fail any more than He can. His word is as good as His Name. In Hebrews vi. we read of two immutable things; they are, the promise and the oath. God binds Himself by His word. His Name—all that He is—becomes the guarantee of its fulfilment. In this way God *magnifies* His word.

***"God is my
King of Old."***

"God is my King of old working salvation in the midst of the earth." What a profound and comforting truth these words contain! The word King has reference to kinship. If there is a king there must be a people, and a relationship existing between them. "God is my King" implies, therefore, the recognition of God in a special relationship, and that everything is subject to His rule. Connected with this, the Psalmist adds, "working salvation in the midst of the earth." God is not apart from the course of events; everything that transpires, whether it is the action of nations or individuals, comes within His cognizance, and is of interest to Him. He takes His part in the affairs of the world. And all through the ages He has been working salvation in the midst of the earth. Salvation of the truth; of His own cause; of vanishing enterprises; salvation of His people; salvation of oppressed nationalities, and of individuals. Perhaps, never more than to-day, has it been necessary to remember this. The war-cloud covers the *world*; the mightiest nations are putting forth all their strength as they grip each other for some tremendous overthrow; the most cherished principles are at stake; all that has been held sacred and secure is threatened. Happy for us if the confidence of the Psalmist—a confidence which he had in the face of enemies and in the midst of ruin and desolation—is ours, and we can say, "God is my King of old working salvation in the midst of the earth." In a future day, darker even than our own, this will be the confidence of the earthly people—God will never cease working salvation until all His purpose is accomplished.

CORRESPONDENCE, etc.

MR. WILLIAM LUFF (whose name often appears as a contributor to these pages) has issued some new tracts for soldiers and sailors. They are short and telling; full of interest, and yet thoroughly scriptural. Plenty of narrative, but all serving one end, to make the Gospel clear to the dullest mind. There are two series: "War Stories from Sea and Land," and, "In War or Peace." Sixteen varieties in assorted packets. Packet of 50 for 6d. Drummond's Tract Depot, Stirling, Scotland.

The Editor of this periodical purposes (D.V.) to give some special addresses on "*The Lessons of the War*," in the Philosophical Hall, Leeds, on February 23rd and March 3rd and 9th. He will be glad to be remembered in prayer.

A CORRESPONDENT IN INDIA writes:—

"The Lord's coming draweth nigh. Let us look up, our redemption also draweth nigh. This War gives us no cause for anxiety. I have perfect peace in Him Who is our peace. The War makes me long for His appearing, and I just pass on my motto for 1915 to you—'Rejoice in the LORD.' How often we rejoice in His gifts more than in Himself. May we make Him our joy, our Beloved, in Whom our soul delights. Then sickness, pain, grief, death and disappointment will not disturb us, for we shall enjoy all in Him."

DR. W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, OF TORONTO, writes:—

"I have read your article on the War with special interest, because of some controversy on the subject over here. . . . I am glad that you hold that it is scriptural to leave the matter open to the spiritual insight of the individual believer. Personally, while I consider War in itself, and the profession of a soldier to be absolutely un-Christian, yet I cannot help believing that there are circumstances when the Christian use of force is as justifiable as it is necessary—I may not fight for myself, but I do not think that our Lord wished me to carry my non-resistance to the extent of standing aside while wife or child is brutally treated. In other words, the existence of police and of locks on doors and windows does not, in my judgment, differ in principle from a War strictly for defence."

MR. R. E. BRIDER, 6, Stirling Road, Bath Road, Bristol, who labours amongst soldiers and sailors and will be glad to receive tracts or back numbers of *The Faith and the Flock*, sends us the following:—

A Christian soldier in the trenches writes:—

"Dear brother, many thanks for books. We have been resting several days and have been very thankful for the rest. The men have been very glad of

the books, especially while in the trenches. We shall be back in the trenches again when you get this letter, am going back in His strength. How I praise Him for His goodness the last fifteen weeks; fifteen weeks of travelling mercies, how true He has fulfilled His Word, we may fail but He never. Do you know the battle is the Lord's, not ours, so we must keep on trusting. I pray for you and your work every day, remember us in your prayers. Keep on pressing forward, may God bless you and all your efforts for Him."

H.M.S. ———— 2nd Cruiser Squadron.

"Dear Friend, thanks very much for the books, I shall be able to make good use of them. There is plenty of scope for work on board, and I trust we shall see many souls born anew. I know that men can be interested in the Word of God and so brought to Him."

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

III. THE NEW EMPIRE AND ITS HEAD.

AS a result of the world's conflicts and disorders, a new federal Empire will arise in Europe. Its extraordinary characteristics will excite universal wonder and admiration. In men's eyes it will be incomparable, and its might irresistible. More than human wisdom will be required to bring it to perfection; but when it is established, it will represent the climax of all that men have been striving after from the beginning.

The idea of such an Empire is running strongly in men's minds to-day. The British Premier (Mr. H. H. Asquith), speaking in Dublin early in October, 1914, described his own aspirations thus: "A real European partnership, based on the recognition of equal rights, and established and enforced by a common will." About the same time, the following remarks appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*: "What a consciousness of strength it would give us, and what a splendid watchword for the struggle, if we could say, with our Allies, that we are fighting for a federated Europe—better still, if we could say we were fighting for a federated world!" The *Daily Mail* of December 21st, 1914, hailed the agreement of the three Scandinavian monarchs as possibly heralding "the beginning of the realisation of the old idea of the formation of a nucleus United States of Europe." A prominent writer on military matters,

referring to the fear of some that Russia may become the terror of Europe if the German power is broken, has suggested that the surest way of counteracting that danger, should it arise, would be the federation of the Western powers, even naming ten which, in his opinion, might advantageously draw together. All these statements, a few out of many that might be quoted, are interesting as showing the drift of things in our time.

The new Empire, when it appears, will be, after all, an old one revived. Destined to be destroyed by the Son of Man at His second coming to earth, it is the same power that used violence to Him at His first coming. It is the Roman power, but in a form different in many respects from anything known in the past. Thus the Beast, which John saw rising up out of the sea in Rev. xiii. 1, was in appearance like a leopard, its feet were as those of a bear, and its mouth as that of a lion. These creatures represent the world-empires which preceded Rome—Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece (Dan. vii. 4-6). The Empire of the future will thus combine Alexander's rapidity of action with the Persian greed of conquest, and Babylon's tyrannical despotism.

Moreover, the Beast has ten horns. These, we are told, both in Dan. vii. 24 and Rev. xvii. 12, are ten kings, who will federate for mutual advantage under one powerful head. Nothing of the kind was seen in the Empire which the Goths destroyed.

The Gentile powers of both past and future are divinely characterised as wild beasts. That is, they have neither conscience nor heart. Their dominion is founded on rapacity and brute force. Remarkably, the states of this intermediate period, while the Roman Empire is in abeyance, have voluntarily accepted this character. All of them having adopted either a wild beast or bird of prey for their national symbol. Hence the British lion, the German eagle, etc.

Four phases of the Empire are indicated in Rev. xvii. 8—it "was, and is not ; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit , and go into perdition." During some twelve centuries it "was." Under this power John himself was suffering. In A.D. 476 its last remnant was extinguished. Accordingly, at the present time it "is not." Presently, it will "ascend out of the bottomless pit," which means that it will be revived by the energy of Satan. Finally, it "will go into perdition," being consigned to eternal doom by the Lord Jesus Christ at His appearing.

All the power of the resuscitated Empire will be centred in its distinguished chief. Thus, doings which are attributed to the Beast itself in Rev. xiii. 5-7 are attributed to the horn upon the Beast in Dan. vii. 8, 11, 25. His confederate kings will "have one mind, and will give their power and strength unto the Beast" (Rev. xvii. 13). For all practical purposes the Emperor is "the Empire." He wields its mighty power autocratically. The beginning of his prosperity will be the subjugation of three European Kingdoms (Dan. vii. 24). Then (the need of a strong hand being generally recognised) seven others will combine with them under his headship for mutual advantage. The archer upon the white horse who goes forth under the first seal is, in all probability, this victorious leader in the first stages of his career (Rev. vi. 2). He is "the prince that shall come" of Dan. ix. 26.

Religiously, the Empire will be infidel. Though it will be for a time in closest association with, and even dominated by, that which calls itself "the Church" (Rev. xvii. 1-8), this will be a political arrangement only, involving no respect whatever, even for Babylon's caricature of Christianity.* God will no longer be acknowledged even in the formal language of State documents. He will be openly blasphemed (Rev. xiii. 6). The principles of Rom. xiii. 1-6 will no longer have any application; the civil power will be in avowed apostasy. An image of the Beast will be set up, which the mass will readily worship, and also the Dragon, as the source of the Beast's power and authority. All who refuse to bow will be persecuted. These are not the saints of the Church period, who at that epoch will all be in the Father's house, but the fruits of the latter-day preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The blood of these faithful ones, Jews and Gentiles alike, will be shed like water. The cries of the agonised sufferers of the Jewish race may be heard in the prophetic language of many of the Psalms (*e.g.*, ix., x., xliv., etc.). Some of the brightest testimonies that have ever been rendered to God in this evil world will be rendered during the dark hours that will precede the Millennial dawn.

Economically the Empire will be the most burdensome despotism the world has ever known. Everything will be centralised.

* "Religion" tends more and more to become a mere matter of political convenience. Even Great Britain is not ashamed to pose as the patron of Mohammedanism when the political situation renders it advantageous to do so.

The Government will gather up all the cords into its own hands. Since the Government of that day will be an autocracy, it follows that one tyrannical hand will control the whole vast machinery of human affairs. This is the point to which the present craze for association, co-operation and nationalisation will ultimately land men. Every person will be required to carry a mark—either the name of the Beast or the number of his name. He may wear it in hand or forehead, as he may choose; but carry the mark he must, or be crushed out of existence, since none will be permitted to trade without it. Class distinction will exempt none from this iron rule; “Small and great, rich and poor, free and bond” must alike submit (Rev. xiii. 16). Wielded by his malignant lieutenant, the false prophet (the Antichrist of 1 John ii. 18-22), the power of the Beast will penetrate into every quarter. In their mad rage against all ancient authorities, men will produce a perfect welter by their revolutionary violence (Rev. vi. 12-17; Luke xxi. 25-26). This will create the need for a strong hand to intervene, and the opportunity for the Emperor of the future will thus arise. Men will be thankful for him until they prove by bitter experience that they have committed themselves to a more galling tyranny than they have ever known before. They will be “scorched” by their own boasted luminary (Rev. xvi. 8).

This reign of terror will be ended by the abrupt appearing of the Lord from heaven. The Beast and the false prophet, at the head of their hosts, with all the satellite kings in attendance, will make war against the Lamb; and these two leaders will be seized, and consigned forthwith to the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 19-20). Without experiencing death and resurrection, these—earth’s greatest transgressors—will be summarily judged at least a thousand years before the Great White Throne is set up.

The earth’s only hope is Christ. Oh, that men perceived this! Every scheme devised by men for the rectification of their wrongs, every device to place human affairs upon a sound and satisfactory basis, is doomed to disappointment. Christ is the Man of God’s purposes. He, and He only, is able to make the rough places plain, and the crooked things straight. All this He will accomplish in His day.

(Next month, D.V., “The Casting down of Satan.”)

WAR TELEGRAMS.

By WILLIAM LUFF,

Author of "War Stories from Sea and Land," &c.

IN war time, telegrams are not only important, but interesting. A telegram from Berlin states that the telegraph office at the German headquarters has to cope with a terrific pressure of work, some nine thousand despatches having to be dealt with daily. Who shall say how many prayer-telegrams reach the Heavenly headquarters hourly, from the battlefields of life; and how many telegrams are received by the good soldiers of Jesus Christ in reply. Let us intercept a few.

TERROR TOLD.

"*Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High*" (Ps. lvi. 2). This telegram was sent by one who found his foes too numerous for him. A soldier wrote of the on-coming of the Germans, as being like the swarms of ants from a disturbed ant-hill; and could we not use the same figure, when facing unnumbered sins, the principalities and powers of darkness, the forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil! The telegram suits the young convert, on a battleship, in a barrack-room, a godless home, a profane workshop, or a worldly workroom—"they be many that fight against me, O Thou Most High." Please note to whom addressed.

SAFETY SECURED.

The reply from the Most High is assuring:—"And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee" (Jer. i. 19). A soldier expects a fight; and God does not enlist us, arm us, and train us for a mere parade. "They shall fight against thee"—what they shall do; "but they shall not prevail against thee"—what they shall not do.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14).

ASSISTANCE ASSURED.

The next telegram tells us why enemies shall not prevail over us:—"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exod. xiv. 14). When David became the champion of Israel against Goliath, he fought for them; so Christ, as our Champion, fights for us. Can He be defeated? He won at Calvary; He wins to-day; He shall finally triumph.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. xix. 14).

PROTECTION PROMISED.

After a great battle Abram received a good telegram:—"Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield" (Gen. xv. 1). As a child of Abraham by faith, this promise is for me, and all who are of faith. Not armies, not fleets, forts, or trenches are our true shield. "I am thy shield." What a telegram! Not we are God's shield, but God is our shield. A soldier wrote that his comrades had taken as their battle-hymn Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of my soul," and said that on Christmas Day, rolling and reverberating along the ine of trenches, he heard the words:—

"All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring:
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

Shall we send a telegram from the field of strife, a telegram to friends and foes, telling of

A CAPTAIN COMMANDING.

"God Himself is with us for our Captain" (2 Chron. xiii. 12). How much depends upon who commands! The personal presence of a trusted commander insures victory. Not an angelic deputy, but God Himself is with us, in the open field and in the cramped trenches of patient endurance; with us ever and everywhere: "For our Captain" to give commands, and to have those commands obeyed.

"Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed!
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand."

And here is a reply telegram from Headquarters, telling of

SATAN SUBDUED.

"The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). When will the War end? Shortly. How will the War end? By our Leader bruising the opposing leader. He, God, shall do it.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10).

He has bruised man's heel; but beneath man's heel he shall himself be bruised.

One other telegram, telling of

DEATH DESTROYED.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. xxv. 8). The first telegram said the enemy would swallow up the man who sent it: this telegram says the enemy himself shall be swallowed up. On the battlefields of to-day Death seems triumphant, turning fruitful fields into cemeteries; but Death will meet his conqueror.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 52-57).

Talking to a young artillery-man, he told me that once one of their guns was run over a bog, and the bog swallowed up, gun, gun-carriage, horses and men. All disappeared never to be seen again—"swallowed up." "Swallowed up"—suggestive telegram! When our last enemy is swallowed up in victory, it will be a victory final and eternal.

"Fight on! though few and feeble, faint and fearing,
The triumph day of victory is nearing:
By prayer dispatch thy telegrams to heaven,
The answer, 'Courage, soul, aid shall be given.
Fight on! the tyrant's kingdom must be shattered
And all his legions to the winds be scattered."

"It is better far to suffer in God's path than to be at ease in Satan's.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES: BEING REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

By R. E.

INTRODUCTION.

IT may be necessary, first of all, to explain the above title. We have long felt that the word "administration" is the key-word of, at least, the first half of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The word "dispensation" in our A.V. in Chap. i. 10 ; iii. 2, and the word "fellowship" Chap. iii. 9 ; these are both represented in another translation (J. N. Darby's) by the word "administration." In the last passage cited, the word in the original in the received text is different, and is translated, by some, stewardship, but in several MSS. it is the same, and the above translator adheres to the word "administration" all through. In Chap. i. 10. therefore, we have "the administration of the fulness of times" ; Chap. iii. 2, "The administration of the grace of God" ; Chap. iii. 9, "The administration of the mystery."

The word "age" or "ages" occurs repeatedly throughout this epistle. "The fulness of times" refers to an age succeeding the present. "This age" is mentioned in Chap. i. 21 and ii. 2. "The ages" are spoken of in Chap. iii. 9 (though this refers to the past) ; in ver. 11, where it is "the purpose of the ages," and in ver. 21, where it is again future, "throughout all ages," or "unto all generations of the age of ages."

This wonderful epistle deals, therefore, with "the purpose of the ages." Not in any elaborate detail, of course—nor must we look for any minute particulars—but on a broad scale, presented in a few graphic touches.

What does this purpose necessitate and involve? Nothing less than the accomplishment of God's will in the administration of everything by Christ ; He will "head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (N.T.). Christ is now actually set above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion in the heavenlies, and this equally applies, in God's purpose, to the earth in the age to come ; while all things

are said to be put under His feet, and God gave Him to be head over all things to the Church (Eph. i. 21-2). In all this we have the thought of administration. Just as Adam was made head of the first creation, and all things were placed in subjection under him, and he gave names to every beast of the field and fowl of the air—he was the great administrator; so Christ will be the administrator of redeemed creation; everything *everywhere* will be subject to Him—He will be Head and Lord of all.

In all this vast inheritance and this unparalleled glory the Church is to share. She will be the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. How fitting that Christ should have a companion suitable to Him, the sharer of His empire when He governs the universe—one in whom His glory and character will be perfectly displayed. A second Eve united to the last Adam, but aspiring to nothing, because all will be hers.

The blessing of Israel, though not specifically mentioned, is included in the administration of the fulness of times. And although the eternal state is not the subject of direct reference, yet surely it is implied. God's purpose is unchanging. And if we were chosen in Christ *before* the foundation of the world, *i.e.*, ere time began, we may be quite sure God's purpose in Christ will not change when time shall end. Unto God the Father will be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages."*

Such will be the divine administration of the ages. How glorious! And as certain as it is satisfying. Every emotion thrills, as we think of Christ administering all on God's behalf; heaven and earth united under His sway and alike owning His sovereignty; and men blessed in Him, and all nations calling Him blessed. Through Him God's way will be "known upon earth, His saving health among all nations." But what blessing for the Church. Can she lack anything when HE will be the administrator—Head over all things to the Church; His hands will supply every need, His heart will never allow any blessing to be wanting—through Him and in Him every divine favor will be hers. In closest union with Him she will know a nearer place than either Israel or the

* It is possible that in the eternal state certain aspects of the administration will be changed, when Christ has delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father, and God is all in all (see 1 Cor. xv.). But Ephesians does not touch upon this.

nations. She will be the object of His care, the sharer of His supreme joys, and by Him she will be nourished and cherished.

It is striking that, in connection with all this glory and this administration of the ages, Christ is spoken of as the Beloved. He is the true Joseph—the beloved of the Father. And the dreams of Joseph find their answer in Christ being Head over all things in heaven and on earth. What is this, but the fulfilment of the sheaves of the field, doing obeisance to Joseph's sheaf; along with the homage of the sun, moon and stars? "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him."

There is also another thought in connection with this title. We are accepted, or taken into favour, in the Beloved. He alone can measure the extent of God's favour to those predestinated to sonship by Him.

Administration will no longer be in the hands of men, except in subordination to Christ. Supreme rule and authority will be vested in Him. Man, as such, has had rule and authority committed to him, but here, as everywhere, he has hopelessly broken down. The present War is sufficient evidence of it (even if there were no other proofs) in the ruin and devastation being spread over a large part of the Continent of Europe; and what for? Ambition and the military spirit, backed by armaments, have plunged Europe in blood, and this in spite of nineteen centuries of Christianity. Is it not time that One Whose title is the Prince of Peace took the administration of everything into His own hands? God has decreed that He shall; it is part of His purpose. He "*hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained.*"

And the saints will have part in this administration. "*Do ye not know,*" asks the apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, "*that the saints shall judge the world?*" And we must read this word "judge" not in its restricted, but in its largest sense. God's plan is to take possession of the heavenlies by the Church, and of earth through Israel. Not but what there will be intercommunication; for we believe that the heavenly saints will have some part in Christ's rule over the earth; but, broadly speaking, it will be as we have stated. And this explains a statement in our epistle, Chap. i. 18: "What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in

the saints." Here it is not our inheritance (which is referred to in ver. 11) but God's inheritance. His glory will be set forth in them; and they will occupy for Him and represent Him. This is seen in the heavenly city (Rev. xxi.) "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." So that again in Ephesians we have the thought of administration, and, in this instance, in connection with the saints.

So in Chap. iv. we have the present administration in the Church. Alas, how little Christ's administration in the Church is realised to-day! "*Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*" What is this but Christ's present administration in connection with His members? He ascended on high and gave gifts unto men, and grace is given commensurate with the gift. Some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. "For the perfecting of the saints, *unto the work of the ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ.*" But all these gifts to His Church are subject to the administration of Christ. As it says, "The Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." And again, "Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them" (Mark xvi. 20; Acts xvi. 10).

As we pursue our study of this epistle let us keep before us this thought upon which we have been dwelling. There hardly can be a more uplifting thought, especially at such a moment as the present, than that God's intention, one day, is to govern; and to contemplate the One He has appointed for all His purposes of administration whether in the Church or in the world. Ultimately God's glory and man's blessing will be secured in Christ. Blessed indeed is it to know now what it means to be under God's administration, through the acknowledgment of Christ as Lord; and to recognise it both in our individual lives and in the Church. This threefold aspect of administration really embodies the substance of this wondrous epistle; Christ Head over all things to the Church; Christ Lord of the individual; Christ the administrator of the age to come.

"Man has a will contrary to God's will; this every one knows who has come to Christ. To do the will of God you must deny yourself."

THE OBSERVATORY.

The Y.M.C.A.—Attention has been called, lately, in a very pronounced way, to the worldly methods of this Association. We deeply regret the necessity for it, but godly men have evidently felt they could keep silence no longer; such are the deplorable practices allowed. One can scarcely credit the extent to which the leaven of worldliness has crept in. Even a song-book has been issued under the auspices of the Association full of drivel and inanity; and in certain places every form of worldly amusement is preferred to the gospel. The worst feature is that all this is associated with the name, Christian.

It is with sorrow we have to write thus; and we do so only in the hope that those who are responsible may see the error of their ways, and may recover themselves ere it be too late. The policy now being pursued is wrong and injudicious in every way. The Association is fast losing the confidence and sympathy of earnest Christian men, and the world will not, in the long run, give much support to the kind of mixture which now prevails. The whole thing is likely to collapse if the present course is persisted in, or, if it does not collapse, it will become a tool of the Devil and an instrument of evil instead of good. But the present policy is wrong, chiefly, because the wrong methods are relied upon. The material has swamped the spiritual. The gospel is put in the background and the gymnasium, billiards, dancing, etc., etc., occupy the place of pre-eminence. Men ask for bread and they are given a stone; for fish, and they are offered a serpent. We wish it were possible to think such language an exaggeration, but the evidence that it is only the sober truth is overwhelming. From our own personal knowledge we know it to be a fact, apart from what has been published, that zealous Christian workers everywhere are uttering their lamentation over the decadency of the Y.M.C.A.

We have appealed to some who are in touch with the Association in their own localities, and this is what they say: A Preacher of the Gospel writes: "With regard to the Y.M.C.A. generally, it panders to popular craving and worldly tastes. It is hardly entitled, generally speaking, to its 'C.,' and would be better described as Y.M.A. (Young Men's Association). I had a stiff fight against the introduction of billiards and smoking . . . but was hopelessly outvoted . . . and ridiculed about my narrowness, &c. I said if they introduced these things they should drop the 'C.'" Another says:—"I am afraid there is a great deal of truth in Mr. F.'s letter; and, as far as I am personally concerned, I feel the general tone of the Y.M.C.A. is far from spiritual, in fact, spiritual things at present are relegated to a back-seat . . . The *whole* difficulty arises from associating Christ's name with what is *really* of the world. The Y.M.C.A. has become largely a social club. Whenever a godly man has a powerful local influence there spiritual work has a place, otherwise it is hardly seen. . . . But of one thing I am certain, that as oil and

water never mix, so, to attach the blessed name of our Lord to all this worldly stuff is an abomination. . . Soldiers *hate* the mixture ; and that I know from actual contact with them."

This declaration, "Soldiers *hate* the mixture" is one which the Council of the Y.M.C.A. may well take to heart. The world, as such, wants undiluted worldliness, and Christians want Christ. But in another sense the world wants Christ too. And with Christ to preach it is infamous to hold out the world's paraphernalia to dying men instead of Him. The world can neither satisfy nor save. Christ can do both. His charm is greater than all that the world can offer ; and where He is presented to men out of a full heart and with some acquaintance with His excellency, men can still be won ; and those who are not won will be made to feel that their highest good has been sought, so that they cannot feel anything else but grateful.

Where is the remedy ? It can be found only in a genuine confession of failure—for as to the failure there can be no manner of doubt—in repentance, and a return to first principles ; for the Association has departed from the aims of its original founders. Let the Council and Secretaries recover their faith in the Gospel as God's power unto salvation, and rehabilitate themselves in the belief that a CHRISTIAN Association must make its chief aim, the bringing men to Christ. If they refuse to place this above everything else, better to drop the name Christian, and suffer eternal disgrace in doing so.

* * * *

The German Emperor.—In *The Great War*, by Robert Middleton of Norwich (Jarrold's, price 2d.) a startling fact is disclosed on page 11. The writer states that the German Kaiser believes it to be the duty of the world to acclaim him as the Divinely-sent world Emperor. "He has not yet been crowned as th - German Emperor, and has refused such a ceremony on the ground that he will wait until he is crowned as the Dictator of Europe." We wrote to Mr. Middleton asking what authority existed for this assertion, and he very kindly sent us the following reply : "With regard to the German Emperor being still uncrowned, etc., I first heard of this from a very wealthy and prominent M.P. about four years ago. I treasured this up as a tit-bit, and asked various well-informed persons if the German Emperor had ever been crowned, and was told most distinctly, no. Then, a few months ago, I saw an article in the *London Daily Express* . . . in which it stated just what I have written." It is a remarkable fact that others before the Kaiser have sought to become dictators of Europe ; e.g., Louis XIV. and Napoleon ; but their enterprise has always ended in disaster. The reason is found in Acts xvii. 26. God has "determined the bounds of their (the nations) habitation," and all who have sought to extend these bounds, instead of seeking the Lord, have come to grief. We do not doubt for a moment but that history will repeat itself. Ther *will be* a dictator of Europe, and, not only of Europe, but of the world, "Because He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man Whom He hath ordained" ; but *that man* is *not* the German Emperor, but the Worthy One of Rev. v. A strong angel proclaimed, "Who is worthy ?" And the only one who is found worthy

is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David. And when John looked he saw "a Lamb as it had been slain." He alone has title to the earth. One Who combines the power of the lion with the meekness of the lamb!

* * * *

Compulsory Military Service.—We deeply regret to learn that a number of Christians have been shot in Berlin because they refused to undertake military service and go to the front. While admiring their fidelity to principle, and wishing to do them all honour, we cannot but feel convinced that it is unnecessary to sacrifice one's life on such grounds. We feel it our duty to utter a distinct note of warning as to this matter. The more so, because good men, whose sincerity and absolute conviction we do not question for a moment, are giving it as their opinion that Christians ought to lay down their lives rather than become soldiers. A missionary writes as follows:—"If conscription is enforced in England, I believe it is the duty of every Christian to refuse to fight, even if his life is forfeited." With all due deference to such a belief, we are persuaded that compulsory military service furnishes no reason for a man to sacrifice his life. War is sometimes justified: e.g., the conquest of Canaan. The iniquity of the Amorites was full; and it became necessary to exterminate them. God Himself decreed this. It is nothing to the point to say that this belongs to a past dispensation. War is never *in itself* right, whether in this or any other era of the world's history. And God would not have directed His people to fight then, any more than He does now, *except there had been or is a justification for it*. And the point is, there may be justification to-day as there was then. Further, government is God's method of maintaining order and putting down evil to-day as much as ever it was (Rom. xiii.). And if the Government call upon all able-bodied men to take up arms in defence of the country, it is certainly not a call to the Christian to be shot rather than do so. It is not the individual who is responsible for all the acts of a Government, but the Government itself. In addition to this, be it remembered, the Bible nowhere distinctly forbids anyone becoming a soldier, nor does it even condemn war (or how could God have ordered His ancient people to fight); and if He thought it well to select a man who was a soldier for a very high public honour, that of being admitted into His Kingdom through the instrumentality of an apostle (see Acts x.), would He call upon one to give up his life rather than become a soldier? He is not a God Whose ways are so unequal as that. Moreover, this case of the Centurion proves that it is possible to be a devout man, fear God, give much alms and pray to God always, though a soldier. We are persuaded that the thoughts of many need entirely re-adjusting upon this subject, and that to advise people to lay down their lives, rather than take up arms *when called to do so by the King*, is advice which is absolutely misleading and mischievous. The only sufficient reason for submitting to be shot would be a demand to deny Christ or the Gospel; on other grounds it is, however well intentioned, a wanton waste of life.

"We hear much of 'progress' and 'advance,' but the only real advance is to follow Christ."

PILLAR OF CLOUD.

Ex. xiii. 21 and 22.

By H. D.

THE cloud was the visible sign of an invisible God. The Holy Spirit is leading a redeemed people through the wilderness ; leading us upward, onward and homeward. As the servant led Rebekah to Isaac, so we, the "Bride," are being led, and while on the way He pours into our hearts the worth and beauty of the One Who has won and attracted us. He shews us things to come. The world does not believe in Him, because He is unseen, but we know and feel the real power and presence of that blessed Guide and Comforter. The Bride and Spirit never are, or will be, separated. In Rev. xxii., in response to Christ's presentation of Himself as the Bright and Morning Star, they say "Come." In Ex. xiii. we see a multitude of about two and a half millions of people independent of all human means. God is their Light, Shade, Eye, Guide, and they shelter under the shadow of His wing. It is just the same to-day. How could we get on without God's guidance, power and grace? In Ex. xii., Israel is sheltered by blood. Ex. xiii., God demands their sanctification to Himself, and, when done, God appears in the cloud. The cloud leads the host of Israel into what must have seemed a strange dilemma. Rocks on either side, Egypt's host behind, and sea rolling in front of them. Surely Moses had blundered ; but we hear the words, "Stand still," "Stretch forth," and the cloud which was leading goes behind, lighting up the path through the sea for Israel, but darkening the way for Egypt's army. This clearly points to what we have revealed in 2 Thess. ii. 6 and 7. In these verses we have two important words, "what" and "He." The first gives us clearly the Church, whose presence upon earth checks the full manifestation of evil. The second word, "He," as clearly speaks of the Holy Spirit, Who by His presence lights up the rugged path for the ransomed host, and also hinders the onrushing tide of foes. This blessed ministry shall continue until each blood-bought one shall be gathered safely home (1 Thess. iv. 13). Then those hostile forces shall be free from all restraint, and like Egypt's host, will rush on to their own confusion and eternal destruction. What a real comfort for our hearts in these lawless days—"Will hinder" till

He come. In Ex. xv., we hear for the first time in Scripture men and women singing and praising God. This is the happy result of redemption being known from the penalty, practise and power of sin. But alas, three days from this joyous place, and all is changed. At Marah the people murmur, but God in grace instructs Moses to put a tree into the water, and then it is sweet. Oh, that care, worry, sorrow and murmuring, how it saps away our joy in God, but when we bring in the Cross how soon all is sweet and smooth! After Marah they hunger, and look to the desert instead of to God. God asks them to look up and out, and see the whole wilderness covered with manna, Angels' food. They also see the Pillar of Cloud lit up with the Glory of the Lord. God thus saying to them, "I stake my glory, my word and oath that I have brought you out to bring you in, not to allow you to die of starvation, but to guide, shelter and strengthen you each day and all the way through the wilderness." Jehovah thus pledges three things to His people.

(1) Presence to guide ; (2) Power to sustain ; (3) Grace to provide. Ex. xxiv. 4-16, we have the cloud at Mount Sinai. Moses and Joshua with seventy elders at base of mount for six days. Days of self-examination, self-judgment, purging, separation and consecration ; then, on the seventh, Moses can enter into God's presence in the cloud ; all because of the altar at the foot. God is never satisfied until we are brought right into His presence, made meet through the precious blood. When the Law was given, three thousand of Israel fell. What a contrast with Pentecost when, consequent upon the sacrifice of Calvary and the exaltation of our Lord Jesus, the Spirit descended and three thousand souls were saved and baptised into the Church, thus forming, for the first time, One Body.

Ex. xxxiii. 10. Sin in the camp. Moses judges the evil and brought his tent without the defiled camp. God's presence in the cloud came and remained by the tent. God has but one principle upon which we are commanded to act regarding evil. We must judge it, and then separate from all that is tainted by sin. God will then, as in the past, stand by and honour the man who acts according to His holy character and for His glory.

"Adam was a safer man outside of Eden than he had been inside ; when within, his life depended upon himself ; when outside it depended on another—on a *promised Christ*."

THE ROYAL GUESTS OF HEAVEN.

“He hath filled the hungry with good things” (Luke i. 53).

By Dr. MORRIS, Brighton.

BLESSED are the peacemakers! Yes, blessed are the joy makers, yea, more blessed are the glory bearers. Mary belonged to this happy company. She sang of joys and blessings yet to come, of mercies still unborn. With Jesus as her object and truth as her theme and love as her inspiration, no wonder she sang the festal song of joy.

1. *Chosen guests* : “The hungry.”

Who are these royal guests?

1. The Desiring.
2. The Distressed.
3. The Destitute.
4. The Dying.

2. *Choice provisions* : “Good things.”

- | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------|
| For the Sinner | - | Salvation. |
| „ Saint | - | Sanctification. |
| „ Sufferer | - | Sympathy. |
| „ Servant | - | Supplies. |

3. *Complete supply* : “Filled.”

Fulness of joy, peace, power, glory.

4. *Crowning feature* : “HE.”

5. *Consequence* : Satisfaction, song.

If the feast is so rich and full now, what will it be when
“They shall hunger no more”?

“Don’t try to hold God’s hand, let Him do the holding, and you do the trusting.”

“HE LEADETH ME.”

Go where He goes, and with Him stay,
Unheeding whither leads the way.—Tersteegan.

* * * *

“There is nothing so small but that we may honour God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands.”

GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

By E. ADAMS.

“NOW is the Son of Man glorified,” said our Lord, referring to His death on the Cross which was very shortly to take place. To Christ, Calvary was a glory.

The Cross was the consummation of a life of service and self-sacrifice. He Who went about doing good and Who came, not to be ministered to, but to minister, completed and crowned the devotion of a lifetime when He offered Himself to God, a spotless, perfect sacrifice.

The sufferings of the Son of Man reached their climax in the unspeakable agonies of Calvary. The silent, patient endurance with which He bore the trials and pains that filled the brief years of His public ministry shone forth with supreme splendour during those awful hours when He underwent that terrible “baptism,” the very anticipation of which drew from Him sweat as it were great drops of blood. Every grace which marked His unique pathway on earth was displayed with paramount glory when He was lifted up to die.

At the Cross are exhibited with exceptional clearness the character and attributes of the Eternal God. At that blessed trysting place meet holiness and love, truth and grace, justice and mercy. There we see the infinite compassions of the God of love side by side with His inflexible determination to give sin its full due. It is at the place where we realise that the condemnation of sin is the very means of its forgiveness that we behold, like the seven-coloured rainbow spanning the heavens with its arch of beauty, the glorious blending of all the many-sided attributes of the Almighty. As the poet sings—

“Truth, wisdom, justice, power and love,
In all their glory shone,
When Jesus left the courts above,
And died to save His own.”

Calvary means a problem solved; a transaction effected; a work done; a victory won. The question, “How can a just God forgive sin?” admits of no solution apart from the Cross of Christ.

God's love desires to save the sinner ; but God's justice says " No." Only at Calvary are the desires of love and the claims of justice satisfied and reconciled by a stupendous transaction such as the mind of man was utterly unable to conceive. God took upon Himself, in the Person of His own Son, the issues of human guilt, and ended them by His blood !

" Done is the work that saves." It helps to remove excessive grief at the sufferings of our blessed Lord when we realise that then was performed the greatest work in the history of the universe. What relief, what joy lie before him who is accomplishing a bitter and painful, but invaluable task ? The knowledge that He was doing a work in virtue of which countless multitudes would be saved was the source of that joy in the strength of which he " endured the Cross, despising the shame." He was doing that for which He came into the world. He was a Master Workman Who was achieving the masterpiece for which He had planned and prepared from eternity. Calvary spells the completion of a work the like of which the universe never has seen and never will see.

At the Cross a victory was won ; a victory over sin, and Satan and the world ; a victory which is shared by all who trust it. Satan and his hosts tried their uttermost to mar that perfect sacrifice. Had their efforts been successful, that sacrifice could not have been accepted, the sufferings and death would have been in vain, the Saviour would have failed in the work He had undertaken on our behalf. We shudder at the dreadful alternative, and hail with glad relief the final shout of triumph, " It is finished." Satan is defeated ; salvation can be obtained ; hell can be avoided, heaven secured, sin vanquished, the world overcome, death robbed of its sting. Thanks be to God for our Redeemer's glorious victory at Calvary.

No wonder that the apostle gloried in the Cross of his Saviour. And he gloried in the Cross as being God's method of salvation in opposition to man's. There are two ways of salvation presented to men ; the true and the false ; God's way and the world's way. Examine any man-made religion under the sun, and it betrays its human and corrupt origin by its method of salvation : it is a religion of works, of human merit ! God's favour is to be bought by our endeavours ; eternal life is to be purchased by " doing the best we can " ; the Almighty's displeasure is to be warded off by

works of amendment and religious duties ; we are to win our way to heaven by what we can do ; man is exalted and God is abased !

This was the sort of religion by which Judaising teachers sought to lead away the unstable Galatians. These self-pleasing doctrines Paul utterly repudiates, while at the same time he glories in the flesh-abasing truths of the Cross. He boasted in that principle of salvation of which the world was ashamed ; and he repudiated with loathing that principle of salvation in which the world gloried. Thus he was crucified to the world, and the world to him.

Further, Paul knew that the Cross was not only the source of salvation, but also of sanctification ; and he gloried in those principles of life which flow from the Cross. The Cross spells " death " ; death to what the world holds dear—death to the world's wisdom ; death to the world's ambitions ; death to the world's pleasures of sin ; death to the world's love of money ; death to the world's aims, spirit, points of view. How could the apostle tolerate in his life those principles which involved His adorable Saviour's death ? How could he have friendship with that spirit which crucified the Lord of glory ? The Cross, with all its ineffable wealth of meaning, stood between his former life and the life which he now felt called to live. With deeper meaning, even, than Samuel Rutherford, the apostle could say, like that saintly man, " Christ's Cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bore ; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour."

To the believer, the Cross of Christ is the awful, yet blissful, centre of all centres ; the most important event in the history of the world ; the most stupendous transaction in the universe. Necessity has drawn him there, and love binds him there ; all the fibres of his being are wrapped around that blessed object. Other glories decay by length of time ; if the splendour of this object change, it will only be by increase. The Cross is the theme of prophets, the centre of all God's purposes, the soul of all Christian doctrine, the mainspring of all holiness, the source of all our peace, and the foundation of eternal joy.

" God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 4.

APRIL, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Confidence that we have in Him.

IN 1 John v. 14 we read: "And 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." What confidence it gives to know that God always hears, if we ask according to His will, and that, if He hears, He always grants our petitions. There is a sense, of course, in which God hears every prayer, although He does not answer every prayer. But in this passage, the fact that He hears means He will answer. And one proof that the answer will be given is, the having this confidence. To know that we have been heard is to know that the petition will be granted. How blessed to feel confident that some day the answer will be given.

The late

Mr. W. P. Manners.

ON Tuesday morning, February 23rd, we received the following letter:—
"The man greatly beloved hereabouts, and greatly beloved by you and me, Mr. W. P. Manners, departed to be with *Christ* this morning (22nd); a short and severe attack of pneumonia being more than an overtaxed heart could stand.

"As he said of another recently: 'He had *heard* of it before he went; he knows what it IS now.'

"His last words to the Lord in my hearing were the most familiar on his lips for many a year:—

'Oh to be but emptied, lowlier,
Mean, unnoticed and unknown;
And to God a vessel holier,
Filled with *Christ*, and *Christ* alone.'

"Next for frequency of utterance were the words: 'That I may know *Him, Him.*'"

"And next:—

'A flax thread in oceans of fire
How soon swallowed up would it be;
But sooner in oceans of mercy
The sinner that cometh to *Me.*'"

Mr. Manners was Managing Director of Worthington & Co. He had risen from the position of junior clerk to be head of the firm. In the obituary notice, which appeared in a local paper, he is described as "a great captain of industry," and as possessing a marvellous capacity for business . . . "But," it adds, "it will be by his spirit of benevolence that his memory will the longer survive. The good he did unknown will never be told." This witness is true. He gave to the Lord's work with unstinted generosity; and there are those who will miss him more than they can tell. What endeared him to many a heart, and brought tears to the eyes of not a few when they heard that he had gone, was the *manner* in which he gave help, and not merely the help he gave. The kindness with which all was done, the courtesy, the evident *pleasure* with which he dispensed his bounty, added their own value and fragrance to his gifts, and made them tenfold more precious. Here is one example, from a letter written to one who had been in the doctor's hands and whom he had advised to see a physician. "I shall be very glad to help you in the direction indicated by the physician you consulted; please let me know what amount I shall send you. It is my privilege to be a minister to you in the Name of Him Who is our all, so there is no need for any reserve. I do pray that you may be restored to health to serve Christ in these dark days."

Here is an extract from another letter, showing his deep spirituality:—

"Thank you so much for your fervent desire for me. I pray you and yours may be

'Kept by His power,
Kept in His love;
Kept hour by hour,
Till called above.'

I always enjoy your notes on the Scripture you have meditated on. I asked this morning (Jan. 1st) for a word of solid rest for 1910 and onward in the upheaval on all hands, and the Lord gave me this: "*Christ is all*"; and very soon afterwards: 'I am the first and the last, I am He that liveth and was dead, AND BEHOLD I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades': and while I was meditating on the wondrous preciousness of these words a hymn that I taught my children years ago was brought before me:

'Jesus is our pilot,
No one else can guide
Our frail bark in safety,
O'er life's stormy tide.
When the waves of trouble
Baffle human skill,
He can always calm them
With His peace be still.'

“ My soul overflowed unto Him,” (he adds).

“ Someone wrote : ‘ Worship is being nothing, and having God’s thoughts of Jesus rolling through my soul.’ ”

It will be seen from these quotations that Mr. Manners was no ordinary man. He might truly be called, as he has been, a “ captain of industry,” but he was as much at home with his Bible as in directing an immense business : his communion with God and his desire to be a channel of blessing to his fellow men kept pace with his enterprise and skill in the world of commerce. Wealth and success never spoilt, or even changed him. His heart was not set upon money, but upon brighter things above, and it never dried up in him the springs of sympathy or made him self-sufficient and distant. The grace of God had found him, and he would have been the first to acknowledge that to that grace he owed everything. God had been pleased to reward his labours and industry and give him a large measure of earthly prosperity ; but this, to him, was but the small dust of the balance compared with what he had found in Christ. And, as a consequence, he was never ashamed to testify of Him, and never tired of recommending Him to others. He was a man of prayer, and we shall never forget kneeling in God’s presence with him. It is said that every fresh commercial undertaking was always the subject of earnest prayer. He often rose early to study the Word, and he was never happier than when preaching or distributing tracts.

All this is not said in praise of the man—he would have deprecated such a thing—but in praise of Him Who came the lost to save, and Whose grace our friend so abundantly proved. He is gone. And earth grows poorer as one after another is taken. But there will be a re-union. If on earth God’s grace has made the communion of hearts possible, and so sweet ; if we have been permitted to know and see His love exhibited in others, and our souls have been refreshed by it, what will it be where everything catches the radiance of His glory, and every vessel is filled with Him, and all that causes discord and division, here, is for ever banished ?

If any of our readers possess spare copies of this magazine for October, 1908, and March, 1909, will they kindly forward same to the editor, and oblige.

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

IV. THE CASTING DOWN OF SATAN.

THE greatest rebel in the universe, the prime instigator of all evil, both above and below, is Satan. During many ages his insolent opposition to all God's ways has been tolerated in divine forbearance; but the moment has been already fixed when His forbearance will end. Then the exalted transgressor will meet his doom.

Popular theology seems vague as to the present whereabouts of Satan. Some persons speak of him as if he were already in Hell; others appear to limit the sphere of his operations to the earth. That he has not yet been cast into Hell is sufficiently proved by his own words in Job i. 7. Appearing before Jehovah amongst the sons of God on a certain occasion, the Creator inquired of him: "Whence comest thou?" To which he replied: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." It is most certain that when Satan or any other transgressors are once cast into Hell there will be no coming forth again to walk to and fro in the earth. Hell's woeful prisoners will not be permitted to roam at will.

The truth is that Satan and his hosts have not yet been expelled from the heavenly places. Hence they are called in Eph. vi. 12 (margin), "wicked spirits in heavenly places," and in Isa. xxiv. 21, "the host of the high ones that are on high." Satan himself is described in Eph. ii. 2 as "the prince of the power of the air." Dan. x. 11-12 shows that evil spirits are even able (when permitted by God) to impede the journey of an angel, sent from above with an answer to prayer. Some have thought that the presence of rebels in the heavens accounts for the omission of the words "it was good," in connection with the work of the second day in Gen. i. 6-8. The omission is certainly remarkable.

Rom. xvi. 20 assures us: "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Let us repeat to ourselves the word "shortly." The career of the great disturber is nearing its end. Christ will soon "undo the works of the Devil," according to the

divine purpose (1 John iii. 8). The first of all prophecies—the word spoken in Eden—will then be completely fulfilled: “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head” (Gen. iii. 15). The Saints are to be associated with Him in His mighty victory, hence the Apostle says “*Your feet*” in Rom. xvi. 20.

Scripture indicates three steps in the overthrow of Satan. The first is found in Rev. xii. 7-12; the second in Rev. xx. 1-3; and the third in Rev. xx. 10. Created originally “full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty,” set upon the holy mountain of God as the anointed covering cherub (thus Prime Minister of the Universe, guardian of the rights of the Divine throne), Satan will finish in the lake of fire (Ezek. xxviii. 12-17). Not as king will he be sent thither, but as the principal offender, and greatest sufferer. It is a hymn, not Scripture, which has addressed him as “Satan, thou king in hell.” The fall of Satan, from heights to us inconceivable, to depths unimaginable, is appalling to contemplate.

In Rev. xii. the veil is drawn aside that we may behold wonders in heaven. First we are shown the Divine purposes concerning Israel (the sun-clothed woman), with Satan’s opposition thereto; then we are permitted to witness a mighty struggle waged in heaven between Michael and the Dragon, each the leader of angelic hosts. The result of the war is that Satan and his armies are cast out into the earth, never again to have a footing on high. This issue the Saviour saw in prophetic vision when the seventy returned to Him in Luke x. 17-18. The triumph over demons through His Name was to Him the earnest of the final victory.

The duration of the Dragon’s sojourn upon earth is definitely stated—1,260 days. From this we learn that the expulsion from heaven takes place in the middle of the last of Daniel’s seventy weeks (Dan. ix. 27). As Isaiah xxiv. 21 shows, it is at the epoch of God’s judgment of “the kings of the earth upon the earth.” This passage indicates the order of these solemn happenings; first, the heavenly foes overthrown, then the earthly.

The Church must needs be removed from the earth ere Satan and his followers are cast out of heaven. Our conflict is characteristically with principalities and powers, with the universal lords of this darkness, with wicked spirits in heavenly places (see J. N. Darby’s translation of Eph. vi. 12). These now use their subtle influence to prevent our practical realisation of our heavenly

portion in the exalted Christ. They will continue in their present position until at last our fighting days are done.

Heaven is filled with rejoicing at their expulsion. It is an important step towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and the authority of His Christ. "Now is come the salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives even unto death" (Rev. xii. 10-11). Three companies of saints may be discerned in these verses: the raptured ones of 1 Thess. iv. 16-17 (it is they who speak); the martyred witnesses of Rev. vi. 9-11, who loved not their lives even unto death; and the suffering saints of Rev. xii. 7: xiii.), against whom the adversary's accusations have been directed. Never again will he be permitted thus to oppose the priestly service of Christ in heaven, but for a brief season he will be suffered to oppose Him as Prophet and King by means of his two chief instruments as in Rev. xiii.

Satan being cast into the earth, pandemonium will ensue. "Woe to the earth and to the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. xii. 12). Horrors which are at present beyond the power of human minds to comprehend will fill the scene for an appointed period. Then the divine hand will come down upon Satan once more. Rev. xix. 11-21 presents to us in vivid prophecy the coming forth of earth's rightful King. The beast and the false prophet are consigned to the lake of fire, and their hosts are destroyed. Then comes the turn of the malignant instigator of all the evil. John sees an angel coming down from Heaven with the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. In Chap. ix. 1 the key is used to open the abyss for the release of hellish evils to operate against men; in Chap. xx. 1 the key is used to close it upon the great deceiver. Identified by all his titles—"the Dragon, the Old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan"—he is cast into the abyss, which is forthwith closed and sealed. This is the doom which the demons of our Lord's time, notably the legion of Luke viii. 31, so greatly dreaded. He who once caused a seal to be placed upon the tomb of the Son of God (Matt. xxvii. 66), has now a seal placed

upon his own prison. At the utmost possible distance from God, he experiences restraint during the thousand years of our Lord's glorious reign. Whatever outbreaks of evil there may be during that period cannot be attributed to Satan, for his deceptions are for the time being at an end. What a reversal of present conditions: the saints sit upon thrones, and their adversary goes into the awful abyss!

But the millennial Kingdom being a dispensation (the last of them all), it is needful that men should be tested once more ere time gives place to eternity. Accordingly Satan is released for a little season. Unrepentant and unbroken, he makes one last great effort to regain his lost world-empire. Men in remote regions giving heed to his overtures, a vast revolt takes place. But it is earth's last convulsion. As Satan's host seeks to compass about the camp of the saints, and the beloved city (Jerusalem), fire falls from heaven and devours them.

The last stroke then descends. "The devil which deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10). This is that of which our Lord spake in Matt. xxv. 41, "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." There will be a restricted area ("a lake") somewhere in the universe of God where evil will be confined and punished eternally. No activity in sin can be permitted, even though heart hatred to God and His Son must needs abide, for neither new-birth nor repentance are possible in Gehenna. Absolute subjection will be divinely enforced (Phil. ii. 10-11). Satan and all his dupes, whether angelic or human, will be found together when the final judgment of God is executed.

Next month (D.V.)—"THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM."

The Queen of Sheba took a long journey to "prove" Solomon. Sincerity cannot be judged until it is tested, therefore God and sincere men are not afraid to be proved (1 Kings x. 1, 3; Mal. iii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 8) for the test which manifests the failure of insincerity also manifests the genuine sincerity of those proved.

"Worship is a more serious thing than is supposed by many; anything that does not suit God's presence in heaven, is not fit for the presence of God on earth."

“STRENGTHENED WITH ALL MIGHT.”

Col. i. 11.

By R. ELLIOTT.

“**I**N the Lord have I righteousness and strength” (Isa. xlv. 24).

These words express the double portion possessed by every believer in Christ. But, generally speaking, the first is understood, perhaps, better than the last. How many there are who do not seem to look to God for strength with the same certainty as they look to Him for forgiveness and justification. Yet the one is as much our portion in Christ as the other, and quite as necessary, in its place.

The words which form the title of this brief paper are taken from Colossians i. 11. The whole verse reads thus: “*Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.*” A strength that can enable us to endure, whatever the suffering, and still be joyful, is surely worth having.

There is a process by which this strength becomes ours. Righteousness, as the verse quoted from Isaiah intimates, comes first. If we are not possessed of His righteousness we have no claim upon God for His strength. Accordingly the contents of vers. 12-14 of Col. i. must be taken into account. In ver. 14 we see how we become righteous. “In Whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” The effect of this is, our whole position and relationship to God are changed. We are delivered from *darkness*, and we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in *light*. In other words, we are in the full light of the revelation of Himself God has given, and of all that in grace He is pleased to be to us: “we give thanks unto the Father.”

It is important to notice that it is in this light that we become conscious of the power of His glory, for apart from the sense of this power we could not be strengthened with all might. Our strength is according to the power of the glory, in the presence of which we are set. Redemption sets us before God according to all the value of Christ’s work, and in the presence of all that God is; that is, in the presence of His glorious power, or, as it might be preferably translated, “the power of His glory.”

It is the power of His glory which strengthens us. It is a simple question of cause and effect. If we are conscious of this power, we must be strengthened. The words, the "power of His glory" have a most important bearing upon our subject. It is not any strength of our own; nor do we become possessed of it by any mere intellectual grasp of the truth. Moses was in the presence of the power of God's glory when he was with the Lord forty days and forty nights; and "he did neither eat bread nor drink water." We do not imply for a moment that we are intended to be independent of the ordinary means of subsistence. In the case of Moses, there was something special. Nevertheless, in his case we do see the effect of the power of God's glory. And we ought to be so sensible of being in His presence that we are strengthened.

"*Strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.*" To many of us this experience seems impossible. "I do manage to bear up under my trials, but I cannot be joyful in them" is what most of us would say. Yes, it may be so. But it is not as far as the power of His glory would carry us, if only we expected more from it. And one reason why we have never, perhaps, experienced the full truth of this Scripture is because when there is need for patience and long-suffering we are more occupied with the cause of it, than with the glory of Him Who would enable us to endure it, and be joyful in spite of it.

May all of us know more of what it is to be *strengthened*. Then we shall not be irritated, soured or depressed by our burdens and worries, but become more acquainted with the power of His glory, which can strengthen us with all might.

"NONE shall appear before me empty" (Ex. xxiii. 15), was God's charge to Israel. Such a rich God as ours should have no empty-handed servants. If any Israelite had nothing to give, it was his own fault, not Jehovah's. A widow having only two mites presented them to Him rather than come before Him "empty" (Luke xxi. 2).

Words cannot express what "riches in glory" we lose through disobedience to Exodus xxiii. 15, and making "poverty" our excuse for being "empty."

FRIENDSHIP.

By WILLIAM JEATER.

AMONG the good gifts of God to His people, friendship holds a high place. The very word "friend" has for most of us associations that are unspeakably dear. We recall this one and that one to whom our soul has been "grappled with hoops of steel," and what we owe in life to the heartening influence and good cheer of some one who came within the circle of true friendship is probably not always realised by us. It is good when we are conscious of the influence. I think it was Kingsley who was asked how it was that he had achieved so much in certain untoward circumstances. His answer was: "I had a friend."

It is not surprising that in that most human (as well as most divine) of books, the Bible, the praises of friendship should be sung, and that the records of friendship should be some of the most engrossing pages of the book.

"For David had his Jonathan, Christ His John," sings George Herbert. The friendships are not all of one type; some had not in them the elements of endurance, and the story ends with a sigh. The Psalmist's bitterest lament is that his own familiar friend,* whom he trusted, had lifted up his heel against him. Abraham could have had little in common with Lot, for the one was a pilgrim soul, the other a mere excursionist. Job and his friends have become proverbial, but the friendship, though so excellent in intention, was the heaviest of Job's burdens.

Peter, James and John were closely associated. They were together in the company of the Lord in some of the holiest moments of His life. Together with Him they went into the death chamber of the house of Jairus—a chamber that was soon to witness the coming again of life and of joy. With Him they were on the Mount and in the Garden. Peter and John, too, were associated at the lake-side, and in the memorable conversation with the Lord after that "manifestation" of Himself. They were together in the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful and in the bold confession before the Sanhedrim. It is indeed strange that John never refers to

* Ps. xli. 9; literally: "the man of my peace" = my dear friend. The expression is found also in Jer. xx. 10; xxxviii. 22; Obad. 7.

his brother James in the whole course of his Gospel, and the events of later days perhaps broke up the close unity of "the three." Yet they could never have forgotten the sacred hours they spent together with their Lord, nor the lessons they learned through their common association with Him.

To Abraham belonged the title, "The Father of the faithful," but nothing, even though it signified his pre-eminence among believers, could equal the honour that was conferred in his name, "the friend of God." On the other hand, nothing could more terribly emphasise the awful fall of Judas than the name by which Jesus addressed him in the Garden of the agony and the betrayal: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

Among the dear names the Lord has given to His people, that of "Friend" has a charm of its own. "My brethren" speaks of oneness of origin and of a family relationship, which, in human circles, is not invariably accompanied by friendship. "Friend" speaks of election and selection; of intimacy and confidence, of helpfulness and sympathy. Paul indeed gloried in the title of bond-servant or slave of Jesus Christ. And from the point of view of the redeemed soul, that word expresses both honour and obligation. But the Lord puts upon us a crown where we ask only a girdle. "I no longer speak of you as slaves . . . but I have called you friends." It is similar to that delicate indication of the difference between place deserved and honour conferred which we find in the Lord's parable of the prodigal. On the one hand the prodigal says: "I will say . . . make me as one of thy hirelings." But the father's heart says: "This, my son—."

It is a common observation that a man is known by the company he keeps and the friends he gathers about him. Indeed, where a man is really great and so far is inaccessible, we are often obliged to draw our inferences about him from his friendships. Yet the rule is not one of universal application. A great man is, from the nature of the case, often greater and better than his friends. For it is a counsel of perfection that lays stress upon the advisability of a man's choosing his friends from his superiors or at least from his equals. A man who, a generation ago, was truly great in his influence upon the religious thought and life of his time made the melancholy statement: "All my 'pets' have turned out badly."

The Apostle Paul did not find that his friendships brought him unalloyed joy. It is a little singular that he never uses the word "friend," not even of those who were associated with him, and never sings the praises of friendship. In this respect he is unlike the writers of the "Wisdom-Literature" of the Old Testament, and even unlike the moralists of his own day. Paul never gets nearer to it than "philanthropy," which he attributes to God, yet he was not without his friends, though he had the experiences of many of us. Some were faithful to the end; some turned away from him and added affliction to his bonds; some could not stand the strain that is bound to come because of divergent judgments and aims. Mark, the writer of the Gospel, for some reason not stated, left him in the full tide of his activities, and because of that incident, a sharp contention arose later between Paul and Barnabas, and the latter, too, went his way, though Mark came into the circle of friendship again. At no time does the circle seem to have been a large one. There is a penalty attached to greatness. The soul of a great man—particularly of one who is great in the things of God—is "like a star and dwells apart." Yet there was Silas (Silvanus), who, with Timothy, was often associated with Paul in his Epistles, (though we never regard these Epistles as joint productions); there were Barnabas, already mentioned, Titus, his "own son" in the faith, and Philemon, who owed "his own self" to the Apostle. These were among the chief of his friends, though with true Christian graciousness the Apostle generally mentions in his Epistles those to whom his affections were drawn, and with whom he shared common interests.

There are two other names among the friends of Paul whose place in that friendship is rich in spiritual lessons. If we cannot say that the names are "bracketed together" there is at least a close association. They are Luke and Demas. The names occur in *Colossians*, in *Philemon* and in II. *Timothy*. The Apostle has been taxed with a little frigidity towards Demas in the first-mentioned Epistle. Literally, the passage runs as follows: "There salutes you Luke, the physician, the beloved." Then the Apostle adds, almost as though by an afterthought,— "and Demas."* In the

*It has been said that Demas was certainly not in the Apostle's mind when he began his sentence, for the verb (which is the first word in the sentence) is in the singular number. But in *Philemon* 23, the text adopted by all modern editors has the same feature—the verb singular is followed by several names. Still more to the point is *Col.* iv. 10, which runs: "There salutes you Aristarchus . . . and Mark . . . and Jesus who is called Justus." It is indeed the normal construction of the apostle. Cf. *Rom.* xvi. 21, 23.

Epistle to Philemon, (which was unquestionably written at the same time as *Colossians*), Paul in the salutation joins to Epaphras, Demas, Luke and other of his co-workers. The remaining reference is one of melancholy interest. It was written perhaps two years later. Writing to Timothy, Paul says: "Be diligent to come to me quickly, for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world (age), and is gone to Thessalonica . . . Only Luke is with me."

It is a pathetic passage. It gives us our final glimpse of Demas. If there was any return to the Apostle—and to the Lord—such as happily took place in the case of John Mark, it has not come upon the record, and for all time Demas stands the type of the faithless friend, whose heart was with and in the world, and who ultimately returned to his own. It is idle to speculate too curiously about him. There is nothing to indicate what special form of worldly attraction proved too strong for him, and the suggestion of a certain well-known teacher that Demas "went off preaching" is probably as wide of the mark as that which makes him a lover of money. We may indulge the hope that it was not a final apostasy, for strong as the word "forsaken" is, it is the word that is used of all the Apostles who, at the time of the Lord's betrayal, "forsook" Him and fled. But it can only be a hope. The circumstances were indeed a test not only to the friendship that existed between Demas and the Apostle, but also to his loyalty to the Christ of the Cross. It needed courage of no low order to openly side with the Apostle, imprisoned and within sight of his execution, despised by his Roman gaolers and hated by his Jewish brethren. And so Demas went off to Thessalonica, where probably he fared as Pliable fared in Bunyan's dream. For when Pliable returned to the City of Destruction, some called him a fool for taking any hazard for Christ's sake, others complimented him on his wisdom in returning.

But it should be noted that it was not the reproach of his association with the Apostle, nor even the hazard of his life that drew Demas away from Paul. He loved "this present world." He gave way, not to the stress of danger, nor before the onslaught of some fierce temptation, but because of an insidious love. "The world" had the dominant place in his heart. If there was any struggle, the world won, and Demas has received an imperishable crown of contempt. If he was saved at all, he was one of those who will be saved as through the fire. He might have heard his

Master's voice saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it . . . ye did it unto Me." Perhaps he will never hear it. His memory lives, a byeword and a reproach.

How we need to watch, lest that inherent love of the world that is in every one of us should overcome us to our shame! With many of us the peril is not of so-called great sins, of disastrous courses that would wreck our life and blast our name; it is rather the succumbing to the world, the becoming drowsy on its "Enchanted ground"; the pleasant drifting down the stream—perhaps away to the open sea! The only safeguard is the love of Christ maintained in power in the heart.

It is happier to turn to the part Luke played at the time. At first, the Apostle's words look cold and unappreciative, but they are not so in fact. They gain in warmth if Paul's order of the words is followed. "Luke alone is with me." And we may be sure that the heart of the Apostle warmed to his friend as he wrote or dictated the phrase. His own heart was comforted, as doubtless he had comforted others.

Which of the two was the greater gainer it would be hard to say. If Paul had the solace of his friend's presence, beyond all doubt Luke's conception of the Gospel was coloured and widened by his association with the Apostle. For God works normally through human means, and the Evangelist's record of the life of the Lord Jesus shows many links with Pauline thought and teaching. The wide aspect of the Gospel of the Son of Man; the proclamation of a salvation of God which all flesh should see (Luke iii. 6); the stories of grace such as that of "the woman of the City"; the group of parables in the fifteenth chapter, all fit in with what we might expect from one who was so close a companion and friend of "the Apostle to the Gentiles." Humanly speaking, Luke was enabled to do what he did because of his association with and faithfulness to his friend, while we, and the whole Church, have been enriched through him and have become his debtors. The lesson is obvious. Faithfulness to Christ—which not infrequently will be shown in faithfulness to one of His servants or to some work in which we are associated—has its reward not only in our own happiness, but in the power of increased usefulness, and in larger and truer conceptions of the truth of God. Luke, probably, was not conscious of his greatness as a vehicle of the Evangel, but to his last day he had the comforting knowledge that in Paul's darkest and most lonely hour, he had remained with him, a faithful and beloved friend.

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE SEA.

Life is a restless sea
 On which we all must ride ;
 Like vessels for Eternity
 We're carried by its tide.

We know at Christ's command
 The winds are hushed to peace ;
 He holds the waters in His hand,
 He bids their raging cease.

He rules life's boisterous waves,
 They cannot us o'erwhelm ;
 While o'er our heads His banner waves,
 For He is at the helm.

His truth our compass is ;
 His word our chart and guide ;
 His Holy Spirit is the breeze ;
 Beneath Love's sails we ride.

With these, and Heaven in sight,
 The voyage, short or long,
 Or rough or smooth, may still be bright
 In Jesus' keeping strong.

Ye tempest-tossed and tried,
 Ye troubled ones and lone,
 Wrestling against wind, waves and tide
 In vessels of your own—

Do but dismiss your fears,
 Quickly to Jesus go,
 How soon would change to smiles your tears !
 To happiness, your woe !

Soon will the voyage cease,
 Oh, then, how sweet to be
 With Jesus where in perfect peace
 There will be "no more sea."

M.E.R.

"It would simplify all life and practice if we could truly say with the Apostle, 'We are ambitious to be well pleasing to Him' (2 Cor. v. 9, R.V.). How safe and how simple an ambition."

"Prayer is the bolt which excludes the thief and the robber, the stormy wind and the tempest. It is the *outlet* of trouble, and the *inlet* of consolation."

* * * *

"The Apostles gave themselves 'continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.' Prayer must ever precede the ministry, or barren results will follow."

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES :

BEING REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

By R. E.

THE NEW CREATION AND THE OLD.

IN seeking to understand the glory and beauty of this epistle, which unfolds God's new creation where all is under Christ, it would be well for us to go back in thought to the first creation where all was placed under Adam.

What a world that was which God prepared and furnished for man! All that divine wisdom, skill and forethought could devise and carry into execution was in readiness when we hear the utterance of the divine counsel, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Nothing was wanting which could minister to his happiness when man was ushered upon the scene—and, as he looked round upon it, all was calculated to remind him of the goodness and beneficence of his Maker. In the same passage which tells us of man's creation we are permitted, too, to learn the divine plan connected with it. Man was to have dominion over the works of God's hands: "*Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*" And not only was this in the divine counsel, but it was repeated to the happy pair whom God had constituted His heirs and executors. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them . . . have dominion."

With what a large and bounteous hand God did everything, and then, so to speak, gave it away. And along with it He gives His blessing. Perhaps the sweetest part in it all is to read, "God blessed them." Was this the answer to some unrevealed sin on Satan's part which had misrepresented God, and maligned His character? God creates a world, of which He Himself can say, "He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good," and He forms a new creature, man, and sets him at the head of it. If so, then we can easily understand why Satan should soon enter that world and lie again about God. God anticipated this, and prepared for it. Fair as this earthly scene was, beautiful and perfect in every part, designed for man's benefit, and answering his every need, and of which man himself was constituted head and lord, it was, after all, as seen in the opening chapters of Genesis,

but an adumbration of another order of things more glorious and perfect still. The scene was but the faint picture of something fair beyond all conception—and the man at the head of it but the figure of Him that was to come.

It is in this Epistle to the Ephesians, especially the opening verses, that this new world bursts upon our view. Here we have another *scene*—heaven instead of earth : another *man*—Christ and not Adam : a different order of *blessing*—spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, and not temporal and material blessings on earth : and God something more than Creator—God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God and Father in Him. It is a new world—the Father’s world—and Christ is the light, and Christ is the centre, and all things are delivered into His hands. But He is not to be alone in this heavenly scene any more than Adam was left alone in that other scene. There will be a partner in His glory. Saved sinners out of every nation will have part with Him. “All things” are His ; but all things are also ours. As it is written, “*All things are yours . . . life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours : AND YE ARE CHRIST’S ; and Christ is God’s.*” And in the words of our Lord : “The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them.”

We may well ask, what attraction has such a world for us ? *Has it attracted us ?* Do we know our part in it ? If not yet, then may our study of this epistle have this effect : may Christ and the scene where He is engage our hearts ; and our hopes be more and more set there, and less and less upon the poor blighted and ruined creation through which we are passing.

THE WILL OF GOD.

Let us notice, first, that all is connected with the will of God. This thought runs through the first half of the chapter we are considering. All is the result of God’s plan, purpose and counsel. And if it be asked, why has all this been done for God’s glory, and in connection with the salvation of sinners ? the only answer is, it is God’s will. God has a will—He decrees—He orders—and in the end He will have His own way. It is truly very instructive to see that God’s will is good, and to learn, as we do from this passage, that when God is exercising that will according to His own sovereign rights, and independent of man’s will, it always secures His own glory, and, at the same time, man’s blessing. For man has a will, and the state of this world with all its sin, misery and degradation is

the result of it. But God's will is finally to triumph, and it will mean perfection of peace and blessedness. All that is good lies in the will of God for man ; all that is evil lies in the will of man when opposed to God. What makes the happiness of heaven is that the will of God is always obeyed : and so we pray, " Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

There are two aspects of God's will—the general and the particular. There is His will which is common to all believers ; and there is His will regarding some particular individual, which concerns him alone. This distinction can be traced in the chapter before us. Paul tells us in the opening verse that he was an Apostle *by the will of God*. This is certainly not God's will for every child of His. " Are *all* apostles, are *all* prophets ? " But when we read of " the good pleasure of His will," that we should be sons (v. 5) ; of the mystery of His will," as to His purpose (v. 9) ; and of " the counsel of His own will," as regards the inheritance (v. 11) ; this concerns every believer.

It was by the will of God, then, that Paul was an Apostle. For nothing is right except it lies within the will of God. Good as it is to be an Apostle, it would be nothing short of a sin for a man to presume to be one, of his own accord. Many things which are right in themselves—many things which may be right for other people—become wrong if they are not part of God's purpose for the particular individual in question.

Then we are told that God has

" Predestinated us unto sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

Here we have an aspect of God's will which is general, and has reference to all His children—we are His predestined sons. This wondrous position is the fruit of God's will. We shall speak, later on, of what it all involves ; our object, at present, is to draw attention to the fact that such a consummation did not spring from our will—for even if it had been possible of attainment, we had no such inclination or desire—but God willed it, for it was His pleasure to do so. All was yet future when this will came into operation, for we were chosen in Christ, and given this place of sonship, before the foundation of the world. It was love in God's heart which prompted it. He planned, He ordered all. And when there was no one to advise or suggest, or press his suit, God was doing His very best

for creatures yet unborn, and who, when born, He knew would turn against Him. Love dictated everything; and for His own pleasure He marked us out for sonship, because it was the highest blessing He could give us; and nothing short of the highest would satisfy His love.

All this gave Him *pleasure*. It was "*according to the good pleasure of His will.*" How immeasurably this enhances the blessing, we all know. He was not driven by necessity; there was no compulsion; our need did not extort it from Him; no one had any claim to such an exalted station; it *pleased* Him to have us eternally before Him in this relationship; and the pleasure it gives Him, and the knowledge that it is according to His own will, leave us nothing to ask or desire. Sometimes with regard to things down here and the ordering of our lives we are tempted to think God's will hard, and we often regard it simply as a cross we have to bear. Let us, in the light of the passage before us, remember that God's will—*i.e.*, God having His own way—meant our highest blessing; and let us ask ourselves, whether He Who planned for us ere time began, and whose plans comprehend the eternity that is to come, can make any mistake in His arrangement for the brief span of our life here, or fail to do for us what is best? He gave us *all*, and thought of our highest good before we had any existence; will He do less for us now that we are His sons, cleansed in the precious blood of Christ?

"THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL."

The mystery of God's will has to do with the gracious purpose which He is unfolding and accomplishing in connection with the government of the universe; the solution of the question of good and evil; and the final subjugation of everything to Christ.

It is called a "mystery" because God is working behind the scenes. And although it is fully declared in Scripture, it is not at present part of His public ways. The term "mystery," therefore, does not mean that it is entirely hidden and no one understands it, but rather that it is not discerned by everyone, and is known only to the initiated. Just as one might enter a factory where some complicated machine was being manufactured, and the various parts of it being made in different workshops; the whole process might seem a mystery to us, because unacquainted with the process and the mechanism, though in reality everything is going

on beneath our eyes. But to the foreman of the works, who knows the end for which every machine moves, it is no mystery.

The mystery of God's will is :

" That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in Him."

So that we see, there is not only the good pleasure of His will in connection with our blessing, but there is also the " mystery of His will " in relation to heaven and earth. " He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou ? " God is determined to exalt Christ ; to place Him on the throne of the universe ; to bring all into subjection to Him Who ever did His will. Christ is the pre-ordained Man Who will judge the world in righteousness on God's behalf—He will hold the reins of government and rule the world as God's representative. We are told that God has purposed this in Himself (v. 9). It all rests upon His own power and is in accordance with His own decree. The execution of it will not be left to man ; it will not depend in any way upon man's faithfulness : " Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." And just as it was according to the good pleasure of His will to constitute us His sons, so, here, it will be " according to His good pleasure " to make Christ the Head of all.

But, wonderful to relate, Christ will not be alone in this exalted state, for God after

" THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL "

has ordained that we should obtain an inheritance in Him. We who were predestinated unto sonship are also predestined unto the vast inheritance which embraces " all things," And all this will be done "after the counsel of His own will." God did not ask anyone, or take counsel with anyone. He did not confer with angels or with men, He just took counsel with Himself. He Who made everything disposes of all as He sees fit. We can understand being told that Christ—the Son—is the appointed heir of all things (Heb. i.). But to be told that God's will is that saved sinners—we who had forfeited everything—prodigals who had spent our patrimony—to be told that we are to have part with Christ may well fill us both with amazement and gratitude. But such is " the counsel of His own will."

And mark the introduction of the word "own" here. No one prompted the gift, and no one can interfere with it. It is all according to God's *own* will, without reference to the will of another. When God's will is so good, may we not exclaim, How blessed that He has a will! And equally blessed that He has the power to give effect to it. In the end, through all the chances and mischances of this mortal life, God's own will will prevail, and we shall see at last how good and acceptable and perfect it is. In sovereign power and goodness He will give effect to "the good pleasure of His will": to the accomplishment of "the mystery of His will": and will bring to pass all things "after the counsel of His own will." In the administration of the ages God's will is thus seen to be paramount.

MORDECAI.

THE MAN OF FAITH.

THE history of Mordecai is a most remarkable instance of faith in a man of God in the darkest day. He held on to God and His downtrodden people through every vicissitude.

Love to God and love to His people whom God had chosen for His inheritance upheld him. "Love never faileth." Love is the spring of everything for God. Even faith works all its victories in the power of it. Indeed there could not be living vigorous faith in God apart from it.

Love bears all things and hopes all things and *believes* all things. So that the man who is most in the power of love is the man greatest in the faith that overcomes every obstacle.

However dark the tunnel he may be called to pass through, hope buoys up his spirit in the power of faith. Hope, is expectation from God only. Faith sees beyond the dark tunnel, because it looks at God Who is above and beyond everything.

No power on earth or in hell can stand in the way of the deliverance of God's people when He chooses to make bare His mighty arm. The highest walls and the strongest guarded fortress, the deepest flowing river and the most impassable desert, the highest towering mountain or the most threatening thundercloud only serve His purpose of love as a means of blessing to us. He can make the greatest obstacles that men raise up bread for us.

In no part of Holy Scripture do we find greater evidence of this statement than in the book of Esther. God is behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes He is behind: and what He does not rule He overrules: then the degraded state the chosen people of God had fallen into is witnessed by the fact that one of Israel's fairest daughters should be given in marriage to a Gentile king who had divorced his wife.

"Thou shalt not make marriages with them," was strictly enjoined by God when they entered Canaan. The seed of Israel must be kept pure. Defilement was against God's Holy Word. The reason for this was that He did not want them turned aside to other gods.

Mordecai's faithfulness was proved by informing the king of the plot to take his life, yet he received no reward at the time. To most of us this would be a severe test. Yet this testing was part of God's way with His servant, and it was all allowed in order to make God's power more evident. It promoted endurance and expanded hope. "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him."

After all this, the king raised Haman into a position of dignity above Mordecai. He was made the highest in the realm. All were supposed to bow down before him. But Mordecai would not, in faithfulness to God's Word, bow down to one of the cursed race of Agag, whom Samuel hewed in pieces before Jehovah.

Faithfulness always provokes the enemy, and brings reproach and suffering and even death on the faithful. Every faithful man is a man of faith in God, and he is bound to suffer for it. Unfaithfulness will escape the sufferings of faith, but it will have sufferings of conscience. It will lose the present joy and compensation of God's approval. It will lose at the Judgment Seat. Even in this world those who are unfaithful to Him shall be lightly esteemed.

It is a part of faithfulness to be able to stand abuse. The more the faithful man is abused, the more he is honoured. Abuse and calumny are essential elements in the testing and triumph of faith. Nothing moves faith from its object and single hearted purpose.

Mordecai's faithfulness, alas! brought suffering on the people of God whom he loved. This tried his affections and his patience greatly. It showed his utter unselfishness. God's chief interest was his interest. This being so, he would leave no stone unturned to avert the wicked devices of Haman on God's people. He urges his niece, queen Esther, to go in, irrespective of consequences,

and see the king. By the goodness of God she was accepted and gained the royal favour. God was behind it all, and that was everything.

What remarkable and inspiring words Mordecai uses to queen Esther: "*If thou altogether hold thy peace at this time then enlargement and deliverance shall arise from another quarter.*" Faith shines brightest in the darkest day. Were the day not dark we would not need faith. He as much as says, if you forget your people now that you are exalted, God won't forget them. If you fail me, God will not. *Trial brings out all the tender pity of God for us.* "He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives" (Psalm cvi. 46).

But he fearlessly warns her that she and her father's house will not escape if she is unfaithful. It was her grand opportunity. She, as a noble hearted and good woman, embraced it. This kind of faithfulness is sure to bring its reward. At this time Haman had erected the gallows to hang Mordecai.

It seemed a singular moment for the king not to be able to sleep. But his eyes were held waking by God, Who was about to deliver His people from unjust oppression, and to exalt Mordecai. This was used to expose the wiles of Haman and bring about his destruction. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself." - "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone it shall return upon him." God in His government made this true of the wily Haman.

When the chronicles of the kings were brought, it was found that no reward had been given to the man who had saved the king's life. This was to be the crowning moment for the man who suffered in faithfulness.

It seems curious that Haman is the one to be asked by the king, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Whom did Haman in his pride think that the king would delight to honour? Haman of course. Poor Haman's heart had been so uplifted that he had told all to his wife. But one thing rankled in his breast to mortify his pride and vain glory—Mordecai would not own him in his exalted station.

What depths of humiliation did the king put Haman to when he commanded him to put the royal robe on the despised Jew, and put him on the king's horse, and lead him in royal triumph through the city. What a reversal of all his wicked plans and schemes!

God honoured the faith of the man who endured the afflictions of faith with God's people. "Them that honour Me I will honour," is ever true. *God always meets faith in its difficulties and honours it.* At all times the man of faith suffers. It is good for him. But in the end he is honoured. Suffering is discipline, and is the proof of love as well as the proof of faith. It is needful to purify us, and it is a most wholesome check on fleshly pride.

What a triumph for God's tried and suffering people when Haman swings on the very gallows he had in his wickedness erected for Mordecai! What a deliverance is wrought afterwards when all his malicious devices are reversed. The downtrodden people are at last the conquerors. Esther as well as Mordecai played a noble part in this victory. Well did her uncle say to her, "And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

What an encouragement to those in high places not to be afraid or ashamed to identify themselves with God's people, who may be under reproach. "If a man does not love his brother whom he hath seen (and shew it practically) how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" The measure of our love to the people of God in affliction and testing is the true measure of our love to God. God is in His people and ever with them. He shares in all their sorrows and afflictions. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." Think of the blessed God using such language!

Moses left the highest court and society in the world and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than have the world's society, honours and pleasures. Whatever they are they are called the pleasures of sin. The whole world system has sin at its root. Its friendship is enmity with God.

Luxury, grandeur and glamour attract the flesh: but to the man whose eyes are opened to the vision of God they lose all their charm.

Faith pierces through the midnight gloom of the visible and endures, *seeing Him Who is invisible.* We are either governed by Him Who is invisible or by the visible which is only temporary. Invisible things are for ever. *Seeing or not seeing the invisible makes all the difference between one man's life and that of another.*

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 5.

MAY, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE REVELATION :

Explained in a simple and concise way for beginners.

By R. E.

Will the reader follow what is here written with his Bible open before him for constant reference.

MORE and more as the days go by is the Book of the Revelation claiming attention : more and more are people enquiring as to its meaning. The present war—in this year 1915—gives an additional importance to this part of God's Word, and makes it imperative that every believer should have some clear insight as to it : for the war with Germany opens up the possibility of vast changes ; seems to point to the end being at hand ; and may bring the nations into position for the final phase ; ready for those very transactions of which The Revelation speaks. God, in His goodness, has told us beforehand what to expect ; and whatever the result of the present war, it can lead only to the accomplishment of those things which He declares plainly in this part of His Word will surely come to pass. For the words of **Chap. xvii. 17** are true of all the actors in that closing scene : " God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will . . . *until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*"

It is these " Words of God " which should be so precious to every child of His, and which we propose briefly to consider.

How often has the exclamation been heard : " I cannot understand the Book of The Revelation." Yet, really, when the key to it is found, it does not present any difficulty. For this " mysterious " book, as it is so often called, is, in fact, to a large extent self-explanatory.

Two points need to be kept in mind : (1) the three-fold division of the book, as contained in **Chap. i. 19** : (2) that the narrative is not consecutive. We are repeatedly carried on to the closing hours before the Lord actually appears, and then carried back to

review some other events in the story, details of which had not been given before. It is this last feature of the book which *seems* to make it difficult and unintelligible; once understood and clearly followed, all becomes comparatively plain.

Before giving the reader a general outline of the book we will deal with these two points.

The three-fold division of the Revelation. Chap. i. 19.

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter (or 'after these')."

(1) **"The things which thou hast seen."** The meaning of this cannot easily be misunderstood: What John had seen is clearly set forth in **Chap. i.** He tells us he was in the isle that is called Patmos, and on a certain day he heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet. *"And I turned to see,"* he says, *"the voice that spake with me."* And he sees *"seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man."* Then follows a description of this glorious Person and what He said to John (vers. 13-20). Here, then, is the first division of the book. It ends with **Chap. i.** For it is to be carefully noted that the words are *"the things which thou hast seen."* Not the things you are about to see.

(2) The second division of the book comes under the head of **"the things which are."** John had just seen the seven golden candlesticks, and Christ in the midst in His judicial attire, with seven stars in His right hand. The explanation of this is contained in ver. 20:

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches."

It is thus made perfectly clear that *"the things which are"* relate to the seven Churches and their angels, or representatives.

The Church was established by God to be His witness in the world. Of Israel it had been said, *"Ye are My witnesses,"* but on account of their unfaithfulness they had been rejected: the natural branches of the olive tree had been broken off: the Church was now to be a witness—only on a higher plane altogether—of God's grace and faithfulness: in other words, a witness to men of His

character and ways. Could anything else, then, but these same Churches, be "*the things which are?*" The "*things which are*" must necessarily refer to that with which God's testimony in the world for the time being is connected.

Hence there follows the addresses to these Churches which, while dealing with their actual state, foreshadow the whole course of the Church's history while still God's responsible witness on earth. The things which *are* must necessarily therefore cover *the entire present period*, for God always closes one dispensation ere He definitely establishes another, although for the time, as seen in the Acts, they may *seem* to overlap. Historically, the Jewish dispensation did not end until the destruction of Jerusalem and the final dispersion; morally and spiritually, and in God's account, it ended with the Cross; and the Day of Pentecost was the inauguration of the new.

Thus the seven Churches, while actually existing Churches at the time John wrote, also stand for seven distinct phases of the whole Church period. Ephesus the earliest—the loss of first love: Smyrna, a revival during the era of persecution under the Roman Emperors: Pergamos, alliance with the world, when matters became more favourable to the Church: Thyatira, the development of the Papacy: Sardis, the revival under Luther and his contemporaries: Philadelphia, a subsequent revival of a deeper and more spiritual character, though not so public: Laodicea, the present phase, characterised, on the one hand, by the development of natural gifts and resources—"rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing"—and, on the other, by a state of lukewarmness which evokes Christ's sternest rebuke, and calls, finally, for His rejection: "I will spue thee out of My mouth." All this refers to the things which are, and forms the second section of the book.

(3) "**The things which shall be after these.**" Clearly, if "*the things which are,*" cover the present period, "*the things which shall be after these*" must refer to a time yet future. When John was writing about the things which *are* he is occupied with the Churches. The Church period still exists, consequently we are still in the presence of the things which are. "*The things which shall be after these,*" are, therefore, yet to come, and they form the third division of the book.

This division extends from **Chap. iv.** to **Chap. xxii. 15** inclusive. As this section will come before us in the general outline which will be found further on, there is no need to enlarge upon it here. We would, however, call the reader's attention to the complete break at the end of **Chap. iii.**, and to the manner in which **Chap. iv.** opens. It is no longer *earth*, but **HEAVEN**, which engages our attention. John had been occupied with the Church on earth right down to the close of its history; now he is not only occupied with heaven, but in spirit he is transported thither. And the Church from this point is seen in heaven, no longer on earth.

Having dealt with the threefold division of the book, we now come to

The external structure of the Revelation.

In **Chap. i.** we have an introduction (vers. 1-3); the salutation to the seven Churches, which evokes a response at the mention of Jesus Christ (vers. 4-6); then a brief summary of the whole book (ver. 7); lastly the vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the candlesticks. This, as we have seen forms the first main division.

Chaps. ii. and iii. comprise the addresses to the seven Churches—the things which are: or, in other words, the second division.

Chap. iv. is the commencement of the third division. It manifestly treats of an entirely new branch of the subject; and the due perception of this is essential to the clear understanding of the whole.

Consider four things: (1) "a door was opened in *heaven*" (2) John again hears a voice, which indicates that some new communication was about to be made—he had heard a voice before (**Chap. i.**). That was on earth; this is from heaven: (3) he is summoned thither; and (4) the voice declares "I will shew thee what things must take place after these things."* **Chaps. iv. and v.** are occupied with a scene in heaven, subsequent to the close of the Church period on earth, and which is introductory to the day of the Lord.

* This rendering, which is taken from Baxter's Englishman's Greek N.T., gives the true sense much better than the A.V., "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." This latter translation might refer to *anything* future: the former distinctly implies that what John would be shewn was to take place subsequent to the events of **Chaps. ii. and iii.** In other words, after the Church period had closed.

Chap. vi. follows in consecutive order. This seems to us evident from the fact that all is connected with the opening of the seals. This chapter begins to relate what will take place on earth consequent upon the Lamb being found worthy to take the book and to loose the seals. But let the reader carefully notice that we are carried only as far as the *sixth seal*. Nevertheless we reach the time when the Lord Jesus is about to appear (vers. 12-17).

There is now a pause in the narrative, and **Chap. vii.** occupies us with several details. We have the sealing of 144,000 (vers. 1-8); and a great multitude which no man could number are seen before the throne (vers. 9-17). These events take place during, and subsequent to, what is related in the previous chapter. While (let the reader carefully note) much which is related in the subsequent chapters comes before, or contemporaneously with, what is narrated here.

Chap. viii. takes up the narrative where it was left at the close of **Chap. vi.** And we have seven trumpets under the seventh seal. These trumpets and the judgment connected with them occupy **Chaps. viii.** and **ix.**, and again we pause, this time at the *sixth TRUMPET*. **Chap. x.** forms another interlude; with the remark that, "*in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished*" (ver. 7) For this we must look on to **Chap. xi. 15**, which discloses what the mystery of God is. We are now again brought to the close—Christ is about to reign, and the time of judgment has come. The previous verses of the chapter refer to details in connection with Jerusalem and God's witnesses there.

In this part of the book Israel becomes prominent. In **Chap. xii.** it is Israel, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came," and again the narrative carries us back to witness other occurrences during the seals and trumpets period; as do **Chaps. xiii.** and **xiv.**, though at the end of the latter we seem brought still nearer the actual appearing; for the Son of Man is seen in the vision upon a white cloud, and the judgment of the earth is imminent.

Chaps. xv. and **xvi.** proceed with the story; we have the seven angels with the seven last plagues (ver. 1), and when the seventh angel pours out his vial, there is a great voice saying, "It is done." We reach the climax.

Chaps. xvii. and xviii. carry us back once more and show us the special judgments reserved for Babylon, and that from more than one point of view.

A far different scene opens in **Chap. xix.** "*The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready.*" The false is judged, the true is about to appear. Christ and the armies of heaven—the saints—are seen coming out of heaven. This follows immediately upon the close of **Chap. xvi.**; all that intervenes is a parenthesis. And there now follows an orderly and consecutive account down to **Chap. xxi. 8.** Satan is bound; the millennium follows; and then the judgment of the dead and the eternal state. From this point to **Chap. xxii. 5** we have a detailed description of the City. Then follow promises and warnings (vers. 6-15), and in vers. 16-21 the epilogue.

Having thus dealt with the threefold division and general structure of this marvellous book, it will now be our endeavour to give the reader as concise a view, as possible, of its contents.

First, a word of warning. It is important that the *character* of the book should be realised. It contains no scheme of doctrine, nor is the gospel unfolded in its pages. Even the Church on earth is not alluded to after the first three chapters: though the Church is the vessel of the testimony which it is the special province of this book to reveal. In this connection it is of the utmost importance to see the place in this book which the Church occupies. The Revelation is said to be "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass"; and John is the vehicle for conveying this unveiling to the Churches. "The testimony of Jesus Christ" is thus committed to the Church, and becomes her testimony. This is confirmed by almost the closing words of the book: "*I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches.*" And all down the centuries her testimony should have been, "Behold, He cometh with clouds." While to Him Who is her Lord there should have been ever ascending the fervent appeal which the Spirit first taught her to utter, and which is contained in that word—"Come." Instead of which she gave herself up to indolence and ease; and forsaking the place of testimony allied herself with the world.

An outline of the Contents.

Will the reader carefully ponder what is said in **Chap. i. 7**, as this gives us the real subject of the book. Indeed it furnishes the key to the whole.

“Behold. He cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

Four facts are here stated: (1) Christ is coming again; for this verse was written long after His first coming: (2) it will be a personal return; for “*every eye shall see Him*”: (3) it will have reference to Israel: “*they also which pierced Him.*” Lastly, it will be in judgment, and the world will be unprepared: “*All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.*” And to all this is added God’s “*Yea*”—and His “*Amen.*” It will be “*even so.*”

The great subject of the book, therefore, is **judgment**. And judgment in a threefold way. Before Christ appears; at His appearing; and at the close of His reign. The common thought of a general judgment confined to some particular day, is an erroneous one.

The thought of judgment being the character of the entire book of Revelation is confirmed by the aspect of the Son of Man in the opening chapter. John beholds the One, upon Whose bosom he had leaned, in judicial vesture, and he falls at His feet as one dead (vers. 13-17).

This is the aspect Christ assumes throughout the book, with rare exceptions; and even the Churches come under the most searching scrutiny. The Apostle Peter declares “the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God,” and here we see it has begun, for it is with eyes like unto a flame of fire” that Christ looks upon even the Church. **Chaps. ii. and iii.** must be read from this point of view, leaving out for the time being all thought of the relationship in which the true Church stands to Him as His body and bride. The solemn close of it all is: “*I am about to spue thee out of My mouth.*” Everything that is false in the Church will one day be rejected. As a *witness* for God on earth, the Church is proved unfaithful and unfit.* This then is the subject

* We are not dealing here with the true ones in it, but with the Church simply as a corporate witness on earth.

of **Chaps. i.-iii.** and covers, as we have already seen, the first two main divisions of the book.

A new subject, entirely, opens with **Chap. iv.** What John beholds is a *Throne* set in *Heaven*. God is about to assert His claim to the earth, and to give the Man of His choice His place as the appointed head of all things. For two thousand years God has been silent. War, tumult, injustice, defiance of authority—human and divine—rejection of Christ, rejection of the Gospel, the refusal of His love, have characterised this scene. And God has waited; but He is about to intervene. And what John sees is a throne—and it is not *vacant*—“One sat on the throne.” There is, after all, One supreme in the universe—there is a throne, and it is occupied. All here is in relation to *creation*. We behold the Creator upon His throne. God governs. This is the thought in connection with the *throne*.

In this Chapter we have the divine attributes set forth. Omnipresence—the seven Spirits of God: Omniscience—the four living creatures full of eyes before and behind: Omnipotence, associated with all God’s ways—the lion, the calf, the man and the eagle. But to Him Who possesses these attributes there is also the ascription, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” The ever existing One—“which was, and is, and is to come”—is characterised by inflexible holiness as well as infinite power—and, as if to demonstrate this, before the throne “*there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.*”

The throne is the subject all through this chapter as well as Him Who sits upon it. On the throne is One Who to look upon is “like a jasper and a sardine stone.” “*Out of the throne* proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices”; for its aspect is that of judgment, and the throne is about to declare itself: *before the throne*, are “the seven spirits of God.” “*In the midst of the throne* and *round about the throne* were the four living creatures; but, most wonderful of all, “*round about the throne* were four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones four and twenty elders sitting. In the presence of all this splendour and majesty are those who once lived and strove and suffered on earth—the redeemed of all ages. And we are told that they

“fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.”

These closing words reveal plainly the subject of this wondrous chapter. We are in the presence of One Who created all things and brought them into being for His own pleasure. And we are in the presence of His throne. He is both Creator and Ruler.

In **Chap. v.** our attention is first of all directed, not merely to a throne, but to a *book*. What a place for a book—"in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne"! For hundreds of years God has chosen to be represented in this world by a book. Once it was the Word incarnate, now it is the Word written: once it was the Word in our flesh (sin apart); now it is the Word in our language. Not, of course, that we mean there was an actual Bible, printed and bound, in God's hand—all was in vision—but what was about to be transacted had previously been written down. And it is an *actual fact* that all that will take place when this sealed book is opened has been recorded previously in the Scriptures of truth.

There is a proclamation: "*Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof.*" "Who is worthy?" That is the question proclaimed throughout the universe. Who is worthy to judge and to have dominion? And no man is found worthy. John weeps. But his tears are soon dried. There is One—but only One in the entire universe—Who is worthy: "The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David."

It is well to notice these titles, because they are not the titles that belong to Christ in relation to His Church, they are connected with His title to the earth in virtue of His relationship to Israel and David, and God's promises to both.

This One is to occupy the supreme place, for He is worthy. During three and thirty years on earth He trod the path of God's appointment through suffering, shame and death. He did God's will, and at the close He could say, "I have glorified Thee." God is now about to glorify Him in the very scene of His rejection. He Who did God's will in suffering is found worthy further to do His will in judgment and government. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in *His* hand." He is characterised by perfect power to accomplish that will—seven horns; and perfect intelligence as to it—seven eyes. Nothing can escape Him; to no task can He prove unequal. Heaven is filled with jubilation and song, as He

approaches the throne and takes the book ; and harps and golden vials full of odours (which are the prayers of saints), and a new song, are employed to celebrate Him Whose Name and fame already fill heaven and are about to fill the earth.

How striking is it to find the prayers of saints mentioned. God will always have His people in harmony with Himself. He purposes, and they pray. And ever since that early promise in Eden was made, saints all down the ages have prayed for the coming of that Deliverer, and for the complete accomplishment of all that promise embraces—the final bruising of the Serpent's head, and subjugation of evil. Those prayers have never faded from God's memory ; they are about to be answered ; and in anticipation, the redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation—represented by the four and twenty elders—join with myriads of angels and with every creature in ascribing worship and worthiness to God and to the Lamb.

(To be concluded).

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

By WALTER SCOTT.

INTRODUCTION.

IN some respects, this is the most remarkable book in the sacred canon. It is more frequently quoted from and referred to in the daily life of nations than any other book. Christian liturgies are full of the sentiment, the spirit and words of the Psalms. They have done more to mould human history than any book or ordinance in existence. Men in all ages, and under all circumstances, have breathed, and lived, and throbbed under the inspiration supplied in this matchless volume.

The heart of man has expressed itself in all its varied feelings in these heavenly odes prepared for *universal* use in the Psalter. But this and other characteristics of the precious book will come before us in subsequent papers. The experiences detailed in the Psalms, and experiences *not* delineated therein, form a delightful and profitable study.

THE TITLE.

Of the 66 books comprising the Bible, this is the only one divinely titled. None of the sacred writers named their respective books. Nor is the Book of Psalms an exception. The Holy Ghost names the Book twice, at least. "David himself saith in *The Book of Psalms*" (Luke xx. 42).

Again, we find it emphatically affirmed, "It is written in *The Book of Psalms*" (Acts i. 20). Thus, before and after the introduction of Christianity, the divine collection of sacred lyrics is named. It is thus singled out for special and precise designation. If the law of Moses formed the ground work of Jewish worship and liturgy, the Book of Psalms formed the vehicle of expression in song and prayer. We loosely refer to the Psalter as "the Psalms," but Scripture is our corrective in this as in many other inaccuracies in common use. "The Psalms" is the third of the divisional titles of Old Testament books, comprising Job, the Book of Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. These five books are grouped under the title "The Psalms" (Luke xxiv. 44), so termed, as these books are rich in Hebrew poetry and form the heart of the Old Testament. The soul of the Hebrew nation expressed itself in the poetic strains of the Psalter—the grandest collection of heart-breathings ever compiled.

NUMBERING OF THE PSALMS.

There are 150 of these delightful compositions, each carefully numbered. From the fact that they were written by many authors, at different times, and under numerous and diversified circumstances, the separate and independent character of each might be supposed, and naturally so. But God is the real author and source of the Psalter, and hence in the numbering and arrangement of the Psalms, a *moral design*, a *divine method* may be traced. Interdependence is a marked feature in those Psalms, and affords a striking witness to the Divine inspiration of this book of holy song. Would not the numbering of the Psalms have divine sanction from Acts xiii. 33. "It is also written in the *second psalm*"? Chapters and verses are a mere human arrangement, and very often break up the sense of a passage or paragraph.

"The wisdom we need we may have; not by labour, but by prayer; we cannot produce it, but God has promised to bestow it."

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

V. THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM.

THE dream of universal conversion to God as the fruit of Christian testimony, however long and widely cherished, is not destined to be realised. Attractive though the thought may be, it has no warrant whatever in Holy Scripture. Every passage which speaks of the close of the present era, predicts complete disaster. Darkness, not light ; judgment, not conversion, is the appointed end.

The question is sometimes asked : " Is Christianity a failure " ? If by this is meant, have any divine purposes failed ? the answer is emphatically, " No." No purpose of divine grace can ever fail. All that the Father has given to the Son will undoubtedly come to Him. Christ will at the last surround Himself with all His own. But if the inquiry means, has Christianity, as a system, failed to assimilate everything to itself, the answer must be, " Yes." But then God's word never gave anyone the slightest reason to expect that it would. Such a thought should never have been entertained by God's people.

Let us consider a few passages relative to the close of the present era. First, one from the Old Testament. Isa. lx. 2, describing the condition of the human family when Christ shines forth, says : " Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples." This language is plain enough, and reminds us of our Lord's words in Luke xviii. 8 : " When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth " ? Had we no other Scripture statement before us, Isa. lx. 2 is sufficient to prove that Christianity is not destined to illuminate the whole earth.

Take, next, our Lord's teaching in Matt. xiii. In a series of parables He declares the course of things in the Kingdom of Heaven during His absence. Vers. 24-30 show that God's wheatfield would be utterly marred by Satanic activity, rendered possible by the carelessness of the labourers responsible ; vers. 31-32 indicate that the Kingdom would develop so abnormally that it would afford shelter to the very servants of the devil ; ver. 33 speaks of the utter corruption brought about by evil doctrine, while in His last words uttered that day He likened the Kingdom to a net, which

gathered much fish only fit to be cast away as worthless. A solemn end to the present period is clearly set forth in our Lord's instruction.

We turn now to the teaching of the Apostles. Jude's epistle is occupied with the matter before us. In the course of his few words this writer traces the introduction and development of evil in the professing Church right on to the Lord's judgment of it at His appearing. Jude's language is stern and scathing concerning those who were diligently corrupting the most wonderful testimony ever committed by God to men. No one can read Jude's epistle without perceiving that the position was hopeless from the beginning, and that every succeeding hour has only brought matters nearer to divine judgment.

Paul has much to say concerning the close of this age. Note his parable of the olive tree in Rom. xi. 16-24. The Jewish people—the natural branches—having been cut off because there was no moral correspondence between them and the root (Abraham), Gentiles, "cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature," have been grafted into their place, and are now the responsible people of God in the earth. But all such stand by faith, or not at all. He who spared not the natural branches cannot be expected to spare the grafts if they appreciate not His goodness. Hence the threat in ver. 22: "Thou also shalt be cut off." There is no question here of individual salvation, which cannot be affected by dispensational failure; the point is that Gentile profession, looked at as a whole, will be divinely rejected as Israel in an earlier age, if not faithful. But has Gentile profession been faithful? What need for "reformation" or "revival" if all is well? How would it be possible for Protestant to reproach Papist, or vice versa, if "Christendom" had continued in the goodness of God? The breakdown is undeniable, nothing remains therefore but the divine cutting off.

Let us now compare three Pauline Scriptures, and note the stages of development indicated in them. In 1 Tim. iv. 1, "The Spirit speaketh expressly that in latter times some shall depart from the faith." The verses which follow show plainly that Popery is specially intended, with its outward protestations of sanctity and its inward moral corruption. "Latter times" simply means times subsequent to the writing of the epistle. The evils described would influence "some"; the departure would not be universal.

In 2 Tim. iii. 1-5 he goes further, saying: "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come." Then follows a picture of wickedness strikingly similar to that of the heathen in Rom. i. 28-32. Christian profession in its last phase is thus destined to be just heathenism with a religious gloss. This is exactly what we see around us to-day. No hope of improvement can be entertained, for what days can follow "the last"? Moreover, the Apostle says distinctly, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (v. 13).

The last stage of development is found in 2 Thess. ii., and there we learn that ere the day of the Lord sets in there will come the apostasy, and the revelation of the man of sin. "A falling away" (v. 3), is far too vague a rendering; "the apostasy" is what the Apostle wrote. The language is terribly precise, and its significance is solemn beyond expression. It means nothing less than the total abandonment of the very name of Christianity. Individual apostates there have ever been, we have yet to behold the absolute blotting out of all profession of the Christian faith.

Obviously this cannot be while true Christians remain upon the earth. The presence of the "salt" must needs preserve the mass from utter corruption. Hence the Apostle does not say the apostasy must take place before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. He will first come into the air, and remove His own; then, before "the day" shines forth, the religious mass left behind will throw off even the name of the Lord that bought them.

It may sound strange to some that such a condition of things could ever be. That Christian lands could again become pagan seems well-nigh inconceivable. Yet the observant eye can scarcely fail to see that everything is working rapidly in that direction even while true believers are present. In recent years the leaders of religious thought have deposed the Bible from its ancient place as the Book of God to the level of a mere religious work, liable to criticism as any other; Christ has been degraded from His Godhead glory to the status of a preacher (and sadly lacking even as that); His miraculous birth and resurrection have been voted myths; and His precious blood has but the value of that of a martyr. "A modified Christ," they say, is what the times require.

“ Liberal mindedness ” is the cry heard all around us. By this is meant easy toleration of every form of religious error, with a frown and a word of contempt for all who hold fast the truth. “ *Liberal mindedness has no kindly expressions for the truth, nor for those who still love it.* ” The Ritualist would speak more generously of Romanists, and Greeks, with all their blasphemous superstitions, than of the Evangelicals of his own communion. The New Theologian would say better things even of the Spiritualist than of those in his own denomination who preach such a Gospel as the late Mr. Spurgeon preached.

The results of this attitude towards the truth are now everywhere apparent. The fear of God has well-nigh disappeared. Accordingly, the Lord's Day is flagrantly desecrated in every quarter and by all classes; heathen religions are applauded; pagan practices are being re-introduced; morals become more lax year by year, and the people are increasingly difficult to govern. Floods of lawlessness bid fair to sweep everything to ruins. The prospects for the end of the age are thus grave indeed, yet not more so than the Word of God foretold from the beginning.

Next month (D.V.)—“ THE ANTICHRIST.”

SUITED MORAL CONDITION FOR PRAYER.

By WM. BOUSFIELD.

Isaiah lii. Verses 1 to 3.

1. “ Awake, Awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.”

2. “ Shake thyself from the dust, arise and sit down, O Jerusalem, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”

3. “ For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought and ye shall be redeemed without money.”

The old prophets continually called upon God to work for them: e.g. Isaiah lxiv. 1: “ Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens,” etc.

Isaiah li. 9 : "Awake, awake, put on thy strength O arm of the Lord."

Chap. lii. is God's answer to this. The force of the opening words is : "Awake Thyself" (N.T.). God would show them that for Him to work with, and for, them, a certain responsiveness and suited moral condition are needed on their part. These three verses shew their condition and the remedy.

We get the same principle in Joshua 7-9 : "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" "Get thee up . . . Israel hath sinned."

So to-day, never was there greater need for earnest crying to God for help, but there are *conditions* to prevailing prayer—a suited moral and spiritual condition, and no "idols in the heart" (Ezekiel xiv. 3).

Now let us see what was the condition of this people, as definitely stated or suggested to us in these verses.

1. "AWAKE, AWAKE."—This is a trumpet call to awake out of sleep. There are similar calls in the New Testament, and we do well to take heed to the call. Nothing so like *death* as sleep : it is insensibility to the claims of the Christ who loves us and demands our all.

2. WEAKNESS.—"Put on thy strength." This is a charge, by implication, of weakness, weakness of the wrong kind, not the "When I am weak, then am I strong," of the beloved Apostle, but the weakness that means impotence and spells disaster. There is one source of strength we sadly neglect : "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah viii. 10). The happy Christian is the truly strong one.

3. NAKEDNESS.—"Put on thy beautiful garments." Think of the terrible indictment in Rev. iii. 17-18 : "That the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." 1 Peter v. 5, says : "Be ye clothed with humility." Where there is no holiness, no meekness, there is no covering, no power. Of Gideon it is said "The Spirit clothed himself with Gideon."

4. MIXED COMPANIONSHIP.—"No more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." It was the "mixed multitude" which led Israel astray. There is nothing more destructive to-day

to the Christian walk and character than mixed companionship. Worldly Lot was saved by the skin of his teeth, but Abraham, "the friend of God," was in the secret with God.

5. **WORLDLINESS.**—"Shake thyself from the dust" (ver. 2). Spiritual things lift up the spirit, the world drags us down to its own level, "the dust." Let us shake ourselves, and have Daniel's purpose of heart, "Not to defile ourselves with the king's meat."

6. **BONDAGE.**—"Loose thyself." If we are not free ourselves how can we tell others of freedom. Let us "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. v. 1). The liberty of the children of God is to be free from the *dominion* of sin.

Now let us see some of the blessings these people are called upon to appropriate, and to enter into in the power of a living faith.

Notice the personal pronouns *Thee, Thy, Thyself*. Spiritual blessing is an intensely individual question.

1. **GARMENTS OF BEAUTY.**—What more beautiful garment than humility, meekness? "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," said Christ, and who more beautiful than He? Meekness is in the sight of God of great price. Garments of praise, salvation, sanctification. Let that which is "pure," "lovely," and of "good report" fill your thoughts and your life; for "as a man thinks, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7). We reproduce in our lives what we feed upon spiritually.

2. **REST.**—"Arise and sit down" (ver. 2). Arise from the *dust*, and sit down in rest. We learn of Him and we find rest. Having finished His work Christ has sat down in perpetuity, and we enter into that rest *now*, though in a fuller measure by and by. David *sat* before the Lord, and sang.

3. **LIBERTY, DELIVERANCE.**—"Loose thyself" (ver. 2). A soul in bondage is not living up to his privileges, and falls far short of God's ideal. In the full realisation by faith of the true Christian position and privilege we not only have life as Lazarus had, but we are loosed from the grave clothes of death, we enjoy the glorious liberty of the people of God.

May God bring us all into this very fulness of blessing.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES: BEING REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

By R. E.

CHAP. I.—SONSHIP.

WE have been predestinated unto *sonship*. So verse 5 should read. Let us consider what this involves.

In the New Testament, believers are spoken of both as children and sons. And although the translators of our A.V. have mixed the two, putting children for sons, and sons for children, yet, in the original, the one term is not intended to do duty for the other. Each has its own distinct meaning. Sonship refers to position and dignity. This is recognised even in natural relationships. A man's *children* may embrace both sons and daughters; and one is his child as much as another; but it is the eldest *son* who is the heir, and inherits his father's titles and estates.

The Apostle Paul is speaking here of sonship, the most exalted position which even God could give us. And what does he connect with it? The highest blessings conceivable; for they are spiritual and heavenly. The greatest favour; for we are taken into favour in the Beloved. A vast inheritance; for it embraces all things. And we are endowed with God's Spirit, that we may even now realise the dignity and glory of our position, and consciously enjoy the favour and love in which we stand.

Let us consider these various features of sonship.

1. We are blessed "*with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*" What are these spiritual blessings? "In Christ" gives its own peculiar and special character to them. *He* is the measure of them; and in Him they are all secured. They are the consequence of His Headship. God has set Christ at His own right hand in the heavenly places; and if we are to understand our own blessing we must understand what that position given Him, as man, involves. For although there is a sense in which the position at *God's right hand* is His, and His alone, yet in another sense, the place He has as Man is the place we occupy, by the grace of God. There is another difference, of course, between Him and us. He deserves that place, for He has won it—His worthiness

merits it. It is ours through grace and because of Him. Yet when all this allowance is made, the term "in Christ," as regards general position and favour, means nothing less than this—"as He is, so are we."

What then are these spiritual blessings in heavenly places? They are *holiness* and *love*. Let us remember the Apostle is speaking of *spiritual* blessings. And the next verse alludes to what they are. "Chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy and without blame before Him in love*."

"Holy and without blame . . . in love." Can we have blessings of a higher order than these? They are peculiarly characteristic of God Himself; and if we look at ourselves and probe our spiritual instincts, is there anything which, in our very *best* moments, we crave more than these? To be free from all that is evil; to love only the good; to love and be loved—is there anything higher? Will there be anything better in heaven? Do the angels who inhabit that bright and perfect sphere know anything beyond? Shall *we*, when we reach the perfection that awaits *us*?

In Colossians iii. where we are exhorted to seek the things which are *above*, we discover, if we read down the chapter, that these things are spiritual in their character, and that, in reality, they are the same as we have been thinking of—*holiness and love*. What else, indeed, could the things be which are *above*? These give heaven its atmosphere, and are the source of its happiness.

In this exalted position of sonship therefore, we shall be all that God requires; we shall partake of His own nature and of all that is suited to Himself—all that we shall be *before Him*. For, be it remembered, it is not here what we are in ourselves, but as "in Christ," and "before Him." All is connected with God's purpose, and not with our attainment or apprehension.

But ver. 6 tells us that as sons we shall be also to *the praise of the glory of His grace*. He will have us before Him in such fashion that He can ever delight in us, for when He looks upon us He will see nothing but what is according to Himself. And all will be to His praise. Grace in all its fulness, in its height and its depth, in its largeness and richness, will be manifest to the universe. It covers all that He has bestowed upon us in the Beloved. How blessed to know that sonship not merely sets forth position and dignity, but

it tells of what we are to God. Could anything impress this upon us more than the thought that we are not only objects of God's grace, but that we are taken into favour in the Beloved. This is the only occasion where this title is used in any of the Epistles. We are the objects of grace in the One Who is the object of the Father's heart. It is the Apostle John who presents Christ to us as the Beloved. Again and again in his Gospel he repeats the words, "The Father loveth the Son": and he also adds, "And hath given all things into His hands." The very same truth is emphasised here. It is the Beloved Who is to be the Administrator of the Ages—the true Joseph—Lord of all, and Who is to bring in the fulness of blessing for man.

At present He is the Administrator of grace. This is what specially characterises the present age. And the glory of that grace is that we are associated with the Beloved Himself. What He is to God, is the measure of God's favour to us.

But there is still a further thought as to sonship. We are heirs—"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Something would be wanting to the dignity and position of sonship if there were no inheritance. This inheritance, vers. 10 tells us, comprises "all things." When grace acts the only limit to its intentions and activities is the love of God—and that is illimitable. That "all things" should be Christ's we can understand, but to read, "*In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance,*" fills us with amazement. Yet, need we be astonished that He Who shed His blood for us should be willing to share with us all that He has? After reading ver. 7 we need not wonder at ver. 10.

Everything, it is to be noted, is "in Christ." It is not a question here of our responsibility or what we deserved. We were entitled to nothing, we had no claim: all that is passed, and God here is unfolding what He had planned before time began and before sin had entered this scene. All is "in Christ," in contrast to being "in Adam." Our blessings are "in Christ"; our acceptance is "in Christ"; it is "in Christ" we have obtained an inheritance; and our redemption is also "in Christ"; and it is upon this last fact that all rests. Here is the foundation upon which is based the magnificent superstructure which grace has raised. "*In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*"

The BLOOD is the foundation of all. Through it we are forgiven—God can righteously blot out the past. And the same blood which takes away our guilt brings us nigh—we have redemption. We are neither guilty nor slaves, but we have forgiveness and we are sons; and all the purposes of God, and the pillars of that universe of bliss where we shall find our eternal home, are based upon this redemption through His blood. In this redemption God hath “abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (ver. 8). If creation displays His eternal power and Godhead, redemption will display His wisdom and prudence, His love and grace, His faithfulness and mercy—the depth of His pity and the largeness of His heart. And it will be seen that all springs from Himself, for all is according to His purpose, and it will be the highest display of His glory.

“O mind divine, so must it be
That glory all belongs to God:
O love divine, that did decree
We should be part, through Jesu’s blood.”

Yes, it is all the result of the “*good pleasure of His will*” and “*according to the good pleasure* which he hath purposed in Himself.” We do well to ponder such words, for they reveal the infinite goodness of Him to Whom we owe all. For as that goodness is apprehended it will become reflected in ourselves. The crowning wickedness of men is shown, not only in that they do such things as the Apostle describes (Rom. i.), but that they “*have pleasure* in them that do them.” Equally so is the *goodness* of God seen in that He has not only purposed all this good for His creatures, but it gives Him pleasure.

Only one thing more remains. We read in another place, “Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” So here, it says: “*In Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*” If we are to realise now what God’s purpose means, if we are consciously to take the place of sons; if all that grace has bestowed is to awaken in us an intelligent response, and we are to be in true liberty, this gift of the Spirit must be ours. It is, without exception, the portion of the sons. Nor is it the least of all the wondrous blessings we have been thinking of.

The Spirit is said to be “the earnest of our inheritance.” He gives us a foretaste of coming glory. We know that we are sons *now*. We rejoice in God’s purpose concerning us. The unfoldings

of His grace have the greatest attraction for our hearts. Above all, the Spirit is given that affection for Christ—God's Beloved—might be awakened, and our hearts be firmly attached to Him.

In all this, God's glory will be secured. It is to be "unto the praise of His glory." When every purpose is accomplished, it will mean the glory of God and the blessing of men. This consummation only awaits "the redemption of the purchased possession." Redemption involves purchase, but much more. Israel in Egypt were purchased by the blood; they were not redeemed, in the fullest sense, until they had crossed the Red Sea, and God could say, "I have brought you to Myself." But even this does not fully illustrate either "purchase" or "redemption"; though it serves to mark a distinction between the two. "The purchased possession," alluded to in ver. 14, includes all that is comprised in our inheritance, and it embraces this very earth where we have been born and where we now live. It is purchased, but it is not yet redeemed. The usurper still holds sway; evil yet casts its blight over the scene. But Christ is to take possession of what He has purchased by His blood, and He will

"Bid the whole Creation smile
And hush its groan."

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

We have been asked to explain Romans ii. 7-10; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19; Rev. i. 10.

A correspondent writes:—

"I should be glad if you can enlighten me on the following points:—

Romans ii. 7-10. Do these verses set forth a principle on which God would act, but is unable because all are guilty without exception; or are some attaining eternal life by these means, which appear to take no account of the Adam nature, or the atoning blood, and to be in direct opposition to Rom. iii. 20.

1 Timothy vi. 17-19. What is the foundation " " of verse 19, and does "lay hold on" mean "obtain"?

Rev. i. 10. Are we right in interpreting the only occurrence of "the Lord's Day" as a day of the week? Should it not rather be regarded as identical with "the day of the Lord"? And if the latter be correct, will it not necessarily make the letters to the seven Churches future in their application rather than present?"

With regard to the first passage, if the language of these verses and the context are carefully weighed it will be found that there

is no conflict between the statements here and in other parts of this same epistle. The opening verses of the chapter show that God's judgment is against everyone who commits evil. Verse 4 speaks of repentance; and repentance necessarily involves faith; for no man would ever reach genuine repentance if he did not believe in his own badness and God's goodness. The opposite of repentance is a hard and impenitent heart (v. 5), and this is certain to bring a man under the wrath of God. Verses 7-10 must be read in the light of all this, and then we shall see that what we have described here are not two classes of persons, both in their natural condition, the one class seeking for glory and honour and incorruptibility by their own innate goodness and desire, and the other failing to do so; but what we have is, on the one hand, those who, through the goodness of God have been led to repentance, seeking for glory, honour and incorruptibility, and their reward will be eternal life: and on the other, those who are *contentious*, and *do not obey the truth*; for these there will be wrath.*

This passage, therefore, does not suppose that some men will have eternal life on the ground of their own goodness and their own works, for no man whose heart is hard and impenitent, who despises the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, will ever seek for glory and honour. And it is equally true that a man only works good after his experience of the goodness of God has led him to repentance. And thus the works alluded to here are really the result of faith. And, contrariwise, if a man is impenitent, if he is contentious and resists the truth, instead of obeying it, whatever he may be in the eyes of men, he cannot produce any good fruits in the eyes of God, nor will he care about God's honour and glory or seek for such things.

Nor need the expression "eternal life" trouble us as to the way in which it is spoken of here. Eternal life is constantly looked at in Scripture as something we attain at the end as well as possess on the road. How good it is, then, to see that it is the knowledge of God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering that alone lead us to seek for glory, and honour and incorruptibility. Apart from it we are content with what is earthly—our sin and our shame.

1 *Tim. vi.* 17-19. The "good foundation" here, is the good works, and the distribution of our means according as God has

*"The context also reveals the fact—as stated in v. 16—that the gospel is, after all, the standard; and the test by which all will be decided."

prospered us. In this way we lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation. Apart from what is the common heritage of all believers, we shall have in the future only that which we gave away down here. Our Lord utters the same truth in Luke xii. 33. What we give by way of alms becomes a treasure in the heavens.

“Lay hold on eternal life” may be rendered, “on what is really life.” That life which is connected with the future. And as we have seen, that future is affected by what we do here. What a solemn, yet precious, lesson these verses contain. No wonder someone wrote for his epitaph these words: “What I *spent*, I had; what I *saved*, I lost; what I *gave*, I have.” In the light of this Scripture how true it is. And from this standpoint each one may well ask himself, shall I be rich or poor in that day? Will there be any foundation for a reward? (cf. also Luke xvi. 9-15).

Rev. i. 10. There is some difference of opinion as to whether the statement in this passage “the Lord’s Day” refers to the first day of the week or to what is known as the “Day of the Lord.” If it does refer to what we call Sunday, it is the only time that day is so designated in Scripture. On the other hand, it is known that very early in the Church’s history the first day of the week was called the Lord’s Day. In any case, it cannot make any difference as to the application of the addresses to the Seven Churches to the present interval. There is no Church, answering to the Body of Christ, seen in the book of the Revelation in that part of it which refers to the Day of the Lord. The Church is seen in heaven in Chap. v. before the Day of the Lord commences. This harmonises with the three-fold division of the book. “The things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” (Chap. i. 19).

With reference to the appeal which was made some time ago in these pages for funds to purchase Testaments for soldiers, Mr. Chapman writes:—

“I received £15. With every Testament I send a personal letter. No Testament is given without a written request, and these flow in from all parts of England and France . . . I receive a large number of most appreciative letters in return, and these are abundant evidence that God owns the service and that men are getting blessing. I am grateful for the response to the “F. & F.” notice. Calls for Testaments still come in, and I still feel they should be met. The total number given away to date is 1800.”

3s. has been received from an anonymous donor at Chelmsford.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 6.

JUNE, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

“Thine Ordinances.”

“THOU hast established the earth, and it abideth,” writes the Psalmist. “They continue this day according to thine ordinances : for all are Thy servants.” As we watch the sunrise and sunset ; as we become aware of the alternation of day and night ; as we are reminded of the change of season, how seldom we remember that these are God’s ordinances. They are visible expressions of Him, for they tell of His power, and of His intervention in the realm of nature.

These ordinances are unvarying. “The sun knoweth His going down,” and never departs from it. The moon has her appointed path through the heavens, and waxes and wanes, with a regularity which, with unflinching precision, tells us how the months pass. Winter and summer, spring and autumn come and go, succeeding one another with noiseless tread. “They continue this day according to Thine ordinances.” And from them we are to learn God’s unflinching power and His unchanging character.

“For all are Thy servants.” They obey the One Who called them into being—they appear and move at His command. They are not impelled or controlled by some blind necessity—they are His servants. How well they work ! How obedient they are ! How punctual !

Around us on every hand are evidences of God’s presence. It is as if we were introduced to some stately mansion where every picture on the walls was painted by the master of the house ; every ornament had been arranged by his own hand : and then the servants enter, and we see that each one knows, and perfectly performs, his appointed duty. We do not see the owner, but should we not be able from what we do see to form some idea of his character and abilities ? So in this earth we have, in various ways, the ordinances of God ; they are all His servants and they teach us of Him. God frequently appeals to these ordinances as a proof of

His unchanging covenant with Israel. Read Jer. xxxi. 35-7, xxxiii. 25-6. Have they not equally a voice to us? The ordinances of heaven and earth, of day and night, of sun, moon and stars, never cease from telling us of God's faithfulness and unchangeableness.

A correspondent writes from abroad :—

Afflicted.

" I had such a delightful experience when staying in—last year. Waiting on the railway platform for a train which was overdue, I was looking at the mountain which almost literally overhangs the station. The moon was just rising, and the scene was arrestingly beautiful—one just *wanted* sympathy in one's enjoyment of the beauty. I suddenly realised that a gentleman (not quite old) was standing beside me, also absorbed in the scene. . . . I don't know whether he or I spoke first—it was all most natural—but there amidst a crowd of holiday-makers we praised God for His goodness, and we each knew that the Lord Himself had brought two of His own together. Ah, but that was only an introduction. Two or three days later, I was in very great trouble; I did not know what to do; I was utterly at a loss and quite helpless; when who should come to call on me but my friend of the station. 'May we have a little reading,' he said, without much preamble; and his message was Ps. cxix. vers. 67, 71 and 75. Distinctly a message. He just came to talk to me about those three verses, he said, though he had seen me only once. His prayer in the hotel sitting-room (where we were never once interrupted though it was 4 p.m. and usually a dozen people would be in and out) seemed just to bring us both into the very presence of Him with Whom we have to do—and I was comforted."

The three verses referred to above are as follows :—"*Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word*" (ver. 67).

"*It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes*" (ver. 71).

"*I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*" (ver. 75).

There is a striking sequence in these verses; and they shew an ever-deepening conviction that God's ways are right. The first verse goes back to the time before affliction was known. And the Psalmist's record of his life then, is, "*I went astray.*" Then affliction came; and what a change it wrought: "*Now have I kept Thy word.*" To how many has this same experience come? But there is a further step in ver. 71. "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*" Having kept God's word instead of going his own way, he finds how

great has been the gain. And then he comes to accept God's judgment of everything in place of his own, and to recognise that all was done in faithfulness. God had been faithful to His own character; faithful to His child; faithful to the love He bore him; and faithful to His purpose to do him good. Affliction had been the means of bringing all this blessing.

THE REVELATION.

Explained in a simple and concise way for beginners.

By R.E.

(Continued.)

BEFORE proceeding further, let us consider the actual position.

1. The Church is no longer on earth, but in heaven. A double proof exists of the truth of this: (a) As we have seen, the Church period is covered by "the things which are," and we have now passed to "the things which shall be after these"; (b) the redeemed, comprising the saints of O.T. and N.T. times are seen in heaven, in **Chap. v.**, represented by four and twenty elders.

2. The dispensation of *grace* has closed. It is no longer "the acceptable year of the Lord," but "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. lxi. 2). From this point onward we have a succession of judgments, increasing in intensity and scope. This is clear evidence that the day of God's longsuffering is over. A further proof of this is found in **Chap. xiv. ver. 6**, where the everlasting gospel is spoken of—the only occasion on which any reference to the gospel is made in this book. Its contents prove it to be of a different character to "the gospel of the grace of God," preached everywhere to-day. The differences are marked. It is proclaimed, not by men, but by an angel. It has the element of fear rather than love, and speaks of the hour of God's judgment having come, instead of announcing His mercy through the atoning death of Christ. And lastly, God is presented as Creator rather than as Saviour. We would ask those who take the historic view of Revelation to consider whether this everlasting gospel has been, or is now being, preached?

3. The Lord Jesus Christ is not on earth, but in heaven. This is seen from what takes place in **Chap. v.** It is the period between His coming *for* His saints and His coming *with* them. A truth

most clearly stated in other parts of Scripture, particularly in 1 Thess. iv. 13-17. Here the apostle distinctly declares that those "who sleep in Jesus will God bring *with Him*." Then he proceeds to shew *how* this will be accomplished. The Lord will descend from heaven—the dead in Christ will be raised, and, together with the living, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the *air*. Here we have a coming which does not affect the world in general, but the *saved only*. This view is corroborated by Rev. xix. 11-14. Christ is here seen coming out of heaven, and the armies of heaven accompany Him. The fine linen clean and white identifies them with the Lamb's wife of the earlier verses. How could the marriage take place in heaven and the saints come with Christ except resurrection had already taken place? These two passages support each other in proving incontestably that the Lord Jesus comes for His saints some little time before He appears to the world. In Rev. xix., moreover, He is seen on a white horse. In 1 Thess. iv. there is no mention of a white horse. In the former, the aspect is distinctly judicial. In the latter, there is a complete absence of this characteristic. Indeed, it would be altogether out of keeping. Before we come forth with the Lord in judgment we meet Him in grace, taste the joys of the Father's House (John xiv.) and the blessedness of union with Him (Rev. xix. 7-9).

4. **Chaps. vi. to xix.** of Revelation, therefore, comprise the period between Christ receiving the saints to Himself and coming with them to reign. It is the period known as the last of the 70 weeks of Daniel. Sixty-nine of these weeks are accounted for, and carry us up to the time of our Lord's crucifixion. From that point prophecy is in abeyance, and the seventieth week (or it may be half of it, if our Lord's public ministry of three and a half years fulfilled the first part of it), remains to be accomplished. This accounts for the frequent mention of this period of time both in Daniel and Revelation. Sometimes, under the figure of "a time, times and the dividing of a time,"* at others, in days, 1,260; or forty-two months (Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7), (Rev. xi. 2-3; xii. 6; xiii. 5).

5. A further proof of what has already been advanced is, the frequent reference to Israel in the chapters we are about to consider. It would be as fatal to a true interpretation of this part of Revelation to apply such references as these to the Church, as it is in the Old

* "Time," one year; "times," two years; dividing of a time, half a year = 3½ years.

Testament—Israel and Judah mean literally Israel and Judah, both in the Prophets and in Revelation.

Briefly then, and broadly, the position is this, in connection with Chaps. vi. to xix., Christ and the Church are in heaven ; the dispensation of grace is closed ; God's judgments are in the earth ; Israel is being gathered back in unbelief into their own land ; the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy is being fulfilled ; and Anti-christ is present on earth in a double character, as King at Jerusalem—the false Messiah of the Jews—and as false prophet in relation to the first beast of Rev. xiii. And the great contest that rages is twofold ; the Beast and Antichrist are opposed to the saints ; this is the visible conflict ; while behind the scenes, it is between God and Satan, as to who shall occupy the supreme place on earth—Is it to be Satan's choice or God's ?

Chapters vi. to xix.

The purpose of this brief treatise is not to unfold the book of the Revelation in any detail, but rather to furnish the reader with a clue to its general contents, which shall enable him to arrive at an intelligent understanding of its scope and meaning, and thus prepare him for the study of larger works upon the same subject.

Chap. vi. The judgments upon the earth now commence with the opening of one of the seals. We have seen, in **Chap. v.** a sealed book delivered to Christ ; and it is important to notice that these judgments are distinctly connected with the loosing of the seals. There are two schools of interpretation as to these chapters—the historic and the futurist. The question to be decided is whether the scene in **Chap. v.**, is present or future, for all depends upon whether the seals have been broken. It seems impossible to conclude that **Chap. v.** describes a scene either actually realised in John's day or since. Several reasons may be given. (1) It has to do with "the things which shall be after these." (2) The first resurrection has evidently taken place, for the saints are in heaven. (3) The loosing of the seals is a signal for judgment ; and this, not as a mere passing phase, but as representing a complete change in the Divine relations with the earth. Now the present era is not judgment but grace. All this clearly points to **Chap. v.** being yet future.

It seems indisputable then, that, whatever *foreshadowings* of coming judgment history may afford, the actual fulfilment of these chapters still lies ahead of us.

These early judgments are in the form of providential dealings. Under the first five seals, we have war, famine, pestilence and persecution. These are the very conditions referred to by our Lord in Matt. xxiv., when speaking of the end of this present age. Under the sixth seal we have described the social and political upheaval which will take place just before the Lord appears. The language, as is often the case in this book, is symbolical, and must not be taken literally. Everything which man regards as stable will be shaken—sun, moon and stars, representing those in supreme and subordinate authority—and to such an extent, that the conviction will come upon men that it is the day of God's wrath.

Chap. vii. brings into view another aspect of the scene. In the midst of this cataclysm God preserves a remnant. He always has His tithe from amongst men. But, be it noted, it is not a remnant of the Church but of Israel. When God takes up direct dealing with the earth again He will also resume His relations with His earthly people.* The blessing of all nations is dependent upon their blessing, according to God's promise to Abraham: "*In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*" Verse 9 introduces another company—a countless multitude—saved from amongst the nations. Nor is this extraordinary, in view of what has just been said, and of the fact that Jewish missionaries will be proclaiming throughout all nations the coming of their Messiah; or in other words, the "gospel of the Kingdom."

"The great tribulation is referred to in ver. 14, shewing *when* it is this multitude is saved, and under what circumstances. The great tribulation is a definite period, predicted in both Old Testament and New, *and still future*. It occurs during the brief supremacy of Antichrist (Dan. xii. 1; Rev. xiii. 7).

Chap. viii. An interlude. The silence is but the prelude to the coming storm. It permits us to witness a most touching and impressive scene. "The prayers of all saints" are about to be answered. What a reminder to us that our prayers are never forgotten, however long delayed the answer may be! And God's actions are in response to His people's prayers!

* Such passages as Joel II. 28-31 will then be fulfilled, which show that God will still have a people on earth though the true Church has been removed.

The seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets. It will be noticed that the judgments under the trumpets are much more severe in their character. The loosing of a seal indicates the withdrawal of some restraining influence—men's ambitions and passions are allowed to have free play. The sounding of a trumpet is something more decisive; it is arresting, and even startling. Under the first four trumpets we have hail and fire; a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea; a great star from heaven falling upon the rivers and fountains of water; and the sun, moon and stars smitten. As to the first, hail is frequently both the means, and the symbol, of divine judgment. The second, indicates some Kingdom in a state of revolution and consequent anarchy. The third, points to the lapse of some distinguished individual whose teaching will poison the very springs of life. A person in authority who prostitutes his power and abilities to dishonourable ends. Someone who has fallen from unusual heights to an unusual depth. The last of the four probably points to the spread of democratic ideas, and the consequent diminishing of authority.

Chap. ix. The woes under the fifth and sixth trumpets have a distinctly Satanic origin. We read of the bottomless pit (ver. 2), and of the angel of the bottomless pit, Apollyon (ver. 11). All this is connected, too, with the fall of some notable individual to whom is given the key of the bottomless pit. Some think that this points to Antichrist. What happens here may synchronise, too, with the fall of Satan, as depicted in **Chap. xii.** In any case, these vivid descriptions of overwhelming hosts, point to the innumerable Satanic agencies which one day will be let loose upon this earth. The locust judgment seems to indicate rather a moral scourge, the devastation of all that makes for human happiness. They expressly forbear to kill men, but torment them. "*And in these days shall men seek death, and shall not find it.*" Whereas under the sixth trumpet men are killed. In ver. 20 these judgments are called plagues. Yet, severe as they are, they do not bring men to repentance (vers. 20-21).

Chap. x. God is now about to take possession—He claims the earth for Himself and for Christ—and this is signified by a mighty angel coming down from heaven and setting his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. This is confirmed by the angel's announcement that there should be no longer delay; for

so the last clause of verse 6 should read. All prophecy is about to be fulfilled. But there is to be a brief interval, for John has yet to prophesy *concerning* (not before), many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings (ver. 11).

Chap. xi. The measuring of the temple, &c., is also an indication that God is claiming His own, and that even at such a time He will, as in Elijah's day, reserve to Himself some true worshippers. The testimony of the two witnesses and their miracles are certainly not in accord with God's dealing in the present dispensation, but remind us of Moses in Egypt, and Elijah in the midst of apostate Israel. The sphere of their testimony is Jerusalem (ver. 8), and is during the career of the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit; showing that Satan directly opposes God's testimony. It is God's last appeal to men in the way of testimony, and the end is at hand—the forty and two months have run their course, and the seventh angel sounds, and there are great voices in heaven saying, "*The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.*" (ver. 15). Though Christ does not actually appear at this moment, yet we have reached a climax. The four and twenty elders worship God and give thanks that He has taken His great power and has reigned. And verse 18 indicates the closing up of all.

(To be concluded (D.V.) next month.)

ALL IS WELL.

In the centre of the circle
 Of the will of God I stand :
 There can come no second causes,
 All must come from His dear hand ;
 All is well ! for 'tis my Father
 Who my life hath planned.
 Shall I pass through waves of sorrow ?
 Then I know it will be best ;
 Though I cannot tell the reason,
 I can trust and so am blest.
 God is love, and God is faithful,
 So in perfect peace I rest.
 With the shade and with the sunshine,
 With the joy and with the pain,
 Lord I trust Thee ! both are needed,
 Each Thy wayward child to train.
 Earthly loss, did we but know it,
 Often means our Heavenly gain.—I.G.W.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

(Continued.)

By WALTER SCOTT.

THE History and Prophecy contained in these famous "Songs of the Lord" are cast in the mould of human experience and feeling. The varied emotions of the soul under joy and gladness are expressed in these everlasting lays, for the Psalter can never die.

HEADINGS AND TITLES OF THE PSALMS.

The headings are undoubtedly inspired, and are as ancient as the text itself. There are 116 titled Psalms; the remaining 34 are termed "Orphan Psalms," as their parentage is doubtful. Several of these anonymous Psalms, however, *seem* to proceed from the pen of "The sweet Psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2): compare Heb. iv. 7 with Ps. xcv. 8, etc. The earliest composer and singer of sacred song was Moses (Exod. xv.); Deborah (Judges v.), and Hannah followed (1 Sam. ii.). It was David, however, himself a skilful musician (1 Sam. xvi. 18), and inventor of musical instruments (Amos vi. 5) who established a combined service of song and instrument in Israel (1 Chron. xvi. 4-36). The *afflictions* of David and the *glories* of Solomon furnish, in the main, occasion for those holy songs. But if the Psalms are *confined* to the recording of the experiences of these illustrious monarchs of Israel, then we are compelled to write that the language is a gross exaggeration. Take the Psalm of Agony (xxii.), and the Psalm of the Kingdom (lxxii.)—the former ascribed to David, and the latter to Solomon—as an illustration of the principle on which many of the Psalms come before us. The historical occasion which gave birth to a particular Psalm is mere ground-work on which the Spirit of God would develop circumstances and experiences which in their fullest import could only apply to our Lord Jesus Christ. The two Psalms referred to, if limited in their application to David and Solomon, are not true; if, however, they are applied to Christ on the Cross, and Christ on His Throne, then their fulfilment in the Spirit and to the very letter are assured facts.

The *first* Psalm, chronologically, is Ps. xc., written by Moses; the *last* was composed after the Restoration from the Babylon captivity, cxxxvii.—the authorship of this latter is not known. Thus the composition of the Psalter covers a period of about a

thousand years. Probably Ezra was the inspired editor (Ezra vii. 6). But the great fact of inspiration is not dependent upon our knowledge of *who* wrote a certain book; it rests on the Divine *fiat*, "ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God." In the Psalm-headings David is named seventy-two times, and hence the colloquial phrase, "*The Psalms of David.*" Certainly the chief events in the life of the Shepherd-king of Israel form ground and material for many of these holy songs of Zion, which in their range and compass travel from David to David's son and Lord, and from the regal, prophetic, and priestly glories of Solomon to the greater glories and dignities of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, and Son of God in Personal right and greatness. Asaph, the musical leader of the choral services instituted by David, subsequently made part—an integral part—of the Temple worship, is referred to in the titled Psalms twelve times. Eleven are dedicated to the sons of Korah—a musical family of great renown. Solomon is the historical subject of Psalm lxxii. But Solomon prefigures Christ, and the kingdom stretching on to the Euphrates gives place to the world-kingdom of our Lord. Solomon is the author of Psalm cxxvii. Moses is the writer of No. xc. and Ethan of No. lxxxix. More than fifty of the Psalms were handed over to the "Chief Musician," so that he might arrange for their fitting place in the public worship of Jehovah.

The fifteen songs of "degrees"—cxxx.-cxxxiv.—some refer to the fifteen steps of the outer court up to the Temple. In our judgment, a worthier object is in view in these Psalms of ascent or degree. David lived in the time of the Tabernacle; Solomon in the time of the Temple, and as David is named in several of these "songs of degrees," we gather that the reference to the fifteen steps of the Temple must be ruled out of court. The depths of distress is fathomed in the *first* of these songs of ascent (cxxx.). Then we have successive ascents of the soul, each rising higher than the other till the grand climax is reached in the Sanctuary of Jehovah (cxxxiv.) when worship fills the scene and Israel is fully blessed out of Zion. These songs of degrees really refer to a growing experience, historically true of Israel in the past, and typically representative of Israel in the coming crisis of her history.

In the Syriac these fifteen Psalms are termed "Songs of Ascent from Babylon" to Jerusalem. Probably they represent as many different stages in that memorable journey.

The *first* of the titled Psalms is No. iii.; the *last* No. cxlv. Both are Davidic.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES :

BEING REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

By R. E.

THE CHURCH.

AFTER unfolding the glories and privileges connected with our position as sons, the apostle gives himself to prayer ; beseeching God to give to the saints, he was addressing, the knowledge of Himself as the Father of Glory, and asking that the eyes of their heart might be enlightened to discern the full wealth and meaning of His calling. Incidentally, this prayer reveals truth as to the Church, which is of the utmost importance.

1. *It is composed of all the saints.* The apostle thanks God for the faith of these believers at Ephesus and for their love unto all the saints. A love that embraced all alone comprehended the true nature of the Church. Love to a mere section of it—however devoted and enlightened that section may be—love to a denomination or to “our Church,” however ancient and historic—falls far short of the apostle’s conception, here. *The Church*—and there is only one—includes all the saints ; and “all the saints” are the true Church. It is faith in the Lord Jesus which constitutes any of us members of that Church. Even the Pope of Rome ; or the Patriarch of the Greek Church ; or the Archbishop of Canterbury, is not a member of the Church because of his office, but only on the same ground as everyone else ; and, unless they are true believers, they are not in reality (in spite of their office), members of it at all. The true members are characterised by faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints. And wherever we find one who possesses this faith, to that one our love must flow out irrespective of party names and distinctions.

2. The apostle’s great desire is that these saints should know God in a special character, viz., as “the Father of Glory” (ver. 17). To comprehend Him thus they needed “the spirit of wisdom and revelation.” Natural gifts and attainments could not impart this knowledge to them. Nor could the apostle. This is the reason of his prayer.

“*The Father of glory.*” This glory is connected with the special calling of the Church. We have seen, partly, already, what this **glory** means. We are blessed “in Christ” with all spiritual

blessings—we are sons, accepted in the Beloved. This is the glory of His grace. But we are also to share Christ's inheritance. This will be to the praise of God's glory. The Church is one with Christ.

God is the Father of glory, because He is the author of all this. That there should be a heavenly company associated with His beloved Son, as Man, was His purpose from all eternity. It is from the standpoint of Christ as Man that everything is viewed here. God is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not here a question of Christ's deity and all that He is in His own Person, but of God's counsels for Man, and Christ filling that place. Only by His becoming a man could the divine thoughts about man be achieved. All that we speak of now concerns the Second Man, the Lord out of heaven, and our blessing in association with Him. Only one word can express it all—*glory*. And God is the source and spring of all.

What is this glory? What does it all involve? It is "the hope of His calling." "Glory with Christ above," is our hope.

"That we, the Church, to glory brought
Should with the Son be blest."

It is "*the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*" Let us think of what God has gained for Himself by Christ becoming man. Think of all that His incarnation, death, and resurrection mean to God. Through it all God finds His pleasure in, and will manifest His glory by, the saints. The Church is to be the vessel for the display of the divine glory. Thus in Rev. xxi. we see her under the figure of the heavenly city descending out of heaven from God, "having the glory of God." This is the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. Not our inheritance *here*, but God's. Ours is spoken of in ver. 11.

This glory which we are here contemplating, and of which God is the author, is all to be made good by the exceeding greatness of His power. This power has already wrought in Christ, "*when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*" Man occupies the highest place in the universe, set there by God. Then the Church comes into view; for it is in this place that she is united to the last Adam. As in the case of the first man, he was made lord of creation and given dominion before Eve was united to him, so here, Christ is set in the place destined by God for the Second Man, and all things put under His feet in this new creation, in view of the Church's union with Him.

3. What a place for Man, and for this second Eve! The usurper will never enter this new creation; no sin will ever stain it; no fall will ever mar God's handiwork; and, consequently, change and decay will be unknown. In this place of pre-eminence God has given Christ "*to be Head over all things to the Church.*" Can we conceive what this means? What must it have meant to Eve to awake and find herself linked with one who was head of that scene of blessing God had called into existence? Her first thought must have been, All is mine through him; and if he has dominion over all, what can I lack? I am one with him who is the administrator. So Christ is the Administrator in this new creation—as He will be also in the age to come—for God "*hath put all things under His feet.*" And He is "*Head over all things to the Church.*" No wonder, in his epistle to the Colossians, the same apostle says, "*ye are complete in Him.*" If He is the Administrator, what can *we* lack?

There is also another aspect. If we are filled full in Him because He is the Head of the Church, the Church is also His fulness—He completes himself in her. And so we read, "*The Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*" He Who fills all will fill the Church, and He will fill her with Himself. His character, His beauty, His glory, all will be reflected in this wondrous vessel of grace and glory which God has fashioned.

This is really the thought of the body—the body is for the display of the head. Every movement of the human body is directed by the head—its every activity and energy flow from thence. So, one day, the Church will be filled with Christ—we shall display Him.

"Thou wilt to wond'ring worlds display
That we with Thee are one."

All this—what it is for the Church to be the body of Christ—should be realised now, in measure. "Christ in you," says the apostle, "the hope of glory." It is the hope of glory, but it has a present application. As we realise that Christ is Head over all things to the Church—that He administrates all on her behalf—we shall lack nothing. His power and grace are still sufficient for all present needs and activities. But all power and grace flow from the knowledge of our union with Him where He is—a Man in the glory.

FUTURE EVENTS.

VI. THE ANTICHRIST.

THE expectation of the Antichrist is, and ever has been, universal throughout Christendom, spite of much confusion of thought as to the quarter from whence he springs, and the true character of his unholy mission.

The Antichrist is a title only found in John's first epistle (1 John ii. 18-22). Other titles belonging to the same transgressor may be found scattered over the book of God. Almost from the beginning of Christianity there have been antichrists, but this does not touch the fact of a personal Antichrist yet to come, with whom no others can be confounded. Thus John writes: "Little children, it is the last time (or hour); and as ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John ii. 18). "Antichrist" means one who sets himself in opposition to Christ, and this manifestly where Christ should be exalted. This is sufficient to let us know where to look for antichrists in our own day—not in the atheistical lecture hall, but in the Christian university and pulpit. In like manner, when the last great deceiver is manifested, his connexion will not be so much with paganism, as with Judaism, and apostate Christianity.

The old Protestant idea (held tenaciously still by many), was that the Bishop of Rome is the Antichrist. This will not bear the test of Scripture; for two reasons:—(1) the Antichrist is an individual, not a succession of men, nor a religious system; and (2) the Romish harlot is rather the *woman* of sin than "the *man* of sin" (compare 2 Thess. ii. 3; Rev. xvii. 1-6).

We will endeavour to classify some of the Scripture passages which deal with this subject, beginning with the Antichrist's relation to Israel (or more properly, Judah). Where the Christ is looked for, there the Antichrist may be expected to present himself, and certainly unbelieving Israel is still looking for the promised Christ; not yet accepting the Lord Jesus as such. Dan. xi. is an important passage in this connexion. It is part of a communication beginning in chap. x., given for the instruction of the prophet concerning the future of his nation. Verses 1-2 speak of the closing days of Persian

supremacy; verses 3 and 4 show the Grecian conquests under Alexander, with the break up of his empire after his death; verses 5-35 describe the contentions of the kings of the North and South (Syria and Egypt) two of the principal divisions of Alexander's empire, Palestine being their usual battle-ground; then, at verse 36, a new party is abruptly introduced—a king in the land—with whom both the Kings of the North and South make war. The description of this Jewish King is so absolutely identical with that of the Man of Sin in 2 Thess. ii. 3-4, that it is clear both passages speak of the same person. "The King shall do according to his will, and he shall magnify himself above every god," etc. Here we have the man, so opposite in every way to the lowly One who delighted to do the Father's will, of whom our Lord warned His hearers in John v. 43: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

The formation of a Jewish state (a likely event at an early date) will create the need for a ruler. This will be Satan's opportunity to introduce the Antichrist. He will be fair spoken at the beginning; his words will be smoother than butter and softer than oil, but war is in his heart (Psa. lv. 21). From the first, the godly in Judea will recognise the Dragon's voice (Rev. xiii. 11). When he judges his position secure, he will suppress the Jewish religious ordinances (by that time restored, with the temple as their centre), and persecute to the death all who venture to acknowledge God. This "man of the earth" will murder the innocent, saying in his heart: "God hath forgotten; He hideth His face; He will never see it" (Psa. x.). This "worthless shepherd will eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their hoofs in pieces." See the Revised Version of Zech. xi. 15-17. Yet the ungodly Jewish mass will be highly pleased with their new leader, at first. In Isa. lvii. 9 Jehovah says: "thou wentest to the King with ointment, and did'st increase thy perfumes and did'st send thy messengers far off, and did'st debase thyself even unto hell." The King here is the Antichrist.

His power will be twofold; kingly authority and spiritual authority will be wielded by him. Hence he has "two horns" (Rev. xiii. 11). Commencing as a "beast" (a political force), he will end as a "false prophet" (a religious deceiver). Compare Rev. xiii. 11; xix. 20. Like the Popes of the Middle Ages, he will be at once a temporal sovereign with limited power, and a

religious leader with practically unlimited power. His religious influence will extend far beyond the limits of his own immediate dominion. His association with the Roman power accounts for this.

We will now consider his relation to Christendom. This is shown in 2 Thess. ii. From this epistle we learn the future of those "who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," people who have had the truth in their midst, but who believed it not. These will be swept along by the current of antichristian apostasy. Great miracles will be wrought in aid of the great deception. There is a pointed contrast between Acts ii. 22 and 2 Thess. ii. 9; the first passage having reference to our Lord's works, and the other to the operations of the Man of Sin. Amongst other marvels, he will be permitted to use the very miracle that Elijah employed on Mount Carmel to call Israel back to Jehovah. Compare Rev. xiii. 13 with 1 Kings xviii. 24. His doings are called "powers," for they are manifestly superhuman; "signs," for they have meaning and teaching; and "wonders," for they are calculated to attract attention and admiration. Strange that an evil age which is characterised by unbelief in miracles (even the miracles of our Lord being discredited) should close with a general and enthusiastic belief in them!

It is not a long-continued evil, such as Popery, that is indicated in 2 Thess. ii., but the climax of insult and wickedness, with which God deals very promptly. It is, indeed, the final conflict between God and Satan before the latter is banished to the abyss. "The mystery of lawlessness" was working even in the days of the apostles, but there was then, and there is still, a restraining power, hindering its full development until God's time comes to allow it. The restraining power is not mentioned, but it is obviously the presence of the Spirit of God in the Church. When the testimony of the Church is ended, the hindrances will disappear, and evil will rush madly to its predicted end.

The Antichrist's relation to the Beast—the Roman power—is dealt with in the book of the Revelation. He is the associate and lieutenant of Europe's last mighty potentate, and will share his special punishment (Rev. xix. 20). "He exerciseth all the authority of the first Beast in his presence" (Rev. xiii. 12). Like Nebuchadnezzar, the last head of gentile power will perceive the importance of unity in matters of religion (Dan. iii.). A form of religion will be devised that will suit all, Jews and professing

Christians included. The desirability of a religion so comprehensive is frequently spoken of in our own time. Satan will see to it that such a religion shall be provided. The worship of man will therefore be decreed. In this connexion some have experienced difficulty in the understanding of Scripture teaching. In 2 Thess. ii. it is the Man of Sin who exalts himself and demands worship, and in Rev. xiii. he causes men to worship the Beast, or his image. To some this seems contradictory. Yet there is no more contradiction here than in the fact that our blessed Lord, when on earth, accepted worship for Himself while earnestly testifying that He sought the glory of Another. There will be a trinity of evil in the last days. The Beast, the false prophet, and the Dragon will array themselves against Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Hence John saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouths of the Dragon, Beast, and false prophet (Rev. xvi. 13-14).

The King of Dan. xi. 36 is most certainly the Antichrist, for he rules in Israel's land. Comparison with Rev. xiii. makes it impossible to identify him with the Beast out of the Sea (ver. 1), but rather with the Beast out of the earth (ver. 11). The power is the Roman power ; the latter is the Antichrist.

We venture no speculation as to the mystic number 666. It is a sign divinely given for the guidance of understanding ones when the crisis arrives, and for them its meaning will be plain. The understanding or wise ones are elsewhere referred to in Dan. xi. 33 ; xii. 3-10 ; Matt. xiii. 23 ; xxiv. 15. They are a class by themselves—God-fearing souls, who, like the sons of Isacchar in David's time, have "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32). While the demon-possessed mass, as foreshadowed by the swine in Luke viii. 33, plunge wildly into the vortex of evil, they, with minds enlightened by the Spirit of God, are enabled to form a sober judgment concerning all that is transpiring around them, and in result hold themselves entirely aloof from Satan's devices. The excitement and enthusiasm with which the new order of things will be welcomed by men generally (Rev. xiii. 3-4) will not appeal to them ; they will have misgivings from the beginning. Witness-bearing and suffering will be their duty and portion until deliverance reaches them by the appearing of the Son of man from heaven.

W. W. FEREDAY.

Next month (D.V.) :—"The Great Tribulation."

SIX TITLES OF THE LORD IN HEBREWS.

By WILLIAM LUFF,

Author of "War Stories."

FROM the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us gather six titles given to our Lord.

1. In the first chapter we find Him spoken of as **God's Son** :—

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (ver. 5).

This gives us His glory and excellency, and the importance of hearing His word, for—

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. i. 1-2).

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*" (Heb. ii. 1-3).

2. In the seventh chapter, verse twenty-two, we have a second title, a **Surety**. What is a **Surety**? A Police Court report will explain. Recently, a fruiterer was summoned to show cause why he should not pay £50 as surety for his brother who was liberated on bail and absconded. The magistrates made an order for immediate payment of the £50 and issued a distress warrant. If we want a scriptural illustration, we have it in the words of Judah to Jacob, concerning Benjamin :—

"I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever" (Gen. xliii. 9).

Surety is one who becomes responsible for another's liabilities. Such a Surety is Jesus, the Son of God.

3. **A Sacrifice**. The Son having become Surety, proved the words of Solomon, "He that is surety for a stranger, shall smart for it, or be sore broken" (Prov. xi. 15 marg.). Hence it is written, "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26).

4. **A Saviour**. The Surety's sacrifice having put away the sin of those for whom He became responsible, "He is able also to save

them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). This not only means that He is able to save those who have gone to the uttermost possibilities of sin, but it also means that He is able to save such to the utmost possibilities of holiness.

5. A Shepherd. This title is found Heb. xiii. 20 :—

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

As sinners, we need saving; and as sheep, we need shepherding. How blessedly this is done may be gathered from the twenty-third Psalm, and from such passages as Ezek. xxxiv. :—

"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God."

6. A Sanctifier. This sixth title is found in Heb. x. 10 :—

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*."

Under the old dispensation, God said :—

"And thou shalt offer every day a bullock *for* a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy" (Exod. xxix. 36).

Thus, as Jesus said, "It is the altar that sanctifieth the gift." How much more shall we be sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. We are sanctified, or set apart to God, in all the value of that offering.

In these six aspects of the Lord we have a complete view of God's perfect salvation.

The Son speaks of the Father.

The Surety stands for men.

The Sacrifice puts away sin.

The Saviour saves to the uttermost.

The Shepherd cares for the sheep.

The Sanctifier sanctifies both the offerer and the offering.

PATIENCE.

Extracts from an Address.

IN connection with the subject of *continuance in prayer*, I should like to read some passages, showing the connection between that and *the Grace of Patience*.

Psa. xl. 1. The Lord Jesus not only "with strong crying and tears" poured out His soul in prayer to the Father, but "waited patiently" for the answer, and His testimony is, "He inclined unto Me, and heard My cry."

Heb. vi. 13-18. Abraham is spoken of as an example of faith, and if we walk in his steps, we must follow him, not only in fervent and untiring prayer, but also in hanging upon God. Every promise is God's hand stretched out to us, and it is only for us to hang on. Every promise is a jewel the lustre of which is undimmed. We may be unfaithful, but "He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself." Therefore the great point is, not to believe in our faith, but to believe in God, and against every uprising of unbelief, just to look straight up to God, and to Christ at the right hand of God, and to hold on. "So, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise," and this will be the result in the case of every one who patiently endures.

Then this virtue of patience is one of the things to be "added" to faith. 2 Peter i. 6. The idea is that of a well ordered banquet in which one course succeeds another. God sets great store by the growth of this virtue in us. Why? Is it not because He is the God of patience? Patience is one of His attributes. How patient He was with us in the days of our unregeneracy! How patient He has been with us since we have known His name, and our failures, and follies and backslidings! How patient with the Church and the world. Now, as an earthly father delights to trace his own lineaments in his child, so God is pleased when He sees His children getting more and more like Him; and we get more and more like Him if we get more patient. This is the present result and reward of patience. But in 1 Peter i. 7 we have another aspect, a continual thing, enduring the trial of faith patiently, will have its reward in that day.

Then the last grand thought in connection with patience. Rev. i. 9, "*The Patience of Jesus Christ*." The Lord Jesus is "the most patient Being in the universe, waiting for the time appointed

of the Father." And *we are called unto fellowship with Him.* Fellowship with Christ in this world as the despised and rejected One, and in His *Patience*. He is waiting for the fulfilment of God's purpose to share His throne with us, the day of the manifestation of the sons of God.

So let us have fellowship with Him in this wondrous matter of Patience. And this applies not only to the great purposes of God, but to the things of every day life, because the more we walk with God, we find every step illuminated by the Scriptures. And then in perplexing, mysterious matters, *we have to wait.*

PHILOSOPHY OR CHRIST :

TWO LETTERS.

MY DEAR—

I.

I fear you have listened to the common cant talk, that religious people are unintelligent, afraid of progress, etc., and are, in a word, hopelessly behind the times. If you were to, at least, get in touch with the current Christian literature you would see how very different the facts are.

At the same time there will always be an evident difference between those who *have* and those who *lack*. The rich may seem very reprehensibly easy-going to the struggling poor. He *has*, and is at ease and quiet, while the poor endeavour and work just because they as yet *have not* all they want.

So with those who *know*—they are necessarily quieter folk, more restful, than those who are still searching. As the poet put it :—

Oh Christian ! the world has forgotten its youth,
And the light in its eyes groweth grey ;
But its passionate unrest, and its quest after truth
Are not charmed by the ages away.
It knoweth the day of its doom draweth nigh,
And the smile on its lips is the child of a sigh.

I also quote from memory, an unknown author, but can assure you he was *not* Oscar Wilde !

Your quotation from that poet of rather unsavoury reputation is a significant comment on his own shipwrecked life. In youth he felt in harmony with nature—presumably because he had not yet broken with Nature's God, and defied His laws. *Afterwards* he wrote with the bitterness of one whose memory reminded him of all that he had lost.

I notice you say, " I felt somewhat that the balm I needed grew in lands that your minds had never explored," but you do not describe to us the promised land.

Now, let us be quite definite about things, especially about spiritual interests, for, like medicines, it is not the talk on the label that we want, but the healing virtue within.

If your nature is anything like that of other human beings, there are just three things you most need : pardon, power and a prospect. No creature gifted with an average amount of common sense should be ignorant of these needs, and surely at this time of day a person of fair intelligence should know where they can be found.

The mistake so many people make is to fancy that Christianity is still in the experimental stage, and that we have had to wait for the twentieth century to find out if it is any good.

The fact is that for nineteen centuries it has been proved that Christianity is the *only power for righteousness* that the world has ever known. It has been that from the beginning, and is so to-day. This is not a mere theory. It is a fact of personal experience that any intelligent person can verify by observation and experiment.

But if you have something better for us, some system that offers us *pardon* on a better basis than the atonement effected by the blood of Christ ; that gives us *greater power* for right living than His present grace can afford, or a brighter *prospect* than His truth sets before us—why, let us have it at once.

Have I written too much ? I hasten to close. Always glad to hear from you.

Yours, etc.,

S. E. McN.

MY DEAR—

II.

You wish to take a more practical interest in my work. Well, *pray for it*. That will be the most acceptable sort.

I wish I could help you to get something that would be of real use to you now and hereafter. So far as I know, only Christianity—that is, Christ—even professes to be that, so of course I cannot offer you anything better.

From your letter, your mind seems to be in a rather nebulous state, as you say you do not understand any religion or even your own philosophy. As you are sufficiently educated to know that Christianity has been an unspeakable blessing for two thousand years to all sorts of people in all parts of the world (and that no

other religion has been that) would it not be worth your while to ascertain (a) What are the distinctive features that make it so? and (b) How you may obtain the personal experience of its benefits?

The need of pardon seems to you an injustice. Very well, let us eliminate it. No hope of it shall be offered to the naughty child, however sorry he may become. No possibility of it shall be contemplated by the sovereign, whatever extenuating circumstances may arise.

No doubt the social fabric would suffer grievously from the improvement, and the world become hardened and hopeless by the demands of our inexorable philosophy, but pardon shall be wiped out of the world.

But I anticipate the objection, that it is only from *religion* that forgiveness must be eliminated, as society simply cannot do without it. And there I must object (using mere common sense) that it is most unphilosophical to deny to God a capacity and a disposition that is essential amongst men.

A truer philosophy, that distinguishes between "right" and "wrong," finds in the possibility of *forgiveness* a welcome refuge from the consequences of failure.

Power at least you admit the need of, but if sincerely, why not turn to the One in Whom alone it can be found? Would this be unphilosophical? Everything in Christianity is to be put to the test of *personal experience*. The pity is that so many discuss it or reason round it or explain it away—as they might reason and argue about a loaf of bread, instead of eating it, and so *knowing* that it gives strength.

Nor is it philosophical to ignore *progress* altogether. If there is anything in the world that uniformly tends to elevate, to improve and to strengthen, it is not philosophy (or common sense either) to ignore it or assume it does not exist.

We may assume that there is no knowledge of electricity available in the physical world, and go on groping our way uncertainly with the light of a tallow dip, but a sensible person will drop theories and switch on the electric light.

I should gather from your letter that from the years of association with merely average Britishers—who are usually profoundly ignorant of Christianity—you have been perhaps unconsciously influenced by your environment, and imbibed their ignorance!

But perhaps I misjudge them, which I have no wish to do. It is easily tested. Ask your friends what they know of (a) the past influence and achievements of Christianity; (b) its present power and importance to society; (c) the reason for such remarkable and unique results; (d) the name of the religion or philosophy that comes next best as a moral power, and (e) what it has done and is doing throughout the world? I should not be surprised to find they could not write down a single fact under any of the heads—and they might even assume that what they know nothing about has no existence!

In all discussion we have to watch carefully the common tendency to use terms of depreciation either unnecessarily or unjustifiably.

You speak of Christianity (Christ) as a "prop," and the word, though a derogatory one, contains a truth. It is a *support*, indeed the only one known to history. And our present state of moral weakness needs exactly the support that can be found in Christ alone—otherwise we shall never realise our highest ideals, or learn higher ones.

You think that Christianity is beginning to be shelved. Not shelved only, but systematically attacked, from the times of Celsus and Julian until now. And yet surviving in spite of all, and still, as ever, a blessing to all who care to prove its power.

If it is shelved to-day, it is by those who know nothing whatever by personal experience of its worth; just as a baby shelves (or sucks?) a sovereign. But since your philosophy includes a search for truth, why not get the truth about Christianity? If it has been and is a blessing to so many millions in every time and clime, why not give time and thought to an *experimental* study of its wonders? A "something" that makes bad men good, and good men better, that gives an inspiration and power for right living that can be found nowhere else, that ever elevates and ennobles, that sustains and consoles in every trying circumstance, that banishes from the heart the possibility of despair, that makes the hereafter radiant with a prospect far better than even the blessed "now"—is surely worth investigation.

At least spend a few shillings in books that will help you. I think we sent you *The Fact of Christ*, but read it again, and consider what He signifies to you. Read *Broken Earthenware*, by Harold Begbie, and *The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, as a sort of preliminary.

Yours, etc.,

S. E. McN.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 7.

JULY, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

“UNTIL THE TIME THAT HIS WORD CAME.”

Ps. cv., v. 19.

AN EXPERIENCE IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH AND OF OTHERS.

By R.E.

TO read of Joseph's experience knowing, as we do, the full history, is one thing: it is quite another to view it from Joseph's standpoint as he trod that thorny path step by step. The hatred of his brethren; their conduct towards him; his banishment to Egypt; his unlawful and undeserved imprisonment; above all, the neglect on the butler's part to remember him, must all have been as mysterious and perplexing, as it was painful.

How much is told in those few words which close the fortieth chapter of Genesis and open the forty-first: “*Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him. And it came to pass at the end of TWO FULL YEARS.*” Two full years of waiting—of expectation; disappointment day after day! The agony seems drawn out to the utmost.

The ways of God are indeed past finding out—His providences are exceedingly strange in their processes and developments. Truly He

“ Moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

From the outside, and judging from mere circumstances, it seems, at times, as if the destiny of Joseph—so large and gracious in its ultimate realisation—was but the sport of human plotting or caprice. The ruthless hands of his envious brothers tear him from his home and from under his father's care; the machinations of an evil disposed woman are allowed to triumph, and he finds himself a prisoner in a strange land; without reputation and without friends; and then, when providence seemed to place within his reach some means of deliverance, instead, there follow two years of waiting, during which he not only appeared to be forgotten by

Pharaoh's butler, but by the God of Providence Himself. The very man Joseph had befriended is allowed to forget; and it *seemed* as if Providence cared so little for Joseph that it never took the trouble either to jog the man's memory or awaken his gratitude.

And yet the *sequel* contradicts all this *seeming*. "*Until the time that his word came, the Word of the Lord tried him.*"

The Word of God reveals His mind—His purpose. It also accomplishes His will. God had a purpose concerning Joseph; and He alone knew how great and glorious it was. Joseph had no idea of what awaited him. But as we see the end, and the way which led to it, the methods of God which seem, at times, so strange, become comprehensible. What a deep meaning there is, then, in the statement: "Until the time that his word came, the Word of the Lord tried him." The forgetfulness of Pharaoh's butler, the lengthened imprisonment, and all that had gone before, were just as much the ordering of God as all that came after. This does not make God answerable for man's perversity, it only shows that there is a superintending Providence which orders the trials of God's people as well as their prosperity. The trials through which Joseph had to pass were at the Word of the Lord. "The Word of the Lord tried him."

Deep seemed to answer to deep in Joseph's experience, until the "iron entered into his soul" (Ps. cv. 18). But the word for his deliverance went forth at last—"his word came." God had a purpose concerning him. He had not been the sport of circumstances. The hatred of his brethren, the injustice, the imprisonment, were all working *together* for good, and preparing Joseph for his future glory. And at the end he could say, "God meant it unto good: God did send me before you to preserve life." Joseph sees God's hand in it all. And not only this. The process, bitter as it had been, was forgotten in the glow of final triumph. "*God,*" said he, "*hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.*" "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"; and when the joy comes, the sorrow, in one sense, is as if it had not been.

Do we not see also that the final result justified the process? The sighs and tears that were wrung from Joseph were not in vain. The severe discipline was the necessary preparation for the

weight of glory. The chastening and the winnowing made him a meet vessel which God could fill until it overflowed. The valley of humiliation fitted him for the heights of power. His previous debasement qualified him for every honour earth could bestow.

And yet there is a further lesson to learn from Joseph's experience, and it is this, viz., that God has His own time. He chooses the hour, as well as the path which leads to it. There was an *appointed time* when the word came to Joseph announcing a complete change of circumstances, "Until the time that *his word* came." To us God's time often seems long: but let us remember that the length and severity of the test are in relation to the purpose in view. No one suffered more indignity and hardship than Joseph; no one reaped a richer harvest of honour and emolument. The whole history is surely intended to teach us that a superintending Providence watches over our lives, and that, whatever the training and test, if we wait, the word of emancipation will some day not fail to reach us.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

(Continued).

By WALTER SCOTT.

APART from the moral influence which the Psalms, singly and as a whole, have exercised in the life and worship of nations, the inner value of these songs as recording the personal experiences of Christ, of Israel in the prophetic future, and of the godly in all ages, is of inestimable value. The Psalter has both a moral and prophetic character. Here too the exercises of the human heart find expression in song, in confession, and in prayer. Another has said, "There is great *moral* value in learning prophetic truths in or through the Psalms; because they are not there treated as mere doctrines, but are handled and felt there by the varied passions of the soul." The 150 Psalms are divided into five books. This arrangement obtains in all Hebrew and English (*Revised*) Bibles.

BOOK ONE.—Nos. 1-41.

BOOK TWO.—Nos. 42-72.

BOOK THREE.—Nos. 73-89.

BOOK FOUR.—Nos. 90-106.

BOOK FIVE.—Nos. 107-150.

Note the ending of these respective groups of Psalms. No. 41 ends with "Amen, and Amen." No. 72 closes with "Amen, and Amen," supplemented with the fitting comment, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended." No. 89 ends in the Divine certainty, "Amen, and Amen." No. 106 closes with the Hebrew note of praise, "Hallelujah." No. 150 is all praise, opening and ending with a grand "Hallelujah," or "Praise ye Jehovah."

While the moral element everywhere prevails in the Psalter, prediction and prophecy are prominent features of the first four books of Psalms.

In the *first* book we have, historically and prophetically, Christ in association with Judah in the land—Jerusalem especially. "JEHOVAH"—God's covenant Name with His ancient people, occurs more than 270 times: "GOD," the creatorial Name, is found about 50 times.

In the *second* book, the faithful, or godly, part of Judah is cast out by the Antichrist from their beloved land and city (Ps. lii. 6). But Messiah takes his place amongst His exiled people and furnishes them with sure hopes of return. As the Jews are not publicly owned when outside the land and amongst the Gentiles, "JEHOVAH," the Covenant Name, only occurs about 30 times, while "GOD" in relation to Creation is found upwards of 200 times.

In the *third* book, the whole nation of Israel—Judah and Ephraim—is historically traced from her rise in Egypt till her glory in millennial days. Christ in royal grace and power is the Hope of the Nations. "JEHOVAH," occurs about 50 times: "GOD," more than 60 times.

In the *fourth* book, the full tide of millennial blessing flows over the redeemed earth, turning its deserts and wastes into gardens of delight, gladdening the nations with spiritual and temporal blessing, and setting Israel as the centre and head of the earthly bliss of those coming days, and Jerusalem, enriched and enlarged, becomes the metropolis of the world, and the Throne of Jehovah. Various dispensational titles occur in this book. "JEHOVAH," upwards of 100 times. "GOD," about 20 times, and then in connection with millennial blessing and times.

In the *fifth* book, Jehovah in His character, ways, and deeds is grandly celebrated. Praise is the leading feature of this precious

book. Creation rests from its 6,000 years thralldom. The wearied sons of men then bask under the light and glory of the Messiah. The throne sustains the blessing for 1,000 years. "GOD," about 30 times. "JEHOVAH," occurs more than 230 times.

A careful study of the Divine names and titles as employed in the Psalter will reveal many a hidden beauty.

THE REVELATION :*

Explained in a simple and concise way for beginners.

(*Concluded*).

By R.E.

Chap. xii. The previous chapter, may be viewed, in one aspect, as the climax of the book. From this point we are afforded glimpses of the various actors in the scene during these terrible forty and two months, which precede Christ's actual appearing; and we are also furnished with further details as to the final judgment of Babylon, the Beast, and the false Prophet; and with some particulars of the development of the conflict known as Armageddon.

And the first actor, and the chief, comes before us in this chapter—Satan, under the form of a great red dragon. He is the persecutor, the accuser and the great opposer of God's purposes—the old serpent called the Devil and Satan. His opposition here is to Christ, and to Israel, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. We have the birth of Christ and His ascension to God's throne. The present Church period is not noticed; Satan is cast out of heaven (the fulfilment of Luke x. 18), and then we pass on to the 1,260 days, and what will happen during that period. There will be floods of persecution against the Jews, especially against those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ (ver. 17), and who, no doubt, will be proclaiming Him as the Man Who shall rule all nations (ver. 5).

Chap. xiii. gives us a description of the subordinate, but visible, actors in this drama—the two beasts. The first is the head and representative of the revived Roman Empire. He is clearly identified with the little horn of Dan. vii., which is associated with the

* The three articles in *The Revelation* can be obtained in separate form from A. HOLNESS, 14, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., or PICKERING & INGLIS, 11, Bothwell Circus, Glasgow. Price 2d. each, or 1s. 6d. per doz., post free.

fourth Kingdom. Compare verses 8, 25, of that chapter with verses 5 and 6 of this. Also, ten horns are connected with both; Dan. vii. 7 and 24; Rev. xiii. 1; xvii. 3 and 12. This establishes the connection we speak of.

The second beast is the Antichrist. The same personage as is referred to in Dan. xi. 36 and 2 Thess. ii. A remarkable correspondence exists between all these passages. They evidently refer to one and the same person. The two horns like a lamb, are in imitation of Christ's kingly and priestly power. But "he spake as a dragon." Both these men are the servants of Satan (vers. 2, 4 and 11).

Chap. xiv. opens with a beautiful Millennial scene. In this book of the Revelation, as we have before remarked, we are continually carried back; here we are carried forward, as also in Chap. vii. The 144,000 referred to here may be connected with the persecuted remnant of **Chap. xii. 17.**

Christ is here seen ready to appear in judgment. As we have already indicated, this is the aspect He assumes all through this book. Here we have what are called the harvest and vintage judgments. The sands are fast running out (vers. 14-20).

Chap. xv. Almost the last hour has come; and we have here seven angels having the seven last plagues. Just as the judgments under the seals seemed to manifest themselves through ordinary or providential channels; and those under the trumpets assumed a more or less Satanic origin; so these last judgments seem as clearly to come directly from the hand of God. Can we attempt to realise the condition of things on earth at that time? Two men dominate the scene. Blinded and, at the same time, energised, by Satan they openly apostatize, and all recognition of God is banished from both the civil and religious sphere. In one quarter, an image of the first beast of Rev. xiii. becomes an object of worship; in another, the Antichrist sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. ii. 4). All are compelled to receive the mark of the beast in their forehead or their hand. Otherwise they cannot buy or sell; and many will forfeit their lives. It will be a time of unparalleled suffering and persecution. But in the midst of it there will be those who will not bow the knee to the image or accept the mark, but will remain faithful to God. And in verse 2 of this chapter we see them standing on the sea of glass, having

the harps of God. They sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb. Those who have been brought through these persecutions alive, sing the first; those who were martyred like their Lord, sing the last.

Chap. xvi. The judgments under the vials lead to Armageddon. There are at least five reasons why the present war cannot be this. (1) It mentions the kings of the east; (2) there is the agency of miracles; (3) the whole world is involved; (4) it is called "that great day of God Almighty"; for Armageddon is not a war between nations—though all nations may be gathered against Jerusalem—but it is between heaven and earth; (5) the beast and the false prophet are present at Armageddon. When the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air a great voice proclaims: "It is done." The end at last is reached.

Chap. xvii. shews the course things will take leading to the final overthrow of Babylon. For a brief period Rome will dominate the nations once more. (The Pope is already spoken of as the only one suitable to preside at the future European Peace Conference). The woman and the beast are one, and yet distinct. Together they represent civil and ecclesiastical Rome. Two things, however, happen consequent upon the confederacy between the ten kings and the beast. There is Armageddon (which is no doubt again referred to in verse 14) and the ten kings determine upon the destruction of the woman who is described as "*Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.*"

Chap. xviii. continues the description of Babylon's overthrow, though perhaps from another point of view.

Chap. xix. A wondrous scene now bursts upon the view. Heaven is filled with jubilation; Alleluia—repeated again and again. Three things give occasion for this: (1) the judgment of the great whore; (2) "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth"; (3) "The marriage of the Lamb is come."

Heaven is opened (ver. 11). Not now "a door opened in heaven," as in **Chap. iv. 1**. That was for John to look in; this is for Christ to come out. His entire aspect speaks of judgment. It is the Nazarene—the crucified—but He comes no longer to be despised and set at nought, but to sit exalted on His throne. Earth's hosts are gathered in opposition. It is the great day of God Almighty—it is Armageddon. "*And I saw the beast, and the kings*

of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army." (cf. Chap. xvi. 14 and 16 ; xvii. 12-14). His army, are the saints. They come forth WITH Christ. Eph. v. 27, has already been fulfilled. The issue of the conflict is not in doubt for a moment. "*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain*" (vers. 20-21).

Chap. xx. Satan does not escape—his end, so far, is now come. The arch-rebel, the instigator of all evil, finds his place in the abyss for a thousand years. It is well to notice the repetition of this term. Six times in the Chapter is "a thousand years" mentioned. This is not by accident. We have come at last to the Millennium. Then will be fulfilled those glowing predictions of the Old Testament prophets.

Three companies are mentioned in verse 4. "*And I saw thrones ; and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.*" This refers to the saints who come with Christ, and who have, of course, previously been raised. Two facts identify them, and also distinguish them from the other classes which follow. In the other two cases "souls" are expressly mentioned. Not so here. On the contrary, it expressly implies they are in bodies, for it states they *sat* upon the thrones. Further, we are told, "judgment was given to them." This is in accord with what St. Paul states, referring to the saints of this dispensation, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world" ? (1 Cor. vi. 2). This is predicated only of this first company. Who, then, do the other two classes comprise ? Those who were on earth witnessing for God after the resurrection of 1 Thess. iv. When John sees them here they have not yet been raised (though subsequently they are, and have part in the first resurrection) and this is why the souls are mentioned. "*And the souls of those beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus, and on account of the word of God.*" Then, again, we have a third class, though this is not made clear in our A.V. The passage should read, "and those"—or "and also the souls"—"who had not done homage to the beast and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." "They lived," (or "came to life"), involves resurrection.

Satan is loosed at the close ; and the final insurrection—the last which this distracted earth will ever know—takes place under his leadership. All are overwhelmed with destruction by fire from heaven.

The judgment of the Great White Throne follows, and thus comes at the end of the thousand years. It is the judgment of the wicked dead, who had no part in the first resurrection, and of any who may have died in unbelief since.

Chap. xxi. Verses 1-8 set forth the character of the eternal state. It will never pass away. The Church is the tabernacle of God, and He dwells with *men*. Nations, as such, seem to have disappeared. It is now God and men, in blessed and unbroken accord. The former things have passed away. One fearful verse describes the condition of the lost (ver. 8).

Verse 9 carries us back, and down to **Chap. xxii. 5**, we have a detailed description of the heavenly city, called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." It is a millennial scene, for we have nations again spoken of, and the need for healing. There will be neither in the eternal state. It is not the earthly Jerusalem, for it descends out of heaven from God. The description is, of course, symbolical, in keeping with other parts of the book, and not literal.

Verses 6-15 give us warnings and promises, and verses 16-21 the epilogue.

The main thesis of the entire book is the thought of the Kingdom: "The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." But it is the Kingdom in manifestation and power, not in grace as at present. And it is established, not by the preaching of the gospel, but by the exercise of the power of God in judgment ; according to Chap. xv. 4 ; " For all nations shall come and worship before Thee : for Thy *judgments* are made manifest." The visible, personal return of Christ in judgment to take the Kingdom, is the subject of this book. And throughout it there is the opposition of Satan and of men generally.

The book closes by presenting Christ to us as the Coming One.

SURELY I COME QUICKLY.

Oh God, what should we do without such a promise and such a hope ? Where else can we look, and upon what else can we lean,

amid the sorrows, the failures, and the discords of earth? Come—Thou Morning Star, the Root and the offspring of David, Thou only One of the Father, and first begotten from the dead—Come, and be the desire of all nations—remove every abomination, redress every grievance, right every wrong—dry the tears and hush the groans of Thy creatures; fulfil the aspirations of Thy people; take Thy lawful place and reign supreme. Come, that we may appear with Thee in glory; and that Israel may say,

“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

“Then the wide earth, in glad response
To the bright world above,
Shall sing in rapturous strains of joy,
In memory of Thy love.

Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation groans,
The air, the earth, the sea,
In unison with all our hearts,
And calls aloud for Thee.”

The position which a child of God occupies in this world is that of service. No worldling can grasp the fact that we are “Sons of God,” and “joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. viii., 14, 17.). And while they speak of the universal fatherhood of God, and presume to address Him as “Our Father,” they seldom or never take the place of being “Sons of God”; neither will they recognise us as such. We are “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” but when receiving instruction as to service in the world, we fill the place of “soldier,” “husbandman,” “workman,” “vessel,” “servant,” and “man of God,” engaged in spheres of service for our “Master,” and so are judged by the world according to our faithfulness or failure in service (2 Tim.). May we have grace to live as “good and faithful” servants for our Master, while living among those who while they cannot judge us as “Sons of God” can quickly judge us as servants.

* * * *

To Hezekiah, Jehovah was “more” than all gods. To Sennacherib, He was “much less” (2 Chron. xxxii. 7-15).

* * * *

Josiah is the only king mentioned who “wept before the Lord,” for the sins of his people (2 Kings xxii. 19). A.G.W.

THE OBSERVATORY.

The Value of the Sunday School.—There has recently passed away, at the advanced age of eighty-five, a man who was well known and appreciated in the colony in which he lived, and whose highest ambition was to use the gifts God had given him in the Sunday School. For 35 years he occupied the post of Superintendent, and he looked upon this sphere of service as more honourable and useful than that of fulfilling the duties of an Alderman or Member of Parliament. Though often pressed to devote himself to these, he always declined, declaring that he could not be engaged in any higher work than that which he had chosen. He himself said: "I have been censured for neglecting what I was told were my public duties. That I ought to have been a J.P.; that I ought to have been an Alderman; that I ought to have been a Member of Parliament. I was repeatedly urged to become everyone of these, but to all such suggestions my reply has been a decided No. I have been called to higher public work—far higher, far more constant, far more abiding work. My work has been for thirty-five years without a break to train and influence for good, as far as I and my teachers could, from 200 to 400 youths and maidens and children every Sunday." And some time ago he wrote: "All that I have done during my long life pales into insignificance when compared with my Sunday School work. If that has been a success, then I have my exceeding great reward which will be made manifest in 'that day.'" Would that this opinion regarding the Sunday School were shared by many others of equal ability. While it is a sphere where many may advantageously *commence* their service for God and their fellow creatures, yet none need think their gifts are too great, or of too high an order for the service it offers. Well would it be for mankind and for the Church if the very best men would take advantage of the opportunities it offers. Recently, no less a paper than the *Times* called attention to the decline in the numbers attending Sunday Schools, and spoke of this decrease as a calamity to the country.

* * * *

"The War and the Future: A message for the Times." This has been published by, and is indeed a declaration of, *The Layman's Missionary movement*. It is the outcome of a meeting held some little time ago, to consider the best methods to secure united action for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, in view of the War. There is very much to claim our sympathy in the aspirations expressed in this pamphlet. The danger is recognised "that when the War is over we should relapse into the old ways and grow slack." The desire is expressed, that "out of the collapse of civilisation as we had known it, out of the utter failure of the ways of thinking and acting which in our self-sufficiency we had chosen, we may be led into a new and better world."

But the writers do not seem to realize all that this breakdown means. We gather this from the last words just quoted. They indeed state, "The whole drama of the War gathers up and states in terrible terms the un-Christianity even of Christendom." They say, "If Christ is right, if He is sufficient

guide and Saviour, how is it that Christendom is still so far wrong after nineteen centuries? "But if these are facts (and they are), can we expect to "be led into a new and better world?" Rather, must we not look for God to intervene in some new way? If there has come, after nineteen centuries of Christian teaching, this crash—this collapse—if Christendom is still so far wrong, is God going suddenly—or even gradually—to set it all right by the very means which have so completely failed *in man's hands*? The Layman's Missionary Movement entertains such a hope. "And it is our belief," they say, "that out of the miserable failure of our human efforts . . . Christ will arise before mankind with a new grandeur as the Redeemer and Leader of human life."

But does such a hope spring from an intelligent apprehension of the Word of God, or is it merely born of human wishes and a false named optimism? To some it may seem almost profane even to question, much more to discourage, such a hope. But it is worse than useless to cherish ideas that have no divine warrant, and it is futile to buoy ourselves up with expectations which have no guarantee outside their human conception. Everywhere the Bible points in the opposite direction to that indicated in the pamphlet we are considering. The last days are to be "perilous times": men are to be turned away from the truth, and be turned unto fables: there is to be open apostasy: "the man of sin" is to be revealed: the nations will be in open rebellion against God. The Layman's Missionary Movement does not seem to realise this. Indeed it expresses just the opposite thought: "We are convinced," they say, "that no satisfactory or ultimate solution will be found, except the problem be approached with the recognition of the essential brotherhood of the human race, and with the conviction that each nation has its unique part to fulfil in building the City of God."

Is there nothing to be done, it may be asked, but to sit down and give ourselves up to ennui or indifference? Is everything to drift? Not so. We advocate nothing of this kind. To point out that certain aims and expectations are not destined to be realised and that they are contrary to what the Bible leads us to expect, is one thing. To do nothing, is quite another. That this dispensation is to end in failure and apostasy; that evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse; that falseness and corruption will grow both in the Church and the world, is nothing less than the clear and repeated declaration of Scripture. "Iniquity shall abound": "the love of many shall wax cold": "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth": these, and such like statements, are found everywhere in the pages of the New Testament. In view of this state of things what did the Apostle Paul say to Timothy?: "*Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry*": and then points him, not to any recovery of the Church or improvement in the world, but to Christ's Second Coming—"His appearing." Let us then preach the Gospel as never before. Let us maintain inviolate, not only the inspiration of the Scriptures, but every truth they contain. Let our solicitude for sinners and for saints be manifest to all. And let us do all this in view of our Lord's near return and with the distinct confession that His personal coming alone can change

the present order—fulfil the promises of God and secure the blessing of men. But let us be careful not to adopt a false programme and wrong headlines however innocently and unintentionally done. The banding of good men together, and all their combined efforts, will not have the effect desired by the Layman's Missionary Movement. We shall not in this dispensation be "led into a new and better world," though we may well do all we can to save men out of the present evil one.

* * * *

The Growth of Apostasy.—In connection with the recent ballot for the Chairmanship of the Congregational Union, a religious weekly stated, "One found a consensus of well-grounded opinion that had Mr. Campbell permitted his name to go to the vote his election would have been secured by a record majority." He withdrew on the score of health. He was well enough, however, to read a paper during the session, and he is referred to as "in every way equipped for the special task of interpreting the deep mysteries of faith." And this is said of a man who a few short years ago denied practically every fundamental truth of the Bible, and went so far that even a leading sceptic welcomed him as a comrade. Yet, without having made any retraction or even apology, but on the contrary having publicly asserted that there is no change in his views, not only is he welcomed as a popular candidate for the Chair of one of the leading denominations, but is spoken of as being "*equipped for the special task of interpreting the deep mysteries of the faith!*" Apart from anything else, could folly go further than this? It would be excellent comedy, but alas, it reveals a callousness and carelessness which no comedy can conceal, and it makes havoc of all that true Christians hold most dear. Although but a few short years ago this man denied his Lord, denied the faith, denied the Bible, and has, within a very few months, preached in such a style as made a leading preacher who was present charge him with robbing Christ of His Deity, yet we read that when he rose to read his paper he "was received with a great crash of welcoming applause," and his paper is described as by an "accredited seer of our day and generation." Truly the Word of God declares that those whose ears are turned away from the truth shall be turned unto fables: and "because they received not the love of the truth . . . God shall send them strong delusion." Only those under a strong delusion could allow themselves to be so deceived.

It has been said that Mr. Campbell has altered his views. He may alter his views many times and never come any nearer to *the* truth. The question is, are his views in accord with the Bible? When they are, two things will happen. Mr. Campbell will make a public confession, and he will do it with the deepest contrition and most profound self-abasement. Until this occurs we must still hold him guilty of being an apostate from the faith. The more he seeks to cover up his original "new theology" views, the more dangerous he becomes. If, however, a thoroughly honest man, he would either publicly renounce Congregationalism and Christianity, or repent in dust and ashes for his past misdoings. It is common knowledge that it is such views as he advocated a few years ago, which in Germany have become one of the main causes of the present world-wide and disastrous War, with all its attendant

horrors. "Never mind what the Bible says about this or that if you are in search of truth," are Mr. Campbell's words, "but trust the voice of God within you." This supposed voice of God within us, *apart from the Bible*, is only too often the voice of self-will, if not the voice of some other *god*, and will lead us anywhere, even to nameless depths, as we have only too plainly witnessed in the case of Germany. It is German theology which is largely accountable for all which to-day we deplore; and the theology of the City Temple is but the echo of it. May God preserve His people; for the apostasy is rising on every side of us, giving us a premonition of worse yet to come. "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

NAMES.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

"I know thee by name" (Ex. xxxiii. 12). "I have called thee by name" (Isa. xliii. 1). "Jesus saith unto her, Mary" (John xx. 16). "A few names even in Sardis" (Rev. iii. 4). "Names written in Heaven" (Luke x. 30).

How blessed to know that, He calleth by name
The stars in their millions, yet calleth the same
The myriads who own Him their Saviour and Lord,
He knoweth their names, though far scattered abroad.

How sweetly familiar! "I call thee by name."
How gentle! how loving! As if the Lord came
To-day as of old and called, "Mary," and "James,"
A Friend of the Family, knowing our names.

Oh think not that only the names of the great,
The names of the titled, the honoured of state,
That these are the favoured—the "Marys" He calls:
And sweetly the call on the lowly ear falls.

He knoweth the names of the lonely and few,
Who dwelling in Sardis are faithful and true:
The names of despised ones, whom others cast out,
Who hold to His truth amid coldness and doubt.

And what does he do with the names that He loves?
He putteth them down among those He approves.
He putteth them down in His heavenly book,
Remembered. Not one will his eye overlook.

Oh, highest of honours! Some day He will call
My name, and like music the message will fall.
No other may hear it: but I shall behold,
Like Mary, the Risen One, fair as of old.

Thy name! Is it Peter? Hast thou Christ denied?
Thy name He remembers, and comes to thy side.
Confess thy transgression, thy name is still down,
His chosen disciple—for thee is the crown.

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

VII. THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

EVER since sin entered, this world has been a difficult scene for men of faith. More or less of contumely and suffering have fallen to the lot of such in all dispensations. Heb. xi. shows this clearly. The difficulties have been rendered more severe by the rejection of Christ. Those who cleave to Him in the face of the world's hatred and scorn must expect to be reproached, and to have their name cast out as evil for His sake (Luke vi. 22). The Christian period is thus peculiarly characterised by tribulation and loss. Whereas the Israelite of old was entitled to expect earthly prosperity in proportion to his fidelity, the godly now are expressly told in Scripture to expect persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12). The Lord Jesus warned His disciples on the eve of His departure: "In the world ye shall have tribulation," adding, happily, for their encouragement, "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). The Apostle also wrote to those newly converted from heathenism: "Verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation"; and in the preceding verse, "Yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" (1 Thess. iii. 3-4). Everywhere he and his fellow-labourers exhorted the disciples to continue in the faith, giving them to understand "that through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22).

But as distinct from anything yet experienced, the Word of God speaks of a time of unparalleled tribulation at the end of the present age, immediately preceding the appearing of the Son of Man in power and glory. Many passages speak more or less directly of that period (Ps. ix., x. being examples), but there are five passages in particular which are so specific in their reference to it that it will be well to confine ourselves to them just now. Amongst these five, Rev. vii. 9 is the most precise in its terms, the literal rendering of the words employed being "the tribulation, the great one," as if God would allow of no misapprehension in our minds concerning the period referred to.

But if Rev. vii. is the most precise, Matt. xxiv. is the most luminous of the passages which directly deal with the subject of the great tribulation. In answer to three questions addressed to our Lord by His Jewish disciples, troubled by His warnings of His own departure, and the approaching destruction of the Temple, He described to them the circumstances in which the godly in Judæa will find themselves at the end,* adding some instructions of the highest importance for those who will be called to pass through the last dread agony there. The setting up in the Temple of the abomination of desolation, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet, is to be the signal for instant flight for all who heed the words of the Lord. No thought of clothes or any other possessions is to detain them; they must speed to the mountains. That their experiences be not unnecessarily painful, He bids them pray that their flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day. The Saviour's account of that time is exceedingly grave: "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (vers. 21-22). In their agitation, the refugees must be on their guard against deceivers, for some will announce His coming to this point or that. To all such voices they must pay no heed. When He really appears, they will no more need to be told of the fact than when the lightning lights up the heavens. "Every eye shall see Him." His appearing will bring His suffering ones deliverance from all their foes.

But who are the sufferers referred to in Matt. xxiv.? Jewish saints, clearly. The Church, with its heavenly calling and expectations, was not before the minds of the disciples when they questioned the Lord as in Matt. xxiv. 3. They were inquiring from their then standpoint as Jewish saints who truly believed that Jesus was the predicted Messiah. Moreover, Jewish marks are indelibly stamped upon this part of the prophecy—"the holy place," "Judæa," "The Sabbath Day," etc. Let this important fact be noted. For

*The differences between Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi. are exceedingly interesting. Luke was guided by the Spirit to give more particularly our Lord's reply to the question (the first of the three) relating to the overthrow of the temple; Matthew gives His reply to the questions relating to the end of the age. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," is the key to Luke xxi: "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation . . . stand in the holy place," is the key to Matt. xxiv. The one is past, the other is yet to come.

the Christian, suffering is a privilege (Phil. i. 29 ; iii. 10). And we are nowhere told to avoid it. The great tribulation, on the contrary, is a penal infliction upon the Jewish people for their apostasy, and the godly are expressly instructed to flee from its terrors.

Our next passage is Jer. xxx. 4-9, and here comment is almost needless. The same period of suffering as in Matt. xxiv. is manifestly referred to, for the prophet exclaims : " Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it." It is the time of unparalleled tribulation. But for whom ? Let the passage itself reply : " These are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah." " It is even the time of Jacob's trouble." As in Matt. xxiv., so in Jer. xxx., final deliverance follows. Jehovah will break the yoke of the stranger from off Israel's neck, and the people shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king.

We turn now to Dan. xii. 1, where again we read of unparalleled trouble—" such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time," followed (as in other passages) by the deliverance of God's people. But who are the people that are contemplated ? " Thy people," says the angel, by which the prophet would understand his own loved nation. The context of this passage should be carefully noted. In Chap. xi. 36-45 we have described the doings of the last Jewish Sovereign (the Antichrist), and his implacable antagonists, the kings of the north and of the south. Chap. xii. opens with the words : " And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." The archangel's interest in the chosen nation will become active at that crisis. " And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time ; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book." It is thus but a remnant that will be saved, but it is their final deliverance from all oppressors. We understand Dan. xii. 1 to refer to the two tribes then returned to their land, and under the sway of the lawless king, and the following verse to refer to the ten tribes who will at that epoch be brought out of their hiding places for divine sifting in view of millennial blessing. With Dan. xii. 1 might be linked Rev. xii. 6, or 13-17, and Isaiah xxvi. 20-21, as describing God's watchful care over His tried faithful ones in Judæa during the last sore trial.

Jeremiah, Daniel, and our Lord thus correspond exactly in their statements—a time of tribulation such as men have never before experienced must fall upon Israel ere the long predicted triumph and blessing.

But Rev. vii. 9-17 speaks of sufferers out of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Let the reader observe the place given to this vision in the Apocalyptic prophecy. As we have shown in an earlier paper, the saints of the Old Testament dispensations, and of the Church period are seen enthroned in heaven under the symbol of four and twenty elders in Chap. iv. Then the Lamb takes the book, and, as seal after seal is broken, various judgments fall upon the earth. But before the last seal is opened, there is found a parenthesis of mercy. In Chap. vii. God lets us see what He is doing in the way of grace while His judgments are abroad. Israelites to the number of 144,000 are sealed and an innumerable multitude of Gentiles are shown, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands. These are not partakers of the present heavenly calling for the following reasons. (1) They are a company apart from believing Israelites, a fact quite out of harmony with Eph. ii. 14-17, iii. 6; (2) They are distinct from the enthroned elders; and (3) They are temple-worshippers, whereas the heavenly Jerusalem possesses no temple (Rev. xxi. 22). "Before the throne" may be regarded as a moral, rather than a local, position. They would seem to represent the large result of the latter-day preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom by Jewish witnesses (Matt. xxiv. 14). This company may well be compared with the "sheep" of Matt. xxv. 31-46. In neither passage is there a suggestion that any have died, though their sufferings may have been intense. It is certain from Rev. vii. that while the great tribulation will be at its fiercest in Judæa, it will be felt in a greater or less degree to the ends of the earth.

One passage remains to be noticed—Rev. iii. 10. Here the Church is in view, beyond all just controversy. To the assembly in Philadelphia the Lord says: "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Here we meet with a new expression—"the hour of temptation" (or trial). This includes "the great tribulation," but goes beyond it. It covers the whole period of Antichristian

activity at the end. During the first part of his career the deceiver will speak with words smoother than butter, being a persecutor for 1,260 days only. But from the entire period the Church is to be kept ; so runs the Word of the Lord. Not preserved through the trouble, like the pious remnant of Judah, but kept absolutely from it. Enoch's portion is as suggestive of that of the Church, as Noah's is of that of Israel.

Next month (D.V.) :—" Babylon the Great."

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES :

BRIEF REMARK ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

By R.E.

Chap. ii. 1-13.

GOD'S MERCY, LOVE AND GRACE.

THE first Chapter, as we have seen, shews us God's purpose. This purpose was in God's mind before the foundation of the world, when He chose us in Christ. And it embraces the dispensation of the fulness of times when all will be gathered together in one in Christ. The Chapter unfolds, too, the special character and calling of the Church. "Blessed with all spiritual blessings," not in Adam, nor in ourselves, nor on earth, but "in the heavenlies in Christ." "Predestinated unto sonship" (ver. 5) : "Accepted in the beloved" (ver. 6) : The inheritance (ver. 11) : Sealed with the Spirit (ver. 13). Then we see where the mighty power of God has placed Christ, exalted above all principality and power, etc., and the Church one with Him there. So we see God's purpose is that Christ and the Church should fill all things.

In Chap. ii. the first three verses describe our condition by nature. There was no life *for God* ; we were *dead* in trespasses and sins. This means dead as between our souls and God. No intercourse—no communion—no relationship. It was a life lived for the *world*, for *Satan*, for *ourselves* ; and as a result, wrath was our portion (ver. 3).

Why did not God leave us to ourselves and to our own fate? Ver. 4 gives the answer. "*But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us.*" What an answer. What a reason for our salvation. "*But God.*" We could not deliver ourselves, the world had too strong an influence; Satan had too strong a hold; our sinful desires held us captive. "*But God.*" How this turns the soul to Him. If it had not been that He was rich in mercy, I must have perished. If He had not wanted me, I should for ever have remained a child of wrath. And here is the reason for it all. "*For His great love.*" Oh, my reader, dwell much upon that. Do not think you are loved only with a little love. God's love for you is a GREAT love; you may not be able to feel it, but *believe* it. Read over the first three verses; not one redeeming feature; and yet God could and would save us from it.

And then, what a salvation!! Not merely an escape from wrath. That would not have satisfied God's love. Not merely pardon. Not merely a place just inside the door of heaven. No, but the very best and highest God could do for us. "*Quickened us together with Christ*" (ver. 5). Think of the change involved here. We, by nature, *dead* in sins, no desire after God, no love for Him. God comes to us to impart a new life, to give us a new footing. We are quickened (*i.e.* made alive), and we are quickened together *with Christ*—Christ, God's delight, ever near to Him, ever pleasing to Him, ever that which God wanted. We are brought into closest union with Him; having the same life; *alive in His life*. Just as Eve partook of Adam's life—she came from him before she was united to him—so the believer partakes of Christ's life, in order to be in closest union with Him. And now God sees us just as Christ is. He no longer sees us dead in sins, but as *near* to Himself, as *dear* to Himself, as His own beloved Son. It is easy to write such words, but think what they mean: God has done His best for us. Instead of seeing us in our sins He sees us in closest association with Christ. Has He not loved us with a great love? May we not say to ourselves over and over again, "God sees me as Christ is; God loves me with a great love?" Ver. 6 gives us our place and portion. We are not standing, but seated, and Christ's place is ours. How was all this brought about? Christ came where we were, He came unto death, and then God quickened Him, and us with Him. So that death (as a penalty) and judgment

and God's wrath can no more touch us than they can touch Him. We are already alive in a life which is beyond them all. We are now as much identified with Christ beyond all the effects of sin, in the eternal favour of God, as He was identified once with us in our death and distance from God. When God raised Him from the dead He brought all that to an end and for ever, and henceforth we are associated with His beloved Son.

In ver. 7 we have the "ages to come," during which God is going to shew the exceeding riches of His grace. In Chap. i. 4-5 we had the ages past, when God was planning our blessing, here we have the future in which all the full extent of His kindness will be shewn. Never anything but kindness as long as the ages shall last. And all "through Christ Jesus." Ah! that is why God will always be nothing but kindness. It will not be according to what we deserve, but what Christ deserves. We have "the riches of His grace" referred to in Chap. i. 7: here it is "the *exceeding* riches"; because it will be unbounded kindness to those who are without merit. Not only forgiveness, but favour upon favour as the years and centuries roll by. King David once said, "Are there any left of the house of Saul to whom I can shew kindness for Jonathan's sake?" David loved Jonathan. God will shew us kindness for Christ's sake, the One He gave to die for us. David found there was a poor lame son of Jonathan named Mephibosheth, lame on both his feet, one who could never serve David, and David made him sit at his table and eat of his bread all the days of his life. God has made us to sit in heavenly places, and He will shew us kindness, not merely during the brief span of mortal existence, but for ever and ever. Oh, think of what the *kindness* of God must be; all the kindness of all the world (ah! that is only part of it), centred in one person.

Ver. 8 shews us that all is of grace. All because of what God is. We simply need the *faith* that receives all He has to give. Salvation is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. So we see all through this Epistle everything proceeds from Him. We are seen in all our deadness and badness, and above us God acting for His own pleasure and glory, and our eternal blessing. What a view we get of God's goodness, do we not? Surely we do not wish to boast (ver. 9). What have we to boast in? But though we cannot boast in ourselves surely we can in God—in such a God, Who has given so largely and so freely.

Ver. 10. Yet all the same God will have us do good works because He wants us to be like Himself. So we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." And if we only wait upon God, He will bring these to pass, for they are as much part of His purpose for us as to be His sons.

How much might be said on that one word "grace" (ver. 8). Do you notice how often it has occurred already in this Epistle? Look at vers. 6-7, Chap. i.; and vers. 5-7 Chap. ii. Oh, what a word it is, how shall we explain it? It is frequently contrasted with works. Here in the very passage we are looking at, it is (vers. 8-9). So it is in Romans xi. 6, also iv. 4-5. These passages help us to understand its meaning. If I work for any person, wages are my due; it is not reckoned of grace to give a workman his wages, it is of debt. So in ver. 16, Roms. iv., it says, "Therefore it is of *faith* that it might be by grace." If anything becomes ours, then, through grace it means we have neither earned it nor merited it in any way. The one who bestowed the gift or shewed the favour has done it entirely of his own free will. No claim, no desert, no merit on our part, but love and goodness on his. Now this is God's way of acting with regard to our salvation. So that works and grace are entirely incompatible. This is what Romans xi. 6 teaches. If it is of grace, it cannot be of works. If of works, it cannot be of grace. But *faith* is a different matter. Faith suits grace admirably. For faith believes that God is good enough to save and bless without any merit of our own. And this is what God wants; that we should simply believe He is as good and loving and merciful as He says He is; that He is altogether what He declares Himself to be, and will do all that He promises. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." For faith looks to God and *expects* Him to be as good as His Word. Well may the Apostle Peter call it "*precious* faith." And so, in Eph. ii. 8 it says, "By grace are ye saved through *faith*." Grace the source, faith the instrument. This salvation is not of ourselves. It is not of works. It is a *gift*. Grace gives out of its own resources—all is on God's part.

Think now of the three great words this Chapter has already introduced to us. God's *love*, God's *mercy*, and God's *grace* (vers. 4, 7 and 8). Can we find greater or better words anywhere? Any other words that have so deep and precious a meaning? Surely these three words mean more and cover more than almost any

other words in the English language. What is greater than love, or mercy or grace, and what is better? And notice they are all connected with *God*. It is *His* love, *His* mercy and *His* grace, we are called to contemplate. So that all that is best is connected with Him. How great His mercy; for He did not despise or neglect or forsake us in our lost estate. How great His love: for not only did He reach down to us and pick us up, but He gave us all that love could give. How great His grace, for He did infinitely more for us than we deserved. Grace goes beyond even mercy. The parable of the tenth of Luke will furnish an illustration of this. Mercy led the Good Samaritan to the side of the wounded man, and mercy bound up his wounds, but there mercy might have stopped. But grace brought the man to the inn and took care of him, and shewed him kindness which extended even to the future. But without love there would be neither mercy nor grace, and it is greater than both. There may be love where no thought of grace or mercy enters. There is love between God the Father and God the Son, but as between them no thought of grace and mercy can apply. There may be love where there is no tangible expression of it. The object is everything: it finds its delight and satisfaction in its object. This may exist where there is no call for either mercy or grace—as between parent and child, or husband and wife, to use an earthly illustration. But in *our* relations with God His love and all the activities of it become *grace*, because grace carries with it the thought of unworthiness and undeservingness on our part. This gives such sweetness to grace—it is love to the *undeserving*. How blessed to think of all this flowing from God; and that love, mercy and grace are all ours, and were all manifested in Christ.

In ver. 11 the Apostle calls upon us to remember what we were as Gentiles. The Jews had an outward place of nearness to God, which the Gentiles did not possess; and they also had promises and privileges from which the latter were excluded. "Without Christ—aliens—strangers; having no hope—this describes our position as Gentiles. What a difference Christ's death and resurrection has made, the Apostle proceeds to show. But it is good always to remember the pit from whence we have been taken. It humbles us and therefore helps us.

And now, in the light of God's mercy, love and grace, how beautiful is ver. 13; to be made nigh to such a God. What has

made us nigh? The *Blood*. *How* near are we? "*In Christ Jesus* we who sometime were far off are made nigh"; *i.e.* we are as near as Christ. His precious Blood removed the distance, for He gave His life for those who had forfeited theirs. He has become the measure of the nearness. Yes, God has not only forgiven, He has brought us nigh. Nothing short of this would content Him. He wants us to take possession of the place that is ours through grace, and to enjoy it.

" Though our natures fall in Adam
Seemed to shut us out from God,
Thus it was His mercy brought us
Nearer still through Jesus' Blood."

R.E.

Three writers record the fact that Rabshakeh "cried with a loud voice" (in the Jew's language), after Eliakem requested him not to do so, fearing the effect it would have on ignorant Jews.

The thought did not seem to strike either Eliakem or Rabshakeh that the louder he proclaimed Jehovah's inability to save His people the better opportunity it gave Him to prove his ability to do so, as well as to prove the falsehood of Rabshakeh's statements.

* * * *

Solomon speaks of the man who "knows" the plague of his own heart (1 Kings viii. 38). Job said, "If I justify myself mine own mouth shall condemn me" (Job ix. 20). The very fact that a man attempts to justify himself proves that he does not know the plague of his own heart.

* * * *

When any Israelite saw in his house anything like "a plague in the house" his duty was to go and "tell the priest" what he saw and feared (Lev. xiv. 35). What immense worry and trouble we would save ourselves and others if we would go direct to our High Priest (Heb. iv. 16), and tell him what we suspected, instead of telling our neighbours, and permit him to judge the matter for us, as did Aaron for the Israelite.

* * * *

Obedience is worthless unless it is prompted by love (Rom. xiii. 10), and love is void unless followed by obedience (2 John 6, John xiv. 15). The measure of a believer's love is manifested by his obedience, and the measure of his faith by his works; neither is worth anything alone.

A.G.W.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 8.

AUGUST, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE GREAT WAR: AND ITS LESSONS.*

[Substance of addresses given in Leeds, Sheffield and elsewhere.]

By R.E.

I.

God and the War—Does it cast doubt upon His government and goodness?—The Lessons He is teaching—The true standpoint from which to regard suffering—The place of Prayer—What shall we pray for?—Double aspect of Prayer.

It is reported that a lady has said, she would not go to Communion again until God stopped the war. This may seem grotesque, but it indicates an attitude of mind which at the present time is not uncommon—the disposition to make God responsible. Many, too, are thinking, if not actually saying, what was expressed in words by an educated and religious man, the other day: “It almost makes one doubt the existence of God.” As was said in a manifesto issued by the Friends at the commencement of this disastrous conflict: “To many will come the temptation to deny God, and to turn away with despair from the Christianity which seems to be identified with bloodshed on so gigantic a scale”; and this is true. The cause of it all, however, is not Christianity, but the want of it.

Does this war cast doubt upon God’s government and goodness? Are we, because of it, to question either His existence or His character? To answer these questions in the affirmative would be unreasonable and unjustifiable. The world is full of tragedy—and therefore this war, from that standpoint, is nothing new. To the greatest of them—sin, suffering and death—we have, in various ways, become so accustomed, that we treat their existence as a matter of course. Are we, because they take on some new guise and appear before us in an accentuated form, to make this a reason for challenging God’s existence or His overruling Providence? This great war, appalling in every way as it is (and no words can adequately set forth its horrors), is not the first calamity the world

* In the hope that the above article may be helpful at this critical time, we have printed an extra quantity of the present number. Will our readers please order extra copies for distribution.

has had to face. If it were, it might reasonably raise questions, which it is nothing short of folly to raise now; it is too late in the day. Ever since sin entered the world—that one unique, outstanding and immeasurable calamity—catastrophes one after another have followed in its train. They are of various kinds—nature “red in tooth and claw,” and “man’s inhumanity to man.” When all this confronts us, and are elements in the very system of which we ourselves are part, how can we be so irrational as to attempt to draw a line between things which do not differ essentially, but only in degree, and say, *that* does not shake my faith in God, but *this* does. Rather, would it not be better to ask, Is there any explanation of this great mystery of suffering?

The Explanation of Suffering.

In the light of certain facts, with which we who live in this world are all familiar, viz. : the presence of sin and death; and knowing what the results of sin are, even in this life, by actual experience, the explanation of suffering seems to be, that in no other way can there be brought home to us the enormity of sin—and the danger of it, because of the consequences to which it must inevitably lead—except by that constant appeal to us which suffering makes. How arresting would be the thought, could it be constantly kept in mind, that every calamity, every disaster, every outbreak of disease, every infliction which causes pain and which it is the lot of humanity to bear, is a reminder that *something is wrong* with the world! All these untoward occurrences are so many warnings and appeals. So many lessons, if only we would learn them. This is at once the explanation and the justification of a process which, looked at apart, might seem barbaric and inhuman. If sin were not in the world, there would be no need for suffering, and there would be none. If man were in a perfect state, in complete accord with his Maker, calamities would be unknown. As things are, they have a purpose to serve, and they are there. They are intended for a blessing. The whole course of things proclaims with strident tones that something terrible is amiss. Is such a warning, however much it may grate sometimes on our ears, cruel? or is it, after all, kind?

You see a big man beating a small boy. Your first impulse is to say, What a brute! But you venture to enquire the reason. You discover that the man is the boy’s father; and the boy

has been guilty of some serious misdemeanour, and you learn that the object of the beating is not that the father wishes to hurt his son, but to save him from becoming the slave of some evil habit. This fact changes your whole conception of the act. It is the same with all those fearful events which involve the destruction of human life and happiness. We are inclined to consider them unnecessary and they seem to cast a doubt upon the goodness and wisdom of the Creator. Were they simply a matter of caprice, without aim or object, they would certainly be the methods of a tyrant; but when we discover that at the back of all there is a gracious design and a necessity, they become the acts of a Supreme Being as infinite in mercy and tenderness as He is in power.

Taking this world as it is, and reminding ourselves of sin and all its consequences, would it be a better world if there were no calamities? If all were one perpetual calm, a period of uninterrupted repose and pleasure, with no clouds, and no storms and no disasters, would that bring the world back to God or even nearer to God? All history and all human experience declare the opposite. Men and nations have always been at their best when there was most to bear, and the struggle was the severest. Is God unkind, then, to be continually reminding us that this life is not all, and that everything is not right?

An aunt had two nieces staying with her. She taught them to thank God every night for some particular mercy received through the day. They had come to her for a change because they had been unwell. This was the prayer offered one evening by one of them: "O God, I thank Thee for sending me a kind auntie *who gives me nasty medicine to make me well.*" The whole philosophy of the universe is found in that child's prayer. Calamities are the nasty medicine to make us well. The difficulty is not in them, but in ourselves. We don't realise that we are sick, and therefore we object to the medicine.

The Tendencies of the last five-and-twenty years.

All this applies to the present war. Do we ask why God can allow such a tragedy? The answer is really not far to seek, and we are not assuming any special revelation in giving it. It is to be found in the tendencies of the last five-and-twenty years. Whither were we drifting? The pursuit of pleasure was becoming more

and more the supreme thing, and God becoming less and less remembered. The Lord's Day was being given up to carnal satisfaction. Moral standards were assailed. Divine institutions were threatened. The teaching of the Bible was openly criticised, if not altogether discarded. By the vast majority, even in England, the appeal of the gospel was unlistened to. All these human elements made the war possible, and God allowed it to come. He saw that He could make it an avenue of blessing to men's souls. That in the midst of death they would seek life, as they had never done in the midst of pleasure and prosperity. Testimony comes from all quarters that such is the case. Whether in the camps in England or in the battle line in France, men listen to the words of eternal life, as they have never listened before.

Just two instances—taken from the crowd, and therefore all the more telling. Testaments were being distributed amongst recruits. They were gladly received, except by one young fellow who at first objected and was even offensive, but in the end he accepted the gift. What was the surprise of the donor to receive a letter from this very individual a few weeks later from the front, in which he thanked her for the book, and added, that, he never would have believed that any book could have been such a comfort to him, and it had made real to him the greatness of the personality of the Saviour. The new and strange circumstances had made him susceptible to its appeal.

Take an instance of a different kind. A soldier in the fighting line was mortally wounded. He said to the man next to him: "I am going, can you show me the way?" "I am as ignorant as you are about that," was the reply. He then appealed to another, and received a similar answer. Someone overheard. A gospel by John was handed along, with the injunction, "Read to him out of the third chapter." This was done, and the dying man said, "Thank you, that's what I want, good-bye," and he was gone. Where? Was it not as true of the dying soldier as of the dying thief: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"? Yes, men are dying by hundreds and getting their promotion—"salvation with eternal glory"—not because they die for their country, but "by Christ Jesus," Who died for them, and they discover Him in their great extremity. Is the war, then, a mistake from this point of view? If it was the only way in which God could get man to

listen to eternal truth, and if it was to be the means of bringing many a one to the Saviour, is He to blame for allowing it?

Is God responsible for the War?

Is God, then, *responsible* for the war? He is not responsible for it, though He has permitted it. The difference is material; and in the Bible is clearly recognised. The history of Joseph affords a very striking example of this distinction. No one could justly charge God with being responsible for the evil doings of Joseph's brethren. They themselves were responsible, as they afterwards felt, when they repented. But God allowed their evil designs to take effect; and this for a wise purpose. "*God did send me before you,*" says Joseph, when he sees their contrition, "*to preserve life.*" And later on, almost his last words to them are these: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*" And the same is true with regard to one greater than Joseph. We cannot make God responsible for the death of Christ, so as to relieve man of responsibility. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," says the Apostle Peter, "*ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*"

The Causes of the War.

Even so this war is attributable to the wickedness of man; and man, and not God, is responsible. In a very remarkable pamphlet written by "A Prussian," but who has been a naturalised British subject for twenty-five years, the causes of the war are clearly indicated, as far as Germany is concerned. And let us remember that the same things apply, in more or less degree, to our own country. "Whatever the *immediate* cause of the war may be," he says, "there are primary and remote causes which are chiefly responsible for it." Amongst these, he mentions, "the crassest and the most destructive form of materialism which the world has ever known and which the mind can possibly conceive:" and says that, "from the mind of educated Protestant Germany of to-day anything approaching belief in authoritative religion, has now completely disappeared." "A very few years ago," he tells us, "all Germany was convulsed by a series of lectures delivered by a learned Professor . . . in which a supreme effort was made to show the utter untenableness of the documents and

traditions upon which the historic Christian creed is constructed and to furnish evidence from which it must be inferred that there is for it no solid objective basis Thousands and tens of thousands of persons attended those lectures, especially in Berlin, and I am speaking from personal knowledge when I say that few persons outside Germany are aware how deep and far reaching their effect has been." He refers also to the influence of so-called Higher Criticism.

The result of all this is that wholly false views of life have been adopted; militarism, with its contempt of human life and character, has been allowed to dominate the situation, while on the part of the people "moral decay and the rapid relapse into paganism are strikingly and visibly manifest." Is it any wonder that force and the desire for world power have received their apotheosis?

Would that all this were confined to one country only. But our own land has come under the same baleful influences. The authority of the Bible has been undermined; much that was once sacred has ceased to be so; pleasure has become the chief pursuit; more and more, God and His claims have come to be disregarded. Is it any wonder that God saw it necessary to awaken us from such a condition; and that this war has been allowed, not in wrath, but in pity? What we need above everything is the humility to return to Him and seek His forgiveness. Let our trust be in Him alone—in confession and prayer rather than in munitions. These are the weapons which, above and beyond everything else, will secure victory, and without which any number of shells will leave us unsuccessful, if not worsted. Instead therefore of treating God as if He had been guilty of some huge blunder, let us look the other way, and see that the blame rests with ourselves; and let us enquire the lesson he would teach, and the blessing which, through all the suffering and loss, He is waiting to bestow.

The Standpoint from which to regard Suffering.

This leads us for a moment to consider the true standpoint from which to regard suffering. The Bible view is: suffering is intended to drive us nearer to God—never to separate us from Him—to deepen our trust and become a means of instruction, and instead of being an occasion for doubting God, one to learn more of His love.

St. Paul informs us that tribulation is a thing to boast in, because it leads to patience, experience, hope and love—the love of God shed abroad in the heart. He can actually connect with that love the being killed all the day long, and being accounted as sheep for the slaughter ; for it is in adversity and affliction that love is sweetest (Rom. v. 1-5 ; viii. 35-9).

But we can pass to the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. No one suffered more than He. Did He ever see in suffering a reason for doubting God ? On the contrary, it was always an occasion for Him to find a refuge in His Father's presence and on His heart. When the dark shadow of the Cross fell upon His path, and all that it meant confronted Him, not from the point of view of the physical suffering merely, that was but an infinitesimal part, but in contemplation of the moral and spiritual conflict it involved, His language was, "Not My will, but Thine be done." Though the cost to Him can never be told, He never questioned the goodness, the wisdom, the love of God. The reason was, there was love answering to love. He not only knew God perfectly and therefore loved Him ; but He also knew Him because He loved Him. His faith triumphed ; and resurrection tells us it was not misplaced. From Him we have to learn this lesson of trust. He came to teach it us. When we love God the shadows disappear, as the mist before the sun, though the suffering may remain. Let us believe that God is great enough and good enough for the tasks He has undertaken. He makes no mistakes ; and the men who have suffered most have generally been the most full of praise and thankfulness. It is quite true that God *appears* often to act in a hard way. Mark Twain, who was of a sceptical turn of mind, asserted : If there is one thing more than another that will break your heart, that is the very thing God will allow to come upon you. In which statement there is a measure of truth. But he failed to see that it is often the broken heart that brings in its train the greatest blessing. Let us hear the testimony of another : "The value of any life consists in the storms through which it has been carried Take out of your own life all these rough dealings of God with your soul, and what an insipid life it would be ! All the *character* would be out of it Trials are the things in the hands of God's Spirit which make true men of us—fit for this world and the next ; and without them men would be fit for neither."

Here is the testimony of one who had been a missionary, and who, at a moment when his labours were unusually blessed, was stricken with leprosy. His work had to be relinquished; retirement from all active service became necessary, and a life of seclusion and "a daily dying" became his lot. He writes: "I thought sometimes that the Lord had forgotten and forsaken me, that He had hidden His face from me. But it was not so. The more sorrow I have had to bear, the easier it has become, and now I am rejoicing in my Saviour every hour. You ask how I am. I have lost my eyesight now and my voice; I have no feet or ankles; no arms; but my heart is far from dead. I still feel, and long, and sympathise. . . . *I have no doubts in these days, and if I had my voice I should be singing all the day long.*"

In the Bible we have an account of three men who entered into an argument with God about His dealings with them. Two instances occur in the Old Testament, and one, in parabolic form, in the New. They are Job, Jonah and the Elder Son in Luke xv. But in every case God had the last word. He will have the last word, always. We may dispute with Him; criticise His methods; challenge His ways; but in the end He will not only silence us, but shew us that what we considered evil was only goodness in disguise, and that a gracious purpose ran through it all.

The Lessons of the War.

It is not otherwise with this war. It may be that God saw men supremely occupied with the material, and neglectful of the spiritual—living only for time, with eternity pushed far back and kept out of sight—grovelling amid the pleasures and pursuits of earth, forgetting they had souls which should hold communion with Him. The ordinary means failed to arouse them. The Bible remained unread, the preaching of the gospel was unattended, or, if attended, the message was not received. In His love He would not allow them to sleep the sleep of death. He would rouse them. His voice should be heard above all. He speaks in this war. It has silenced disputes; it has called men away from ordinary avocations; those who dwell at ease have had to bestir themselves; above all, the stern realities of existence are brought to almost every door, and millions are called to leave home, kindred and country and to face death. This is how God is speaking to men

to-day. It is He Who speaks. To make it a mere affair of men, would be folly. To fail to hear His voice, would be a crime—a crime against our own souls.

What is He saying? Is He not asking us, first, to survey the whole scene—the vast armies, the devastated countries, the unheard of sacrifice of lives and treasure—the unmentionable brutalities—and to learn from it all how little the heart is changed by human efforts, such as civilization and education; and that even Christianity itself, where it is only nominal and formal, is totally insufficient to produce any radical improvement? As has been well said: "We are compelled to face the fact that the human race has been guilty of a gigantic folly. We have built up a culture, a civilization, and even a religious life, and we have been content to rest it all upon a foundation of sand." We who live within the British Isles must not think that the responsibility for all this rests upon one or two countries only; or that our only concern is to get the war ended as soon as possible. Whoever may be responsible for starting this war, and however in certain quarters it may have been conducted, it nevertheless raises questions of the gravest and most vital import, which are of universal application, and concern us all. To fix our attention upon the objects we are fighting for, our methods of conducting the combat, the sacrifices which are being made, and the outward demeanour of the nation, is to look too low and within too limited a compass. God has a controversy with mankind. He is demanding a hearing, and this is why He has permitted a war which more or less involves the whole civilized world.

2. And the reason of this is that amid all the terrible suffering and loss entailed by so unprecedented a conflict, His design is that the sacrifice and the sorrow may call us away from that which was proving our destruction—the almost exclusive occupation with the material and the transitory—and back to Him, and to the things which really matter. This He is doing. Men and women are thinking as they have never thought before; and at the front, at all events, there is an atmosphere which makes it easy for millions to think of their spiritual necessities who have too long neglected them. God is again giving an open door to His gospel; His servants are finding it easy to speak His message, and it is welcomed; and this could not, and would not, have been apart from the war.

3. This stupendous struggle is possibly to remind us that the end of the present order is at hand. Let us remember, this is no ordinary war. No doubt the *ordinary* passions of men play their part; but there are other causes, deeper and more real, than those which touch the mere surface of things. This war is, in many respects, in the nature of a *spiritual* conflict. Something more than the love of fighting, the question of the balance of power, or desire for extension of territory, accounts for it. It is a war of principles—a caste seeks to dominate the world. It is a war of doctrine—the doctrine of blood and iron; which means nothing less than this:—Your power to do a thing is your justification for doing it. And it is a war which concerns not only nations but is a challenge to every one of us: it challenges our principles—our beliefs—our trust in God. In a word, it is a war as to whether the most pagan and unprincipled principles that ever were formulated are henceforth to govern mankind.

All this argues a public and deliberate abandonment of Christ's teaching. Men are attempting to overthrow and destroy the work of God. His Gospel is being set at nought. They love their own ideas and their own ways better. A creed that suits humanity and panders to man's tastes and passions is being substituted for the Divine oracles. The Bible plainly declares that this is to be, and that it will call down the judgment of God. When everything fails in the hands of man, God introduces something new. He will judge Christendom and introduce His Kingdom in manifestation and power. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever," is said to be the final result of such judgment (Rev. xi. 15). The present dispensation is to end with a crash. Then will come the day of the Son of Man, and of His universal and acknowledged empire. But "as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." In view of all this we do well to remember our Lord's words: "Watch ye therefore and pray always."

The Need of Prayer.

Specially is it the duty of Christians to pray at the present time for God to overrule and restrain this fearful conflict. The issues are in His keeping. Evidences are not wanting that He has more than once intervened already. But there is surely need for a more humble

and dependent spirit amongst all classes. If God is recognised, and we are lowly and prayerful, He will exalt us in due time and give the victory. Otherwise He may see fit to humble us. Some may be asking, May we pray for victory? Others, Is it any use? will God be affected by our prayers?; and are not many in Germany praying that their country may win? If we understand the nature of prayer and its true place, we shall have no difficulty in answering these questions.

There is a double aspect of prayer. On the one hand, God permits us to tell Him everything, and pray about anything. The authority for this is found in Philippians iv. 6. "Be careful (anxious) for nothing, but in *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." This gives us perfect liberty to pray. What others may be praying for does not concern us and should not hinder us. Sometimes it is said, God cannot answer both, and do two opposite things; and people stop asking, instead of leaving the matter in God's hands. He never tells us to stop, or to be worried by difficulties; which after all are more or less of our own creation. Two children may go to a parent with some plea. The request of one is in opposition to that of the other. Would the father or mother say to those children, Never come and ask me for anything again, I cannot do what you both ask me? Rather, would not the matter be left to the discretion of the parent? So with our requests to God. In the passage we are considering, nothing is said as to the answer. God does not promise to do all we ask. He does promise us His peace; and no restriction is placed upon our prayers. *Any* need, *any* anxiety may be turned into prayer.

But there is another aspect of prayer. "*And 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*" (1 John v. 14-15). Here it is not asking what we like (that is Phil. iv. 6 as we have seen) but asking according to His will, and with the sense of being heard. Not that God does not hear all our prayers, but there are, we know, two ways of being heard. An individual who refuses our request hears us; or he could not refuse; but if he intends to grant it he hears in a deeper

way. It is in this deeper way that God listens to prayers which are according to His will. We rise from our knees with the sense that we have had audience with Him—there has been not only prayer but communion.

Let us keep in mind, then, these two facts of prayer:—(1) Liberty to unburden our hearts about any and every matter that concerns us or ours. (2) A higher form of prayer; asking along the line of God's purpose, and receiving what we ask. Each has its own place and value. For even the first produces a habit of intercourse with God, and prayer becomes a natural and easy exercise. Moreover, if our requests cannot, for wise reasons, be granted, something even better is promised, viz., God's own peace, which cannot be disturbed, shall keep our hearts and minds. And what can exceed the value of hearts and minds being kept in peace under the strain and stress of to-day?

May we, then, look beyond the war to God, trusting still to His goodness. Let us not forget that there is occasion for humbling on our part, nor fail to remember He is teaching us lessons we need to learn. If only our attitude toward Him is right, He will neither forget us nor fail to bless.

“ Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.”

David did not “enquire of the Lord” (1 Sam. xxx. 6), when marching with the enemies of the Lord (1 Sam. xxix. 2), against His people, as he did when “greatly distressed” by threats of death. It is no use to “enquire of the Lord” while living among Philistines, and being identified with them.

The personal character of every man and woman in the world is described in the Book of Proverbs: none is excepted. In which chapter is that of the reader given?

* * * *

It is good to pray for deliverance from self before praying for deliverance from others (Ps. cxix., cxxxiii., cxxxiv.).

A.G.W.

EMMANUEL'S LAND.

"Born from above." "They seek a native country."

O beautiful beyond compare,
And dearer than all lands to me,
That heavenly country, bright and fair,
The Land of my nativity.

While nations strive, and peoples fight,
And fill the world with misery,
I flee to that dear Land of light,
The Land of my nativity.

No earth-cloud stains its atmosphere,
No discord jars its melody;
No sin, no sigh finds entrance there—
Bright Land of my nativity.

O loyal souls! nor shame, nor death
Can dim your heavenly fealty,
While ye confess, with dauntless faith,
The Land of your nativity.

E. STACY-WATSON.

A MORNING WITHOUT CLOUDS.

'Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.'
—Psalm xxx. 5.

(Thoughts for the War).

'Twas in the Darkness God drew nigh
And gave the shapeless, lifeless earth
Order and life, to beautify,
Bringing our glorious world to birth.
Darkness on Sinai abode
When Moses went to meet with God:
He from that gloom made Light to shine—
The glow of Oracles Divine.

When—at God's Word—King David's son
Set up the House of God most fair,
The cloud within, to Solomon
Witnessed Jehovah's presence there.
Shall we then doubt that from this gloom—
War's cloud, first cousin to the tomb—
As on the Resurrection morn,
A Day of Gladness will be born?

WILLIAM OLNEY.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

(Continued.)

By WALTER SCOTT.

IF we look for distinctive *Christian* teaching in the Psalter, our search will be in vain. The stand-point in the book is that of *Jewish* believers having an earthly calling, and looking for the public intervention of the Messiah to deliver them from their sins and from their enemies, ultimately exalting the nation in political and social headship over the Gentile world. There is, of course, truth and experience common to God's people in all ages and under all possible earthly trials; and of this the Psalter is the witness. In fact, it is this very circumstance which has made, and will continue to make, this Divine collection of song and prayer a book absolutely unique in itself, and of universal use. The popularity of the Psalter can never wane. But proper Christian teaching, sentiment and experience *must* be sought for in the Epistles of the New Testament. The birth of the Church as the mystical body of Christ united to its Head in heaven; the heavenly calling; present association with Christ in glory; the Holy Ghost given to permanently indwell believers; a purged conscience; are truths which are utterly unknown in the Psalter, being developed only in the Acts and Epistles.

When the Psalter was compiled—probably in the Restoration under Ezra—the Hebrew to a large extent had died out as a written and spoken language. During the 70 years' exile in Babylon the people expressed themselves in the Syriac tongue, the language of their conquerors. At a still later period the Septuagint translators were confronted with the insuperable difficulty of certain Hebrew words prefixed to a number of the Psalms. Fuller and later research have enabled these early obstacles to be surmounted, the fruit of which we now give to our readers. The meanings are drawn from the most trustworthy sources and authorities at our disposal.

NEGINOTH

occurs in the titles of seven Psalms, Nos. 4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76. The word is also found in Hab. iii. 19, "on (or upon) my stringed instruments." Not the musical instruments themselves, but the *music* of the instruments is denoted by the word *Neginoth*. As *Neginah*—the singular of *Neginoth*—is translated "Song" (Job.

xxx. 9; Ps. lxi. 12, etc.), we gather that combined singing and playing gives the full force of the word.

NEHILOTH

occurs but once in the Psalter, and as part of the title prefixed to Ps. v. The word refers to wind instruments as flutes or pipes.

SHEMINITH

is found in the titles of two Psalms, vi. and xii. In the former it is associated with Neginoth. We gather, therefore, that the *playing* (Neginoth) is upon an *eight-stringed instrument*, probably a harp. Sheminith is the instrument, Neginoth the music; see 1 Chron. xv. 21.

SHIGGAION

occurs in the title of Psalm vii., and Hab. iii. 1, and signifies a *Wandering Ode*. The full title of the Psalm indicates the trying and painful circumstances under which it was composed by David.

GITITH

occurs three times in these Psalm-headings, viii.; lxxxi.; lxxxiv. The word refers either to an instrument or a tune or song of that name. More we cannot say.

MUTH-LABBEN

part of the title prefixed to Psalm ix. and of Davidical composition. Some translate, "*concerning the death of the champion*"; see 1 Sam. xvii. Others refer it to David's bitter wailing and passionate grief on the death of Absalom, and render the passage thus, "*Concerning the death of the son.*" We cannot say more on this admittedly difficult expression. Would not the subject of the Psalm best suit the triumph of David over Goliath? We think so.

MIGHTAM.

There are six Michtam Psalms. These are Nos. 16, 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60. In the margin of these Psalms we read "*a golden Psalm of David*" and that is just what those Psalms are, each a *golden* composition, a jewel of rare worth.

AIJELETH SHAHAR

occurs but once and that in the Psalm of sobs or of the agony (xxii.). "Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling (in the *feminine*) from the power of the dog." Thus he—the *hind of the morning*—the true *Aijeleth Shahar* was hunted by dogs of men and heartless persecutors. The margin of Ps. xxii. gives the meaning.

MASCHIL.

There are thirteen *Maschil* Psalms Nos. 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142. In the margin the word is rendered

giving instruction. This is amply confirmed in Psalms xlvi. "Understanding" (*Maschil*); xxxii. 8, "instruct" (*Maschil*); liii. 2, "understand" (*Maschil*). The thirteen Psalms are full of Divine instruction, and thus answer beautifully to the title prefixed to each.

JEDUTHUN

is prefixed to Psalms xxxix; lxxvii. Jeduthun was a distinguished leader in the musical department of the Temple worship, and significantly the name means *praising*. His immediate associates were Asaph and Heman. Besides his musical talent, the prophetic gift especially in direct connection with David as his Seer (2 Chron. xxxv. 15), must have given him a position of commanding importance in the counsels of the King. Jeduthun is specially named in 1 Chron. xvi. 41, 42.

SHOSHANNIM.

This word meaning the *lilies* is in the titles to Psalms xlv.; lxix.; lxxx. It cannot now be ascertained with certainty whether Shoshannim refers to a musical instrument shaped as the *lily*; or to the subject matter of these respective Psalms.

ALAMOTH

occurs only in Psalm xlvi. But in the musical services established by David, we read, "with psalteries on Alamothe." The word signifies *virgins*, and probably refers to the part which the Hebrew virgins took in the musical service of the Temple. *They* had their part in the songs of the Lord.

MAHALATH.

This word occurs in Psalm liii., and in conjunction with Leannoth in Psalm lxxxviii. Mahalath signifies *disease*, and aptly refers to the morally *diseased* state of Israel, of which Psalm liii. treats. For Leannoth see Psalm lxxxviii.

JONATH-ELEM-RECHOKIM

occurs but once; in the title of Psalm lvi. Putting together the derivations of the three combined words it reads *the mute or silent dove in distant places or amongst strangers*, and this really expresses the character of the Psalm.

AL-TASCHITH

is found in four Psalm-headings, lvii.; lviii.; lix.; lxxv. The word signifies *destroy not*, in what sense it is to be understood the respective Psalms inform us.

SHUSAN-EDUTH.

Shusan is the singular of Shoshannim, and means the *lily*, the name of a musical instrument in shape of a lily. Eduth signifies the *testimony*, and refers, we understand, to Jehovah's testimony against the enemies of His people and their victory over the heathen, but delivered in a dirge through the musical instrument known as the *lily*. Psalm lxxx.

LEANNOTH

The word is associated with its fellow Mahalath (*disease*). Leannoth signifies *wormwood*. The combination just suits the character of Psalm lxxxviii. which is one of the most mournful odes in the Divine collection.

SELAH

occurs more than 70 times in the Book of Psalms, and three times in Hab. iii. Luther, the learned De Wette, Hengstenberg and others, as the late G. V. Wigram, held that the word means to *pause*, be *silent*; and this you naturally do wherever "selah" occurs.

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

VIII. BABYLON AND THE BEAST.

THERE seems an intentional contrast between Babylon the Great in Rev. xvii. 1 and the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in chap. xxi. 9. The language introductory to the two descriptions is practically identical. In each case one of the seven angels which had the seven vials came and talked with John saying: "Come hither, I will show thee," etc. From this we infer that the Spirit of God would have us keep the Bride in mind while thinking of the Harlot, the one being the antithesis of the other.

Though Babylon's fall is announced in Rev. xiv. 8, her judgment actually takes place under the seventh vial, and is indicated in its prophetic order in chap. xvi. 19; but such is the gravity of the matter, that, before proceeding further with the prophecy, the Spirit describes at considerable length her wickedness, her latter-day triumphs, and her doom.

The angel carried John in spirit into a *wilderness* to see Babylon, the great Whore; to a *great and high mountain* to see the Bride. This is significant. The whore finds her home in the world, and the world is as barren and unsatisfying as a desert, let men labour to improve

it as they may; the Bride, on the contrary, belongs to another sphere altogether and John must be lifted out of this scene in order to get a glimpse of her.

What John saw in the wilderness was a gaudily dressed, richly jewelled woman, riding upon a scarlet coloured Beast, having seven heads and ten horns. This Beast has already come before us as the revived Fourth Empire. The woman's name is emblazoned upon the forehead: "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth." Sitting upon the Beast declares plainly that she rules the Empire; the State is under her guidance. She is also said to "sit upon many waters." This shows that her influence is very far reaching, for the waters are "multitudes and nations, and tongues" (Rev. xvii. 15).

If the Bride of Rev. xxi. is the Church (as we do not doubt), it follows that the Harlot is that which has assumed her place and standing in the earth. The mystery of Babylon and the Beast is thus Satan's caricature of the mystery of Christ and the Church. The one is called "great," the other "holy." Men admire greatness; God values holiness.*

The Beast is the revived *political* system of Rome; the woman is Rome's *religious* system, with whatever else she may have gathered into herself ere the apocalyptic vision becomes a reality. She has daughters—other professedly Christian bodies, scarcely less evil than their mother; but these would seem (in some cases at least) to continue distinct until the end. The harlot is Jezebel (Rev. ii. 20) in her full and final development, after every opportunity for repentance has passed away. She is "Babylon" at the finish, characterised by pride, independence of God, worldliness, idolatry, and bloodthirstiness. Well might John marvel that anything that had ever possessed even a vestige of Christianity should be so characterised. Yet this is what both God and man will behold just before the last dread stroke falls.

Rome, ever lustful of power and influence, and at all times fertile in schemes for the attainment of these objects, is clearly destined to have one brief period of universal supremacy, and to dazzle men's eyes with her meretricious splendour before her lurid glare is extinguished for ever. Just when she has arrived at the pinnacle of glory, and the goal of her hopes, she is overthrown utterly. The head of the Empire and his subordinate kings will

* The word "great" should be eliminated from Rev. xxi. 10. The best MSS. omit it.

tolerate her pretensions for a time, finding her useful for their own purposes. But she who has ruthlessly trampled upon men in the past—kings and people alike—must yet be trampled down herself. Retributive judgment, on the lines of the great governmental principle of Gal. vi. 7, is clearly predicted for the harlot in Rev. xviii. 6 ; xix. 2.

Events are moving rapidly towards the fulfilment of this prophecy. The great war is making it manifest that Rome has a very real hold upon the minds of men, even in quarters where it might least be expected. Not only Great Britain, but now Protestant Holland also, have sent embassies to the Vatican, in defiance of the customs of several centuries ; and on all sides it seems taken for granted that Rome will have a voice in the ultimate treaties of peace. Even those who have no real love for her are being made to feel that she is a factor in human affairs which cannot be ignored. Step by step she will get into the saddle once more, and control the destinies of Europe.

Her overthrow is thus described. "The ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast (not "*upon* the beast"), these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." She will thus be stripped of all her wealth and glory, and reduced to utter ruin. The terrible happenings in France at the epoch of the great Revolution are solemnly suggestive of how this may be brought about.

But while the woman is identified with the city in chap. xvii. 18, it is not the city itself that is destroyed, for the Beast would scarcely destroy the ancient capital of his own dominion. That which is overthrown is the corrupt religious system which has for so long had its seat in the seven-hilled city on the banks of the Tiber. This the rulers of the restored Empire despoil and destroy.

Human hatred after all only brings about the fulfilment of the divine will, even though God has no place whatever in the thoughts of Babylon's tormentors, who are all utterly infidel. "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree and give their Kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

In the course of a fresh vision in Rev. xviii. ("after these things"), the divine side of the great catastrophe is emphasised. The Beast and his confederate kings are not mentioned. "The kings of the earth" who bewail her ruin (chap. xviii. 9) must be carefully distinguished from the ten sovereigns who accomplish her

overthrow. They are the more distant rulers of the earth "who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her." Her glitter has attracted and ensnared them, but their geographical situations have preserved them from feeling the weight of her oppressive hand in the same degree as those nearer to the seat of her power.

The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over Babylon's fall. Her merchandise is catalogued in detail in chap. xviii. 12-13. It begins with "gold" and ends with "the bodies and souls of men."

The longsuffering of God and His silence in the presence of iniquity have frequently been a cause of perplexity to God's harassed people. But the divine judgments, however delayed, are sure. No form of evil will escape His hand, least of all that which cloaks itself with the Name of His beloved Son.

Next month (D.V.) :—"The Marriage Supper of the Lamb."

CHRISTIAN JOY.

By W.R.

OF the fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Gal. v. 22 love has the premier place, and when this exquisite fruit is manifested in the life it is the sign given by the Holy Spirit, in 1 John iv. 7, that the soul has been born again. "Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God: he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."

But next to this in importance is Joy. Alas! what a stunted growth it appears in some of us.

I do not speak of the effervescent emotion natural to some which is sometimes counted for joy, but the real, deep, gladness of heart which flows out from close communion with God and a knowledge of His character and ways.

In order to obtain a proper understanding as to what this joy is our eye must be directed to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Can we ever fathom the depth of meaning in that wonderful passage in Heb. xii. 2: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God?" It was joy to Him to do the Father's will, and that will was that He should endure the Cross on our behalf. There is a beautiful connection with this verse in Psalm xvi. 8:

“ I have set the Lord always before Me, because He is at My right hand I shall not be moved ; therefore My heart is glad and My glory rejoiceth : My flesh also shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew Me the path of life : in Thy *presence* is *fulness of joy* : at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

He has endured the Cross, and God the Father has raised Him from among the dead. He is in the Father's presence for us as our Great High Priest and oh ! what joy it is to His heart to know that we now are His. His is indeed *fulness of joy*, and His are the pleasures for evermore, for He is set down at the right hand of God. “ Because Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows ” (Heb. i. 9), and He is going to “ present us faultless before the presence of His glory with *exceeding joy* ” (Jude 24). Here is the joy in which we have a part.

As to ourselves, we can only have real joy as we are in dependence upon God and are prepared to gladly do His will, because, seeing His purposes wrought out in our lives and being submissive to Him, we shall be occupied with His glory, and occupation with ourselves will correspondingly decrease. This is the highest point in joy to which we can attain—to “ joy in God,” (Rom. v. 11.) That was the secret of the Lord's joy and peace amidst such scenes of darkness and sorrow. “ I *delight* to do Thy will, O My God ” (Ps. xl. 8).

It is true that it may involve us in suffering for the Lord, but there is a beautiful word of exhortation and comfort in 1 Peter iv. 13, “ Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with *exceeding joy*.” “ If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ happy are ye.”

Adverse circumstances should not be permitted to mar our joy, but rather increase it. Look at Paul, writing from a prison dungeon, chained to a soldier, he could say to the saints at Phillippi, “ *rejoice* in the Lord *always*,” and, as if he could not emphasise it enough, “ again I say, *rejoice* ” (Phil. iv. 4). Mark, it must be in the *Lord*, not the circumstances.

The trials we encounter in our pilgrimage are sent for the express purpose of developing our spiritual life. For proof of this read James i. 2 (R.V.) : “ Count it all *joy*, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials, knowing that the proof of your faith worketh

patience." Here, again, we see the exhortation to rejoice—to rejoice even in the things we naturally dislike, if the purpose of God is wrought out, and it surely will be if we become more "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 28-29).

Moreover our joy will flow from the Lord Himself, for in John xv. 11 He says: "These things have I spoken unto you that *My joy* might remain in you and that your joy might be *full*." What were the things He had spoken? "If ye keep *My* commandments ye shall abide in *My* love, even as I have kept *My* Father's commandments and abide in *His* love." "This is *My* commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." If love is therefore lacking, joy will be, too, for this is the outcome of love. How significant that the Holy Spirit should have placed love before joy in Gal. v. 22. What divine order there is in the Word.

Oh! what joy it is, too, to know that the Lord Jesus has saved us. Joy flows out of believing, and the deeper our apprehension of the Person and glories of the One Who has saved us by His own blood, the deeper will be our joy. "Whom having not seen ye love: in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with *joy unspeakable* and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8). This joy is indeed unspeakable, for no words can adequately convey to the heart and mind of an unbeliever, the deep sense of peace which floods the soul of the saint—it is an intensely personal, individual matter. "Now the God of hope fill you with all *joy* and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). Note here how peace closely follows joy, as in Gal. v. 22.

Surely, too, should we treasure up in our hearts the words of our blessed Lord and Master, for if our heart is centred on Him we shall love His Word, and there is a joy found in tracing Him through the sacred Word and contemplating the glory of His matchless Person in type, prophecy and gospel. "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the *joy* and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by Thy Name, O Lord God of Hosts" (Jer. xv. 16). "These things write we unto you that your *joy* may be full" (1 John i. 4).

In conclusion, it is instructive to read instances in the Old Testament where joy was manifested in things relating to God. When the foundation of the second temple for Jehovah was laid, after the people had returned from captivity, "many shouted aloud for *joy*" (Ezra iii. 12). Again, when it was finished, they "kept the dedication of this House of God with *joy*" (Ezra vi. 16).

“They kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel” (Ezra vi. 22). When the Ark of the Covenant was removed to Zion, after its long sojourn in Kirjath-jearim, they brought it up with joy (1 Chron. xv. 25). Then too, at the close of David’s life, when the materials for building the first magnificent temple had been collected together, he said, “as for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things, and now I have seen with joy Thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee” (1 Chron. xxix. 17).

May it be given us to joy in the Lord continually.

PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

ONE sometimes hears the question asked, “If Christ died for everybody, how is it that anyone can be finally lost?” Now, far be it from us to prescribe theology instead of ministering Christ, but we must learn to distinguish things that differ. The more intelligent our faith, the stronger will it be.

The above question may be answered by showing the difference between the propitiatory and the substitutionary aspects of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course these two aspects cannot be separated in fact, for all truth is one, but they can and ought to be distinguished in thought.

PROPITIATION is that aspect of the work of Christ in which He offered Himself a sacrifice to God so as to render it possible for God to forgive sin. It is the satisfaction rendered to divine justice that renders the divine mercy available for the sinner. God, we may say with all reverence, was confronted with a problem. His love wanted to forgive man, but His justice stood in the way. One of His attributes seemed to militate against another. How could He forgive the sinner and at the same time remain just? The difficulty presented by His own perfections He solved in the atoning death of Christ. The atonement was not necessary in order to extract mercy from an unwilling God. It did not set up in the heart of God a different attitude towards the sinner. On the contrary, it was the expression of the love He had already for the sinner. Nor was it an inferior being who sacrificed himself to appease the anger of an offended Deity. God Himself, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, took upon Himself the penalty of human guilt,

and exhausted it in His own death. Thus His character as a sin-hating God was fully vindicated, and exhibited to the whole universe for all time. The sin question was taken up and settled once for all. And now God stands on the platform of that glorious work accomplished at Calvary and offers a free pardon to all without any distinction whatever. The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is the righteous ground upon which salvation can be proclaimed to the sinner. It is the channel through which alone the mercy of God can reach the lost. The grace of God is the source of the sinner's salvation, while the death of Christ is the procuring cause. Propitiation is the transaction between the Son and the Father with respect to human guilt.

SUBSTITUTION has reference rather to the relation between each individual saved sinner and the One Who carried his sins. It is the BELIEVER—the one who has trusted Christ for salvation who ought to be able to say, "He was wounded for MY transgressions; He was bruised for MY iniquities; the chastisement that brings ME peace fell upon Him; He was bearing MY load of guilt; He was cancelling MY debt; He was discharging MY liabilities; He was thinking of ME, MY name was on His mind, MY name was on His heart, while He was taking MY punishment; His death was the equivalent of MY death; "He bore on the tree the sentence for ME." What blessed assurance such language as this gives. Particular redemption is the family secret of God's children. It is bound up with the other doctrines of grace. The believer at first rejoices in the knowledge of sins forgiven through trusting a living, almighty Saviour; but later on he goes back 1,900 years to the time when all his sins were put upon his adorable Substitute Who bled and died to put them away for ever; and then his faith should travel further back still to the past eternity and rest upon the unchanging purpose of the Father, Who chose him in Christ before the foundation of the world.

There need be no confusion. We can say to any sinner on earth, "Christ died for the ungodly; there is no barrier on God's side to your salvation; the work that makes it possible for you to be forgiven is finished; heaven's gate is open wide, and you have but to enter in." But we dare not say to everybody, "Christ put YOUR sins away; He cancelled YOUR debt; He took YOUR punishment, and you are free," for such language is restricted in the Word of God to those who by faith in Christ Jesus have become God's children.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 9. SEPTEMBER, 1915. PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE GREAT WAR: AND ITS LESSONS.

SUBSTANCE OF ADDRESSES.

II.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, CHAP. XVII.

God in relation to the Universe, to the Nations, and to the Individual—
His final plan.

THE address of St. Paul on Mars Hill, recorded in the above Chapter, sets God before us in a wonderful way, as well as His methods and plans.

1. God made the world, etc. He is the *Maker* of all. Ver. 24.
2. He is Lord of heaven and earth. He *rules* over all. Ver. 24.
3. He is the giver of all—for He gives life and breath and all things. Ver. 25. In the above we have God in connection with creation.

4. Then we come to His relation to men. He has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. We might be inclined to think that while there is a God of Creation, He does not occupy Himself with the nations, they often seem left to themselves; but He is the God of history as well as of the earth, sea and sky. The very God Who made the world has fixed the limits of each nation's boundary and ordained the duration of their power (ver. 26). It is not by chance that each nation dwells within a certain area, or has had a certain history. God has determined their times and appointed their bounds. Russia has a given area; Britain has her Empire; Assyria, Greece and Rome all had their appointed times and boundaries. They had their rise, their glory and their fall; and all was appointed by God.

So that we have set before us in the above address, God as Creator, and then in connection with the life of *nations*. But does He care for the individual man and woman? Does He notice each severally? Yes, the next verse tells us that He does. "Though He be not far from *every one of us*." And ver. 28 is true of each single individual.

Thus we have God presented to us in these three ways: In the works of His hands, which we see all around us; in the history of nations, and in connection with our own individual history. The heavens and the earth speak to us of God. He made all. If I look at a watch or a machine, I know it was made by some man. Equally, if I look at a tree or a star I know that it was made by God. And there is every reason for knowing that He made them, for man cannot make a living thing, like a bird or a tree, nor can he make a world, such as a star. And as these things could no more come of themselves than could a watch or clock, what strong presumptive evidence they afford of the existence of God.

Yet, although God is so near to everyone of us—near in nature, acting in history, and the very source of our own being—how ignorant we may be of Him. Men have been so ignorant as to represent Him under figures of stone graven by art and man's device (ver. 29), and how ignorant multitudes of our fellow creatures are to-day, though it may take a different form. It is this ignorance, and what it leads to, that God commands us to repent of (ver. 30). Ignorance of God is the prime cause of every evil. And to-day, if men will, they can have the fullest knowledge of Him. He is fully declared by the Son of His love (John i. 18). Repent, means to think again, a change of mind. "As a man *thinketh* in his heart so is he." God wants to be known. He commands us to repent of our ignorance. What excuse is there *now* for ignorance when we have Christ's life, death and resurrection? In this way God has been fully revealed. To be ignorant of the One Who called everything into being, Who rules over all, and is the source of our own existence, is one of the most dreadful conditions possible. Yet thousands are in that condition—to them God is only a name. And the reason why God wishes to be known is because He is going to bring to an end the present period, and introduce a totally new régime. "*He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness.*" Everything is to be summed up, tried, and set in order. All that is unrighteous, unholy and contrary to God will be put down. He Who has pre-ordained times (according to ver. 26), has fixed a day (not necessarily of twenty-four hours) when He will intervene—it will be the time of the Grand Assize—and will introduce the reign of Christ. And He Who will be the Judge and Ruler is appointed, as well as the day. He is the Man Whom God has raised from the dead. The Resurrection of Christ was

God's last public act in this world. It is His last testimony to man. This is why Paul preached Jesus and the Resurrection; this is why Peter said—speaking of one being elected to fill the place of Judas amongst the apostles—“Must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His (Christ's) Resurrection” (Acts i. 22).

Perhaps you have never thought of the Resurrection in this light. It is God's last and greatest testimony to men; because it is the exhibition of His greatest power: something altogether beyond the possibility of man to accomplish. In this way God “offers faith” to all men (marginal reading of ver. 31). Here is this stupendous fact for faith. There must be repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. As surely as Christ is raised, so surely is a limit fixed to the present age; and so surely will God intervene to introduce a new order of things.

Is not this, then, a marvellous address of St. Paul's? Does he not fulfil his promise, “Him (God) declare I unto you”? He shews God in five different ways:—(1) As Maker and Ruler of all; (2) As the God of Providence and History, in connection with the nations; (3) As the One near to everyone of us, giving us life and breath and all things; (4) As the God of Resurrection—setting aside death; and (5) Introducing a new order, in which Christ will be pre-eminent.

What a wonderful vision this gives us of God. He moves and acts in every sphere. What evidences of His power and existence are afforded in creation, in history, in the way He cares for us individually, and in resurrection. And very soon He is going to publicly intervene in the affairs of this world, and Christ will be His representative here as King and Prince of Peace. Can we afford to be ignorant of God? To be ignorant of the One Who made all things, and superintends all, and Who gives to all life and breath and all things; in Whom we live and move and have our being; and Who has displayed His power and given public proof that He is, in raising His Son from the dead, and Who presently is to take the reins of Government into His Own hands—must be the greatest calamity conceivable. And this chapter not only calls our attention to these wondrous facts, but furnishes further evidence of His goodness and love, in that He would no longer have us remain in ignorance of the source of our being and salvation. To know Him is the prime end of our existence.

This address of Paul's also informs us of God's plan ; for He has a plan with regard to this world. At times it seems as if it were not so ; specially during such a war as is now raging : as if men were like ants, " having no guide, overseer, or ruler " ; and this world and its inhabitants like a ship in the trough of the sea without helm, chart or compass. This chapter tells us all is different to that. There is a God, and He is not indifferent to the world He has brought into being. He not only made it, but He rules it. One, Who needing nothing Himself, gives to all. He has placed His controlling hand upon all the events of history, but His most striking intervention in this world's affairs occurred when by His mighty power He raised Christ from the dead.

But it will be said, Christ has disappeared. There seemed light, there seemed hope, there seemed some method in all when He came, but has not all that been quenched ? and in spite of His miracles, His mission, His death, His rising again, is not everything as hopeless and aimless as before ? And the answer is, No. "*He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man Whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.*" The resurrection is one distinct step towards the final goal—the pledge of the glorious end God has in view. The day is appointed, for it is altogether certain ; righteousness is to be triumphant ; the Man whom men need and this world needs, and God needs, is ordained ; and resurrection secures all, and sheds its light across the present and the future.

We see, then, that everything is planned and everything is assured. But all is connected with another Man and another order of things. Men cannot introduce the man able to heal the sores of stricken humanity, though they will try ; but God will. What a wide view of God Himself, and all His ways, this address of Paul's, given nearly nineteen hundred years ago, affords :—Maker, Ruler, Provider, Organiser, Saviour. This world of men will one day know their God, and be satisfied. But He wishes to be known now. He longs for men to know Him. Their natural life is His gift. The world which ministers to that life in a thousand ways, and fills us with wonder and astonishment, is His work. But the true and perfect revelation of Himself is in Christ. The Maker of all has come into the world He made in the Person of

His Son. That One died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He died that we might never die. He was a sacrifice on account of sins, that God might forgive them. In Him God speaks to us; in Him He is revealed. Is it any wonder God calls upon us to repent of our ignorance? Through Christ His plan for the nations and for the earth will be accomplished. A King shall reign in righteousness. The Victim will be victorious; He Who suffered must reign; royal robes will invest the wearer of the crown of thorns; He Who was despised and rejected shall possess all authority and power. To this One we must look; in Him we must believe, and then all will be well.

It is God's will that the One He has raised from the dead is the One in Whom we should find blessing. In His infinite goodness He gave Christ; not to condemn the world but to save the world; and if there is repentance, and faith, we are no longer in ignorance of the Author of our being, but He becomes fully revealed to us in Jesus Christ in all the blessedness of His being. How fully Paul declared God; and He is One Who wishes to be known and loved by us.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

(Continued).

By WALTER SCOTT.

The Characteristic Feature of each Psalm.

BOOK I.

Book I., Jehovah, in relation to Judah; known, loved, and trusted.

Psalm.

- 1 The character and ways of the godly and ungodly.
- 2 The Messiah, Who is also the Son; His rejection; His glory.
- 3 Confidence in Jehovah in presence of evil men.
- 4 Personal integrity the ground of confidence in Jehovah.
- 5 God appealed to in righteousness against the wicked.
- 6 Jehovah's governmental anger and displeasure deprecated.
- 7 Confidence in the judgment of God upon the wicked.
- 8 Earthly glory centres in Jesus, the Son of man.
- 9 The closing days. The wicked punished and Israel delivered.
- 10 The Antichrist of the last days described.
- 11 Jehovah trusted and known on His throne and temple.
- 12 The godly in the midst of evil, but preserved.
- 13 "How long?" the cry of faith by suffering saints.
- 14 The atheism and wickedness of the world.
- 15 The practical character of the righteous for the kingdom.
- 16 The pathway of confidence trod by Jesus as man.
- 17 The path of righteousness closing in glory. Christ trod it.

Psalm.

- 18 The sufferings, righteousness, and exaltation of Messiah.
 19 God's testimony—the heavens; Jehovah's testimony—the law.
 20 Messiah in His trouble prayed *for*; as King prayed *to*.
 21 Messiah exalted in answer to prayer of preceding Psalm.
 22 Christ the victim suffering for sin, and the results in grace.
 23 The pathway of the sheep—Jehovah the Shepherd.
 24 The path to the kingdom. The King of Glory celebrated.
 25 The faithful Israelite confessing sin; grace and guidance sought.
 26 Jehovah appealed to because of uprightness in heart and ways.
 27 Jehovah the confidence, His house the desire, of the godly.
 28 Jehovah judgeth the wicked; Jehovah heareth the righteous.
 29 Jehovah celebrated in His glory and power.
 30 Jehovah the soul's confidence, not His mercies.
 31 Jehovah the strength and deliverance in extreme trouble.
 32 Jehovah known as Pardoner, as Refuge, and Guide.
 33 Jehovah praised because of His wisdom and power.
 34 Jehovah praised because He *has* and *will* deliver the righteous.
 35 The prayer of righteousness against ungodly persecutors.
 36 The wicked devising mischief; Jehovah's goodness a refuge.
 37 Rest in presence of evil, Jehovah being waited on.
 38 Suffering for sin under the righteous government of God.
 39 Man learning himself under the hand of God.
 40 Christ in death accomplishing the will of God.
 41 The godly poor the object of Jehovah's care.

BOOK II.

Book II., God in His Being and Character better known by outcast Judah.

- 42 The pious Jew, outcast from his land, thirsting after God.
 43 The pious outcast Jew longing to praise his God.
 44 The pious outcast Jew strengthening himself in God.
 45 The glory of Messiah, the conquering King, celebrated.
 46 God a refuge, help, and strength in troublous times.
 47 Israel head of the millennial nations.
 48 Jerusalem the joy and beauty of the millennial earth.
 49 Man in honour abideth not, he goeth to the grave.
 50 God expostulating with His people Israel.
 51 The confession of sin in the nature and in practice.
 52 The wicked destroyed, the righteous flourish on the earth.
 53 The wickedness and judgment of Israel's enemies.
 54 The *name* of God for deliverance and praise.
 55 The soul's distress because Jerusalem is the seat of evil.
 56 God and His word the resource in trouble.
 57 God Himself the soul's confidence; glory at the close.
 58 God judging the workers of wickedness on the earth.
 59 Israel's prayer of judgment upon the Gentile confederacy.
 60 The cry of the Jewish remnant answered in victory.
 61 The pious Jew in distant places turning to God.
 62 God everything to the soul. God a refuge for us.
 63 God thirsted after, delighted in, and followed after.
 64 Secret plotting against the righteous sharply judged by God.
 65 Israel and creation visited in millennial blessing.
 66 God known and celebrated in His judgments and deliverances.
 67 Re-gathered Israel the source of blessing to the millennial earth.
 68 God's past and future displays of Himself on Israel's behalf.
 69 Christ suffering for righteousness at the hands of man and Israel.
 70 The martyr's prayer to God against his persecutors.
 71 God the believer's trust from youth to old age.
 72 The glory, blessing, extent, and duration of Messiah's Kingdom.

BOOK III.

Psalm. *Book III., Israel's history from Moses to Christ.*

- 73 Why do the wicked prosper? See answer in verse 17.
 74 God invoked because of His name, sanctuary, and people.
 75 Messiah receives Israel, and then judges the earth.
 76 God known in all Israel; God judging the mighty.
 77 The troubled one remembering God's faithfulness in the past.
 78 Israel's failure, and God's goodness reviewed from Moses to David.
 79 Jerusalem desolate, the temple defiled, death and bloodshedding.
 80 Israel's past and future history as the vine.
 81 Israel reappearing as the new moon.
 82 God judging among and counselling magistrates and rulers.
 83 The last gathering of the eastern nations against Israel.
 84 God longed for in His Courts—the pathway of tears.
 85 Jehovah known as the salvation of His people.
 86 Jehovah prayed to, His greatness and mercy extolled.
 87 Zion loved, securely established; Christ born there.
 88 God's governmental wrath endured by the remnant.
 89 The mercies and faithfulness of Jehovah to His people.

BOOK IV.

Book IV., Israel's history goes back to Abraham.

The Messiah comes and reigns.

- 90 Man—weakness and nothingness in the hands of Jehovah.
 91 Jehovah's tender and loving care of His Messiah.
 92 Messiah celebrating Jehovah's praise in millennial days.
 93 Jehovah reigns, spite of the tumultuous raging of man.
 94 Jehovah-God executing vengeance and delivering His people.
 95 Israel summoned to sing and appear before Jehovah.
 96 The earth summoned to sing, for Jehovah is coming.
 97 Jehovah reigneth in righteousness and power.
 98 Israel and the earth rejoicing, for Jehovah cometh.
 99 Jehovah reigneth as king in Zion; our God is Holy.
 100 Universal rejoicing and worship.
 101 Messiah telling how He will govern the kingdom.
 102 Zion remembered, and the eternal divinity of Messiah declared.
 103 Jehovah the healer of disease and forgiver of sin.
 104 Jehovah's glory in creation and providence celebrated.
 105 Jehovah's goodness because of His covenant with Abraham.
 106 Israel's history in view of Jehovah's enduring mercy.

BOOK V.

Book V., Moral Truths and Praises are the prominent features.

- 107 Deliverance, redemption, and the goodness of Jehovah celebrated.
 108 The praise of restored Israel amongst the nations.
 109 Apostate Israel set forth by Judas.
 110 Messiah sitting at Jehovah's right hand; Melchizedek blessing.
 111 The glorious works of Jehovah known and celebrated.
 112 The blessings and character of the godly on earth.
 113 Jehovah universally praised through all ages.
 114 Jehovah's deliverance of and presence with His people.
 115 Jehovah contrasted with idols and the blesser of Israel.
 116 Jehovah's redemption of His sorrowing people celebrated.
 117 Jehovah praised by all because of His goodness to Israel.
 118 Israel celebrates Jehovah's mercy, and Messiah received.
 119 The law of God written in the heart of Israel.

Psalm.

120	Song of degrees.*	Deliverance from deceit and falsehood.
121	" "	Jehovah helps, keeps, and preserves.
122	" "	Jerusalem builded; its peace sought.
123	" "	Jehovah-God alone looked to.
124	" "	Jehovah on Israel's side.
125	" "	Jehovah His people's protection.
126	" "	Redemption from the captivity celebrated.
127	" "	Jehovah keeps and watches.
128	" "	Jehovah blessing out of Zion.
129	" "	Haters of Zion confounded.
130	" "	Jehovah known in His grace and mercy.
131	" "	Quietness in presence of Jehovah.
132	" "	Davidical grace and blessing.
133	" "	Unity of Israel in blessing.
134	" "	Jehovah's servants in unceasing praise.
135	Jehovah praised in Zion, and in contrast to idols.	
136	" His mercy endureth for ever "—Israel's millennial watchword.	
137	Edom, Israel's rival; Babylon, Judah's oppressor, both destroyed.	
138	The Word of Jehovah the confidence of the faithful.	
139	Jehovah Omniscient and Omnipresent.	
140	Prayer to Jehovah for deliverance from the wicked.	
141	Prayer to Jehovah for divine keeping from evil.	
142	I cried unto Jehovah my only refuge in distress.	
143	In midst of persecution, Jehovah alone looked to.	
144	What is the worth of man? Israel delivered and blessed.	
145	Millennial glory and blessing over the earth.	
146	Hallelujah! Jehovah praised because of His goodness.	
147	Hallelujah! Jehovah praised because of His grace to Israel.	
148	Hallelujah! Jehovah praised by all creation.	
149	Hallelujah! Jehovah praised by all Israel.	
150	Hallelujah! Jehovah praised; "Praise ye the Lord."	

*These songs of degrees, or *ascents* historically refer to the coming up from Babylon; same word as in Ezra vii. 9.

Nobody on earth is so "miserable" as a backslider (Rev. iii. 17).
Why? Because he is "good for nothing" (Matt. v. 13).

* * * *

If the priests and scribes believed the Scriptures quoted by Jesus they would not have questioned His authority (Mark xi. 17).

* * * *

Jesus stated that Mary's "good work" would be told "where-soever the Gospel would be preached in the whole world" (Matt. xxvi. 13). Let us not forget that the "indignation" of those who gave her "trouble" has also been told.

* * * *

Mary was first found fault with at home (Luke x. 40): then in public (Mark xi. 17). Her voice was not heard justifying herself at either time, but she was amply rewarded for her actions by her Lord taking her part on both occasions.

A.G.W.

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

IX. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

THE Bride of the Lamb is now brought into view, that the marriage supper may be celebrated (Rev. xix.). Both the judgment of what is false and the marriage supper take place *before* the public manifestation of the Lord Jesus, the one on earth and the other in heaven. The whore is overthrown instrumentally by the Beast and his confederate kings; the Beast himself is dealt with directly by Christ at His appearing.

While many on earth lament the overthrow of Babylon, all heaven rejoices. The foulest blot that ever disgraced the earth is removed in her judgment, and the whole of heaven's occupants justify the divine sentence. "True and righteous are His judgments And again they said, Alleluia." Moreover, the elders and the living creatures, in the presence of these judgments, fall down and worship God who sits upon the throne.

Next, there comes a call from out of the throne to "Praise our God," and with voice as of a great multitude, and as of the rushing of many waters, and as of mighty thunderings, there bursts forth the response: "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent (or, the Lord our God, the Almighty) reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. xix. 5-7). The removal of the false system, Babylon, is a great step towards the establishment of the Kingdom; but since the King is destined to have a bride (antitype of Eve) associated with Him in His glories, the marriage must take place ere the Kingdom really appears.

But who is the bride? What company of believing people is represented by so happy a symbol? Here we must carefully distinguish between dispensations, if we would indeed understand. In Ps. xlv. we see the King in His might, with the Queen standing by His side in gold of Ophir. To confound this with the picture in Rev. xix. is to confound earthly things with heavenly. The viewpoint in the Psalms is necessarily the earth, and there Israel has the chief place in the ways of God; but Rev. xix. describes a scene in heaven, and what place has Israel there? It would be

incongruous to think of Israel as bride in the book of Revelation, seeing that in chap. xii. Israel is shown rather as the mother of our Lord. Moreover, the bride of Revelation is *the Lamb's wife*. This title is suggestive of suffering. Not Israel, but the Church, has been His associate in rejection and suffering, and this during the entire period of her pathway. At the very close of Scripture we have the Spirit and the bride crying with one voice, "Come." Who is this that is thus possessed of the Spirit before the Lord's return? Assuredly not Israel, but the Church.

It is interesting to note that we have four women shown to us in the Apocalypse, each representative of a corporate body, or system. First, we have Jezebel in chap. ii. 20. This is Popery. Second, we have the sun-clothed woman of chap. xii. 1. This is Israel. Third, we have Babylon the Great in chap. xvii. This is Popery at the end, with whatever else she may have incorporated with herself. Finally, we have "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," in chap. xix. 7, xxi. 9. This is the Church.

The twenty-four elders, who fill so interesting a part in the Apocalyptic visions, are mentioned for the last time in chap. xix. 4. The reason, we believe, is this. The saints of both Old and New Testament dispensations down to the time of the Lord's coming for His Own are included in that symbol, and until the marriage supper takes place all these act together as sharers of a common priesthood; but when the moment comes for the marriage, these divide into two distinct companies, for the bride is the Church, and the Church began, not in Eden, but in Jerusalem in the day of Acts ii. As the R.V. of Eph. iii. 15 correctly teaches, there are various families in heaven and on earth. There are blessings that are common to the people of God in all ages, and there are also blessings peculiar to this most favoured era. Election, faith, redemption, saintship, and heirship we share with all the objects of God's grace in every dispensation; but other blessings, as the relationships of body and bride to Christ, are ours alone. Thus we must distinguish between saints of Old and New Testament dispensations as we contemplate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. All are there, but some as bride, and some as guests.

Remark, it is the marriage of *the Lamb*, not of the bride, whoever she may be. God's object is Christ. It is "The day of His

espousals, the day of the gladness of *His* heart " (Song iii. 11). On the same principle, the grace of God to man is charmingly presented to us in Matt. xxii. 2, as a marriage made by a king for his son. A wedding feast described without even a mention of the wife ; is there anything like it elsewhere in literature ? In this way God would show us that in providing good things for man, He is seeking, first of all, the joy and the glory of His beloved Son.

But what have we in such a statement as this—" His wife hath *made herself* ready " ? Is not all our meetness His alone ? In one sense, yes. The best robe of divine righteousness is upon every saint. But there is another garment that will be conspicuous at the marriage supper ; it is called " the righteousnesses of the saints." This will be granted in divine government as the result of the manifestation at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Revelation is characterised, as a book, by divine government).

The Judgment Seat must be set up before the supper is spread. There every believer will read his life anew in the light of God. The deeds done in the body (2 Cor. v. 10) will be appraised at their true worth by One with Whom no mistake is possible. While bad and good will alike pass before Him, it will be His joy to commend and reward the good. Every deed wrought in the power of the Spirit, fruit of the life of God within, will be held in eternal remembrance. Every such deed is a stitch, as it were, in the garment of saintly righteousness which the bride will wear on the marriage day, and which the Bridegroom will survey with the utmost delight, as the evidence of love manifested to His name here below. The Kingdom is a reign of righteousness, and we take our place therein according to righteousness. All this is settled at the Judgment Seat. Following the Judgment Seat is the Marriage Supper, and then the public appearing of the King.

The bride is arrayed in " fine linen, clean and bright." Her evil rival loves purple and scarlet (Rev. xvii. 4). This world's glories appeal to the latter ; righteousness and purity are the delight of the former. There are four figures of righteousness employed in the Scriptures :—(1) Gold, expressive of intrinsic divine righteousness ; (2) Brass, the judgment of righteousness as applied to man ; (3) Fine linen, the righteousness of saints ; (4) Filthy rags, all human efforts apart from grace.

The marriage scene having been described, John was commanded: "Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Who are the called ones? Scarcely the saints who compose the bride, and certainly not those of Anti-christian times, for they are not raised until the supper is past (Rev. xx. 4). We conclude therefore that the called ones are the saints of Old Testament days, all of whom will share the bliss of the coming day in their own divinely appointed positions and relationships.

Overwhelmed by the glories thus presented to his gaze, John fell at the angel's feet to worship him, and was promptly rebuked for his fault. Even an apostle was liable to err. Flesh cannot be trusted even in the presence of glories. How merciful the provision of the thorn after Paul had been caught up to the third heaven! (2 Cor. xii.).

Another supper is described in the same chapter in Revelation. In verse 17 we see an angel standing in the sun, and crying with a loud voice to all the fowls of heaven to gather themselves together unto the great supper of God. The details, as given by the Seer, are terrible. The birds gorge themselves with the flesh of kings, captains, horses, and men of every degree. It is Armageddon, not the Armageddon of the newspapers, but the Armageddon of Holy Scripture. It is the most awful incident in the judgment of the quick, when earth's true Sovereign appears. Finding Himself opposed by the armed hosts of earth, He will destroy them by the word of His mouth. Whatever men's dreams, war will not end until He ends it summarily once for all (Ps. xlvi. 8-9).

What bliss to have part in the marriage supper of the Lamb, but what horror to be involved in the great supper of God!

Next month (D.V.):—"The Re-gathering of Israel."

The remembrance of what God has done for us in the past should brace us for the present (Deut. vii. 17-21).

* * * *

Hired priests are "glad" when promised big salaries (Judg. xviii. 20), even if those who hire them keep stolen idols (Judg. xvii. 10).

A.G.W.

“NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.”

Though years roll on, and marks of change
On all around we see,

How sweet to know there doth abide
Faith, Hope and Charity.

Time's ruthless hand may take away
Our friends, our strength, our youth,
But never can it shake or move
These pinnacles of Truth.

Triumphant "Faith" (the Faith of God)
Still cries "It shall be done"
Clings to the "promises of God"
When every prop is gone.

"Hope" too still shines amid the gloom,
That star, whose welcome ray
Has lighted millions to their Home
Through this world's desert way.

Love's fire still burns in humble hearts
Kindled by Hand divine;
Not "many waters" can it quench
Or cause it to decline.

Are we possessors of these gifts?
Our happiness is sure,
And shall (not through the year alone)
But evermore endure.

M.E.R.

THE OBSERVATORY.

Onesidedness.—Writing about the day of "Intercession," which will mark the anniversary of the outbreak of this war, a morning paper says: "'Intercession'! One is glad of that word . . . In past centuries of war and crisis we had days of 'Humiliation.' Queen Victoria struck out that word during the Crimean War, and substituted 'Intercession'—which is right." Why not have both? It has been thought that our enemies might misinterpret the attitude implied in humiliation and say we acknowledged by it we were in the wrong. Our enemies may safely be allowed to think what they like, and interpret our actions as they please, so long as our actions commend us to God. And surely what He looks for above everything is, national humiliation. "*HUMBLE yourselves under the mighty Hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.*" We are not called upon to live in the sight of our enemies and regulate our ways by what they may think, but to live and walk before God. It is written "God resisteth the proud"; and a humble attitude before Him is more needed just now than anything else—even munitions. One is painfully conscious that the nation has not yet "come to itself." The talk on every side is about anything and everything but the one *supreme* thing. No doubt all the other things are necessary.

There is one thing which is indispensable: the help of God; and this can only come through prayer and confession. We were very glad to read the following: "Writing, the other day, in the ante-room of a 'personage' 'somewhere in the War Office' I noticed in large letters, 'Victory comes by prayer.'" It is good to know that this is recognised in the place where the war is being controlled. "The horse is prepared against the day of battle"; quite right; and quite necessary from a human standpoint; but the divine record adds: "Victory is of the Lord" (Prov. xxi. 31 margin).

"If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side
 Now may Israel say;
 If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side,
 When men rose up against us:
 Then they had swallowed us up quick,
 When their wrath was kindled against us;

Our help is in the Name of the Lord,
 Who made heaven and earth."

But we wish to point out the onesidedness of the remark to which reference has been made. Why should there not be humiliation as well as intercession? Or if another word is preferred, let us say, confession. Intercession is by no means the whole of prayer. We have only to read the prayers recorded in the inspired Word—the prayers of *holy* men—to see that a foremost place is given both to humiliation and confession. For these are not interchangeable terms though they frequently accompany each other. Moreover these holy men identified themselves with the sins of others. True prayer consists of confession, petition, thanksgiving, intercession and adoration. Why be content with partial views on such a great and important subject as prayer? Why set "intercession" against "humiliation"? Why not have both?

Onesided, or partial, views on spiritual matters are fruitful of untold mischief. Here is another instance, and it is a very common one: "The test is not what we believe in theology, but 'by this shall all men know that ye are My Disciples, if ye have love one to another.'" Here the writer does what is so often done, he places faith and works in opposition. There is no opposition. The test *is* what we believe, quite as much as what we do. Belief or disbelief governs our every action in ordinary life; yet when we come to the spiritual realm the two are treated as if they had no connection; and it is often said, as long as a man acts rightly it does not matter what he believes. As a matter of fact, every man who, in any sense, even the most limited, acts rightly does so because he believes in something. How much more necessary, then, is it to believe correctly, if we are to act as Christians. Only an individual who takes a deplorably onesided view of things could write as if in theology it did not matter what we believe. Surely it matters what a man believes about morals; and no sensible person would deny that conduct is affected thereby; yet in the very realm which faith most of all claims as its own, and where divine authority reigns supreme, what a man believes, we are told, is not the test.

The Jews.—Two very striking articles on "The War and the Jews" appeared recently in a daily paper from the pen of Mr. Israel Zangwill. His opening remarks are these:—"The first thing to grasp if you would understand the Jewish question is that the Jews do not exist. Six hundred thousand Jews are fighting in the war but not *the* Jews. *Their* fighting ended in the year 133. Fifteen thousand Jews are fighting for the British Empire, 50,000 for the German, 170,000 for the Austro-Hungarian, and 350,000 for the Russian." He adds: "Individual Jews are frequently shrewd and fortunate, but as a people Israel is, in his own expressive idiom, a Schlemihl, a hapless ne'er-do-well." He then shows how they are suffering through the war, because a great many are located where the contending armies are continually advancing and retreating. "Not only have they suffered . . . in the burnings, bombardings, pillagings, tramlings; not only have they shared in the misery of towns taken and retaken by the rival armies, but accused hysterically or craftily before both belligerents of espionage or treachery, and even of poisoning the wells, they have been crucified by both."

"The Jews do not exist"! So writes one of their leaders. To sight and sense this, of course, is true. In another, and far more real sense, it is not true. The purpose of God concerning them as a nation exists; His promises still hold good; they are beloved for the father's sakes; they are never forgotten; when their prosperity, with the possession of their land, comes again there will come with it the blessing of all nations. "What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead." "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "The Jews do not exist." That may be so in man's account. To faith it is different. Elijah built an altar of twelve stones in recognition of a complete and undivided Israel, after the Kingdom had been rent in twain; while St. Paul makes use of the remarkable words: "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God night and day, hope to come." In view of all this, the following further extract from the articles from which we have already quoted will be of interest:—

"But, if the cause of Zionism has thus received a serious set-back, if the heroic work of the colonists for a whole generation seems undone, if the old Jewish exodus from Egypt to Palestine has been reversed after three thousand years by this great exodus from Palestine to Egypt, the new exodus has produced a strange dramatic episode, which may bring Zionism nearer than ever to its hope. For among the refugees at Alexandria were a number of young Zionist colonists, tradesmen and students, wishful neither to turn Turk nor to resume the Russian. For the suzerain of Palestine they might have been ready to fight, had not the Turks declared a "Holy" war, which these young Jews felt was as little their business as to fight for the Russia they had long since quitted. But Egypt had been proclaimed English, and inasmuch as Russian law allowed absent subjects to fight in an allied army, they would fight with England—for Palestine!

"The idea of fighting for Palestine was not, indeed, new. It had more than once been brought to me by the despairing younger generation.

“ But now it had come in a practicable form. Through their spokesman, a Russo-Jewish journalist, the young Zionists begged to be enlisted as a British-Palestine battalion. To the British military mind, nursed on the Bible, the idea did not lack fascination, and General Maxwell, the Grand Commander of Egypt, appointed Colonel J. H. Patterson, the distinguished Irish soldier and sportsman, to organise the corps. The Colonel cabled to me, asking for a message of encouragement, and I cabled back my welcome of the incident as an omen for the establishment of a British Protectorate in Palestine. This message, toned down by the local military censorship into a wish for the men’s ‘ happy return ’ to Palestine, was read to them, and the Colonel made a speech that was translated into Hebrew, and ended with the words : ‘ Pray with me that I should not only, as Moses, behold Canaan from afar, but be divinely permitted to lead you into the Promised Land.’ ”

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES: BRIEF REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. Chap. ii. 14-22.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

Jew and Gentile made one—one new man—one body—one Spirit—built together for a habitation of God.

“ **F**OR He (Christ) is our peace.” This means here, not exactly the believer’s peace with God, or his own peace, but peace between Jew and Gentile, for hitherto there had been enmity, as, strangely enough, there is to-day. But if a Jew accepts *Christ*, and a Gentile does the same, there is peace at once, they are brothers. Christ has made them one. There is no partition between them. This refers to a wall in the Temple at Jerusalem which shut the Gentile off from certain parts of it to which Jews were admitted. This was by God’s ordinance, but all that has now ceased, they both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Jew and Gentile are henceforth on an equal footing. The law of commandments is abolished and in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile but one *new man* ; viz. a Christian (vers. 14-15).

This part of the chapter raises the question as to whether the Jew, as such, any longer possesses a place of privilege on earth, and the Apostle is shewing that all that is abolished. In ver. 6, Jew and Gentile are seen sitting together in heavenly places *in Christ* ; and, as regards earth, there is no longer any privileged place, both are on an equal footing : “ made nigh ” (ver. 13) ; “ made both one ”

(ver. 14); "one new man" (ver. 15); "one body" (ver. 16). All distinctions according to the flesh are ended. From this standpoint there is a "new creation" entirely.

"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off" (Gentiles); "And to them that were nigh" (Jews). Christ came with a message of peace to all men. His very presence on earth announced peace. See Luke ii. 14, and Acts x. 36. And so God is called the God of peace (Heb. xiii. 20). When we accept Christ, and believe God, peace is ours. Every question is settled with God—and one day, as the fruit of the Saviour's work and His presence on earth, there will be universal peace. For then everyone who refuses Christ will be banished from God's presence, as well as sin; and there will be nothing to disturb.

Read verses 17-18 together. The one is Christ coming to us from God, the other is our going to God through Christ. The second is the consequence of the first. The Saviour—the Son of God—is, first of all, the bearer of a message of peace from God Himself, which is to have the effect of bringing us right back to God. What a thought, Christ preaching *peace*! and His blood the righteous ground of that peace! Does not His coming, and above all His death, prove that God does not wish to be at war with men? And when that message of peace from the very heart of God reaches my heart, the effect must be to bring me back to God. The very presence of Christ on earth meant an overture of peace on God's part. And so the very next thing we read is, "For through Him" (through the One who has brought us peace) "we both" (both Jew and Gentile) "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Having received the message of peace from God, proclaimed in the coming of Christ, and by word and action, we are no longer afraid to approach Him. We know that God can have nothing against us, for has He not given His Own Son to take our place? and being at peace with God and He being our Father, we delight in coming to Him.

We have access, and the nearer we come, the more all that the Name, Father, means, as applied to God, becomes known to us. Notice the order. Christ preaches peace. When we receive the message in simple faith, and believe that God really wants us to be at peace with Him, then the Holy Spirit is given, and it is by the Spirit through Christ, we have access. God now loves to have us near Him. It is by the blood we are made nigh, as ver. 13 tells us. It is the Spirit enables us to draw nigh, and gives to our

hearts the blessed consciousness of all that it means to call God our Father. We approach God through the very One Who came from Him, and came from Him with a message of peace.

Need we then have any fear? Think of how near God comes to *you* in Christ, and of how near you can now come to God. Christ on earth, touching the leper, placing His hand upon the sick, feeding the multitude, and then taking the sinner's place in death tells how near God has come to us. Christ in heaven tells of how near we can come to God through Him. The One Who brought you the peace is the One through Whom you approach, and the Spirit is the power. It is like the prodigal coming home to the father's heart: "We have access by one spirit unto the Father."

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (ver. 19). We must remember, the Apostle is writing to Gentiles here (see ver. 11). He has been shewing how all the old distinctions between Jew and Gentile have been abolished in Christ, and he concludes his argument by saying "Now therefore ye (Gentiles) are no more strangers and foreigners." A stranger is one who is not at home, and a foreigner has no rights in the country where he is. You are neither, says St. Paul. You are at home, and all the privileges and rights of the place are yours. You are fellow citizens with the saints. That gives you an equal footing—equal right—and you are of the household of God, you are at home.

St. Paul uses a number of different figures to shew what he means, citizenship, household, etc. And now in vers. 20-22, he speaks of a building, for Jews and Gentiles form a dwelling place for God. He no longer dwells in temples made with hands, but in and with individuals (see Acts vii. 48-50). To call a building of bricks and mortar a Church, is, strictly speaking, a misnomer. The Church of God is composed of living persons. This is the wonderful truth the Apostle now unfolds. "Are built," he says "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (ver. 20). All believers, from Pentecost onward, are part of the same building. The Apostles were the first, so they form the foundation. Christ Himself is the chief corner stone, "In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." We are set apart for God, it is a *holy* Temple.

There are three ideas connected with a building. One is, it is composed of different stones. You could not very well make a large building out of one stone, and these stones are brought into relation one to another and "fitly framed together," they are joined. A second thought is, that it is always growing until it is complete. And lastly, it is for some one to dwell in. So Christians are not so many units, we are brought into relation one with another, we form part of the same building. There is something altogether different between the relationship of two Christians and that between two unconverted people, even though they be close friends. The former are linked together by God and form part of the habitation where He dwells. The building still grows as every newly converted soul is brought in, and we are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (ver. 22). We are God's dwelling place. The effect of this was seen at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down. It says, He filled all the house where they were sitting and rested upon each of them. From that moment the disciples were God's temple and God's house. So Paul writes to the Corinthians: "For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said: I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." There are corporate blessings as well as individual blessings. God does dwell in us individually, but also collectively. And the very fact that God dwells in the midst of His people separates them from the world. Just as of old God brought the people out of Egypt (type of the world) in order to dwell amongst them. God's house is where He rules His people and provides for them, and if we are in His dwelling place everything must be ordered and arranged according as He pleases. And in His house there can be no lack. It is thus we are brought under the divine administration. At the present period God's administration is concerned with His household and those who form part of the habitation where He dwells. All is under Christ's rule. One day that administration will extend to the whole earth. What a privilege to belong to the household of God and to His habitation. We realise it all by the Spirit. By the Spirit we have access to the Father. And by the Spirit God dwells in our midst. On the one hand the Spirit can bring all the fulness of God to us; and on the other He can conduct us to the Father, where we share the Father's delight in His Own beloved Son.

HYMNS OF THE SEA.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

WHEN a little girl saw the white-tipped waves away on the horizon, she beautifully said: "The waves are waving their handkerchiefs, and singing, 'Glory to His Name'! aren't they"?

So many of our hymn writers have thought:—

"Ocean hoary,
Tell His glory,
Cliffs where tumbling seas have roared;
Pulse of waters, blithely beating,
Wave advancing, wave retreating,
Praise ye, praise ye, God the Lord!"

"Yes, God is good: in earth and sky,
From ocean depths and spreading wood,
Ten thousand voices seem to cry,
God made us all, and God is good."

"O God, of good the unfathomed sea!
Who would not give his heart to Thee?
Who would not love Thee with his might?
O Jesu, Lover of mankind,
Who would not his whole soul and mind,
With all his strength, to Thee unite?"

Some take us back to the birthday of seas:—

"Spirit of God, that moved of old,
Upon the waters' darken'd face;
Come when our faithless hearts are cold,
And stir them with an inward grace."

"The earth, with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty! Thy power hath founded of old;
Hath 'stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea."

What a beautiful conception to think of the sea as the blue mantle of the earth! It is only equalled by Cowper's hymn:—

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm."

We may trace man's "footsteps on the sands of time," but who can trace "footsteps in the sea"?

Many ocean hymns are prayers for mariners :—

“Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidst the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep ;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.”

More frequently hymn-writers have thought of spiritual storms :—

“When storms of sorrow toss my soul ;
When waves of care around me roll ;
When comforts sink, when joys shall flee ;
When hopeless griefs shall gape for me :
One word the tempest’s rage shall quell ;
That word, Thy name—Immanuel.”

“’Tis sunlight on the sea,
All stormy though it be,
Poor mariner, for thee,
For Jesus rules the waves.
Dark tempests crash and roar,
Breakers roll more and more
On to the peaceful shore,
But Jesus rules the waves.”

Well may faith triumphantly sing :—

“Begone, unbelief,	By prayer let me wrestle,
My Saviour is near,	And He will perform,
And for my relief	With Christ in the vessel,
Will surely appear ;	I smile at the storm.”

“Tho’ round me the storms of adversity roll,
And the waves of destruction encompass my soul,
In vain this frail vessel the tempest shall toss,
My hopes rest secure on the blood of the cross.”

How sweet the message of another favourite :—

“Fierce and wild the storm is raging
Round a helpless bark ;
On to doom ’tis swiftly driving,
O’er the waters dark !

Joy! . . . behold the Saviour! . . .
Joy! . . . the message hear! . . .
‘I’ll stand by until the morning ;
I’ve come to save you ; do not fear!’ . . . ”

Another suggests happy occupation that will prevent sea-sickness in rough weather :—

“When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Count..your blessings, name them one by one!
 Count..your blessings, see what God hath done;
 Count..your blessings, name them one by one;
 And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

A sweet little hymn reminds of the pilot:—

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
 Over life's tempestuous sea;
 Unknown waves before me roll,
 Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal;
 Chart and compass come from Thee;
 Jesus, Saviour, pilot me!"

Another suggests the anchor, and asks:—

"Will your anchor hold in the storm of life,
 When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,
 When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
 Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?"

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
 Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
 Fastened to the rock which cannot move,
 Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love."

The lighthouse is introduced by another:—

"Brightly beams our Father's mercy
 From His lighthouse evermore;
 But to us He gives the keeping
 Of the lights along the shore.

Let the lower lights be burning!
 Send a gleam across the wave!
 Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
 You may rescue, you may save."

Are we on the sands? Let us sing:—

"For mercies countless as the sands,
 Which daily I receive
 From Jesus, my Redeemer's hands,
 My soul, what canst thou give?"

Are we among rocks? Let us sing:—

"My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
 On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
 All other ground is sinking sand."

"The tide of time shall never
 His covenant remove;
 His name shall stand for ever,
 That name to us is—Love."

(To be concluded.)

THE REVELATION.

APPENDIX.

An esteemed correspondent writes :—

“ Your articles on “ The Revelation ” should prove of real value to beginners because there is need of a simple and concise statement.* May I suggest that . . . you should discuss the following points.”

“ 1. If the chapters dealing with the seven churches represent the whole course of Christian history, how are we to explain the idea of the imminence of our Lord’s Coming from the standpoint of the first Christians ? ”

“ 2. What do you think of the view set forth by several writers that the words ‘ they are ’ mean ‘ they signify ? ’ It always seems to me that if the book covers the whole period there must be a very careful consideration given to the question whether the book, from the very outset, does not refer to a time subsequent to the Church’s removal.”

“ 3. Are the seals, trumpets and the vials concurrent or continuous ? ”

REPLY.

1. The two factors (i.) that Christ’s coming was always the immediate hope of the believer, and (ii.) that, as a matter of fact, there has been a *gradual* development of a condition of things that was foreshadowed, must both be accepted, even though they appear to us, at times, irreconcilable. Otherwise, the clear and complete teaching of Scripture must be evaded. It is not always easy to explain how man’s free choice and God’s determinate counsel and foreknowledge can fit together. But we are not under any obligation to make them fit. Our duty is to accept both, because Scripture recognises both, and experience likewise seems to demand room for each. Two forces or facts may exist, even though at times seeming to be antagonistic, in spite of our not being able to explain *their relation one to another*. The fact that the Church’s history has stretched over a period of nineteen hundred years, is true ; the fact that St. Paul wrote, “ *We* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” and thus did not place the Lord’s return beyond the then existing generation, is also true. The Church from its *earliest* history has looked for the fulfilment of the promise “ I will come again.” It was not their concern *how* God would work it all out and accomplish His designs. Otherwise, when was the hour to strike which would make it incumbent or permissible to look for the Lord’s return ? Or where in Scripture does it suggest that the Christians in the early centuries were without such a hope, but it would belong to those of later centuries ? At what point in time was such a hope to dawn ? The whole of the New Testament is against such a conception, for almost every epistle (and all were written during the first century), presents the Lord’s return as the hope of those to whom it was addressed.

A somewhat analogous case, is the offer to Israel at the beginning of the Acts that if, as a nation, they would repent, Christ would return. Had this offer been accepted, How would God have fulfilled His eternal purposes concerning the Church ? we might ask. As events have turned out, it seems to us that the entire course of things would have been altered, just

*Published in separate form, price 2d. or 1/6 per doz., post free, A. Holness, 14, Paternoster Row, or Pickering & Inglis, 229, Bothwell Street, Glasgow, E.C.

as to all appearance they would have been had Christ come back in the first or second centuries. The return of Christ, as the hope of the early believers, does not seem more difficult to understand than this offer to Israel. All ten virgins (Matt. xxv.) went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Their hope was His immediate return. Yet this did not prevent Him tarrying; nor did His tarrying prevent His return being their immediate hope. Our Lord in His discourses always insisted that His return was to be the hope of those He addressed.

2. The question whether The Revelation "from the very outset does not refer to a time subsequent to the Church's removal" seems to involve a notion out of harmony with the book itself, and with dispensational truth. (a) There is no statement to the effect that it refers *as a whole* to a period later than the present one, but, on the contrary, many references which render such a view untenable; (b) The Revelation was given by God to Christ to shew unto His servants *things which must shortly come to pass*. It is expressly stated "the time is at hand." "He that readeth" is not said to be somebody in the future. (c) John addresses the then existing Churches. And at the close we read "I, Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches." The Church is the repository of the truth—"the pillar and base of it" (1 Tim. iii. 15); (d) Moreover John sees the Son of Man in the midst of the seven lampstands, and it is said "these *are* the seven churches." There seems to us not an atom of justification for construing this as "they signify"; (e) How could such *detail* be given of a moral and spiritual condition which did not exist? The entire form of the addresses to the seven churches suggests a direct and immediate application. (f) This present period is the Church period, and no other is. At the close of the present dispensation the distinction between Jew and Gentile is revived, and the matter of Israel's position is revived. The promises of God to His earthly people—of which the Old Testament is full—will then be fulfilled, and the nations blessed through Israel. There is not so much as a suggestion in the whole of Scripture that churches exist then as they do to-day. On the contrary, it is distinctly declared that all nations will come up to Jerusalem to worship and the temple there will be the House of Prayer for all people. (g) With regard to the period of judgments introductory to the Day of the Lord, there seems to be no reason for supposing that Chapters i.-iii. of The Revelation refer to that period. The objections to such an idea are found in what has already been stated, and there are others which have been mentioned in the pamphlet itself.

3. There seems insufficient evidence available to enable us to give a very precise answer to the third question. To some extent any conclusion on the point seems to depend upon whether the reader chooses to consider the seven trumpets, which seem to be evolved from the seventh seal, as concurrent with that seal or not. Some on the other hand may think that "the space of half an hour" (Chapter viii., 1) necessarily makes the judgments under the trumpets subsequent to those under the seals. The actual facts as disclosed in the book are these: the judgments under the sixth seal indicate that the end is very near, for it is said "the great day of His wrath is come"; and, moreover, the description of what takes place tallies with Matt. xxiv. 29, which is the immediate prelude of "the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven." Again, the seventh trumpet announces that "the Kingdoms of this world *are* become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ"; and it is added, "Thy wrath is come and the time of the dead that they should be judged." Yet it is not until after the seventh vial is poured out that Christ is actually seen coming out of heaven. On the one hand, then, we have the fact that both the sixth seal and seventh trumpet bring us within sight of the end, and on the other, that Christ does not actually appear until after the seventh vial. The weight of evidence seems to support the view, of the judgments being continuous; especially as the seven angels with the vials are said to have the seven *last* plagues.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 10.

OCTOBER, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

1908—1915.

With this issue the magazine enters upon the eighth year of its publication. Changes have taken place since its commencement, but the One Who permitted this work to be undertaken remains the same, without variableness or shadow of turning. There is continuous testimony that the labours of those who contribute to its pages have not been in vain. We are grateful to those who have written to us with reference to our article, "*The Great War, and its Lessons,*" which appeared in the August issue; and gratified that so many have found help. The desire has been expressed that it should be published in separate form, and this will be done as soon as possible. Orders may be sent to Mr. Alfred Holness, 14, Paternoster Row, E.C.; Pickering and Inglis, 11, Bothwell Circus, Glasgow; or to the Author, 73, Durham Rd., Wimbledon, London, S.W. Our readers will notice the Editor's change of address. After fourteen years residence in Leeds, we have removed to new surroundings. From first to last we have felt that God was ordering this for us; and so it has proved. May we count upon the prayers of our readers that the purpose He has in view in bringing us to a new locality may be abundantly realised. How wonderful are God's dealings with His children! How unceasingly, with what mercy and wisdom, He guides, disciplines and blesses them. There is not a movement connected with their sojourn down here which is not of interest to Him, nor any circumstance He cannot employ to do them good. But the *deepest* lessons often cannot be told, they are between ourselves and God. In connection with the above change, with all that preceded and accompanied it, there are matters too private and personal to relate. God permits things which not only seem to try us up to breaking point, but to baffle and perplex us as well, until, like Job, we are almost ready to challenge the dealings of the Almighty. If any of our readers are passing through such an experience we would take the opportunity of reminding them that they are not alone, and that the vicissitudes or sorrows they are encountering are not strange. There are others

with them in the same furnace. Nor is God arbitrary or harsh. There is a reason for, there is a design in, all His ways. The book of Job is the grand lesson-book in this connection; and we cannot tell our readers all that its pages have meant to us during the past month. It has spoken when every other voice was unavailing. It has explained mysteries which could be solved by no other means. This precious and unique portion of the Divine Oracles contains many lessons; but two seem to stand out with the utmost distinctness. One is, it is no use to argue with God or try to put Him in the wrong; the other, God will in the end justify His ways, and add such blessing as will compel us to say, "the ways of the Lord are right."

Job knew to the full the depth of agony which the tortured spirit of man has sometimes to pass through before it can reach the light of day, and can say "*Now mine eye seeth Thee*": and his experience has proved a cup of consolation and strength to many a burdened one since. It is when we see "the end of the Lord," and see ourselves, that the explanation of all that seemed so hostile and bitter comes, and instead of complaining we bow and worship.

" And so in perfect peace we go,
 Along the way He trod;
 Still learning from all need below
 Depths of the heart of God."

Here is what a lonely woman writes from far away in Australia: we take it from the *Australian Missionary Tidings*: "I have left the North, arriving in Brisbane in March. Up where I have been is no place for a respectable Christian woman to live alone. I tried hard, but left at last . . . I think you know I have delicate health, and am so lonely that I have to be continually remembering that He has said He will never leave me, and that He is always near and cares, for there is no one else. I have a great longing for a Christian friend, someone to talk to about the Lord . . . My life is, and has been for many years, very sad. I need the prayers of the Lord's people. Some time ago Mr. Paton sent me a little booklet entitled "*Angels in White, or Care and its Cure*," It helps me much, but I still crave of the Lord a friend, one of His own friends to be near me. Please don't forget my loneliness and need."

Will our readers remember this case in prayer, and also give thanks for the comfort God has already given to her.

It will be with regret that the readers of this magazine will learn that Mr. Walter Scott, who so often contributes to its pages, is lying seriously ill at his home, Carlton-by-Nottingham; and his daughter tells us that all his engagements till the end of the year have been cancelled. We spent the night with him on our way south at the end of August, and were surprised to learn that he was taken seriously ill the day after we left. His daughter writes: "The day after your short visit father suddenly collapsed. Excessive vomiting of blood from gastric ulcer endangered his life. He is now, thank God, out of danger and doing as well as his advanced age will allow." Later news is as follows: "Last night he had a bad relapse, and is suffering severe pain."

Our brother is known far and wide through his writings on prophetic and other subjects. For over fifty years he has been a minister of the word of God, and he is now well past the allotted span of life. He has not only served Christ, but followed Him. We are sure there will be many prayers offered for his recovery, if it be the Lord's will to spare him; and also the wife and daughter will not be forgotten.

"Comfort through all this vale of tears in blest profusion flows." So sings the writer of a well-known hymn. How good it is to know this. These words express a profound truth. If God permits affliction to come it is that we may learn how He is able to comfort, and thus be drawn closer to His heart. Job had three "miserable comforters"; but there is a Divine Comforter, Who never misunderstands us, Who can feel with us in all that we are feeling, and knows just how things affect us, which no human friend ever can know. At the present time, in connection with this terrible war, and for other reasons, too, how many of God's people need comfort. May they know One Who can not only enter into their side, because He fully understands their case, having made Himself acquainted with every form of human woe, but Who is also able to lift them above all that belongs to this scene of sin and sorrow, to be in spirit where He now is in the unclouded light of heaven and the deep calm of the presence of God.

When one is fully satisfied with himself and is dissatisfied with everybody else you may rest assured that he is either a Pharisee (Luke xviii. 11), or a backslider (Rev. iii. 17).

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

X. THE RE-GATHERING OF ISRAEL.

NEARLY nineteen centuries have passed since the apostle asked the question, "Hath God cast away His people"? meaning the twelve tribes of Israel (Rom. xi. 1). Christendom's answer to this question has been practically "Yes," for Christendom has long treated Israel with disdain and cruelty, as though they were a people (like Amalek of old) for whom divine forgiveness could never be. But Christendom has blundered in this, as in many another matter of grave importance.

In answer to his inquiry, the apostle directs attention to his own case. "I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." If God could find mercy in His heart for such an one as Paul, it may be regarded as the earnest of mercy for his guilty nation, for Paul was a specimen case, both in sin and in grace (1 Tim. i. 12-16). Moreover, he adds in Rom. xi. 2: "God hath not cast away His people which He *foreknew*." Mark the word "foreknew," for it covers everything. It explains all God's dealings with Israel from first to last. Seeing that He "foreknew" His people He was fully aware, when He pledged Himself to Abraham, how ungrateful and evil his seed would be, yet He gave the father of the faithful both His word and His oath (Heb. vi. 13, Gal. iii. 15-18). His purposes therefore stand; postponed undoubtedly, but not abandoned. Israel must yet possess every inch of the territory promised to Abraham, and must yet enjoy every predicted blessing in the land, and that for ever more. The divine character makes this absolutely sure.

When God in His word speaks of judgment upon Israel He invariably limits it with an "until." Thus in Rom. xi. 25, we are told that "blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." In Luke xxi. 24, we read: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." "The *fulness* of the Gentiles" means the present Christian company; "the *times* of the Gentiles" means

the period of Gentile supremacy which commenced with Nebuchadnezzar some six centuries before Christ. When the Christian company is completed, and removed to heavenly glory, and when the appointed period of Gentile supremacy is ended, God will turn His attention once more to the whole house of Israel.

We repeat, "the *whole* house of Israel," for so runs the word of Jehovah. See Ezek. xxxix. 25, as one of many passages that could be quoted in this connection. Ten of Israel's tribes are lost to us (the assertions of certain cranks notwithstanding); we are familiar with representatives of two tribes only. "The Jews" we call them. But all Israel's tribes are known to God, and "He that scattered Israel will gather him" (Jer. xxxi. 10). "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee" (Jer. xxx. 11).

The world's blessing awaits Israel's restoration to God and to Canaan. Not to the Church, but to Abraham, Jehovah said: "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). Peter told the people in Acts iii. that Jesus would remain in the heavens until their repentance and conversion. When Israel turns to God, times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord, and the restitution of all things will take place. In Ps. lxxvii. 1. Israel in faith prays: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us (Selah); that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations." Israel and Jerusalem form the pivot upon which everything turns for the nations and for creation. Neither London, Berlin, nor Rome is, nor ever can be, God's centre of administration and blessing. How little do the proud ones of earth understand this! Truly God's thoughts are not men's thoughts, neither are His ways men's ways (Isa. lv. 8).

The resuscitation of Israel as a nation, when it comes about, will be one of the most remarkable events in the history of our planet. It will be a divine work. Only God can make the dry bones live (Ezek. xxxvii.). Man will try his hand at it before God's time is fully come. Isa. xviii. suggests an effort on the part of a maritime power to re-establish the people so long "scattered and peeled." Such a movement is being discussed at the present hour. It is recognised that when the Turkish Empire is overthrown

(and many expect this as one of the results of the present world-wide conflict), Judea will be a difficult problem for the nations to settle. Such is the fascination which that land has for the "Christian" powers, and such is its geographical situation, that it would be well-nigh impossible to allot it to any existing state without serious trouble ensuing. Accordingly, the suggestion has already been made to give it back to the Jews. This is a very likely thing to happen, but such an event will be no fulfilment of the Scriptures we have been considering. It is a partial restoration only, and a restoration for trouble. The re-establishment of a Jewish state will furnish the Antichrist with his opportunity, with all the horrors that that means for the unhappy people. God's time will come when the Son of Man appears in glory. Then the great trumpet will be blown, and all Israel will be gathered, never again to fall a prey to their neighbours (Isa. xxvii. 13). Jerusalem will become the metropolis of the earth; the throne of Jehovah will once more be set up there; the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh; and righteousness and peace will be established.

Israel's enemies will be numerous at the time of the end, for Satan ever delights to stir up hostility against those who are loved of God. The enemy in the land (the crafty Antichrist) will be set upon by both the Kings of the North and South, the Jewish people suffering terribly in the fray, as though ground between the upper and nether millstones. The King of the North is the latter-day representative of the potentates who once ruled from the Ægean to the Indus (Dan. xi.); the King of the South is the ruler of Egypt. The King of the North, in whom will be fulfilled the many unaccomplished prophecies concerning "the Assyrians," will be no mean foe. His prowess is described in Dan. xi. 40-45; and the experiences of the Jewish people under his iron heel are given in Ps. lxxix.; Zech. xiv. 1-2. His allies are named in Ps. lxxxiii.; and Dan. viii. 24, shows that he will be backed by a power mightier still than his own.

That power is Russia—Israel's last and most deadly enemy. Two whole chapters in Ezekiel (xxxviii., xxxix.) are devoted to the last disastrous enterprise of the Czar of that day. It is remarkable that so detailed a description should have been given by the Spirit of God more than twenty-five centuries in advance. There was no Russian Empire when Ezekiel penned those chapters. China,

India, and Egypt were already hoary. The very foundations of the Russian Empire were not laid until about fifteen hundred years after Ezekiel's day. The alliances with which we are familiar in 1915 will have been annulled ere this prophecy is fulfilled. France and England will at the end form part of the revived Roman power, the policy of which will be utterly at variance with that of Russia. The cupidity of the Northern Empire will be aroused by the wealth of restored Israel, and the absence of fortifications in their land will suggest an easy victory (Ezek. xxxviii. 10-12). But Jehovah will speak in His jealousy, and in the fire of His wrath; He will put hooks into the jaws of Gog, turning him back with utter destruction. The burying of the bones will occupy the house of Israel seven months, and the munitions of war left upon that frightful battlefield will supply Israel with firewood for seven years (Ezek. xxxix. 8-16).

The closing words of Moses' wilderness song (Deut. xxxii. 43) describe the situation at the end when the judgments of God have done their work. "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will make expiation for His land and for His people." (R.V.). Israel's wrongs avenged, the people and their land reconciled to God in virtue of Christ's atonement and all the nations of the earth sharers of Israel's joy—such are the gracious purposes of God when fighting days are done.

Next month (D.V.) :—"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

A CONFESSION.

When I was young, after taking an evening service, the thought has come, "What shall I take as my next text? I shall soon use them all up." These thoughts, I gladly confess, I was able to judge and condemn as from the enemy. Now I am old, the Word is to me as a huge basket full of most beautiful gems, and I must confess that, as yet, I have examined only a few of them, and that only in a very casual manner. Oh what a storehouse of truth! What a mine of wealth is God's precious Word!!

F.J.J.

SPURIOUS SPIRITUALITY.

By R.E.

“ He is a Jew (or Christian) which is one inwardly . . . whose praise is not of men but of God ” (Rom. ii. 29).

“ IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery.” It is because of the intrinsic worth of anything that it is copied. If it had no excellence, no goodness, no speciality, it would be neglected. A sovereign is counterfeited because it possesses value. So, because there is such a quality as true spirituality—and a rare quality it is—there is also its counterfeit. And the counterfeit is far more common than is generally supposed. It is our present purpose to mention some forms of it ; for, with the best intentions, we are all liable to assume that we have the real, when we possess only its substitute. And just as it is possible to carry a bad shilling in one’s pocket without suspecting it, much less being the accomplice of a forger ; so we just as unwittingly slip into a spurious spirituality, while all the time fancying it is genuine. Those who fall into such a mistake (and who does not, at times ?), are not necessarily hypocrites.

1. One common error is to *mistake the form for the spirit ; or to insist upon some point or doctrine of minor importance as if it were the essential thing.* The Jews constantly did so. Outward circumcision, ritual, forms and ceremonies, became everything. Paul had this in mind when he says, “ He is a Jew who is one *inwardly* ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit.” We are disposed to do the same thing, only it takes another form. It is not that the form in itself is necessarily wrong—circumcision was not—but the soul rests in the form, and elevates it above the spirit. The reason is, of course, it is so hard to keep in touch with the vital and essential ; so easy to grasp what is outward and material. True spirituality, then, is giving that which is essential and of supreme importance its proper and commanding place.

2. There is, strange to say, a spurious spirituality which goes to the opposite extreme. It does not take account of outward things, such as circumstances, nor does it see that man has to be considered as well as God. It is fond of quoting texts, without even asking what precise bearing the text has upon the peculiar circumstances that have arisen. This is a form of spiritual quackery.

A quack, in medicine, is one who does not take circumstances into account. In other words, he does not take into consideration the actual condition of the patient; probably because he does not understand the symptoms. He has one or two specifics for every conceivable ailment, and applies them without any discrimination. The spiritual quack quotes texts in very much the same way. He does not consider that while the text is perfectly true in itself, and divinely inspired, it may not apply to the particular case in hand.

St. Paul, who was truly spiritual, did not act in this way. At one time, he employed circumcision, as in the case of Timothy, whose father was a Greek, and "because of the Jews in those quarters." Under different conditions, he declines to circumcise Titus. He is a heavenly citizen; yet when he feels that circumstances demand it, he does not hesitate to declare his Roman citizenship, and to appeal unto Cæsar. Yet there are people, to-day, who seem to pursue the opposite course. They do not take circumstances into account. They make use of texts, which can only safely be used in an abstract and relative sense, as if they had an absolute and universal bearing. No stress of circumstances, no need, however dire, no variation from the ordinary course, nor any special demand that may arise, can ever make them flinch in this mechanical process. Its serious defect is, it loses sight of God *in the circumstances*; forgetting that the circumstances are by His permission, if not by His direct ordering. To lose sight of, or ignore, the circumstances, is often to lose sight of, and ignore God, and a person who does so is to that extent unspiritual.

3. *There is a spurious spirituality which assumes a sanctity loftier than the Bible.* This may seem a strange statement, and yet it is true. Constantly are we confronted by it. It acts with undue severity; denounces that which the Bible does not condemn; prohibits what the Word of God does not forbid; looks upon that as evil which is harmless; brands as unlawful that which is legitimate and even expedient when kept under due control; and adopts as its motto, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." How subtle this snare is! And the flesh often falls a prey to it. The reason being, that our evil nature plays as much part in the assumption of a *superior* sanctity as in the most degraded sins. The one appeals to a certain character of mind and temperament quite as much as does the other.

4. The kind of superior sanctity we have described often speaks and acts as though God had *taken us out of the world*. Yet the words of our Lord's prayer are very distinct; "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." We are not of it. Its spirit, its aims, are not to be ours; and many of its methods we cannot adopt. On the other hand we need to avoid a course which, while not carrying us into a monastery, is very much akin to the monasticism of the Middle Ages.

5. There is, lastly, a spurious spirituality which selects some circumstance, such as an event in a person's life; or his daily calling; or his ecclesiastical position; and judges of everything from that single standpoint. It is the resuscitation of the old cry, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Instead of judging a thing on its own merits, we allow its antecedents or supposed reputation to colour our imagination and warp our judgment. It is hardly necessary to point out how all this proves the absence of true spirituality.

Perhaps a concrete example may help to illustrate some of the points we have enumerated. In a monthly periodical there recently appeared an article entitled "How does the Christian stand in relation to the world"? This is a very important subject, and we hoped to learn something from it. It is but the bare truth to say we were greatly disappointed.

The way the author (A.J.P.) commences seems to us peculiarly unfortunate. His subject is the Christian's relation to the world, yet he at once begins by talking about the heavenly calling of the believer. One would have thought that this would rather tell us what our relation to heaven is. Moreover, he speaks as if "the heavenly calling" is all that can be said of the one who is a believer.

He proceeds to speak of nationality, and asks, How did nationality come about? He implies that it was entirely due to the wickedness of men, and that God had no hand in it, except in judgment. Speaking of Babel, he says, God "confounded their language, scattered the people abroad upon the face of the earth, and called their city 'Babel' which means *confusion*. Now 'God is *not the author of confusion*,' so that we learn clearly that nationality became a necessity as a result of man's folly and sin." We do not see clearly, at all, that this fact made nationality a *necessity*.

Something else might have happened. The reason it did not is due to a fact which A.J.P. totally ignores, viz. : that God had something to do with national life. The Bible distinctly tells us that He divided to the nations their inheritance ; *He* separated the sons of Adam ; and further, that He determined their times and appointed their bounds (Acts xvii. 26 ; Duet. xxxii. 8).*

The article goes on to declare that Abram's call "involved God's setting aside the nations." Here the writer goes beyond Scripture, as in the former case he comes short of it. Illustrating, by the way, what we have said earlier. In what sense did Abraham's call set *aside* the nations, when a few centuries later God specially raised up Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and conferred upon him universal sovereignty, and moreover, instituted the "times of the Gentiles" (nations) ?

But we find, as we go on, that such statements have an end in view, and it is simply a case of special pleading. The effort is to try and prove that one who is a Christian has no connection with any nation. "If he is not of the world, *he is plainly not of a nation.*" This does not follow, in spite of the big capitals A.J.P. employs to emphasise his point. A nation and the world are not one and the same thing ; though, of course, the nations are the nations of this world. The world was in existence nearly two thousand years before there was a nation ; and *nations* might cease to-day, and yet the world continue. Scripture plainly declares Christians are not of the world, it never says they are not of a nation. Long after Christianity was established Paul spoke of himself as a Jew and also as a Roman. A.J.P.'s deduction is altogether false. It runs counter to the most palpable of facts. There are certain circumstances under which everyone of us, whether converted or unconverted, must declare his nationality—A.J.P. included. How could he do this truthfully, if his assertion is correct ? † The fact is, he is confounding what we are before God with our position before men—our "new birth" with our natural birth. He is confusing the truth of "in Christ" with the life which we still

* No doubt man's sin had something to do with it, just as man's sin, to some extent, accounted for the first king of Israel. But in both cases God took the matter in hand, and overruled it for the accomplishment of His own purposes, and so that which, originally, was due to human failure became part of a divinely ordered plan.

† Most of us have recently filled in forms in which our nationality was either implicitly or explicitly declared.

have to live in the flesh ; he is mixing up heavenly position with earthly responsibility and relationship. The one does not obliterate or set aside the other. Each is true *in its place*.

He further confuses the issue by declaring that if we feel *any* responsibility at all with regard to the nation to which we by birth belong, this involves our "taking as full a part in the government of the nation as the unbeliever." We reply, nothing of the kind. Moreover, if by birth we belong to a nation (and these are his own words) then we do belong to it, and nothing can alter this. Nor does he help us when he brings forward the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. He writes as though Christ were our example in the actual details of our lives. He is not alone in this ; we have seen it attempted by others. But a moment's reflection will convince us how impossible is such a conception of Christ's position in this respect. His path cannot be ours ; and, in many important respects, ours was never His. There are certain positions and relationships He never filled. It is therefore futile to ask, as A.J.P. does, would Christ do this, that or the other ? The scope of His example is clearly defined in 1 Pet. ii. 21-3, and refers to a certain moral attitude. His question as regards the apostles is equally beside the point. They had a special calling and were set to do a particular work. To ask whether they were this, that or the other, is an equally aimless question.

But we must stop. It is not in any captious spirit that one writes thus ; nor do we as a rule criticise the efforts of those who, to a large extent, are seeking the same ends as ourselves. But the article we have ventured to analyse is a specimen of the rather misleading deliverances which are to be met with, and which, while assuming a very lofty spiritual standpoint and claiming to be based upon Scripture, have no real divine authority. We trust it has been shown that the assertions to which we take exception have no warrant from Scripture, and consequently the kind of spirituality they are calculated to engender is of a doubtful kind. The article is one-sided and overdrawn. Deductions are made which carry us far beyond what is revealed. It is not by such means that a true spirituality is fostered. This can be promoted only from within, and in close communion with God. If we are right at the centre we cannot go far wrong as to the circumference—all else is only artificial and mechanical—based upon human deductions from the Word of God, and not upon that Word itself.

THE PATHWAY.

As my Advocate in Heaven
Jesus lives for me,
Ever pleading with the Father
Should I sinful be ;
Feeling with me in my sorrow
On the throne above,
Thence His hand is stretched to succour,
Proof of changeless love.

From the mountain top He sees me
On the waters drear,
Toiling, rowing, almost found'ring
Thence He gives "good cheer."
When the waves are rough and boist'rous
And I'm filled with fear,
Jesus comes through seas of trouble,
Dries my every tear.

Siftings, testings, stripes and pruning
Purify the heart ;
Harmless, through the heavenly armour,
Every fury dart.
Heated furnace, how'er scorching,
Makes the metal pure,
Tho' it may be sevenfold heated
Makes the work more sure.

Grace sufficient for my pathway
And my daily need,
From the Living Fount of blessing
Shall be mine indeed.
I shall triumph in my weakness
By His grace supplied ;
In His meekness is my triumph,
Walking by His side.

Thorns and briars in my pathway
Sorely try my heart,
Dried up wells and desert marches
Serve a needful part.
Purifying and uplifting
On my heavenward way,
When I seek the grace that's needful
Manna is my stay.

Sweet the portion now He gives me,
Treasure from above,
Brings me to His sumptuous banquet
Banner o'er me love,
Throws His loving arms around me,
Gives me love's embrace,
Sees nought in me but the beauty
Of His matchless grace.

LETTERS FROM THE PAST.

The following genuine letters passed between the Rev. Mr. Love and his wife, just previous to his being beheaded on Tower Hill, on account of his religious principles. They have been kindly placed in our hands for publication and we hope they will prove acceptable to our readers.

LETTER I.

LETTER FROM MRS. LOVE TO HER HUSBAND.

London, Aug. 21, 1651.

“ SWEET HEART !

“ **I** Beseech you to observe that it is your wife that writes to you.

I hope thou hast freely given up thy wife and children to the Lord God ! who said, leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me. O ! that the Lord would keep thee from having one troubled thought about thy relations. I desire to give thyself freely into the Father's hands, and not only look upon it as a crown of glory for thee to die for Christ, but as an honour to me, that I should have a husband to leave for Christ.

“ I dare not speak to thee, nor have I a thought within myself of my unspeakable loss, but wholly keep my eye fixed upon thy unspeakable and inconceivable gain. Thou leavest but a sinful mortal wife, to be everlastingly married to the King of Glory : Thou leavest but children, and brethren, and sisters, to go to the Lord Jesus : Thou leavest friends, to go to the enjoyment of holy angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect : Thou dost but leave earth for heaven ; and, if natural thoughts begin to rise, I hope that spirit of grace, that is within thee, will quell them, and knowing that all things below are but dung and dross, in comparison of those things above. I know thou keepest thine eye fixed upon the loss of earth, my dear ! I know that God hath not only prepared glory for thee, and thee for it, but, I am persuaded, he will sweeten the way for thee, to come to the enjoyment of it. And when thou art putting on thy clothes that morning, think thou art putting on thy wedding clothes, to go to be married to thy Redeemer ! When the messenger of death comes to thee, let him not be dreadful to thee ; but look upon him as the messenger that brings thee good tidings of eternal life ! When thou goest up to the scaffold remember what thou toldest me, “ It was but the

chariot to draw thee to thy father's house." When thou layest down thy dear head, to receive the last stroke, remember what thou saidst to me, "that though thy head was severed from thy body, yet thy soul shall be united to Jesus Christ, the head in heaven." And though it may seem bitter, that, by the hands of men, we are parted a little sooner, than otherwise we would have been, yet, let us consider, it is the will of the Father; besides we could not have lived much longer together on earth; it will not be long 'ere we shall enjoy one another in heaven. Oh! let us comfort one another with these sayings. Oh! be comforted; it is but a little while ere thou shalt be where the weary are at rest, and where the wicked shall cease from troubling thee. Oh! remember, that though thou eat thy dinner with bitter herbs, yet thou shalt have a joyful supper with Jesus Christ at night. And, my dear, by what I write to you, I do not undertake to be a teacher to thee, for this comfort I have received of the Lord by thee. I hear a warrant is come to the Lieutenant; I am ready to think it may be concerning thee, to send thee to thy journey's end to-morrow, and that because they may possibly be hindered if they stay until the day appointed; but, I am persuaded, thou art so far from being afraid of it, that thou dost long for the day, which, next under God, to hear of thy willingness to die, will be the greatest comfort in the world.

"I can write no more, but commit thee to the hand of that God with whom thou and I ere long shall be. Farewell, Farewell."

MARY LOVE.

LETTER II.

ANSWER.

"MY GRACIOUS BELOVED!

"I AM now going from a prison to a palace. I am now going to receive my wages. I am going into heaven, where there are two of my children, and leaving you on earth, where there are three of my babes. Those two above need none of my care, but those three below need yours. It comforts me to think two of my children are in the bosom of Abraham, and three of them will be in the arms of such a godly mother; I know you are a woman of a sorrowful spirit, yet be comforted; though your sorrows be great on account concerning your husband's going out of this world, yet your pains shall be the less in bringing up your children in the

world. You shall be a joyful mother, though you be a sad widow. God hath many mercies in store for you: the prayers of a dying husband for you will not be lost. To my shame I speak it, I never prayed so fervently for you when I was at liberty, as I have done in prison. I cannot write much, but I have a few practical councils to leave with you, viz.:

1st. "Keep under a sound orthodox-soul-searching Ministry. Oh! there are many deceivers gone out into the world; but Christ's sheep know his voice, and a stranger they will not follow. Attend any Minister that teaches the way of God in truth, and follow David's advice. Ps. xix. 27.

2nd. "Bring up your children in the knowledge and admiration of the Lord; the mother ought to be the teacher in the father's absence. Prov. xxxi. 1. "The words that his mother taught him:" and Timothy was instructed by his grandmother. II. Tim. i. 5.

3rd. "Pray in your family daily, that your's may be in the families which call upon God.

4th. "Labour for a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

5th. "Pore not on the comforts you want, but upon the mercies you have; look rather at God's end in afflicting, than to measure any degree of your affliction.

6th. "Labour to clear up your evidence in Heaven, when God takes from you the comforts of earth; so that, as your sufferings do abound, your consolation in Christ may abound much more. Though it be good to maintain a holy jealousy of the deceitfulness of the heart, yet it is ill for you to cherish fears and doubts touching the truth of your graces.

"If ever I had confidence touching the grace of another, as Peter said, "I am persuaded that this is the grace of God wherein ye stand." 1 Pet. v. 12.

7th. "O, my dear soul! wherefore dost thou doubt whose heart has been upright; whose walk has been holy; I could venture my soul this day in your soul's stead, such a confidence have I in you.

8th. "When you find your heart secure, proud and presumptuous, then pore upon corruption more than grace; and when you find your heart doubting and unbelieving, then look upon your graces without your infirmities.

9th. "Study the covenant of grace and mercies of Christ ; and you are interested in such a covenant that accepts the righteousness of Jesus Christ, as if it were your own alone. Oh, my love ! rest, rest thou in the love of God, in the bosom of Christ.

10th. "Swallow up your will in the will of God. It is a bitter cup we are to drink, but it is the cup our Father hath put into our hands.

"When Paul was to suffer at Jerusalem, the Christians could say, "The will of the Lord be done" ! O, say ye so when I go to Tower-hill, "The will of the Lord be done" !

11th. "Rejoice in my joy.

"The joy of the Lord is my strength !

"Oh ! let it be your's also.

"Dear wife, farewell ; I will call you my wife no more. I shall see thy face no more, yet I am not much troubled, for now I am going to the bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, to whom I shall be eternally married.

"Farewell, dear love ! and again I say farewell : the Lord Jesus be with your spirit : the Maker of Heaven and earth be a kind husband to you, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be a father to your children. So prays

"Your dying, yet most affectionate friend,

CHRIST. LOVE."

From the Tower of London, the 22nd day of August, 1651, the day of my glorification.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

(Continued.)

By WALTER SCOTT.

THE Psalter is more largely quoted from in the New Testament and in human literature than any other Old Testament book. In all parts of the New Testament there will be found references and citations from about forty Psalms. We would earnestly commend a careful study of these New Testament references to the Psalter. Many a hidden beauty will be discovered ; many a precious gem

unearthed, and an amplitude of meaning given by the sacred writers to these odes and songs of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Read Ps. xlv. 6, 7, in the light of Heb. i. 8, 9, in which God Himself declares the King to be *God* (ver. 8) and *Man* (ver. 9), in the combined glory of His Person. What a weighty assertion, from the highest source, of the Deity and humanity of our Lord! Then, again, read the prayer of the rejected Messiah of Israel in Ps. cii. 24: I said, "O my God take me not away in the midst of my days"; in the light of Heb. i. 10-12. In those three verses are contained a mine of spiritual wealth in which the eternity of His (Christ's) being and greatness are declared. What a contrast to these words of the Psalm: "He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days." Just one other instance of New Testament *added* light on the Psalms. In Ps. ii. the nations rage while Jehovah calmly announces His determination to set His Anointed, His Son, as earth's King on Zion. Then He addresses His Son, "Thou shalt break them with a *rod of iron*"—a rod of inflexible righteousness. But when we discover from Rev. ii. 27, that the *same* grant of authority (ver. 26), and the *same* exercise of administrative rule are conferred upon the New Testament overcomer, as that which the Psalm predicates of Christ, the King, we are truly amazed at the kingly dignity conferred upon saints. We share in His greatness as King; See also Ps. cxlix. 6-9.

QUOTATIONS.

Ps. ii. 1, 2	..	..	..	..	Acts iv. 25-26.
Ps. ii. 7	..	..	..	..	Acts xiii. 33.
Ps. ii. 9	..	..	..	..	Rev. ii. 27.
Ps. v. 9	..	..	..	..	Rom. iii. 13.
Ps. viii. 2	..	..	..	..	Matt. xxi. 16.
Ps. viii. 4-6	..	..	..	..	Heb. ii. 6-8.
Ps. viii. 6	..	..	..	..	1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22.
Ps. x. 7	..	..	..	..	Rom. iii. 14.
Ps. xiv. 1-3	..	..	..	..	Rom. iii. 10-12.
Ps. xvi. 8-11	..	..	..	..	Acts ii. 25-28.
Ps. xviii. 49	..	..	..	..	Rom. xv. 9.
Ps. xix. 4	..	..	..	..	Rom. x. 18.
Ps. xxii. 1	..	..	..	..	Mark xv. 34; Matt. xxvii. 46.
Ps. xxii. 2	..	..	..	..	Matt. xxvii. 46.
Ps. xxii. 6	..	..	..	..	Matt. ii. 23.
Ps. xxii. 18	..	..	..	..	Matt. xxvii. 35; John xix. 24.
Ps. xxii. 22	..	..	..	..	Heb. ii. 12; John xx. 17.
Ps. xxiv. 1	..	..	..	..	1 Cor. x. 26.
Ps. xxxii. 1, 2	..	..	..	..	Rom. iv. 7, 8.
Ps. xxxiv. 12-16	..	..	..	..	1 Peter iii. 10-12.
Ps. xxxvi. 1	..	..	..	..	Rom. iii. 18.
Ps. xl. 6-9	..	..	..	..	Heb. x. 5-7.
Ps. xli. 9	..	..	..	..	John xiii. 18.

Ps. xlv. 22	..	..	..	..	Rom. viii. 36.
Ps. xlv. 6, 7	..	..	..	..	Heb. i. 8, 9.
Ps. li. 4	..	..	..	..	Rom. iii. 4.
Ps. lxxviii. 18	..	..	..	..	Eph. iv. 8.
Ps. lxxix. 9 (<i>first</i> clause)	..	..	..	..	John ii. 17.
Ps. lxxix. 9 (<i>second</i> clause)	..	..	..	..	Rom. xv. 3.
Ps. lxxix. 21	..	..	..	..	John xix. 30.
Ps. lxxix. 22, 23	..	..	..	..	Rom. xi. 9, 10.
Ps. lxxix. 25	..	..	..	..	Acts i. 20.
Ps. lxxviii. 2	..	..	..	..	Matt. xiii. 35.
Ps. lxxviii. 24	..	..	..	..	John vi. 31.
Ps. lxxxii. 6	..	..	..	..	John x. 34.
Ps. lxxxix. 20	..	..	..	..	Acts xiii. 22.
Ps. xci. 11, 12	..	..	..	..	Matt. iv. 6.
Ps. xciv. 11	..	..	..	..	1 Cor. iii. 20.
Ps. xcvi. 7-11.	..	..	..	..	Heb. iii. 7-11.
Ps. xcvi. 7	..	..	..	..	Heb. i. 6.
Ps. cii. 25-27	..	..	..	..	Heb. i. 10-12.
Ps. civ. 4	..	..	..	..	Heb. i. 7.
Ps. cix. 3	..	..	..	..	John xv. 25.
Ps. cix. 8	..	..	..	..	Acts i. 20.
Ps. cx. 1..	..	..	..	..	Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42.
Ps. cx. 4..	..	..	..	..	Heb. v. 6.
Ps. cxii. 9	..	..	..	..	2 Cor. ix. 9.
Ps. cxvi. 10	..	..	..	..	2 Cor. iv. 13.
Ps. cxvii. 1	..	..	..	..	Rom. xvii.
Ps. cxviii. 6	..	..	..	..	Heb. xiii. 6.
Ps. cxviii. 22, 23	..	..	..	..	Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11.
Ps. cxxxii. 11	..	..	..	..	Acts ii. 30.
Ps. cxl. 3	..	..	..	..	Rom. iii. 13.

In the foregoing citations carefully note what is added, or omitted, or altered.

A PRAYER.

- “Father forgive them,” Jesus prayed,
They know not what they do;
Father forgive, and so was stayed
The wrath, which was their due.
- “Father forgive,” appealing cry,
So full of tenderness,
- “Father forgive,”—and so may I
Forgive, and learn to bless.
- “Father forgive,” the sweetest strain
That reaches God’s own ear,
Father forgive; may I exclaim
When I am bowed in prayer.
- “Father forgive”; it is His joy
To pardon, and to bless!
And He forgives without alloy,
In unmixed tenderness.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IN connection with the work of Mr. R. E. Brider amongst soldiers and sailors, the following will be read with interest:—

“ Thank you very much for the welcome gift of Bibles received. They have commenced their career of usefulness; also I am very grateful for the books. Your kindness has been the means of helping forward the work of God on this ship, and we are truly grateful to Him for His love in raising you up. We are receiving help and blessing, a backslider has returned to the joy of the Lord, since I wrote. Last night’s prayer meeting was truly refreshing, and the spirit of earnestness plainly felt. Times have been rather strained, owing to our continual activity at sea, but unless something quite unusual happens the meetings go on, even though a lot may be detained on duty. The meetings are a great help, and one or two fresh faces have turned up.”

A Christian soldier at the front writes:—

“ My dear friend, many thanks for letter and parcel. I am pleased to say that this leaves me quite well in health and spirits. Your tracts proved very useful. They help me to get many a word in for the Master, and I believe much good will come, for out here men are in a thoughtful mood, and will listen to you when you talk to them of the things of God. I am writing this having just returned from the firing line, it is nearly 10 p.m., and the guns are booming away. Since last I wrote to you I am very pleased to state that from time to time it has been possible to arrange gospel and Bible meetings, and profitable times have been gloriously experienced, and many have taken their stand for Jesus. Some, thank God, surrendered just before their call came. I am asked very often for Khaki Testaments, and should be pleased to have more of them, so that I could meet those who ask for one with the Word of God. Begging an interest in your prayers.”

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES.

THE MYSTERY.

Ephesians iii.

THIS is one of the greatest chapters of the Bible. Notice a few of the words and expressions to begin with. “ *Unsearchable riches* ” (ver. 8); “ *Manifold (or all various) wisdom of God* ” (ver. 10); “ *The love of Christ which passeth knowledge* ” (ver. 19); “ *All the fulness of God* ” (ver. 19); “ *Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think* ” (ver. 20).

Then notice the subject of the chapter. It is the Mystery (vers. 3-4). Something which had been *hid* from ages and generations and not made known unto the sons of men until it was revealed unto the apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Yet it was God’s eternal purpose, though hid in Him until the moment came for its revelation (see vers. 5, 19). So that we are living in a day of

marvellous light ; and Satan's great effort is to keep the children of God in the dark as to this wondrous truth. By "mystery" is not meant something which no one understands or is intended to understand. It simply means, a truth which is known only to the initiated. That is to say, the world does not understand it ; it is for those who are children of God. You can understand that there are certain truths which are for all the world (such for instance as John iii. 16) but there are other truths which no one can appreciate or understand until he has entered the family of God. This mystery is one of these.

What is the mystery which once even God's children did not know, but which is now revealed ? It cannot be found in the Old Testament, for we are told (ver. 9) "it was hid in God." Verse 6 explains it : "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." In other words, Jew and Gentile are brought into the same relationship with Christ, and share the same inheritance (see Chap. i. 10-11). They form one body, and have the promised Spirit. It is not only that Jew and Gentile are one, but they are one with Christ, baptized with one Spirit, so as to form one body—the body of which Christ is the Head : this is the mystery of which the Apostle speaks. To know this wondrous relationship to Christ, its nearness and all that flows from it, is the chief end of the Gospel. It was given in a special way to the Apostle Paul to make known this revelation : "Whereof I was made a minister," he says (ver. 7). And so great is this truth, so exalted and blessed is the place the saints have, that he speaks of himself as "less than the least of all saints." Such is their place collectively in the counsels of God the Father and in relation to the Son, that, looking at himself as an individual, he can only speak of himself in this way.

If the Apostle Paul was speaking to you, he would try and make you understand the truth of your relationship to Christ along with all other Christians. He would speak to you of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." That is, as a member of His body, all the fulness of Christ is for you. You are so joined to Him by the Holy Spirit given to you that only the figure of the head and the body can adequately set it forth. Perhaps you know that brain power is necessary for every movement of the body. The body derives its strength from the head. The stomach cannot

digest food without the brain supplying the necessary force ; and so with every function of the body. Now this conveys some idea of what Christ is to His body—the Church ; and we partake of His life, His Spirit, His energy and His grace—“ unsearchable riches ” alone conveys some idea of the fulness there is in Him for us.

This union of Christ with believers is God’s masterpiece, and He had it in His mind from the beginning. Indeed, when He created the world He intended it as the theatre of its display, and that thus His all various wisdom might be known. Read latter part of ver. 9 in connection with ver. 10. The angels are to learn through the Church the wonders of God’s wisdom, and its all-various character.

So great is the mystery that the Apostle seems to find relief in prayer (ver. 14), just as he did in chap. i. ver. 15. Only it is not a repetition ; this prayer is quite different. The Church (composed of all believers) can only realise her own position and blessing as she recognises the place that is Christ’s. And in order that we may comprehend the place He fills in the Father’s thoughts and plans, we need “ to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ” (ver. 16). “ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Christ has been the beloved object of God from all eternity. We read of Him in John i. as in the bosom of the Father, and it is the Father’s desire that He should dwell in our hearts—have a place in our affections—so that we may understand the love that is behind all the wondrous plan for Christ and the saints. All true Christians are saints, and he desires that we may comprehend with all saints the extent of it—breadth and length and depth and height—that is, the purpose of God for His people as united to Christ. But it is not only the *wisdom* of it, it is all the fruit of love : love planned ; love executed it ; and love delights in it. “ And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” Think of it, dear Christian reader, you are united to One Who loves you with this surpassing love. We do indeed need to pray this prayer, that we may be strengthened by His Spirit, otherwise we cannot appreciate it, for, in the love of Christ we reach the very fulness of God (ver. 19). Greater even than the purpose is the love that planned it, and which led Christ to die for its accomplishment. The purpose and the love which prompted it are connected with the very fulness of God. There is nothing more to be revealed.

The mystery completes the word of God. The Spirit strengthens us with might in order that we may rise to the vastness of it all; and also that our affections may be fixed upon Him Who is the centre of all. Only in the Spirit's power can we comprehend the love that has associated us with Christ and given us part and place with Him in such a wealth and extent of glory. The love is ours; the inheritance is ours; all things are ours; the very fulness of God is ours. God has filled us into His fulness. All the wisdom, love and power of God are displayed in this mystery.

The Chapter may well close with a doxology. So great is God's power, enabling Him to give effect to such a glorious purpose, that He can do more than we ask or think. For in this mystery there is a great deal beyond our asking and thinking. And to God there will be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.

HYMNS OF THE SEA.

(Concluded).

By W. LUFF.

Writing of the Holy Bible, one hymn-writer sings:—

“Against this sea-swept rock
Ten thousand storms their will
Of foam and rage have wildly spent—
It lifts its calm face still.”

Are we in mid ocean? Let us recall Micah vii. 19. “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,” and sing:—

“O love! thou bottomless abyss!
My sins are swallow'd up in thee;
Cover'd is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me.
While Jesu's blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!”

Are we of a missionary spirit?:—

“Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,
And you, ye waters roll;
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;
Till, o'er our ransom'd nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign.”

And what of the Heavenly Shore? :—

“ Our life is like a stormy sea,
Swept by the gales of sin and grief ;
While on the windward and the lee
Hang heavy clouds of unbelief.
But o'er the deep a call we hear,
Like harbour bell's inviting voice ;
It tells the lost that hope is near,
And bids the trembling soul rejoice.”

“ Not now, my child !—a little more rough tossing,
A little longer on the billows' foam ;
A few more journeyings in the desert darkness,
And then the sunshine of thy Father's Home ! ”

It is nearer :—

“ *Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*”

(Rom. xiii. 11).

“ Yon shining shore is nearer,
The saints in robes of light,
With harps and golden vials,
Are almost within sight!
Hark, to the mighty anthem,
That rolls across the sea,
' We give Thee praise and glory,
Eternal Trinity ! ’ ”

“ Saviour, lead me, till at last . . .
When the storm of life is past, . . .
I shall reach the land of day, . . .
Where all tears are wiped away . . . ”

“ Oh, Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love,—
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above ;
There to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand ;
And glory, glory dwelleth
In IMMANUEL'S land.”

“ Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high ;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past ;
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh, receive my soul at last.”

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 11.

NOVEMBER, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

By WALTER SCOTT.

THE Psalter is the mirror of the human heart. From the time of its composition it has laid hold of the soul of man, and asserted its claim as the only book in existence in which individuals, peoples, and governments could express themselves. Trial, weakness, sorrow, sickness, death, war, peace, poverty, confession, penitence, prayer, oppression, sin, holiness, with all the ills and joy of life, find fullest expression in the Psalter. Its universal adaptation is a striking and remarkable evidence of its Divine Authority. No other book in the realm of human literature, or even in the Divine Collection, could take the place of *The Book of Psalms*. No other book in the Bible possesses such marked characteristics. The Psalter is altogether unique, and stands alone as the interpreter of the human heart in its varying moods and tenses. In this respect it has no compeer.

Then, for the Christian the Psalter is precious, inasmuch as it reveals Christ in glories and dignities which all saints find delight in contemplating.

Distinctive Christian teaching as to Christ, the Church, the Holy Spirit, and the position of believers since the Cross and Pentecost, is not to be found in the Psalter. But the book is full of Christ, and this constitutes its main charm to saints of every age.

The Messianic Psalms might well form a volume of themselves. Christ in personal history and prophecy; His present session at God's right hand; His royal priesthood; His throne; Kingdom; and everlasting reign, are, in brief, the subjects of these nineteen Messianic compositions, which in their profound depth might well occupy a life-study. Then, besides His public glories and dignities we have unfolded His feelings, His words, His thoughts under every possible circumstance of trial, of sorrow, of rejection, and of joy as well.

THE MESSIANIC PSALMS.

Psalm ii.—This, the first of the Messianic Psalms, is of course, prophetic. The Counsel of God to place His Son as King on Mount Zion has yet to be accomplished. The Psalm discloses a wild scene of rebellion against Jehovah and His Anointed. But the purpose of God stands, and Christ shall reign. New Testament references, Acts iv. 25-28 ; xiii. 33 ; Rev. ii. 27 ; xix. 15.

Psalm viii.—Here we witness the Son of Man in a wider sweep of glory than that of Psalm ii. What He created as God, that He takes possession of as man. It forms His far-reaching Dominion. The Church does not form part of His Dominion (Eph. i. 22). The Church is associated with Him in joint heirship : see Heb. ii. 5-9 ; 1 Cor. xv. 27.

Psalm xvi.—The path of absolute trust in Jehovah is here trod by Jesus. The perfection of man in entire dependence upon, and obedience to God. The Messiah looks on to the final results of such a life. These are, Resurrection ; God's right hand ; and everlasting joy. See Acts ii. 25-27.

Psalm xvii.—"Hear the right" is Messiah's appeal to Jehovah. In the previous Psalm we have unfolded the beautiful path of *trust*. Here it is the path of *righteousness*. His life, in both respects, was formed and directed by the Word of God. Others in their measure trod the path, but He alone in its perfection. The hope of righteousness is glory (Gal. v. 5). The righteous life of the Messiah on earth is the governing thought of the Psalm. Righteousness is the first and last note (vers. 1, 15).

Psalm xxii.—This is pre-eminently the Psalm of sobs—of agony. Here the marvellous story of the Cross is prophetically foretold, and its everlasting results declared. The Psalm divides in the middle of ver. 21. "Save me from the lions' mouth," closes the recital of *His* sufferings.

Psalm xxiii.—In this beautiful Psalm—Scotland's favourite—the Messiah enters upon His pilgrim journey ; a path He trod perfectly, and without flaw or break-down. He placed Himself at the outset under the care and protection of Jehovah, whom He terms "My Shepherd." As His eye scans the wilderness with its dangers, enemies, needs, He fears not, yea, "I shall not want," is His note of assured triumph, and this too ere He enters on wilderness circumstances. The House of Jehovah is the goal of certain hope. His path is the pattern of ours (John x.). "He *restoreth* my soul," need present no difficulty in the primary application of the Psalm to Christ. Spiritual refreshment is meant ; inward renewing of soul. See Luke xxii. 43.

Psalm xxiv.—To dwell in the House of Jehovah (xxiii. 6) and occupy the *Throne* of Jehovah (xxiv. 9) formed the goal of desire for the Messiah. It might be thought that vers. 3-5 are not Messianic. But of *One* only could they be absolutely true ; of others only in measure. To the Messiah alone could the heads, and gates, and doors of the Kingdom be lifted up. He alone could answer the challenge : "Who is this King of Glory ?" Magnificent is the answer—twice proclaimed—"Jehovah of hosts, He is the King of glory." The Jesus of the New Testament is Jehovah of the Old Testament. He is Jehovah, King, Son, Lord, and Jesus.

Psalm xi.—Here the Messiah is the speaker. He tells of His patient waiting on Jehovah, of his deliverance and resurrection, of Jehovah's works and thoughts, of His sacrifice in Atonement, of His life-ministry, and of His very prayer to Jehovah. It is a wonderful Psalm; especially when read in the light of Heb. x. The last five verses form Psalm lxx.

Psalm xii.—If this Psalm is read and studied in the light of John xiii. 18; Matt. xxvi. 21-25; Mark xiv. 18-21; Luke xxii. 21—a fourfold witness—its Messianic character is established. But verse four does *not* apply to Christ.

Psalm xiv.—The King in personal grace and charm, as also in victorious power, is before us in this beautiful Psalm. His Deity is asserted in verse six and His humanity in verse seven, and that by God Himself; see Heb. i. 8-9. The Queen in her beauty is Jerusalem; the virgins are the peoples of the cities of Judah; the daughter refers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But amidst the palaces, and gold, and perfumes, and music, and all that goes to make up the royal court, the KING in His beauty and splendour is the grandest object in the coming millennial glory; and of HIM the Psalm speaks.

Psalm lxxviii.—This grand millennial Psalm, in which past and future deliverances are celebrated, is founded on the ascension of our Lord; compare verse 18 with Eph. iv. 8. The Person of the Messiah is more hidden than in Psalm xiv. The effect of His presence in glory and in judgment is the prominent thought. Songs and singing for the Messiah form an integral part of this great Psalm.

Psalm lxxix.—The sorrows and suffering of the Messiah, as told by Himself to Jehovah and to others, presents an exceedingly mournful picture, relieved now and again by gleams of sunshine and gladness (verses 30-36). The New Testament references to verses 4, 9, 21, 25, greatly add to our intelligent knowledge of the circumstances detailed in our Psalm. Other verses are associated with the rejected and suffering Messiah; see verse 26.

Psalm lxxxii.—David's Son and Lord is here presented as King of Kings. His Kingdom is universal in extent, righteous in character, and enduring for ever. The blessing of His reign are celebrated in words of great beauty and fulness. He shall reign in full Solomon-character and glory, and far exceed the reign in greatness of David's son. Prayer ends in the glory and grandeur of the Kingdom (verse 20).

Psalm lxxxix.—If this long and interesting Psalm, which fitly closes the third book of the Psalter, is regarded as *only* applying to David and Solomon, Christ is robbed of a great and distinguishing glory. The New Testament references to the greater David of our Psalm puts it beyond the possibility of a doubt that our Lord is the central object. We travel from David to David's Son and Lord: Acts ii. 29, 30; xiii. 34. Were further proof needed as to this typical Messianic Psalm in its undoubted application to Christ, we would refer to verses 14, 18, 19, 27. The Psalm finds its full and exhaustive fulfilment in Christ.

Psalm xci.—The Devil was right in applying this Psalm to the Son of God (Matt. iv. 6; Luke iv. 10, 11). He alone on earth perfectly fulfilled the conditions which would secure immunity from life's dangers and troubles. There are four speakers in this beautiful Psalm. The Holy Spirit speaks in verse one. Then the Messiah answers in verse two. The redeemed part of Israel addresses the Messiah in verses 3-13. Then God, the Most High expresses His Personal delight in the Messiah, and passes on to millennial times when Messiah's greatness for ever will be publicly manifested.

Psalm xcvi.—In Psalms xciii.-c. we have the introduction of the Messiah, the First-Born, into the millennial world. These Psalms are the blessed witness to the fulfilment of Eph. i. 21. The Messiah is exalted to the first place in the new world, "*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*" He reigns in the rights, character and name, too, of Jehovah. The application of verse seven to Christ as in Heb. i. 6, stamps the Psalm, and the group of which it forms an integral part, as distinctly Messianic.

Psalm cii.—Here the Messiah is witnessed as the "Man of sorrows." In the first eleven verses He gives in brief a record of His sufferings. Then the afflicted One addresses Jehovah, and in spirit prophetically rejoices in what Jehovah will do for Israel and Zion in the coming day of gladness (verses 12-22). Once again the Holy Sufferer recurs to His sorrow in verses 23 and 24. From Heb. i. 10-12 we learn that verses 25-27 of our Psalm contain God's answer to the preceding plaint of sorrow. How the New Testament enlarges the scope and meaning of these Messianic Psalms!

Psalm cx.—This brief Messianic Psalm opens with a gladdening sight. The Lord welcomed by Jehovah to His right hand where there are pleasures for ever more. The Messiah is presented as the true and greater Melchizedek in the combined glory of Priest and King. The resistless power in which He executes just vengeance in the coming day upon Kings and peoples, then in mad rebellion against His authority, is duly attested in our Psalm; as also His reign in Zion. There is remarkable crispness in the sentences of our Psalm, in which some of the weightiest truths of Scripture about our Lord are found. The New Testament references to this short Psalm of but seven verses, are not very abundant, but luminous with light and instruction: Heb. i. 13; Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42-44; Acts ii. 34, 35; Heb. x. 12, 13, comment on verse one of the Psalm. Heb. vi. 20; vii., reason on verse four, and Rom. xi. 25-27 on verse two. It is a wonderful Psalm.

Psalm cxviii.—This Psalm is the closing strain of what the Jews termed "The great Hallel" sung on great occasions. The voice of Israel saved and delivered from sins and enemies is here heard celebrating deliverance, but another voice is also heard. Christ is here the rejected Stone of Israel (verse 22), great in the day of the Kingdom—"head of the corner." Christ the Messiah of Israel, will be the corner-stone for beauty, strength, and the bond of unity to knit the many and diversified glories of the Kingdom into one grand whole:—see Acts iv. 11; Matt. xxi. 42; 1 Peter ii. 7.

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

XI. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE goal of Christian desire, according to 1 Cor. i. 7 and 1 Peter i. 7, is "the revelation of Jesus Christ." In the one passage the Authorised Version reads "coming" and in the other "appearing"; in both "revelation" is the proper term. The reference is to the great and notable day when God will bring again His First-Begotten into the world, not in lowly grace, as long ago, but in majesty and glory.

That day will be momentous in its issues. No day (that of the cross alone excepted) could be more far-reaching in its results.

(1) It will be the solemn winding up of man's day, and the ushering in of the day of the Lord. "Man's day" (1 Cor. iv. 3—margin) is that long period of human pride and self-will which commenced with the intrusion of sin into the world, and which will be ended by divine judgment at the revelation of Jesus Christ. During man's day God is naught, and man is all. The day of the Lord will reverse the conditions. Isaiah ii. 10-22 is the first passage of Scripture that specifically mentions that day; and it graphically describes the complete overthrow of all that of which man has boasted himself, that Jehovah alone may be exalted. Terror will fill men's minds when this takes place. Twice it is stated that Jehovah will arise to "shake terribly the earth." All human schemes and accomplishments will tumble to pieces, to be patched up no more. The cataclysm of 1914-1915, appalling though it be, is as nothing compared with the utter collapse of everything of man's at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Happy are they who have received a Kingdom which cannot be shaken (Heb. xii. 28).

(2) It will be God's public vindication of the man Christ Jesus. Let Satan and men attempt what they may, the once-crucified One must reign, and every created being must render homage to His name and title. Long ago, by the pen of Isaiah, Jehovah drew attention to Him as His servant whom He upholds, and His elect in whom His soul delights, and concerning Him He has declared: "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till He have set judgment

in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law" (Isa. xlii. 1-4). This passage is quoted in Matt. xii. 17-21 in proof of God's pleasure in Him when man on earth; the day will come when He will fulfil every sentence of it, and the despised One will reign.

It is becoming in the Christian to "love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8), and that not because of the relief and reward it will bring to us (and it will bring us both "rest"—2 Thess. i. 7—and "the crown of righteousness"), but because of what that day will mean for Christ. We love that day in advance; we delight to think of the vindication and glory it will yield to the Lord Jesus.

(3) It will be the first step towards the final overthrow of Satan. The great adversary will lose for ever his footing in the heavens as the result of the war with Michael and his angels (Rev. xii. 7, 8), but he will still have liberty to pursue his evil designs, although his activity will be limited to the earth. But the revelation of Jesus Christ will put an end even to this. The angel of Rev. xx. 1, with key and chain in hand, will apprehend him and cast him into the abyss, sealing up that place of horror for a thousand years.

During the lengthy period of the kingdom of the Son of Man, men will not be exposed to the craft of the deceiver. But the abyss is not his place of final punishment. The kingdom being a dispensation—a term of responsibility for man—Satan is released for a little season at its close. A revolt ensues in the outlying parts of the Saviour's dominion, after which the adversary is apprehended a second time, and forthwith consigned to the lake of fire, where he, with the Beast and the false prophet, will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Even infernal beings must confess Jesus Lord (Phil. ii. 10-11). He is their judge as well as the judge of men, as the demons acknowledged with such manifest terror in the days of His flesh (Matt. viii. 29). It is His business to put out of the way all—men and spirits alike—who dare to challenge the supremacy of God.

(4) The revelation of Jesus Christ will be the solution of every problem, and the settlement of every question. Problems and difficulties of every kind, social and political, are increasing rapidly as the age grows old. The world's leaders are sorely perplexed. Already we see something of the condition of mind described by the Lord Jesus in Luke xxi. 25-26, though the fulfilment of the

passage is not yet. It looks forward to an even graver crisis than the present. "Upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Man's sin and folly has created the confusion, but man is not capable of dissipating it. No difficulty is ever really *settled*. Politicians and others succeed from time to time in putting a patch on here or a patch on there. A reasonable appearance is thus put upon things for the time being, only to be followed by outbreaks more serious and widespread. There is only One man in the universe really competent to straighten out human affairs. In symbolic vision He is shown to us in Rev. v. 6 as a Lamb "having seven horns and seven eyes." This means perfection of power and wisdom. It sometimes happens now that a man has power without wisdom, and sometimes wisdom without power. The first is disastrous to the people, and the second is useless to meet the need. Solomon with his phenomenal wisdom, was just the shadow beforehand of the Lord Jesus. When He arises in His might, and shows Himself in His glory, He will take earth's sceptre into His Own capable hands, "and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isa. xl. 4). God will "lay help upon One that is mighty" (Ps. lxxxix. 19). His hand will be upon the Man of His right hand, upon the Son of Man Whom He has made strong for Himself (Ps. lxxx. 15). "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. xi. 4).

Knowing where men's true hope lies, it is impossible for the spiritually instructed believer to give the smallest countenance to creature schemes and aspirations. Instead, he waits in patience for God to bring out the Man of His purpose. The Christian waits for "the revelation of Jesus Christ," suffering meanwhile with all others.

Next Month (D.V.) :—"The Restitution of all Things."

Saul's explanation to Samuel ran thus: "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice." This was because he did not fear the Lord and obey His voice (1 Sam. xv. 19-24).

SOUL DECLENSION.*

By R.E.

(An Extract).

THIS common complaint is a disease which threatens every Christian, and we need to be continually on our guard against it. The decline and fall of a once flourishing empire is sad enough, but the decline and fall of a believer is sadder still.

How important that each of us, instead of having to mourn over a backward movement, should be like Isaac, of whom we read in Genesis xxvi., "And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great." Of how few this can be said as to their spiritual career! Reader, does this describe thy spiritual progress? How has it been with you the last few weeks, or months, or years? Has it been advance, or decline? Where are you, as to the state of your soul, at the present moment? Take your bearings, we beseech you. Ascertain your position. Are you speeding onward to the heavenly shore, borne along by the power of the Holy Ghost, or are you drifting? If the latter, the longer you remain as you are, the more you will go astray, and the harder it will be for you to recover the lost ground.

Take the helm and steer once more for the desired haven. Neither let anyone imagine it is enough to stand still. We cannot do that for long, the currents around us are too strong. It means either forward or backward, progress or retrogression, with every one of us. How is it with you?

Let our first inquiry be as to what it is induces soul declension.

1. One great danger we need to be on our guard against is a *self-satisfied state*. Reader, beware of becoming satisfied with your spiritual progress. Nothing is more insidious, and yet there is hardly anything to which we are more liable. It suits us admirably to think, "Well, there is not much the matter with me." Take care; one thing has happened already, if you think that. You are getting out of the presence of God. A soul near to God will never be self-satisfied. A celebrated painter, when he had finished a certain picture

* To be had in booklet form (in full) from the Author, 73, Durham Road, Wimbledon, S.W. Price 1½d. each, or 1s. per doz., post free.

BROKE HIS PALETTE,

because he said he had satisfied himself, and therefore he knew his power was gone.

Self-satisfaction will inevitably lead to sloth. Look at the bride in Canticles (chap. v.). Her beloved is outside, and she is too lazy to open to him. He has been there long, for his head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. But she has been asleep, and her only reply to his knocking is the expression of her self-satisfaction, "*I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?*" Satisfied to be without her beloved! And are we content to be without the company of Christ? More occupied with what He has done for us, than with what He is. If His Person does not command our affections, soul declension will soon set in. It had already done so in the case of the bride. And what was the end? "*The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.*" Depend upon it, if Christ is not our object, nothing will keep our hearts, and sooner or later, as we have seen, we shall be exposed. Let us then seriously ask ourselves, "Is Christ to me all that He once was?" For the decline of the individual often begins where the decline of the Church began—"Thou hast left thy first love."

2. *Worldly associations* will infallibly lead to soul declension. Witness Naomi! Hark to her sad confession: "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty."

Are there any reading these lines who are in a like case? Is the language of your heart something like what is described in the verse of a hymn:—

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I sought the Lord,
Where is that soul-transporting view
Of Jesus and His Word?"

Dear friend, has the world spoiled your taste for heavenly things? Have you formed some worldly alliance that has robbed you of the joy and peace that once were yours? If so, at this moment, without further delay, return as Naomi did. Remember the "house of bread," where alone true satisfaction can be found.

Remember those feasts you once enjoyed. Get back at once to the place where God visits His people and gives them bread, and never, never leave it again.

3. *Earthly prosperity* is another occasion of soul declension. In proportion as a man's purse fills, his soul seems to empty. Many a one, zealous for the Lord in early days, whose spiritual career at the spring seemed to promise abundant fruitfulness, has failed to realize these expectations. What has been the cause? Worldly success. Scripture may well speak of the *deceitfulness* of riches. How few can bear prosperity! It tests many more than does adversity. Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of God at the beginning; but when he had "riches and honour in abundance," he joined affinity with Ahab. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

This suggests another thought, viz., that "the cares of this world," as well as the deceitfulness of riches, choke the "word." The tree promised fair, the blossom was full and abundant; but there came a killing frost, and much of the fruit was spoiled. Perhaps, my reader, this is so with you. You sink beneath a load of care, and do not know how to rise above it. Anxiety withers everything. And you have almost ceased to hope for anything different. You are as badly off as the man of wealth; he has not known how to use his money, and so it became a bane instead of a blessing; and you have not known what to do with your care. And yet it might have been a blessing to you. You have been crushed by it, when the Lord only sent it to make you lean upon Him; and you have tasted only the bitterness, when, if you had looked at it in His presence, and accepted it from Him, even this strong grief, like the carcase of the lion, would have yielded sweetness. And what has been the effect of it all? You have declined in soul.

What else could be the effect of not trusting Him? But do not think that all is hopeless. He is ready to be trusted now. Remember He has said, He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Believe Him to be as good as His word. He has said, "Be careful for nothing," and has told you to carry everything to Him in prayer; and if you only do this, instead of your care that now weighs you down, you shall have His peace that will make your heart lighter than a child's. For has He not said, "Casting *all* your care upon Him; for He careth for you?"

Perhaps there may be someone who says, "But my cares are the result of my own folly." And therefore you think you must bear them as best you can. And so you go on month after month, your despondency growing deeper, and your heart more and more seared, and further removed from God. But let me ask you, Were not the troubles and sorrows that befell Naomi all the result of her own folly? But did she use this as an argument for remaining in the land of Moab? Not at all. She heard the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, and, wanderer as she was, she knew enough of the God of Israel to know that if she went back there would be bread for her. And so it will be with you. His grace towards you has not changed, and never will. It began with you because of Christ, when you deserved nothing, and will continue for the same reason, though, if possible, you deserve still less; for Christ has not changed, though you have. All that we deserved at our very worst was laid upon Him, in order that we might get what He deserves; and all that we have, or ever shall have, is for that reason.

4. We would briefly notice a fourth reason for soul declension—it is *lack of patience in running the race*. We are exhorted to run with *patience* (Heb. xii. 1). This seems to imply that the race may be long, and will test our power of endurance. Some races are accomplished in a single spurt—not so with this. Many could get through

A HUNDRED YARDS' RACE

very well, who would cut a very sorry figure when it came to five miles, or even half that distance. "Ye have need of endurance." How many have fallen out of the race for lack of this quality! The path became monotonous, or they encountered difficulties they did not expect, and so they turned aside into an easier way.

But what about the recompense of the reward (Heb. xi. 26)? Moses chose "*rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*"

Having begun the race, may we seek grace to continue, in order that we may finish our course. It is often when we are getting past middle life that decline begins.

5. A fifth reason is that *some evil propensity is allowed to remain unjudged*. No one knew anything about it, perhaps they hardly admitted it to themselves ; but, nevertheless, it was being nurtured in the heart, and one day proved too strong. This has often happened (sometimes when least expected), and many a downfall has been the consequence. The smallest evil, if allowed a place in the heart, may prove to be a worm that will wither our Christian life. Let us, then, scan our hearts carefully and constantly to ascertain if any evil tendency is there that needs to be judged. And, oh ! even if it be a right hand, cut it off, or a right eye, pluck it out. As you value your peace and prosperity, do not allow the evil thing to find a lodgment in your breast.

There are numbers of things, too, though not wrong in themselves, any of which may easily become a snare.

The all-important thing is, not whether it is a snare to other people, but, is it a snare to us ? How may we know ? The answer is, Are we under the *power* of it ? The question we have to ask ourselves is—and may the Lord enable us now, at this very moment, to answer it to Him—Have I control over it, or has it control over me ?

Do not be satisfied, we beseech you, with saying, “ It is only a little thing.” It is the little foxes that spoil the vines. Flies are only little, but “ dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour.” We all remember the story of how

A TRAIN WAS STOPPED BY FLIES

that had got into the grease box of the engine, thereby impeding the proper outflow. Diminutive creatures to bring to a standstill a thing so weighty ! So some little sin, allowed in secret, may, sooner or later, throw us off the line altogether. The other day, several hundred tons of chalk had to be detached from a cliff ; it took a large quantity of explosive material to do it, and immense force had to be exerted, and yet that chalk was but the conglomeration of myriads of tiny shells, thousands of which could easily be crushed between the thumb and finger. And so with some habit ; it seems such a light matter at first, but by-and-by it may become a load that you cannot throw off.

6. Once more. Soul declension may result from *want of watchfulness and prayer*. Who can forget the words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, on the night of His betrayal—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"—or fail to remember the sad result, in one case at least, of not so doing? And we find this one, doubtless in remembrance of his own fall, exhorting others to "watch unto prayer" (1 Peter iv. 7).

An army marching through an enemy's country is always on the alert, and so should we be. To be surprised is often to lose the battle, though otherwise well-equipped for the fray. We have an ever-watchful enemy, and he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. We need, therefore, to be vigilant, for we do not know when to expect an attack. There are his wiles, too. Our only safeguard is to have on the whole armour of God, "*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.*"

How easily, too, we sink into a cold, formal state—outwardly correct, but

INWARDLY ICE-BOUND.

It is easy to lapse into this state, but harder to recover from it. If a gardener allows his greenhouse fire to get low on a cold night, he may find in the morning irreparable damage done. Let us keep ever in the warm sunshine of Christ's love, and our spiritual thermometer will be at its proper level.

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near."

The soul that is near Him never need fear decline.

Having thus considered some of the causes of soul declension, we would in conclusion suggest a few of the safeguards against it. "Prevention is better than cure."

The first safeguard is, that we cultivate a spirit of dependence. "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" Seek to be guided in everything by His Word. He has said, "I will guide thee with Mine eye"; that is, if you wait upon God you will get light as to every step of your pathway. Until the cloud moves, our only safety is in abiding where we are.

If we are dependent we shall more easily learn to be *content*. And this is an immense safeguard. Many have been led off the right path because they grasped after something more than they possessed. Let us be satisfied with God, and content with such things as we have.

Moreover, if we are contented, we are also likely to have a *single eye*. How the possession of this would get rid at once of a host of things that trouble us! If Lot had had a single eye he would not have looked at the well-watered plains, and, as a consequence, would probably never have entered Sodom. If we can truly say,

" Jesus, Thou art enough,
The mind and heart to fill,"

the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, will have no charm for us.

In seeking to *help others*, too, we shall find a great safeguard. We cannot do this unless we are going on ourselves.

The force of example is more potent than any words. And the thought that we must practise ourselves what we have preached to others, we should often find a great stimulus.

Would there not, too, be less likelihood of soul declension if we were more *diligent*? "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." The best antidote to going backward is to go forward. A business man looks for his turnover to be larger each year; and, if it is so, and his regular profit is maintained, and his customers are reliable, he feels safe. But he would not feel safe otherwise. So a believer should not feel satisfied unless he is continually advancing. We are to go on adding. "*Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance,*" and so on.

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." In other words, if we do not go forward we shall go backward. If we do not add, we shall lose what we have. Like

A MAN ON A BICYCLE,

we are only safe as we advance. And so Peter concludes, "*If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

Shall we have this abundant entrance? It seems like what most of us have seen as we have looked out to sea—a well-manned ship, with every stitch of canvas set, and flag unfurled aloft, making for port! How splendid she looks as wind and sea bear her along to her desired haven! But another sight presents itself—that of a ship with sails rent, and mast overboard, and rudder gone—little more than a hulk—being towed into port.

May we use all diligence, that so we may have an abundant entrance.

But the greatest safeguard of all will be the cultivation of habitual nearness to Christ, and of increased acquaintance with Him. Without this, dependence, contentment, a single eye, a desire to help others, are not only useless, but impossible. Let us go on to know more of the meaning of His Own words: "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, *and am known of Mine*, as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father" (John x. 14, 15).

And, as a final safeguard, may we make this our constant prayer, "SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART: TRY ME, AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS: AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24).

Can two walk together except they be agreed? (Am. iii. 3). The standard laid down for the walk of a believer is "the path of righteousness" (Ps. xxiii. 3), and he is expected to "walk worthy of God" (1 Thess. ii. 12). As it is not possible for an *unbeliever* to walk in this path, a believer must "leave the path of uprightness" (Prov. ii. 13), and come to the level of an unbeliever if they are to "agree" to "walk together." It was Solomon "made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt" (not Pharaoh with Solomon) (1 Kings iii. 1). "Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab and went down to Ahab to Samaria." Ahab did not go up to Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 18 and 19). Such "walking together" never brings any good to either, but is bound to bring disaster to the believer.

UNACQUAINTEDNESS WITH CHRIST.

“ I wish the Lord would kindly take away my grievous unacquaintedness with this glorious Man Christ Jesus.”

Lord, take away this strangeness which I feel,
My soul's great grief !
O rend the veil which hides Thy face from me ;
Thy Grace with Vision seal :
Then only will my spirit find relief,
When Faith her Lord shall see.

Thou callest Thy believing Church Thy Wife,
O wondrous Love !
Should there be strangeness twixt Thyself and Bride—
Strangeness akin to strife ?
Lift up my soul to Thee in Heaven above,
And keep me at Thy side !

Give me Thy Spirit, Lord, to teach me how
So to behave
In thought and word and conduct, that no more
Thou must displeasure show !
Sanctify me, whom Thou did'st die to save,
And fellowship restore.

WILLIAM OLNEY.

The butler's remembrance of what Joseph had done for him and his forgetfulness (Gen. xl. 23), led him to exclaim : “ I do remember my faults this day ” (Gen. xli. 9). So with Israel, the remembrance of what David had done for them, and how badly they had treated him was the strongest proof of their genuine desire “ to bring the king back ” (2 Sam. xix. 10). Humility is the first proof, confession the second, and action the third, of genuine restoration of soul, as seen in above cases.

* * * *

Caleb's testimony to Israel regarding “ the sons of Anak ” was, “ We are well able to *overcome* them ” (Num. xiii. 30). Forty-five years afterward he proved to Israel by overcoming three sons of Anak that God's ability and his faith were not in vain (Josh. xiv. 7 and xv. 14). What a contrast to the unbelief of those whose report led the Israelites to think they were unable to overcome such “ giants ” and then “ presumed ” to fight with the Amalekites, who chased them as bees do (Deut. i. 43-44).

* * * *

A tree not bearing fruit is an encumbrance (Luke xiii. 7).

SIDELIGHTS ON PRAYER.

By E. ADAMS.

[I]T is a commonplace, that the importance of prayer cannot be exaggerated. Every saint in the history of the church that stands out as a champion of the faith and as a great power for God has been a man of much prayer. We think of such men as Luther, Brainerd, Wesley, Alleine, Fletcher, Baxter; and a score of others might be named, who spent two, three, and even more, hours a day in communing with their God.

The well-known saying of Martin Luther, "To have prayed well is to have studied well," demands to be carefully pondered. The fact is, *prayer is a work*. It is not a little habit that was pinned on to us when we were children; nor is it the performance of a piece of professional routine. It is one of the most important exercises to which the believer can devote himself. Prayer and preaching sum up the work of the apostles. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word," was their God-inspired decision. Prayer is a means of extending the kingdom of Christ on earth; it is one of the mightiest weapons that can be wielded against the world, the flesh and the devil.

Why are not our prayers answered? It is a fact that we often pray, and do not get our requests granted. Given that our motives are pure and our petitions sincere, the great reason that our prayers fail to secure what we ask for is that they are not in keeping with the unrevealed will of God. The outstanding Biblical illustration of this is Paul's thorn in the flesh. He received an answer, but his request was not granted. The Lord's will was that the infirmity should remain; but His servant should receive additional grace that was more than enough to counterbalance the results of the natural weakness. We pray for the recovery of sick relatives, and yet they do not always recover. Thousands prayed that C. H. Spurgeon's life might be spared, but that prince of preachers passed away. A godly pastor relates how, that, when his child was very ill a member of his congregation called upon him and was painfully surprised to learn that he did not pray that his child's life might be spared. His answer was that he could not pray for the boy's

recovery. He had no liberty ; he felt that approach to the throne of grace on that matter was barred, and had the inner conviction that the child would not recover. And so he left the matter entirely in the hands of God, without pleading on the sick boy's behalf. As he expected, the child died. He was a Spirit-taught man, and, under the circumstances, to have besought the Lord to spare the child would have been waste of time and strength. If we were more closely in touch with the Lord we should be able no doubt to discover far more than we do of the unrevealed will of God for us, and so our prayers would be more intelligent and more effective.

Does prayer alter circumstances? To this we give an unhesitating "Yes," in reply. We can understand how that the general course of things may go on in the usual way, while at the same time there may be an alteration in the details of our lives without affecting in the least the former. The hundreds of souls on board an ocean liner are constantly changing their occupation and relative positions, without producing the least alteration in the speed or direction of the giant ship.

Many remarkable instances are on record where prayer has worked wonders in changing circumstances for the temporal good of God's believing children, and no doubt the reader can call to mind personal experiences of this sort. It is far easier to expect God to change things in the spiritual realm, in answer to prayer, than in the natural. But since our heavenly Father is the Preserver of all men, and especially of those who believe, and since He takes interest in our physical well-being, and numbers every hair of our head, we may expect Him to change circumstances for our temporal good. But there is another and higher, and perhaps more convincing reason why prayer alters circumstances. There is an inseparable connexion between our circumstances and our spiritual experiences. The two are bound up together. And so *believing prayer changes circumstances with a view to our spiritual blessing*. We may not see just when and how our prayers have altered things for us—indeed, if we always saw, where would be the opportunity for walking by faith?—but we *believe* that had we not prayed when we did, things would not have happened as they did, and we should have been the losers—possibly the eternal losers—through the omission.

It is a help to see that our prayers do not always correctly interpret our real needs. We pray, and the request, as we frame it, is not answered. But *God meets the real need* of our soul in answer to our heartfelt cry. God can best interpret the real need of the soul, and this He does, although the request, as we framed it, may not be granted.

The eternal God would have His children pray for *spiritual* things. In the two prayers of the apostle in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is spiritual blessings that are named and sought. True, we are encouraged to make all our requests known to God, but if we put the spiritual first, it will often be found that the natural falls into its right place as a matter of course.

Petitions which are according to God's will, are always granted. The Father purposes to bless His child; the Spirit in accordance with the Father's purpose, creates the desire in the believer, who presents his petition in the name of the Son, Who purges it from all taint of sin and infirmity and offers it to the Father. Thus the praying believer finds his place in that wondrous circle in which the three Persons in the blessed Trinity are engaged in the work of blessing him. No prayer thus offered can ever fail of an answer.

As we pray, so God works. Where does He work? Chiefly in us who pray—subduing evil passions, quickening holy desires, strengthening faith, illuminating the mind, warming the heart, suggesting openings for service, developing all the graces and quickening all the faculties of the soul. Now the very fact that God has changed things *in* the believer may prevent him from seeing that his prayer has been answered. Had God in answer to his petition changed the position of the articles on the mantelshelf, shall we say, he would have exclaimed with glad wonder, "What an answer to the prayer I have received"! But God has done something just as wonderful, and infinitely more valuable, by changing the machinery of the inner life. While we pray God is working in us, and this even apart from answers to our requests, for prayer as an exercise of soul has a wonderful reflex influence on our inner life.

It may be as well very briefly to name some of the *conditions of successful praying*. A holy walk is indispensable. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me," is ever true,

whatever dispensation the saint of God may be living in. Again, we must be sincere. If we but realised at all times that God reads the heart with absolute accuracy, it would have been impossible for it to have been said that "more lies are told in the prayer meeting than anywhere else." We must ask for God's glory. There is such a thing as "spiritual selfishness," when the soul is so engrossed with getting its own needs satisfied as to forget the glory of God and the blessing of others. We are not to be Dead Seas, always taking in, and never giving out, but channels through which God's blessings are to flow to others. James sternly reminds us that it is useless to ask when we do not expect to receive; and although the Lord may shew mercy to our unbelief and grant an answer where the cry is but faint and despondent, to "expect great things from God" honours Him, and those who thus honour God will be honoured by Him.

As we have seen, prayer quickens the spiritual man, and gives clear insight into the Lord's will. It is of the first importance that we obey the leadings of the Spirit, and the impulse within. By refusing to act upon these promptings begotten of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer, we are cheating ourselves out of the very blessings that our prayer would secure for us.

We are bidden to ask *in Christ's name*, and when we do this as we ought, we not only are asking in accordance with His character, but are virtually making Him responsible to see that our prayer is answered. *We ask* in the name of Christ; *God gives* for the sake of Christ. And by *abiding in Christ* a unity of thought and desire is established between the saint and His Saviour, so that, in a measure, our askings are really His askings in us. Only by thus abiding in Christ could George Muller have gained such a mighty power in intercessory prayer.*

Let us beware of careless praying; let us beware of un-intelligent praying, of formal praying, of unspiritual praying. Too often we are guilty of playing with prayer. And we are generally too much in a hurry. We rush into the presence of God, and pour out a stream of petitions, with little forethought and exercise of soul. We talk too much. It is far more important that God should speak to us than that we should speak to Him. Let us learn to wait on the Spirit more, that we may give utterance to petitions which He is ready to breathe through us.

Prayer is a work. Do we regard it as such? Do we give ourselves to it? Do we consider it a never-failing means of extending the kingdom of Christ, and a mighty weapon against the forces of the foe? Shall we with firm determination take up the language of the apostles and say, "We will *give ourselves* continually to prayer"?

When pleading with God for "grace" Moses reminded Him that "this nation is Thy people," and told him that fellowship with Him was the vital test of separation on the part of Israel "from all nations" (Ex. xxxiii. 16). This was what he pressed upon Israel before his death (Deut. xiv. 2).

In the days of Samuel, Israel's plea for wanting a king was "that *we* also may be like all nations" (1 Sam. viii. 20). What a revelation is seen of the lack of fellowship with Jehovah. How humiliating to see Israel ashamed of being a "peculiar people above all the nations" and wanting to be "like all nations."

This is a true picture of those who have been "called out of darkness into God's marvellous light." As long as Christians realise that they are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet. ii. 9), and "walk in the light" referred to, they are bound to be "separated from all nations," for those who walk in darkness can never enjoy communion with the God of Light: but when Christians fail to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," they bring themselves to the level of "all nations," and instead of giving the nations the privilege of beholding their "good works, and of glorifying God" they forget their "high calling" and soon wish to be "like all nations" (1 Pet. ii. 9, 11, 12).

* * * *

When good seed "fell among thorns, it did no good to the thorns, but the thorns "choked it."

* * * *

"Great vexations" are sure to come "upon" those who live "without God," and "without law" (2 Chron. xv. 3-5).

"The defender of truth will need to watch his spirit and temper, lest, while he attacks error in doctrine, he falls into evil in practice. Many have failed in this."

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES: BRIEF REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

By R.E.

Chap. iv.

WHAT is the vocation spoken of in ver. 1? For it is necessary to know our vocation before we can walk worthy of it. We must turn back to chap. ii. vers. 14-22. There we read that Jews and Gentiles are made one, one new man, one body, and have access by one Spirit; *i.e.*, all distinctions after the flesh are abolished. The Jew has no longer any standing in the flesh—the Gentile never had—it is now what we are *in Christ*. We belong to the household of God, we are God's habitation. That is our calling. No wonder the Apostle exhorts us to walk worthy of it. It is said there was always a peculiar bearing about the sailors on the late Queen Victoria's yacht, the effect of being in the Royal presence. Should there not be distinguishing marks about those who belong to God's household, and who form the habitation where He dwells?

Those who have this high honour are to be characterised by lowliness and meekness, etc., and to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, because God has made us one. In vers. 4-6, you will find a sevenfold unity. Yet there is diversity in unity, for "unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Look attentively at vers. 9-10. Look at the ascended Christ; He fills all things. Whatever place grace may have accorded to us, Christ is supreme. He fills all things. Before He ascended He descended. Let us get our souls filled with the sense of this—Christ has been given the place of authority and power. God has placed a Man in heaven, and He is the source of life and power to His Church. He has given gifts unto men. Here is one supreme proof of Christ's victory and exaltation, He has, since His ascension, bestowed gifts upon men. On the day of Pentecost He bestowed the gift of the Holy Spirit, "*Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear,*" said St. Peter (Acts ii. 33). Look then at your Saviour in this exalted position; see Him, Who once bore your sins in His Own body on the tree, now ascended far above all

principality and power, filling all things. Is He not enough for you? He is enough for His whole Church, and therefore He must be sufficient for each individual. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Claim your portion. Say to yourself, "It is not a question of what I am, but of what Christ can do for me. It is not a question of my past, but of all *He* has for me now." It is not a question of what we are, but of *His* grace in us. Supposing you heard the empty pipes complaining: "We cannot supply this town with water, we are hollow and dry," what would you say to them? Would you not address them something after this fashion: "Your hollowness and emptiness need be no impediment, nay, they are just what the reservoir requires, *that* has the water, and as you are connected with it, your empty pipes may soon be filled with the clear sparkling liquid the town below is waiting for." So Christ is the reservoir, and we have only to receive from Him. Look up to Christ ascended, and you will soon feel that He is enough for you. You need be only like the empty pipes to convey His grace to others. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Shall I tell you the full story of redemption? How the man that God made in His own image fell, and dragged everything down to ruin, for God had set him at the head of His creation to rule and hold it for Him; and so, instead of earth being a happy place, it became full of suffering, sin, and death. And then God spoke of *Another Man*—the woman's seed, which should *bruise* the serpent's head. One Who, being the woman's seed, was truly man, and yet was more than man. As the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "That Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*." And the moment came when He, truly man and yet God's Son, was born. But His *death* was the *most* wondrous thing. Holy in Himself, He could die for the sins of others, and He did. It was God's will. But this was not the end. God, on the third day, manifested His power and declared Christ to be His Son by raising Him from the dead; and He has placed Him as Man in a place and position man had never occupied before; so that above angels, and in the very centre of God's glory, there is a Man—the very One Who died on Calvary's tree. And what is the meaning of this for us? It means that all who accept Christ

now share His place. The light and love and glory of the Father's presence are for them, and every ray of glory that now shines from the blessed face of Him Who died for them, only tells of the Father's welcome and the Father's love. Think of the difference between Adam and Christ—between man at a distance and subject to God's judgment and Man now in the very glory of God. *Grace* has severed our connection with the former and associated us with the latter. Do we know there is a way for the sinner to the Father's heart and the very centre of His bliss, and that way has been opened by the death of His Son? And all the glory God the Father has given to that Son becomes the portion of those who believe.

There is one more part to the wondrous story; the Holy Spirit has come down from the Saviour in His glory to win hearts for the One Who died for them. For Christ is to be the firstborn among many brethren. The Father planned it all; the Son shed His blood to make it a possibility; the Holy Ghost has come to bring us the news, and engage our hearts with it. And the wonderful news is that Christ shared all that was ours—condemnation and death—that we might share all that is His. So when Stephen was dying he looked up and saw "the glory of God and Jesus." Heaven was opened, and that was the sight that met his gaze. And it was the same glorified Man that won the heart of Saul the persecutor.

The Lord Jesus, before He left this world, spoke of the work of the Comforter. "He shall glorify Me," He said, "for He shall receive of Mine and shall shew it unto you" (John xvi. 14). Our home is with Christ in the glory of the Father.

To return to our chapter. We see the ascended Christ bestowing gifts upon men—not natural gifts, but gifts which had never before been bestowed. Ver. 11 gives a list of them; and they are all for the benefit of His Church. Vers. 12-13 tell us why they are given, the final end and aim of all being to bring us to the knowledge of the Son of God, that thus we might reach the stature of a perfect man, for all truth is set forth in the Son of God. He is the pattern Man, and in Him, now glorified, we learn our own position and blessing. As Romans viii. 29 tells us, we are to be conformed to His image.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VII.—No. 12.

DECEMBER, 1915.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE WAR.

The following is an extract from John Wesley's journal. He was on board ship on his way to Georgia, and it is refreshing to read what he has to say about some German fellow passengers. He writes:—

"At seven I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behaviour. Of their humility they had given a continual proof, by performing those servile offices for the other passengers, which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired, and would receive no pay, saying, 'It was good for their proud hearts,' and, 'their loving Saviour had done more for them.' And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. There was now an opportunity of trying, whether they were delivered from a spirit of fear (a storm was raging), as well as from that of pride, anger and revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. The Germans calmly sung on."

Having reached Savannah, he adds:—

"Mr. D. and I took up our lodging with the Germans. We had now an opportunity, day by day, of observing their whole behaviour. For we were in one room with them from morning till night . . . They were always employed, always cheerful themselves, and in good humour with one another. They had put away all anger and strife, and wrath and bitterness and clamour and evil speaking; they walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and adorned the Gospel of our Lord in all things."

Such comments are indeed instructive. Read in the light of the present, they seem hardly credible. To-day, the whole spirit of the German nation appears changed. That there are exceptions, we gladly believe. All, surely, do not rejoice in such deeds as the sinking of the Lusitania, and the execution of a helpless woman, like nurse Cavell, whose life was devoted to good deeds—to select only two from the host of barbarities for which Germany is responsible. What Germans have been by the grace of God, they can be again. That they could say: "It was good for their proud hearts" to perform some menial office, and their "shewing a meekness which no injury could move," seem to us more like a fairy tale, in the face of the unmeasured brutality, accompanied

by loftiness and pride, which now characterise them. May the day soon come when many hearts which are now full of bitterness and contempt for others may be changed by the influence of God's grace, so that once more it may be said of them (and not only of them, but of all of every nation who profess and call themselves Christians): "They had put away all anger and strife, and wrath and bitterness, and clamour and evil speakings."

A simple incident leads one to hope that this will be; that when the war is over, men, in looking back over the past, will repent in dust and ashes. "Something happened at Louvain—a little thing, but let it give us hope." In the house of a professor at the University some German soldiers were quartered, friendly, considerate, doing no harm. Suddenly one day, in obedience to new orders, they fell on this home, burned books, wrecked rooms, destroyed the house and all its possessions. Its master is dead. His wife, looking on with her helpless children, saw a soldier give an apple to a child. "Thank you," she said, "you, at least, have a heart." "No, madam," said the German, "it is broken."

Nurse Cavell's last words need to be remembered: "**Standing as I do,**" she said, "**in view of God and eternity I realise that patriotism is not enough.**" And the Chaplain adds, "*She spoke of her soul's needs at the moment, and she received the assurance of God's Word as only the Christian can do.*" In face of the talk in some quarters (so misleading and deplorable) about soldiers earning heaven on account of their bravery and because they die for their country, we are glad that such wide publicity has been given to the statement, uttered by this brave woman in the hour of peril, "that patriotism is not enough." Had it been enough, and had dying for one's country been enough, surely it had sufficed in her case. She "spoke of her soul's needs," realising that no death of her's was sufficient, however bravely and innocently borne. "Her soul's needs!" God and Christ and the work of the Cross are alone adequate for these. Blessed be God, He has made provision for them all; "The Father sent the Son—the Saviour of the world." In the One the Father sent, and in what He came to do, lie the only hope of the sinner. Yet all this is completely set aside if a man earns eternal life by fighting and dying for his country. If this is true, if such a thing is possible, then the infidel, the blasphemer,

the drunkard and the libertine go to heaven equally with the one who is a believer and has ordered his life according to God's word, for both may die for their country. Such a condition of things makes faith in Christ of no account, and treats the teaching of the Bible as if it were unnecessary, *as far as heaven is concerned*. Nurse Cavell knew better, "She received the assurance of God's Word as only the Christian can do." May the words of this noble woman serve as a corrective to the false notion referred to, and stir many to seek the satisfaction of their soul's needs, in Him Whose blood alone cleanses from all sin.

The country is not yet stirred on the spiritual side, as we would like to see it. There seems, to a great extent, the same mad rush for pleasure; making allowance, of course, for the millions of men under arms. Two Sunday pictorials have been started during the war. In a northern city, recently, we noticed three cinema palaces in the principal street, all of recent date. (It seemed a desecration to have them there at all).

And although when the war commenced congregations on Sundays were larger, there does not as yet seem any strain upon the seating accommodation. Is it possible that the war is going to pass without any change in the spiritual condition of the nation? We have heard that a remarkable appeal was made in a weekly paper a little time ago, by a well known public man, for a religious leader. That such a need exists, and that it is felt, cannot be denied. Why is no religious leader available? Surely at such a time—in the face of such a crisis in the world's history—some commanding voice—someone who will compel attention to eternal truth, is the great need of the hour. If that voice ought to be raised anywhere it should be heard inside the Church. That it is not, is a sad reflection upon, and forms a terrible indictment against, that which once was said to be "the pillar and base of the truth." How low the Church must have sunk: how out of communion with God must she be: that what the world craves she cannot give. It is humiliating; and every Christian ought to feel the humiliation his own. There is one thing, too, which makes the leanness of the Church more conspicuous. In other departments the men are to be found. The war has revealed its Kitchener, its Joffre, its Jellicoe and French. When God wishes for a certain end, where and when he requires

a certain work done, He always has His men. And it is one of the clearest indications of victory for this country and its allies that such men as have been mentioned (not to enumerate others) are available. In the light of this, if there is nothing to correspond in the Church, the more significant and deplorable the fact becomes. Where is there anyone who, in virtue of spiritual power and stature, occupies such a place in the higher realm? No doubt there are excellent men, who say excellent things. But no spiritual atmosphere has, so far, been created; no clarion note, clear and penetrating, has yet been sounded; no call that must be obeyed, has been heard; ought we not to be on our faces that such should be the case?

A well-known public man who has served his country for years, and is a Christian, asked the other day, "How is it that the Churches and Christianity have not been able to avert such a horrible calamity as has overtaken the whole race?" And he went on to remark how regrettable it was that the Churches had not done as much as might have been hoped. Such sentiments are shared by all who think seriously. The only possible answer is, that the Church has become so worldly and lax that it has grown feeble, and suffered the loss of spiritual power; so that like the woman we read of in Luke xiii, she can "in no wise lift up herself." If she only realised it, this would become her strength. Instead of which she is more inclined to boast, and to think, even if she does not say, "*I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.*"

It seems as though if God is speaking at all it is by the stress and storm of war, and within the war zone. If hearts are bowed anywhere it seems to be in the trenches, where death is an hourly visitor, and where shot and shell do their deadly work. And doubtless many a cry ascends to God from devastated fields and homes. As one has said, "Now on the blood-stained fields of Belgium and France lives are being laid down in thousands—but never wasted. Can we at home also say our life is not being wasted?" "What an awful story that was I heard the other day. The speaker told me how a soldier in hospital had said to him that out there in the trenches he had begun a new life. There in those blood-washed trenches he had seen Christ, and, said he, 'I am a changed man—but, oh, I dread going home, for my wife will laugh at me so.'" Yes, over here we can laugh and remain irreligious—out there they pray and turn to God.

We hear of French infidels forsaking unbelief and calling upon God as they gaze upon the death struggle going on in their native land. Are we witnessing anything of the kind in England? The French infidel Lorridan writes—and his words have been carried all over France:—

“ I laughed at faith and considered myself wise. I no longer retain my gaiety over this derision, as I see France bleeding and weeping. I stood by the roadside and saw the soldiers. They went on so joyfully to meet death. It made me ask the question, ‘ What is making you so calm ? ’ And they began to pray : and said, ‘ We believe in God.’ To hope when everything is sinking, who can do this without faith ? I doubt ; but the old woman from Brittany, whose sons have bled to death—she prays ! How ashamed am I before the woman ! What will become of France—of her children, if they do not believe ? If her women do not pray ? That nation will conquer in this war which has confidence in God as its foremost weapon . . . How difficult to remain an atheist in this vast national cemetery. I cannot. I have betrayed myself and you—you who have read my books and sung my songs. To give up God is to be lost for ever. Lorridan dare not die an atheist. This thought troubles me, a God lives and I stand far from Him. My soul shall joy mightily if ever I experience that moment when I, kneeling, can say, ‘ I believe ! I believe in God ! I believe ! ’ ”

Let us pray that such changes may be seen in England. That there is a change in attitude and outlook in many an individual, cannot be denied. This war compels thought to move in a wide area, and also along a different groove. Oh, that the Church knew her mission, and were ready and capable of helping such. No doubt there are individuals doing all they can, and doing it well. Yet we have it on unimpeachable evidence that there are those in the responsible positions of spiritual guides who do not know how to preach the gospel. If a man were in soul distress, they could not help him. Their sermons to soldiers are made up of scraps of good advice.

One turns with relief to a message which came in the form of a letter to *The Times* “ from the fighting zone ” not so long ago. It describes what is going on there:—

“ Can it be that the hellishness of battle, the wearing down of the spirit induced by trench warfare, moments of utter loneliness which every soldier has to bear, strike right at the soul and enable him to realise the nearness of the spiritual world ? ”

These words embody a very impressive fact: the ease, the pleasure, the luxury, the pursuit of wealth, that largely make up life here, tend to blind the eyes and numb the senses, and render people indifferent to spiritual claims and aspirations, while out there the exact opposite is the case. If so, then the war after all, to this extent, at least, is a blessing in disguise. The writer proceeds:—

“Yet, as a nation, we are certainly growing humbler, and, through much individual adversity we are beginning to realise the need of something more effective than material force. Men of excellent courage and intelligence are beginning to admit to themselves that they are losing faith in human power, and especially in their own judgment. They would like to cry aloud for help if only they were sure of being heard. That is not an unhealthy sign. It is exactly what men who are constantly standing on the threshold of death invariably feel. The only difference is, that at the front many of us have already been forced to a certainty that there is something stronger than material force. So in desperation we have called on the Name of God. We have not called in vain.”

One of the saddest sides of the war is the cost to humanity in valuable lives. Do we think of the war from the standpoint of the lives that might have rendered some conspicuous service to their day and generation extinguished before their time? This is the subject of a very remarkable pamphlet which has come into our hands. For instance, a young doctor whose researches had materially led to the finding of valuable remedies for certain diseases “was one of the first German soldiers slain in the present war.” Of another it is said, “Had his life been spared, there is no height in his profession to which he might not have attained.” There follows a lengthy list of professors distinguished in various departments of learning. It further states that the French casualty lists contain the names of scores of university professors who had laid down their lives for their country. The writer of the above pamphlet may well add, “To what a pass civilization has come when it must call away from their work such men. . . . We have not yet begun to realize to what an extent the academic life of Europe is suffering through the war. ‘Cambridge in the past term has been, as a University, practically non-existent.’” “One hears of artists who lament that they have almost forgotten that they once painted pictures, and of composers who since the war broke out have been unable to write a single bar.” Valuable writings that had never reached the printer have perished. “It was only from an incidental sentence in a newspaper obituary that an author learned that the burning of his home by German soldiers had consumed the manuscript records of the last ten years of his work.”

Regrettable as all this is, it is not the true measure of the war's calamity. The Christian, while not ignoring such losses, far less *forgetting* the waste of life—will look beyond, and wait for God to work and reveal Himself. Loss may be gain, and waste may become wealth, if He sees fit to order it so. This does not mean that to *us* one thing is as good as another. It only means there is *another* side.

The outer history of this war may be written; but who shall write the *inner* history? "The thoughts of many hearts" cannot, in this case, be revealed, or if so only to a few. Who shall relate the inward strivings and the spiritual needs never realised before, so that souls have craved the light and reached out after God for the first time. What processes! what developments! have been taking place. This war has revealed some as monsters, while others it has turned into saints. There have been characters redeemed, and characters blasted: some have sold themselves to the devil, and others given themselves to God. In one sense, it almost seems as if the world of humanity is being re-made. We do not mean that after the war human nature will, in itself, be essentially different to what it was; but many will feel they can never live the lives they did; they will (let us hope) have turned themselves "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." Others will have become more hardened and more dark. The war is carrying on a great winnowing process; and separating men into two companies. Let us be very certain of one thing, *it will leave none of us as it found us*. This is as true of the believer as of the unbeliever. We are permitted to see God at work as few have been; this means great gain, if we perceive it; but corresponding loss if we do not; for unless He had some great purpose in view, war on such a gigantic scale, and with such unexampled suffering, would never have been allowed. It is just God's opportunity to bless. For the people of God, therefore, it is a time of waiting, watching and prayer. To some extent, at least in principle, the words of Daniel apply now; "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." May we dwell "in the secret place of the Most High."

R.E.

"His power is our refuge, a shelter for our feebleness amid all life's perils."

HOLINESS : ITS BASIS AND INFLUENCE.

HOLINESS is the great need of the Church of God to-day. It is the highway of spiritual power and of true testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. It produces spiritual peace and unity. "First pure then peaceable" is God's order. When this is not maintained there is sure to be serious loss to our souls.

Holiness means separation from evil, of whatever kind, and the utter abhorrence of all that is inconsistent with the glory of Christ.

Salvation must be realised before holiness is possible. Otherwise, we become given up to self occupation and to self satisfaction, which is both subtle and very dangerous.

Those who strive after holiness without the realisation of salvation and deliverance must necessarily fall into legality or become sanctimonious ; which indicates that settled peace with God is not enjoyed.

Holiness is not in any sense an improvement of man in the flesh. That has been proved impossible. "Our old man is crucified with Him." Our present blessing lies in accepting God's holy judgment on all that we are in the flesh, and therefore in ceasing to expect good from it.

There are some points I should like to make clear with regard to holiness. First, its ground. Second, its power. Third, how attained. Fourth, its effect.

THE GROUND OF HOLINESS. The death of Christ is the basis of holiness. There God expressed Himself fully in the holiness of His nature against all that is unholy. How deeply should our hearts be affected by such an expression of God's abhorrence of evil in the death of His Own Son ! Do our hearts in any measure feel what that meant to Him ? When the blessed Son of God Who knew no sin, but hated it with a perfect hatred, was made sin for us—when He was forsaken of God, and in the deepest bitterness of soul cried out in the depths of His sorrow "My God, My God, Why hast THOU forsaken Me ?"—that was the result of the holiness of God.

If that is burned into our hearts in the power of God's Spirit it ought to make us hate the flesh and all its works. Could we go on with the indulgence of what is unholy if we were in the spiritual power of the Cross?

THE POWER OF HOLINESS. Love is the essence of holiness. Love is of God, because it is the Divine nature. Being formed in the Divine nature is not only the result of the Spirit's indwelling but of His constant unhindered activity in us. If we grieve Him His work is hindered in us, and consequently we are not formed as we might be in the power of love.

If we are formed in love we shall have the power to love good and hate evil. Evil is that which springs from the will of the flesh. To hate that means something and costs us suffering. He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

If not armed with the same holy mind of Christ we shall fall under the power of the flesh, which is evil. If we are formed in the Divine nature we are formed after God, and consequently love what He loves and hate what He hates. The measure of our holiness is the measure in which we are formed in the power of love.

As the Spirit's formative work proceeds in us we grow in the Divine nature and thus increase in practical holiness. As Peter says, "add to brotherly love, love."

Had the saints at Corinth been in the power of chap. xiii. of Paul's first epistle, what a different state of things would have been found amongst them. According to that chapter you might have all gifts and all knowledge and give all your goods to feed the poor, yet, if you have not love, you are nothing.

How we need to be kept in the nearness of God's holy presence so as to be formed by it and thus to know and practice what suits Him, even though we are misunderstood or even slandered. If I love my brother I shall abide in the light—the holiness of God's presence—and there shall be no occasion to stumble my brother. (See 1 John ii. 10).

HOW HOLINESS IS ATTAINED. Christ in glory is the true standard of holiness and the only power by which holiness is attained. It is

as our souls are brought under the power of His glory that we grow in holiness. "We all with open face beholding the Lord's glory are changed into the same image from glory to glory." The hope of seeing Him as He is has the same effect. "*Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*" From these verses we gather that Christ in glory is both the power and standard of holiness.

Occupation with Him has the transforming effect of producing His gracious holy character in us, and the blessed hope of seeing Him has the same effect, yet we shall not be fully conformed to His likeness until our bodies are changed into the likeness of His glorified body. That absolutely excludes the idea of perfection in the flesh. "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

How was holiness produced in Moses? What made his face shine, unconsciously to himself? Why was he so prompt to see and judge and utterly to abhor the sacrilege of the people in turning a feast of the Lord into the worship of the golden calf? What made him righteously indignant with the people for giving up God?

Was it not because of occupation with the glory of God? God filled Moses for those forty days and nights on the mount, when he did eat nothing. *Because he was filled with God man was displaced in his eyes, and all that was of man was judged by the knowledge of what suited God.*

The beauty of holiness is, that those who are most holy are unconscious of it. Like Moses "he wist not that his face shone." Talking about our own spiritual attainment is not an indication that we have reached a very high level.

Humility will characterise those who are most holy. Humility never vaunts itself, not even over spiritual attainment. Those who are thus lowly will always feel, "Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect." The glory of the Lord eclipses and displaces self in every way, even as regards our attainment.

THE EFFECT OF HOLINESS. The effect of holiness in an individual or company is very far reaching and powerful. It is a wholesome check on evil principles working amongst saints. Evil that might often otherwise break out and spread amongst such is often retarded by holy influence.

The influence of holiness is much more powerful than gift. Though gift is for the promotion of holiness, yet a man might be gifted and not very holy. Where this is the case (and it is not uncommon) the effect is disastrous to the spiritual good of God's people.

Is it not a fact that many a man has used his ability to promote unholy principles, and thus sow discord? How the Church has suffered in all ages as the result. Our present state is all too plain an evidence of it.

Hence the man of God is exhorted as to his own behaviour in the house of God. The behaviour of a man professing to act for God is as important as his teaching. *Principles and practice cannot possibly be divorced.*

“Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt.” What is seasoning with salt but the energy of Divine grace? “Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever.” “Whose house are we.”

One, much valued, but lately deceased, said that “If we are not a sanctifying company we are a corrupting company.” Very solemn words for us all to take to heart. How far is our influence sanctifying others—leading them nearer the Lord? is a serious question. We all influence others much more by what we are than by what we say. How lowly we need ever to walk before Him Whose eyes are searching in holiness.

“Follow peace with all men and holiness.” Those who always try to sink what is called differences in doctrine for the sake of peace too often forget to follow holiness as well as peace. Holiness cannot be sacrificed for the sake of a fair show in the flesh. “Touch not the unclean thing.” “Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity”—unholiness. *The measure of our holiness will be the measure of our influence for good with others.* It will be the measure of our faithfulness to the Lord with what He has committed to our trust, and which He expects us to jealously guard; and, also, the measure of our holiness will be the measure of our spiritual power and happiness.

“Yet sure if in Thy presence
My soul still constant were,
Mine eye would more familiar
Its brighter glories bear.”

I TURNED THE PAGES OF THE YEAR.

"Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51).

"They understood none of these things" (Luke xviii. 34).

I turned the pages of the year,
And as I turned, my Lord drew near :
The Master, Who from day to day
Had taught me in His Own sweet way.
Twelve volumes were the months, and each
Was filled with lessons meant to teach :
And as I turned in pensive mood,
He asked, " Child, hast thou understood " ?

There had been pictures, grave and gay,
Drawn by His hand from day to day :
There had been parables, as when
In bygone days He walked with men :
There had been voices, soft and loud,
Spoken to me and to Life's crowd :
And now, for my eternal good,
He asked, " Child, hast thou understood " ?

There had been blood-shed, war, and strife :
There had been mysteries of life.
Alas, in ignorance it seemed
My silly mind in folly dreamed,
And half asleep, I had not seen
The Truth, though God had Teacher been.
" Lord, now beside Thy pupil stand,
That I Thy will may understand."

" These things understood not his disciples at the first ; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him." (John xii. 16).

WILLIAM LUFF.

" Love never pauses to calculate."

* * * *

" Faithfulness is always rewarded. Obedience and dependence delight God, and the path of true blessing for the Christian is always that of devotion."

" The *little* ones in God's school are still *living* ones, and must be cared for."

* * * *

" Watchfulness without prayer is presumption, and prayer without watchfulness is mockery. Watch and pray, and continue therein."

* * * *

" ' We know ' is a technical expression in the New Testament, when the Holy Ghost had come. ' We know ' is the expression of common Christian knowledge."

FUTURE EVENTS.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

XII. "THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS."

THIS is that golden era of which prophets have written glowingly, and psalmists have sung rapturously from the beginning of their testimony. It is that wonderful time when divine rights will everywhere be respected here below; when the long-rejected Jesus will be enthroned in His appointed Kingdom; and when man's evil career will receive an abrupt check. Then Satan's power will be set aside; his wretched work will be in large measure undone; and creation's wounds will be healed. "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose"; "instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree"; "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together"; yea, "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isaiah xxxv. 1; lv. 13; xl. 5; lii. 10). Blessed era! How remote if we were to judge by appearances, but how near when we hold the prophetic lamp aloft in faith!

Let us read together Acts iii. 19-21 (in a corrected translation): "Repent therefore and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, Who was fore-ordained for you, whom heaven indeed must receive till the times of the restoring of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since time began" (J.N.D.). Peter was the speaker. He was addressing the Jewish people on the occasion of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. He made a definite proposal to his audience—by divine authority, of course. If they would repent of their many sins, and especially of their murderous rejection of Jesus, times of refreshing should come to them from the presence of Jehovah. He would even send back the very One Whom they had driven away, and the times of the restitution of all things should set in. Bible readers in Israel had long looked for such a consummation. In Matt. xvii. 11, the Lord confirmed the disciples in their expectation that Elijah "shall first come and *restore* all things." In keeping with this hope, they asked Him after His resurrection: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time

restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). Now Peter, with light from heaven in his own soul such as even he never possessed before, lays before the people the conditions upon which the longed-for restoration could take place. *Their* thoughts might be limited to Israel; *God's* thoughts take in the whole creation.

The restoration of all things is contingent upon two other events: the repentance of Israel, and the return of Jesus. He will not return until Israel is prepared to welcome Him; and until His return no universal restoration is possible. A millennium without the Lord Jesus, whatever the aims and desires of men, can never be.

The restoration of all things has limitations. Peter's words show this: "Of which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since time began." Some have pressed the apostle's words to make them include even the unpardoned dead. The restoration does not go beyond what "God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets," and certainly no prophet bids us look for the restoration to divine favour of men who have died in their sins. The prophet's standpoint was the earth, and in heart-stirring language they describe the removal by divine power of all the scars that sin has caused in order that God may once more have pleasure in the works of His hands, and that men may enjoy His mercy. The healing of the lame man was an example, strikingly illustrating Isaiah xxxv. 5-6.

In that era Israel will be restored. All the twelve tribes will enjoy the blessing of God throughout the whole extent of the magnificent possession promised to the fathers. (In the past they have occupied only a small part of their destined inheritance). The temple will be restored to them, with Jehovah's presence filling it continually (Psa. lxxviii. 29; Ezek. xliii. 4-5). None of them will need to exhort his neighbour to "know the Lord," for all will know Him from the least to the greatest of them (Jer. xxxi. 34).

The nations will also be blessed (Psa. xxii. 27, 28; lxxii. 17). No longer characterised by pride and independence of God, no longer filled with envy and hatred towards each other, they will dwell peacefully under the sway of the King of kings and Lord of lords. In accordance with the divine purpose, they will acknowledge the special place of favour and supremacy given to Israel, and will

render respectful homage. They will seek Jacob's face, as Psa. xxiv. 6 tells us, because God is in Jacob's land. From year to year the ambassadors of all nations will attend at Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. xiv. 16).

Creation at large will be restored. No longer will the strong prey upon the weak. Even the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the lion will eat straw like the ox (Isa. xi. 6-7). The Son of Man's beneficent rule will extend to "the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas" (Psa. viii. 7-8). The manifestation of the Sons of God will be the signal for the complete deliverance of all from the bondage of corruption (Rom. viii. 19-21).

But whatever the blessedness of that era, absolute perfection will not then be realised, and thus finality will not be reached. The millennial age (the last of the dispensations of God) is the vestibule to the everlasting Kingdom, the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth. Therein perfection will indeed be found. The Son of Man having subdued every antagonist, and silenced every rebellious tongue, God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

"The first of 'The Fathers' was about A.D. 140. John (1 John i.) gives me 'from the beginning,' *i.e.*, of Christianity; A.D. 140, therefore, will not do for me."

* * * *

"Vessels such as Paul are the chords on which God strikes, and on which He produces wondrous music; but Christ is the music itself."

* * * *

"Nothing puts the madness of the infidel and the folly of the superstitious more to shame than the quiet, devoted walk of a heavenly minded Christian."

* * * *

"Our education and moral training are carried on by God in the wilderness. Here our hearts are put to the proof, and here too we learn what a God He is."

* * * *

"If our circumstances find us in God, we shall find God in all our circumstances."

THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS.

Romans xiii. 12.

Swift to its dawning the morning millennial ascending
 Radiates glory along the horizon's dark rim,
 Up from the valleys faint warblings harmoniously blending
 Prelude, with tremulous bliss, the millennial hymn.

Eyes that have watched through the darkness are brightening with gladness,
 Hearts that have wearied with waiting now throb with delight,
 Strong in new hope to press on through all shadows of sadness,
 Leaving behind them for ever the glooms of the night.

Oh happy day, we have longed for thee watching and weeping,
 Longed for His coming, the glory and crown of thy bliss,
 Yearning to see His fair sunshine from height to height leaping,
 See the dark wilderness bloom 'neath the breath of His kiss.

Here where He toiled in dishonour, and suffered in weakness,
 Yielded Himself in His love to the shame of the cross,
 Bore the forsaking of loved ones with infinite meekness,
 Died by the anguish mysterious of measureless loss,

Here shall He conquer, and reign in ineffable glory.
 Reign with His saints who have shared in His sorrow and shame,
 Here shall be told through the age His unparalleled story,
 While all the nations exalt His omnipotent Name.

Yet, ere that day of delight break in beauty and blessing,
 Tempest must herald its sunrise, and death mark its dawn ;
 Fast to the conflict the powers of darkness are pressing,
 Eager to bar the advance of the brightening morn.

Impotent enmity ! Yet, ere its fires malignant
 Soil with their lurid dishonour the vanishing night,
 Grant us our Lord to be rapt to Thy " Presence " benignant,
 Shelter Thy saints in Thy " secret pavilion " of light.

Hidden with Thee while the world, in deluded compliance,
 Yields itself up to thy enemy's impious fraud,
 Hurling foul blasphemies unto God's Throne in defiance,
 Blind to the ominous flash of thy scabbardless sword,

Till with Thyself Lord, in luminous splendour down-sweeping,
 Smiting rebellion to ruin, Thou bringest Thy own,
 Ended for ever our weariness, watching and weeping,
 Into the wealth of Thy kingdom, the might of Thy Throne.

E. STACY-WATSON.

" The forty-sixth Psalm begins and ends with ' God is our Refuge.' If our refuge be in God, our circumstances must meet us in God, and according to that which is written in the same Psalm, Jehovah of hosts is *with* us. Be you with Him, and He will be with you. He is our Refuge from the storm, our place of safety from the enemy."

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGES.

Being brief remarks on the epistle to the Ephesians.

Chap iv. (*Contd.*)

LEARNING CHRIST.

We have already been learning much about Christ and our association with Him. God has chosen and blessed us in Him; predestinated us unto sonship by Him; made us accepted in the Beloved; in Him we have obtained an inheritance, and He is made head over all things to His Church which is His body. (Chap. i. 3-6, 11, 22-3). Further, Chap. ii. shews us we are quickened with Christ (one with Him in resurrection life); seated in heavenly places in Him; made nigh in Him; and have access through Him to the Father, and He is the chief corner stone of the building which is God's habitation, of which we form part. (Chap ii. 5-6, 13, 18, 20).

In Chap iii. we read of the unsearchable riches of Christ, all of which is ours, because united to Him, just as a wife shares in all the wealth of her husband. He is to dwell in our hearts by faith, that we may know His love that passeth knowledge.

In Chap. iv. we see the ascended Christ bestowing gifts upon men, for the perfecting of the saints, such is His care for the Church. For the Church is Christ's. We hear ministers talking about "My" church, and "My" flock, or "My" people until sometimes the thought that the Church is Christ's, and every true member of it His own property, is lost sight of. As a result of these gifts Christ bestows, believers come to the knowledge of the Son of God, and grow up into Christ, who is the head in all things—the whole body deriving strength and nourishment, is compacted together and makes increase (ver. 16).

What a wonderful insight these chapters give us of our association with Christ, and all that flows from it:—Blessed, accepted, quickened, loved, united in living union with the Head.

We now have Christ presented to us as our Teacher, our pattern and our study. The Apostle, first of all, again depicts the state of the Gentiles by nature (vers. 17-19), and then says to those who have now believed: "But ye have not so learned Christ." This shews us that it is not simply learning something Christ taught, but we are to learn Christ Himself. And He Himself will be our

Teacher. "If so be ye have heard Him and been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." It is not merely what He said, but He was all that He taught. People had only to look at Him to see the exemplification of all He said, and it is only by personal contact with the Saviour, a daily living near to Jesus, seeing Him and hearing Him, that we can become like Him. Then it is we renounce the "old man"—the former conversation—which means the old manner of living, and we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and put on the "new man" which is according to God righteous and holy. It is being in the company of Christ that effects all this. Seek, then, to become daily more acquainted with Him. As it is true even in the world, "a man is known by the company he keeps," so, if we are in the company of our Lord and Saviour, it will surely be known, as it was of the early disciples—even their enemies "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts iv. 13).

Notice the terms, "the old man" and "the new man" (vers. 22-24). The first, we "put off"; the last, we "put on." What a complete change. "The old man," is an expression denoting the flesh, or evil nature, with its characteristics. You find the expression in Rom vi. 6, and Col. iii. 9. We see it to be totally unfit for God, the flesh never wants to please Him. Moreover, it has been condemned by God in the Cross of Christ. For that Cross is the witness that the flesh is incurably bad, and never can love God or try to please Him. Otherwise, Christ need not have died. So that the Cross is the witness of my badness as well as of God's goodness. What a comfort to know that God has ended it, and never expects anything from it. But we must have the same mind about it as God. We must accept the truth of Rom. viii. 3, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh.*" Whether it is respectable flesh, or disreputable flesh; religious flesh or profane flesh (for it takes many forms and can be kind and gentle when it suits as well as fierce and cruel) it is man's state by nature, and as such has been tried and tested by God for four thousand years, and proved to be utterly unprofitable, and God has condemned it. Christ is the only one God can accept, and when I accept Him, I am at peace with God, and through the indwelling Spirit can live to please Him (see Rom. viii. 4-16). Then I put on the "new man" which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness. We become like Christ, and refuse everything that is contrary to Him.

In Christ's life on earth we see all the characteristics of the "new man" and the more we are "renewed in the spirit of our mind," the more we desire likeness to Christ, and refuse the "old man" and all that belongs to him. Thank God, in faith, we believers can adopt the language of Rom. vi. 6, and say "our old man is crucified with Him" (Christ). Henceforth we are to be occupied with Christ, who is now our life. In the language of our chapter, to learn Christ, if so be that ye have heard Him and been taught by Him. What a wonderful study. It is something more even than studying the Bible, it is studying a PERSON, the One the Bible reveals. That is why the Bible is the book of books, because it reveals a Person to us which no other book speaks of in the same way. Every other book that speaks of Jesus borrows from the Bible. And Jesus is so great—for He is God's Son—so wonderful, so loving, so holy—in a word, so altogether pleasing to God—that *only* God could depict His life, as we have it in the four Gospels. And the Holy Spirit who inspired the writers of the Bible is ready to lead us into the knowledge of the One presented to us in its pages. How necessary therefore to pray for His illumination whenever we read the book.

In the remainder of our chapter there follows the exhortation as to putting away things that are characteristic of the "old man" and also the positive characteristics of the "new man"—truth, moderation of anger; giving, instead of stealing; edifying conversation, etc. Then, in ver. 30, we are told not to "*grieve the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*" Is not this a wonderful statement? It is not simply that if the believer does wrong he himself is grieved, but another Person is grieved, even the Holy Spirit Who dwells in him. And if we do not like to grieve ourselves, much less should we like to grieve such a Friend, Who has taken up His abode in our hearts. And how easily angry feeling, or foolish conversation, or evil thoughts may grieve Him. Does not the word "grieve" shew He is our Friend, or, as the Lord Jesus called Him—Comforter? He always likes us to say and think and do the things that please Him. For He has taken possession of us for God. We belong to God—body, soul, and spirit—through the precious Blood of Christ, and because of this God has given us, so to speak, into the keeping of His Spirit, and He has taken possession "until the day of redemption," that is, until the body itself is fully redeemed like the soul, and we are at home in our Father's house, and like Christ for ever. Think, then,

of the Guest you have within your heart, and may your life and everything be ordered to suit Him, so that *He* may never be grieved, and always be able to make *you* glad. All the joy we ever know as Christians comes from this Guest who has been placed within us by God to keep us ; and He is able to impart fulness of joy, yea the very joy of God Himself, and as we put away the things of ver. 31 and act according to ver. 32, we shall not make Him sorry, but He will make us happy, with a happiness beyond anything this earth can give.

EXTRACT.

“ Is there anything more impressive or illuminating or blessed than to see and know that God is really working? That He, and none but He, is working out some gracious plan of His Own. Does it not make you feel very, very near to Him, and God very real? Supposing for instance, it had been possible to have been present at creation and seen the earth emerging from the water, and then the beasts appearing on the dry land, and the fish in the sea, the grass begin to grow, and the sun, moon and stars take their places in the heavens, and all that without any visible agency, would it not have been very wonderful? We should have said it is God working ; though we should not have seen Him. And it is nothing less than God working when a soul finds Him and learns to know His grace. A soul is in darkness and disorder and death, until God breathes upon it and speaks to it. The picture of creation in the second verse of Gen. i.—chaos and darkness—is a picture of the human soul through sin. And just as we see then the Spirit of God brooding over the waters, so God by His Holy Spirit brings new faith and life and light to a heart that is closed to Him. We see God at work in the one case as much as in the other.”

We wish heartily to recommend the following messages to soldiers, from the pen of W. B. Westcott (Published by Morgan & Scott) :—*The Soldiers' Soul ; A Message ; The Forbidden Subject*. The first and last named are 2s. 3d. per hundred ; the other 1s. per doz.

January issue of *The Faith and the Flock* will appear in a new cover. It will (D.V.) contain a New Year's Address, and an article on National Needs, based upon 1 Sam. vii. ; beside other matter, including a very interesting letter from a Serbian Christian.

Mr. Fereday, if the Lord will, hopes to contribute articles on Elisha during 1916.