
THE FAITH

AND

THE FLOCK

1916

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Questions for the Closing Year.

By WILLIAM LUFF, Author of "War-Time Messages."

"Ask now of the days that are past."—(Deut. iv 32).

Has God been good? And lo, past days stood up,
And in their hands each held a brimming cup,
Filled with the goodness that God's grace had poured,
From the eternal good in Jesus stored,
And in a chorus sang as forth they stood,
"We can bear humble witness, God is good!"

Has God been faithful? The past days again
Stood forth and chanted to a gladsome strain,
The faithfulness that with the rising sun,
Has daily a true course and constant run.
"As faithful as the sun our God has been,
Through all the changing seasons we have seen."

Has God been loving? Eager were past days
To tell their story to their Maker's praise,
"Love has grown springtide flowers and summer sheaves,
Borne autumn fruits, and 'mid the falling leaves
Bestowed its gifts. And so all songs above,
Arose the past days chorus—God is Love."

Has God been just? Once more old days stood forth,
And 'mid the thunders of avenging wrath,
Re-told the story of the Cross, where died
The Just for the unjust, that justified
By faith the unjust soul might have God's peace,
And strike a song that shall not, must not, cease.

Has God been near? And my own days arose,
The days of the past year about to close,
And in a chime they rang, "God has been Good,
And Faithful, Loving, Just, and through Christ's blood,
Will still be what He has been," and their chime
Helped me to face another span of Time.

The Faith and The Flock.

Vol. VIII—No 1

JANUARY, 1916

Price 1d

“Himself.”

“*Jesus HIMSELF drew near.*” (Luke xxiv. 15.)

“*Able even to subdue all things unto HIMSELF.*” (Phil. iii. 21.)

JESUS HIMSELF! Nothing less is offered to us. If we want Him, we can have Him. All that He is, and all that He has, may be ours. Our Christianity, to be all that it ought to be, and may be, must be just this—HIMSELF. That one word comprises all that we shall need of strength, of wisdom, of comfort during the year which is before us. He suffices for all needs; for all questions; for all sorrows. In darkness, or in light; in prosperity or adversity; in sickness, or in health; in the crowd, or in the desert; whether the path is strewn with thorns or with flowers—He is necessary, and He is enough! Without Him, whatever else we possess, we have nothing. With Him, whatever else we lack, we have all things. He is “Our wine to cheer, our bread to stay.”

“Our comfort midst all grief and thrall,
Our life in death, our all in all.”

“**JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR.**” The circumstances under which this took place are well known. Two of His disciples were on their way to Emmaus. Utterly dispirited and disheartened, with scarcely a ray of hope left, after the disasters of the past few days, they were seeking the quiet of their own home. They were dazed, and utterly unable to explain why He, upon Whom all their hopes had rested, should have been apparently powerless in the hands of their rulers, who had put Him to an ignominious death. As they communed together and reasoned about it all, “*Jesus Himself drew near.*”

But when we read, “*their eyes were holden that they should not know Him,*” the mystery seems to deepen. Was it not, above all, necessary that they should know Him? Would it not, in a moment, have solved their doubts and dissipated their fears? Yet at the

very moment when, as it appears to us, they needed to know Him it was rendered impossible. This cannot be explained on merely psychological grounds. No doubt, they were so pre-occupied, and so little prepared to see the One Who had been so recently crucified, that under any circumstances they may have been slow to recognise Him; but the situation is not solved in this way. "Their eyes were *holden* that they should *not* know Him." And the reasons appear as the narrative proceeds. They had known Him and thought of Him purely in connection with Israel, and with earthly hopes (see v. 21). They have something to learn. And Christ hides himself until He has prepared them for the lesson He would teach, and then, and not till then, He makes Himself known. And the lessons, briefly, were these. They were to learn that His death, far from depriving them of Him, had brought Him nearer; and, next, that although the glory and pre-eminence of Israel as God's earthly people were to be in abeyance, there was to be a new company on earth Christ would own as His—one which would be in closer and more vital relationship with Him than Israel will ever be. Accordingly, when these two disciples reach Jerusalem once more, and rejoin the others, Christ comes into their midst—pattern of what would be true spiritually hereafter—and then sends them forth to proclaim repentance and remission of sins in His Name.

Was it a mistake, then, the process by which He led them to this new and higher ground? Far otherwise. Had He revealed Himself at the beginning, it would have proved a hindrance rather than a help. They would have been so startled that it might have unnerved them. In any case, it would have completely unfitted them to listen calmly to the unfolding of the Scripture, by which alone He could lead them to a right apprehension of all that had taken place, and thus give them a solid resting place for their faith.

Has not all this a deep lesson for us? It seems mysterious and incomprehensible, at first, looking at it from their point of view, the way that Christ took, yet we see in the end how reasonable and necessary it was, and that there was a *purpose* in it. Are not God's ways with us often very similar? Do not things turn out just contrary to what we expect? Are we not sometimes terribly perplexed

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by the dealings of Providence, and by all that is allowed to happen? But does not the foregoing incident teach us that there is a purpose in all, and that when all is unfolded we shall see it; and in the meantime it is ours to learn the lesson God is teaching?

We have thought of all that it meant to these two disciples for Jesus to draw near, let us now consider what it means to ourselves.

1. To begin with: when we were first converted, *Jesus Himself drew near*. If this turning point in our lives was real, it meant nothing less than the discovery of Him. This may not have been realised at the time: we may have been too occupied with our own need and desire for relief; nevertheless, *He drew near*. Perhaps we were too engrossed with what He had to offer to think much of Him. But we have surely discovered since then that the initial blessing carried with it something infinitely higher than we at first realized, viz., this: "Jesus HIMSELF drew near."

2. *He drew near in order to remain near*. We read, He "went with them." Oh, the difference that makes to life and to everything.

"Sing aloud to God our strength,
He is *with us* where we go;
Fear we not the journey's length,
Fear we not the mighty foe."

HIMSELF—with us. With Him near, we do not fear the worst foe. "Though I walk through the valley of *the shadow of death*, I will fear no evil," said one. Why? "For *THOU* art with me." "Jesus Himself drew near and *went with them*." This is what each believer may know—nothing less. This may be our happy experience this year and all through life.

And He is with us when we are least conscious of it. These two disciples did not know that their Lord and Master was by their side. And you may say, I have no consciousness of His presence, I cannot realise that He is near. This makes no difference to the fact that He is really with you. He has His own time for giving you the realisation, just as He had with these others, but He is with you. Israel in the desert did not always realise that God was with them. Yet, we read, "they drank of that rock that *went with them*, (marg.) and that rock was Christ." Faith believes without

feeling. Rest in the fact that He is with you and wait His time to reveal Himself.

3. The One Who draws near to us knows all about us. "*What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*" was the question which revealed His perfect knowledge of them. Yes, the one who goes with us *understand us*. He knows all our thoughts, all our perplexities, and every difficulty. And He can meet them all in our case, as in theirs. Have you doubts about Himself—doubts about His dealings with you, or as to what is happening all around you—if only you bring them to Him, He will explain. No two people ever could have had deeper misgivings than troubled the minds of these two disciples going to Emmaus. Their faith seemed eclipsed on account of the untoward events of the previous days. Through personal contact with Christ their recovery was complete.

But although He knows everything He invites us to communicate our fears and difficulties to Him. When these disciples exclaim, "Art Thou only a stranger, and hast not known the things," He answers, "What things?" The very telling was a relief to them. All their difficulties were "concerning Jesus of Nazareth." It is so still. The true and perfect knowledge of Him really settles every difficulty. Because every question that disturbs and perplexes, whatever it may be about, does so because of our ignorance of God, and Christ is the perfect revelation of the heart of God. To know Him is to know God; and to know God is to end our doubts. Christ had none, because this knowledge was His; and it may be ours.

4. He draws near to us in our sadness. "*As ye walk and are sad.*" It is HIMSELF we need then, most of all. Never is His company so sweet. To know that He understands us when all misunderstand; to find the comfort and relief He can give when we seem to have suffered irreparable loss; to discover that He is sufficient under all circumstances—all this is ours when Jesus Himself draws near. How many things there are to make us sad in these days. The cure for every form of sadness is Himself.

5. *As we read the Holy Scriptures we must expect Jesus Himself to draw near.* "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concern-

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ing Himself." What moments! when with Bible open, we seem to pass from the vestibule to the presence chamber, and Christ fills all.

"No more the symbol and the sign
But Christ revealed to me."

Unless this happens our reading has been more or less a failure. The end is not attained merely by reading the Bible, or even by committing it to memory, necessary as both are. The object in reading is to become acquainted with Him of Whom the Bible speaks—Jesus Himself. Then, and then only, do our hearts burn within us. Surely the Lord knew the meaning and use of the Scriptures far better than we do, and He used them to reveal Himself.

6. "The breaking of bread." Here in a special way, Jesus HIMSELF draws near. It was the way he chose to make Himself known to these two. "*And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.*" The symbol of His death becomes the means by which He is revealed. What a barren and empty form the Lord's Supper often becomes, when the outward rite is all, or some supposed manipulation and transformation of the bread and wine claim attention. In both cases the real meaning and blessing of the observance are missed. Unless Jesus himself draws near the ceremony has been in vain.

The bread and wine speak of His death. His own words leave not a shadow of doubt on this point. (Luke xxii. 19/20: I. Cor. xi. 24/5). In that death everything that stood between us and Him has been removed. It is not without significance that Christ selected the breaking of bread as the special means by which their eyes were opened and they knew Him. And particular emphasis seems laid upon this fact by the two who participated. When they returned to Jerusalem, "They told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread." May it ever be so with us; and the great characteristic of such seasons be: "*Jesus Himself drew near.*" The Lord's Supper is for a remembrance of Him. Human frailty alone is accountable for the magic and mystery associated with it. Originally it was but a memorial feast. And as we remember Him, in obedience to His own word, should it

surprise us that His love—yea, HIMSELF—becomes the portion of our hearts, and upon which we are called to feed.

7. *Jesus Himself in the midst.* “And as they thus spake Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them.” This becomes a pattern for all time—the Lord the centre of His gathered saints. He had gathered them, and now He takes His rightful place. For this purpose He had gone after the two on their way to Emmaus. For this purpose their eyes had been holden; for they were no longer to know Him in connection with merely Jewish hopes, but with another and higher circle of interests. And for this same reason, when their eyes were opened and they knew Him, “He ceased to be seen of them.” He wished to teach them that His death, which seemed to them to sound the knell of all their hopes, had opened up possibilities of which they had never dreamed—a company of believers on the earth, to which Christ, though absent, would be nearer, and in closer association, than ever He had been or could be to Israel as a nation—a company to represent Him on the earth, which He would regard as His body, and to which He would in a special way grant His presence and authority.

Alas, how much is often allowed to come in between the believer and Jesus HIMSELF. The nearer we can come to the pattern in Luke xxiv. the happier and more full of blessing for us will it be. It is not a question merely between one taking part or half a dozen; but of giving the Lord his place, and of everything being subject to His control.

8. One word more. This same One Whom we know now in the various ways already indicated—Who drew near to us at the beginning, Who goes with us along life's pathway, Who is nearer still in sadness, and Who makes Himself known in a special way when His people are gathered together—He is the One Who is coming, and Who will presently subdue all things unto HIMSELF. We are looking for the Lord Jesus *as Saviour*—(Phil. iii. 21). None but He will do. He is coming in that character, to fashion our bodies like unto His own glorious body, to put all things right, and bring everything into subjection to God. Evil will be put away; the rebellious will be put down, and He HIMSELF will fill all things—then Jesus HIMSELF for evermore. R. E.

Serbia: **The Cry of the Serbian Soul.**

By JAMES S. WILES.

There is in our midst a famous book called *Thinking Black*. Thinking Black, that is just the difficulty. It is not easy for a white man to "think black," nor is it always that an Englishman can think Serbian. The Serbian mentality is, however, much nearer to our own, than the African, and I now propose to draw aside the curtain, for a few moments, from a thoughtful Serbian mind. To-day I have received certain reflections upon the present distress, reflections which open up to us, not only the heart of the writer himself, but also many other pondering minds in that harassed and decimated little land. Listen!

He says: (1) "Men have failed, not the standard, not the ideals, not the Spirit breathing through the Bible, no, but *men*; human nature has failed. Again and again, men have turned from God's Face, and gone the way of the serpent. There is an Emperor who has dared to flatter his people thus:—'You are the best and greatest people in the world. I will lead you to conquer all the peoples in the world and to dominate them.' Who has failed? men ask. Why, that Emperor has failed, and God is saying clearly enough: 'I sent you not to dominate, but to serve and work.'

(2) But the philosopher has also failed—that philosopher who has been teaching: 'There are super-men and under-men; there is a super-nation, and there are under-nations. You, my compatriots, you are super-men, and you make up the super-nation. Wherever you look upon the earth, your brethren must become your servants.' But God is saying in reply to that: 'In my manifold wisdom I created the big and the little nations. Neither super-man nor under-man was my creation. This is a wretched invention of yours. In My sight the super-man (if you *will* have this word) is the man who stands nearest to Me, but remember that the man who stands nearest to Me stands nearest to the smallest of my creatures—nearest to the under-under-man—and loves them and supports them as I do.'

(3) Again, the man of science has also failed—the scientist who has given us the doctrine of the ‘struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest.’ He says that the whole meaning of history is that it is a competition in physical strength. Yet all the time, God is looking down upon proud clay, and whispering through all the world: ‘I am the only Might; power belongeth unto Me, and Mine is the only Right. You talk of the survival of the fittest, but everything is *unfit* outside of Me, and all wisdom is foolishness apart from Me.’

(4) Again, the priest has failed, who has said: ‘Christ lives only in *my* Church, in other churches Christ is not, or is dead. My Church is the only boat of Salvation, all others lead to Hell. Come in, you who wish to be saved.’ God is answering through the sunshine and shadow, the rain and wind on sea and land, and the whole beauty and harmony of His Universe: ‘Do you think my little man, that there is room enough for Me in your small Church? Even your own small soul is not always satisfied with such a narrow dwelling; how then could it contain Me? Or if that, indeed, were possible, how then could all other parts of the world live without My Presence, you little foolish priest of mine?’

(5) Europe was proud, and ‘the Lord will destroy the house of the proud’ (Proverbs xv. 25). The Lord is just now destroying the house of proud Europe by Europe’s own hands. The present war is not a struggle for existence, as the short-minded and short-sighted say; it is a great examination for men and nations. It is a touchstone for their faith and moral worth.

(6) The sufferings of Serbia are terrible, you say. Yes, but suffering is the way to love. Go, and make the experience. Go, and mix your tears with the tears of the suffering, and you will begin to feel love towards them. Love can be born only in pain—like every living thing is born. If you are afraid of pain, you are afraid of love.”

Such is the earnest and penetrating cry of my Serbian friend, who came and visited me while I had typhus fever in Nish.

But that is not quite all. There is a post-script. He adds that “the Word of God tells us that a Satanic thought came to man; he thought he could become God. But in his attempt at realising this dream, instead of coming face to face towards God, he wan-

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dered away with his back upon God, and became more and more engrossed in Nature and in things. He began to worship Nature, and to worship things, and while so doing, became, himself, more and more but a thing amongst things. And yet I would write to you that the Christ, despised and rejected and crucified on Golgotha, is alive and liveth for evermore, and amidst this war-storm, many souls have seen by faith the shining stars beyond the blackest clouds, and have said with one of old: "O Lord, our heart is ne'er at rest till it find rest in Thee."

Brethren, they of Serbia who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth salute you.

Whithersoever the "Governor" Listeth.

BY E. STACY WATSON.

"When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee."

BREASTING the billows without a sigh,
Meeting the tempest fearlessly;
Thus, O mariner, ride the sea,
For Jesus, its "Governor," rides with thee.

What to Him is the lightning flash?
Fears thy Captain the thunder crash?
He, who can hush the waves at will,
Says, *in His own time*—"Peace, be still!"

Cheerfully then, while He guides the bark
Over the waters, wild and dark,
Sing till the feeble heart grows brave—
Resting on Jesus strong to save.

Strong to save from desponding fears;
Strong to save from unsanctioned tears;
Strong to keep thee in perfect peace;
Strong to land thee where storms shall cease.

Sing then, sing, while the storm is high;
Answer its wrath with melody;
Safe as thy couch is the raging sea,
For Jesus, its "Governor," steers for Thee.

Elisha, the Prophet.

BY W. W. FEREDAY.

I.—ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR.

There was no room for a prophet in the order of things established by Jehovah for Israel when normal conditions prevailed. At the close of the ministry of Moses, the high-priest was the link between Jehovah and His people, and the civil leader was directed to walk under his guidance (Num. xxvii. 18-23); when the priesthood failed, the king became the link, and the high-priest fell into the second place (I. Sam. ii. 35); then, when royalty failed, prophets were raised up, for our God will have some means whereby He can reach His people for their instruction and blessing. But prophets were brought forward intermittently as God saw the need; there was no line of them, as of priests and kings. Each stood in his own responsibility; he fulfilled his mission, and passed away.

But there was an exception to this in the case of Elijah. *He* had a successor. "Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-Meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet *in thy room*." Elisha was thus supplementary to Elijah. The contrast between the two was remarkable. The one terrible in his bearing, the other gracious; the one an ascetic, the other homely and accessible to all. Elijah's miracles were characterized by judgment; those of Elisha, with one exception, were marked by mercy. The very manner in which each is introduced to us arrests us by its contrast: the Tishbite bursts upon the scene abruptly, like a bolt from the blue (I. Kings xvii. 1); the son of Shaphat is seen peacefully plowing a field (I. Kings xix. 19.)

Elijah and Elisha remind us of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus. The stern ministry of Elijah was akin to that of the Forerunner (Luke i. 17); the gracious ministry of Elisha is suggestive of that of the Saviour Himself (Luke vii. 33-34). The name, too, is eloquent in its meaning:—"God is Salvation."

Elijah's intercession to God against Israel (Rom. xi. 2) led to the anointing of Elisha to be prophet in his room. His deeply

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tried spirit burst forth into sore complaint against God's people. He recounted their sins before Jehovah. They had forsaken His covenant, thrown down His altars, slain His prophets with the sword, and were now seeking the destruction of Elijah himself (I. Kings xix. 10.) How unlike Moses in Exo. xxxii. 31-32! Moreover, in his extraordinary assertion, "I, even I only, am left," the prophet seems to have fallen into the error of supposing that not another loyal heart was left in the land! God cannot accept this from any of us. True, others were not so pronounced in their separation from evil as Elijah, but Jehovah would have His servant know that there were nevertheless seven thousand knees which had not bowed down to Baal. Remarkably, from this point in the narrative, other witnesses are brought out into the light—samples of the seven thousand (I. Kings xix. 19; xx. 13-22, 28-35; xxi. 3; xxii. 8.)

Let us take warning from Elijah's failure. Our own times are deplorably evil, and the apostasy hastens on. God appreciates those who, like Elijah, take a firm stand against the evil, at whatever cost to themselves in the way of ease and honour here. But let none of these entertain a thought of their own faithfulness in contrast to others. Humility becomes us, and extreme tenderness of spirit towards those who, however strange their associations, in their hearts really value Christ. All such are very precious to God; and however gravely He may Himself rebuke in them what is not well-pleasing in His sight, He will never tolerate in us a censorious spirit towards them. To fall into this is to sacrifice our usefulness at this critical moment in the history of the Church of God. If so excellent a witness as Elijah failed in this particular, the danger for ourselves is exceeding great.

II.—THE CALL TO SERVICE.

Elijah journeyed to Abel-Meholah to find a successor, and lo' in the goodness of God, he found a companion. For the fiery prophet's trials were not yet ended, and he was henceforward to be comforted by the fellowship of a kindred heart. "Two are better than one . . . for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow." (Eccles. iv. 9-10.) How truly Elisha refreshed his master's spirit is suggested by the words in II. Kings iii. 11: "he poured water

on the hands of Elijah." In I. Kings xix. 21, it is said: "he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."

A pleasant picture is exhibited to us in I. Kings xix. 19-21. In the midst of Baal-worshippers a pious farmer pursued his course, his soul doubtless sorely grieved by the apostate condition of God's people, yet himself wholly separate in heart and mind from the prevailing unfaithfulness. His call to service and testimony came to him when Elijah passed by. The call is given in I. Kings xix. 19; his anointing is found in II. Kings ii. 9. In like manner, the apostles of our Lord heard the call in Matt. iv. 18, &c., and received the anointing in Acts ii.

It was but the work of a moment, Elijah's casting of his mantle upon Elisha, but it was the turning point in his spiritual history. It was the great crisis of his life. If he had failed to perceive the significance of that moment his whole after career would have missed the divine intention. Similar crises occur in the history of souls to-day; what we need is the spiritual sensibility to recognise them when they come. Thus, a disciple may hear the distinct call of the Lord to forsake all, and devote himself to the work of the Gospel in a wild land. If he hesitates, the honour may pass by him for ever. If, on the other hand, he humbly submits himself to the divine mandate, his whole course is "Forward" from that moment. Our lives, as far as usefulness is concerned, are either made or lost by our ability to discern these crises when they arise. We are only really useful when in the place where God would have us.

Elisha left all to follow devotedly the footsteps of another. Here is our example. "Follow thou Me," is the voice of Christ (John xxi. 22.) Let us cultivate the spirit of Ruth in her fervent outburst to Naomi: "*Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for where thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*" (Ruth i. 16-17.) This is devotion indeed.

Further, Elisha left all to tread a path of loss. Elijah was a proscribed man, and danger tracked his every step. From the quietness and security of the farm, Elisha went forth to be his

disciple. His complete breach with the past seems indicated by the fact that he not only slew the oxen, but also "boiled their flesh with the implements." So to speak, he burned his boats behind him. From that day there was to be no looking back. We, brethren, are followers of a rejected Christ. Loss, not gain; suffering, not ease, are the appointed accompaniments of true discipleship. Are we really prepared for these things? Our apostle trod an unparalleled path (his account of it will be found in 2nd Cor. xi. xii.); but what sustained him therein? Hear him in Phil. iii. 7-8: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but rubbish, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him."

(*To be continued, D V.*)

Earthquake in Italy.

In January, 1915, occurred a terrible earthquake in Italy. The reason comparatively little attention was called to it is due to the fact that the gigantic war overshadows all else and leaves little room even for a convulsion of this magnitude. The following are some of the details:—"The King of Italy said to Signor Marconi:—'I have visited all the earthquake disasters in Italy of my time, and this surpasses all, including even Messina, as only two or three per cent. of the population have escaped, while in Messina thirty per cent. survived.' Thirty thousand persons and sixty towns vanished in *half a minute*, and of one sleeping town of 11,000 inhabitants, not a thousand survived; and a telegram from Rome (*Times*, January 18, 1915) reveals a startling similarity to a phenomenon of our Lord's descent (Zech. 14, 4)—'Mount Pizzodeta, whose height is above 6,000 feet, has been sharply cut in two by the earthquake; and the opening is so wide that it can be seen clearly from a great distance.' How like that Day, crowded with famine, pestilence, earthquake and war, which only waits for the disappearance of the midnight watchers, and how near it all brings Him whom our souls love!"

National Needs :

Some Thoughts founded on 1st Samuel vii.

By R. F.

“God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: that they should seek the Lord.”

Here we have three things stated :—

First.—The essential unity and equality of all men, for all are of one blood. From the point of view of ability and rank, all are not equal ; but from the standpoint of the race, all are equal.

Second.—The recognition of *nations*; *i.e.* peoples gathered within given areas ; owning one government ; and speaking one language.

Third.—The object “*That they should seek the Lord.*”

The formation of peoples into nations was not left to chance, nor to the will and caprice of men ; it was the result of divine intervention—both their times and boundaries were fore-arranged by God. No doubt man played his part in it all ; and failure and sin on the human side were not wanting ; but to suppose this were all, would be to misconstrue one of the most important developments in the history of the human race. We know it was wrong, in the first instance, for Israel to desire a king ; but eventually God took the matter into His own hands, and Kingship in Israel became a Divine appointment. Something similar happened in the case of nations. The confusion of tongues, resulting from man’s wickedness in building the tower of Babel, may have given occasion to this new arrangement, but, at the same time, it was the psychological moment which God seized to give effect to purposes of His own (Cf. Deut. xxxii., 8.)

There is, consequently, not only individual life, and family life, but national life. And how impressive is the reason given why God arranged the times of the nations and fixed their boundaries : “*That they should seek the Lord.*” The very boundary of a nation was to be a reminder of God’s existence ; and of the national responsibility to recognise Him. That nations, as a rule,

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have forgotten this, is only too true. If they have looked upon their boundaries it has been only with the thought of how they could be extended. And, instead of remembering that they owed their very existence to God, they have forgotten Him, either in their love of ease and sensuality, or in their mad rush for material prosperity and dominion.

Yet a nation prospers only as it responds to the original idea : "*That they should seek the Lord.*" How important national life becomes from this standpoint, is evident. If Great Britain is great to-day it is for two reasons : Her fitness for the place God has given her, and her recognition of His claims. A nation remains strong and pre-eminent only so long as it fulfils the purpose of its advancement to power and glory. When it becomes no longer fit to fulfil God's will it perishes. When it ceases to think of God, and only considers itself, it is flung aside. The reason given by Daniel why the kingdom was about to pass from the hand of Belshazzar is the same in every similar case, whether we think of Assyria, Egypt, Greece, or Rome. "*But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven and the God in Whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.*" The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland now occupies the place in the world once filled by the nations mentioned. Her dominions are far more extensive than those belonging to any other nation ; she is equally superior in power and wealth. In saying this we have no desire to flatter. Far from it. God has chosen to place this realm in the exalted position it occupies. For purposes of His own He has given her this wealth and influence. The high power she possesses has been *bestowed* ; and is not due to her own merits or achievement. Though at the same time she has to some extent wrought with God and produced many noble men and women He could use.

But, to-day, she seems to stand at the dividing of the ways. This great war is going to test her, as probably nothing else has ever done. For years, amid growing prosperity, and ever-increasing expansion on every hand, she has gradually been forgetting her allegiance to Him to Whom she owes all that is hers. She has been living for the things which are seen, and forgetting the things that are unseen. God is calling her to account. What gathered wealth, and of lives more precious than gold, will have been sacri-

ficed before the war closes, and the final toll is paid! The war has come as God's appeal. Were we not forgetting Him and His laws? And if we had not sunk into blank atheism, had we not reached a point of indifference and carelessness which shut Him out of our lives just as effectually?

The question is: How shall we come out of this war? That is the question of all questions. And that question may partly be answered already by seeing how we are going through it. Judging from this standpoint, the outlook is not very hopeful. We are not losing sight of all the sacrifice and the bold endeavour that has been, and is being, made; nor do we forget the means and personal service devoted to the cause of charity and to the alleviation of suffering. It is all most wonderful. But it is not enough. How far does all this spring from a motive which God can accept? How far has the nation returned to its God? We believe that in the trenches there is a feeling after Him; a growing sense of how much He is needed; and souls are finding Him in Christ. But how is it at home? We do not believe the Church is awakened yet, much less the nation. And if this is so, what is to happen when our men come back? Some prayer meetings we attended the other day, which were fairly representative, did not seem to manifest any deep awakening. There was no cry from souls really in distress, no laying hold of God in a very tempest of urgency, little of that prayer which one feels must prevail. We are not sitting in judgment; much less assuming that we can do better; we are only stating what we felt, and saying that we missed what we longed for. It was only as a rare exception that the deeps were touched. There was no flood of petition or confession which bowed the audience beneath it, or carried it aloft.

If the Church is to be blessed, and the nation restored, we must not forget that there is a definite way to it. Distinctness and definiteness are the invariable marks of a work of the Holy Spirit. Generalities are not enough. To say we have sinned, is not sufficient unless we are prepared to say wherein we have sinned. And, above all, we must be true. Truth in the inward parts is always what God desires.

There is a chapter of history which is calculated to help us at the present time. In I. Samuel vii. we read how God gave the

Israelites the victory over their enemies the Philistines. It will be remembered how this was preceded by dire and discreditable defeat. In chapter iv. we read: "*Israel was smitten before the Philistines And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines?*" There was no need to ask such a question; the reason was plain enough. The false gods on every hand, and the moral and spiritual state of the people, furnished the answer. They then have recourse to the "ark of the covenant" as a sort of fetish. (Just as people in this so-called Christian country distribute charms to the soldiers.) How ready the human heart is to trust in anything short of God; and to believe that misfortune is due to anything rather than its own state.

But the ark does not bring them any nearer to victory. How could it, when God had departed from them, and the bearers of the ark were Hophni and Phinehas? All ends in further disaster. And the truth was uttered by the dying wife of Phinehas when she exclaimed: "*The glory is departed from Israel.*" When, however, the ark is in the enemies hands and separated from a degenerate people, God can maintain His own glory, and Dagon is found prostrate on his face before it. Moreover, wherever the ark was taken, the enemies of God were smitten. What a rebuke to Israel. Associated with *them*, the ark was powerless. Alone, and with the Lord, it was omnipotent!!

It comes back, for the Philistines are glad to be quit of it, and at length finds its resting place in Kirjath-Jearim in "the house of Abinadab" and they "*sanctified Eleazar, his son to keep the ark of the Lord.*" Thus twenty years pass, and we read: "And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord" And now comes the great revival and restoration of which we wish to speak. How was it brought about?

"And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you; and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only: and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

In the first place, there must be a return. "*If ye do return.*" This is essential: and how much it is needed to-day. Who can

doubt that, as a nation, *we* have been drifting away from God? "IF YE DO RETURN." And, "WITH ALL YOUR HEARTS." God will have reality; and He will have *all*. A divided heart will not satisfy Him.

Nor is it enough to return. The strange gods must be put away. God will not link His honor with others. He will not brook rivals. It must not be the Lord and something else. May we not *in a sense* apply this to ourselves? Is there not a danger of worshipping the god of Munitions? Granted that, as things are, men and guns are necessary as instruments, are we not liable to put our trust in these and in our own resources? And can we say there are no strange gods amongst us to-day? If the martyrs for the truth could come back into our midst, would they not be appalled by the things they would hear and see in connection with our so-called Christianity? Would not our levity, our indifference, our superficiality make them enquire if some new kind of Christianity had not appeared on the earth? What need there is for us to "*prepare our hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only*." Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only."

Thus far we have three things. (1) Return unto the Lord. (2) The putting away of strange gods. (3) Preparation of heart to serve the Lord. This last seems to show that the children of Israel had been away from God for so long that they had forgotten even the way to serve Him. Is it not so with many in our own land?

But all this was preparatory to something else. Let it be remembered that here we have plainly shewn us the *divine* way of restoration and victory. Both individuals and nations must follow what is here indicated if true revival is to take place. All that has gone before—the return; the putting away; the preparation of heart—is to make one thing—the indispensable thing—possible; and that is, PRAYER.

"And Samuel said, '*Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.*'"

Samuel would not and could not have done this apart from what had already taken place. And we need to bear this ever in mind. Had there not been a suited moral state on the part of the

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people even Samuel's prayers would have been unavailing (see Jer. xvi.) We sometimes betake ourselves to prayer, forgetting what must precede and accompany it. And then we wonder why God does not answer us. Our hearts must be divested of their lusts and their idols before God can give deliverance. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve Him only: and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." Yet, when the people are thus prepared, there is one ready and able to intercede. "I will pray for you unto the Lord," says Samuel. He stands for the man who is sufficiently near to God to intercede for others. If he said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah," it was because he was familiar with that place himself. For Mizpah means, "Watch tower."

Yet in connection with prayer there must be the open and sincere confession of felt weakness. What is prayer itself but a tacit confession of need and helplessness; and this must be fully owned. So at Mizpah they "*drew water and poured it out before the Lord.*" "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." And even the Son of God crucified through weakness uttered the words, "I am poured out like water." There is no mistaking the meaning, then, of this symbol.

To this was added fasting. There are times when things which give a pleasurable excitement and appeal to the senses must be laid aside, however innocent and appropriate in their place, in order that the full force of our need may be realised, and our souls clarified from every gross influence, so that we may see, and commune with God. If only a week's abstinence from self-pleasing and every form of self-indulgence were religiously observed, and we were as a nation to bethink ourselves before God of our shortcomings, and repent, who can tell the result?

One thing more. They said there, "We have sinned against the Lord." There was fullest confession.

How impressive are these seven things! and are they not necessary to-day? (1) Do we not need a *return* to the Lord? for have we not departed from Him? (2) Are there not many evils and idols to put away? (3) Have not our hearts turned aside after other things, and become choked with worldliness and materialism,

and, consequently, is there not need to prepare our hearts unto the Lord and serve Him only? And all this that we may (4) be in a proper state and attitude for prayer. While in connection with this exercise must there not be (5) a confession of our weakness? (6) a forsaking of all that might prove a spiritual hindrance? and, lastly: distinct and deliberate confession, "We have sinned?"

No sooner is Israel gathered to Mizpah than "the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel." But the Israel they went up against now was very different in character to the one they had before so easily overcome. Then it was a polluted, defiled, and self-confident people whom God had forsaken; now it is a penitent, restored people—one that had returned to its God and betaken itself to prayer—and defeat is turned into victory.

It is here that Samuel comes into prominence. The nation is now in a condition in which he can act on its behalf. It seeks his help. "*And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord, and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him.*"

"A sucking lamb." This expresses dependence and devotedness. Where these are found God will never fail to answer. They existed in all their perfection in Christ, and it is when that which spoke to God of Christ came before Him in connection with the prayers of His servant, that He sent deliverance. "*The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them.*"

We are not suggesting that God intervenes in this particular fashion to-day. He chooses His own methods, and works in different ways at different times. Yet the principles to be deduced from the circumstances of Israel's victory abide for all time and have their application to-day. It is not only victory that is wanted but blessing and revival; and these can come only in the manner indicated:—A return to the Lord; the putting away of evil; penitence and prayer. Victory without these would be worse than defeat; with these, the gains, whatever they cost, will be something never to be forgotten.

Grain from Joseph's Granary.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Author of War Stories from Land and Sea.

FIRST SACKFUL.

WHEN HORSE OMNIBUSES RAN.—At Christmas time, I noticed many of the omnibus men had two ribbons on their whips and thin bell-strings: they were the colours of a Rothchild, blue and orange, and denoted that the men were the receivers of a brace of pheasants, the gift of that honourable gentleman. What should we think of a man who was willing to receive the pheasants, but refused to wear the ribbons? Such are they who are ashamed to wear the badge of Christ, from whom we receive many a brace of blessing, embraced in the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (I. Tim. iv. 8.) For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels. (Luke ix., 26.)



A PRIZE ROSETTE.—In the butcher's shop, I saw the butcher's dog carrying in his mouth a Christmas rosette, off one of the prize beasts. Poor dog! He might have had a good solid bit of meat; but he was satisfied with a rosette: like professors taken up with ritual, and having no Christ." Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."—(Heb. vi. 1).



KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD—(I. Peter i., 5).—On a stone in a garden, I was shewn the following inscription:—

November, 1902.

"The jubilee of my second birth. Kept by the power of God, fifty years faithful. A.H., the present owner of this property. Aged 66, October 30th, 1902."

A faithful God, can keep His people faithful. See I Sam. xvii. 32. "Let no man's heart fail." Isa. xlii. 4, "He shall not fail nor be

discouraged"; neither should His followers. Josh. i., 5, 6. "I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage." Isa. xlv. 8. "Remember this and shew yourselves men." "Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ."—(Jude 1.)



HOW GERMANS HELPED FRENCHMEN.—The German volunteer rescuers, who helped their French brethren in the Courrières disaster, were able to live where others died. The papers said:—"The equipment of these eighteen German miners is the most perfect in the world. Their leader, Captain Kopp, explains how the oxygen sack which each man carries over his back enables its wearer to live for hours under poisonous gas. The poisonous gas which drove back the French rescuers is rendered innocuous by the German miner's breathing apparatus. This apparatus is only one of a thousand illustrations of German inventiveness in the application of science to industry. In this instance the German chemist is one of the world's greatest benefactors. The oxygen sack as a humane invention, ranks with the Davy lamp. The Hibernia mines, from which the German rescuers have come, are notorious for their 'gassy' character. It was this fact that set the German scientists to exercise their wits: and the respiratory apparatus is the result." What a pity German science had not kept to these lines; but let us learn a lesson. Those who would rescue others in the world's sinpits, need to have divine equipment, that like their Master, they may be in the world, but not of it. To this end Christ prayed, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."—(I. Peter iv., 1, 2.)



CURED BUT RELAPSED.—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."—(I. John i. 8.) And those who live with the supposed sinless ones, generally see the

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deception. Said the one who was eating, "I think there's some thing wrong with this bacon." "Wrong, sir! Impossible. It is the very best bacon. It was cured only this week." "Well, if you ask my opinion, I should say it has had a bad relapse, then." Perhaps a like excuse may be made for those who profess to be cured of total depravity.



UNDER THE RED SHIELD.—I am told that the name Rothchild is an abbreviation of "Red Shield," because under the sign of the Red Shield, the great business first began. Be that as it may, the prosperity of the Christian is due to the great Red Shield of Redemption: a large shield, an impenetrable shield, a victorious shield. "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield."—Psa. v. 12.) "Above all taking the shield of faith."—(Eph. vi. 15).



FORGETTING THE POWDER.—A little boy was playing with his soldiers, and as he arranged army against army, he allowed his imagination to express itself aloud, "And now the soldiers get nearer, and nearer, and nearer—then they all burst out laughing at each other, 'cos they've forgotten to bring the powder." It was disappointing, just when one expected a volley and a gallant charge; but how like many a finely organised bit of fighting, or proposed fighting between other armies. It all comes to nothing, because the soldiers on one side, at least, have forgotten to bring any powder. Such attacks end in defeats, for the foe is never without powder. Christ's soldiers spell powder without the "d," according to I. Thess. i. 5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."



A WARNING WORD.—We read, Heb. x. 35—"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." Confidence or faith is the Christian's cash: only in ignorance, or folly, or mistake do men throw gold away. A tradesman, having

£40 in gold, put it in a refuse pail for safety, while he left the shop for a few moments. When he returned he emptied the pail into the dust-cart, and it was not until an hour afterwards that he remembered what he had done with the money. He hurried to the electric light works, where he was just in time to prevent the morning's refuse being deposited in the destructor. After a two hours' search the money was discovered. Moral—Do not put your confidence, nor your coin, in a refuse pail.



GOD FIRST.—Being in Worcester, and lying awake in the early morning, I heard the Cathedral clock strike six, and immediately after it, a hooter went, calling workpeople to their work. I felt glad the Cathedral was in front of the factory: and it is better still when God is before Mammon, and Christ before the counter. "God first," is a safe start for any day. Let us, like Nehemiah, arrange "to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the Lord: also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as *it is* written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: and *that* we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage."—Neh. x. 35-37). "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."—(Matt. vi. 33).

"I remember an incident which occurred in South Africa during the Zulu War. Our troops were on the move and the camp was being struck. When the soldiers came to remove the tent of a General, now one of our senior Field-Marschals, they found him kneeling on the ground reading from his book of prayers. It might have been thought that the men round about would have smiled or laughed at what they witnessed. On the contrary, I am sure that in the battle which very shortly took place that act inspired the men with the greatest possible confidence in their gallant leader.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 2

FEBRUARY, 1916

Price 1d

Notes and Extracts.

God's Unexpected Ways.

The attention of Christ being drawn by one of His disciples to the buildings of the Temple, drew from Him a most unexpected comment: "*Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*" How unexpected are God's ways! How unprepared often we are for what He sees fit to permit! And yet there is a needs be, if only we could see it. Had not the Temple, which should have been a house of prayer for all nations, become a den of thieves?

Nor is it otherwise with regard to the present war. To regard it as an accident, or as a chance occurrence; to look upon it as due simply to a concatenation of forces over which man had no control, would be to miss the true significance of this stupendous event. There is a needs be. It is a day of reckoning—a day of judgment, though not in a final sense. God is saying to us, "Seest thou these great buildings?" Or, in other words, "Seest thou these great nations, proud of their civilisation, bloated with wealth, intoxicated with pleasure, and forgetful of Me and My claims? they are throwing themselves against each other and battering one another to pieces." Three years ago we should have no more expected it—no more have looked to see Europe—nay, the whole world—convulsed with war, than that disciple expected to hear, as he called his Lord's attention to the stones and buildings of the Temple, that soon not one stone would be left upon another.

But nothing is more certain than that there is a day of reckoning. With nations, that reckoning comes in this life; with individuals, in the life to come, though sometimes partly here and now, according to the nature of the offence. What is

this collapse of civilisation—this anti-climax to all the hopes of man, as man—to teach us? What, but that God has to be reckoned with: that He counts: and that He takes account: and that in the last resort the question is, How do we stand with Him? Not only are the nations face to face with one another in this supreme struggle, but they are face to face with God. And unless they realise this there is very little hope for them. And to bring the matter home to each one of us: If judgment is visiting the nations, as such, here and now, what is there in reserve for individuals who have flouted God's authority and refused His appeals? Individuals, perhaps some of the least deserving, may escape loss and suffering and even inconvenience through the war, and go on neglecting God, but the day of reckoning will as surely come to each one at some future day as it has come to the nations now.

This war is also a judgment on Christendom, though not the final one in this case, either. But Christendom has been God's dwelling place, as surely as was the Temple of old at Jerusalem. The principal combatants in this fearful war are the nations where for centuries God has walked; where His truth has shone; where the Gospel has been preached; and where the power of the Holy Ghost has been felt. But as surely as the Temple of old became a den of thieves, so surely have the mass of those who have enjoyed these unparalleled favours of God become corrupted, defiled and reprobate. And we know from the Scriptures of truth what Christendom ultimately will become: "The habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."



The Family. Few things have been more marked during the past thirty years than the way in which those brought up within the sphere, and under the influence, of Christian teaching have deliberately turned their back upon even a profession of Christianity; while many are quite content with a nominal profession. Such a condition of things is portentous of evil results both to the Church and the world, and is fast hastening on the apostasy for which the professing Church is ripening. We are bound to admit that

the emptiness of much that passes as Christianity is largely accountable for this sad declension. But there is also another reason. Family life has not been all that it should have been. Recognition of God in the *family* has often been entirely absent. Family life is one of the greatest preservatives of moral and spiritual wellbeing conceivable. Nor must we ever expect either the Church or the Sunday School to take the place of, or do duty for, the instructions that should be given within the family circle.

In this connection we are glad to call attention to "*The Christian in relation to the Family*," by H. D. Woolley,* in which the origin of the family; the way a believer's family is linked with God; its sacredness; family blessing; why God instituted the family—are some of the subjects discussed in a very helpful manner.

God in our Circumstances.—"Nothing can happen without God. The words of the Prophet are: 'Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure'; and James tells us (Acts xv. 18: 'Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.')

"That which has happened to us, that which is happening, that which will happen, has been determined by our Heavenly Father, Who will make all things work together for the good of those who love God and show their love by walking with God, and who are the called according to His purpose. 'He that spared not His Own Son but delivered Him up for us all, *how shall He not* with Him also freely give us all things'" (Rom. viii. 32).



"Our security does not depend upon our feeble, wavering faith, but upon the omnipotence, the love and the faithfulness of the unchanging, the eternal God."

* Morgan & Scott, 12 Paternoster Buildings. Price, Twopence.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

III.—THE DOUBLE PORTION.

Whatever services Elisha may have rendered (Timothy like) in association with Elijah while the latter remained on earth, his testimony proper began after Elijah was rapt to heaven. Their last journey together is full of spiritual significance. Starting from Gilgal, they proceeded west to Bethel; thence they turned back towards the east and visited Jericho; and from Jericho they passed to Jordan, and across to the other side. All these points spoke of a blessed past and an evil present—Israel's Canaan history commenced at Gilgal (Josh. v.). There their camp was formed; there the reproach of Egypt was rolled away; and thence they marched forth at the divine bidding for conquest. The associations of the place were thus very precious to a pious Israelite. But Gilgal was now one of the chief centres of national iniquity.—(Amos iv. 4, and v. 5; Hosea iv. 15). The place of Israel's early consecration to God had become the place of gross unfaithfulness to God! How sadly we are thus reminded of what the Church was in the beginning and of what it is to-day!

Bethel, meaning "house of God," was sacred as the spot where God manifested Himself to Jacob, and graciously pledged Himself to the servant—(Gen. xxviii. 10-22). Now one of Jeroboam's calves stood there—(I. Kings xii. 28-29). causing Jehovah to speak of the place in contempt as Bethaven—"house of folly"—(Hosea iv. 15).

Jericho once witnessed a marvellous display of divine power when Jehovah caused the walls to fall down flat; it was now a standing proof of the nation's apostacy from God—(Josh vi. 20; I. Kings xvi. 34).

Jordan once opened to let Israel into the land; now it opened to let Elijah out. Jehovah seemed thus to sunder link after link all that which once bound the people to Himself. They had rejected Him; He now rejected them. It is as if He said to His servant; "They do not want Me, and they do not want you; let them alone."

The holy persistency of Elisha on that memorable journey

is very remarkable. At the start Elijah gave him the opportunity of remaining at Gilgal while he went on to Bethel (II. Kings ii. 2). But Elisha protested: "As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." At Bethel and at Jericho further opportunities were given, but Elisha refused them in the same determined manner. Was the departing prophet really desirous of getting rid of his companion, or was he instead, testing him as to how far he entered into the circumstances of that moment? We believe it was the latter. As the words of the sons of the prophets show, there was an impression abroad that Elijah was about to be taken away, and Elisha was bent upon remaining with him until the end. His soul felt that blessing was connected with association with Elijah, and he was determined not to miss the blessing. So "they two went on." Oh, that we clave to Christ with the same set purpose that Elisha clave to Elijah! Herein is the secret of power for life and testimony.

Arrived at the river, Jordan fled before the prophet, "so that they two went over on dry ground." Expressive type of Christ—death's master. But His death is also ours, and we find ourselves, in consequence, with Him outside of the present evil world. Do we indeed realise that this is our true position?

Jordan being passed, Elisha's great opportunity came. "Ask what I shall do for thee," said his master, "before I be taken away from thee." Like Solomon at an earlier date—(I. Kings iii. 5) his purpose of heart expressed itself in his reply. "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy Spirit be upon me." The "double portion" was the portion of the firstborn—(Deut. xxi. 15-17), whereby he was enabled to worthily represent the dead, and maintain the honour of his name. All in the Church are firstborn ones—(Heb. xii. 23), and as such are endowed with blessings such as saints in former dispensations never knew. Nothing could exceed the wealthy portion which is ours in the risen Christ, that "better thing" which God has "provided for us"—(Heb. xi. 16). By the Spirit's power we are enabled to enter into the realization of it, and so become fitted to worthily represent the absent Christ in the scene of His rejection.

Not until Jordan was passed did Elijah propose blessing

to his disciple. In like manner, Calvary must be left behind in resurrection power ere the Spirit could be given from above, and full Christian blessing be enjoyed.

But there was a condition imposed upon Elisha. "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Elisha did see the glorious sight, and so the longed-for power and blessing became his. Do we see the Man who has gone up to God? Is the eye of our faith upon Him? The apostle prayed for the Colossians (i. 11) that they might be "strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Strengthened in this manner, Stephen could die in triumph, and Paul could live and serve dauntlessly.

From the departing prophet there fell the mantle. This Elisha took up, and forthwith rent his own clothes in two pieces. We must put off in order to put on. We must be divested in order to be invested. In measure as the old "I" is practically renounced (God's sentence of death upon it really accepted) so Christ is manifested in us. The apostle describes his own experience thus:—"We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh"—(II. Cor. iv. 11). He even welcomed the most painful circumstances when they contributed to this grand result.—(II. Cor. xii. 9.)

Possessed now of power, Elisha turned back towards Jordan, "And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over"—(II. Kings ii. 9.) Elijah had gone, but God remained. What we all need is faith in the Unseen. Israel failed in this when Moses disappeared in the mount—(Exo. xxxii. 1.) The Church has likewise failed in its faith in the invisible Head, and in the invisible Spirit. Men come and go, but God is ever with His people. Let us not live in the past—lamenting that "the former days were better than these"—(Eccles. vii. 10); but let us rather lay hold upon God for to-day, assured that we shall find Him as good to us as ever He was to His saints in ages past.

(To be continued.)

The Lord in the Midst.

"Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." (Luke xxiv. 36).

"The first day of the week . . . came Jesus and stood in the midst.
(John xx. 19).

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20).

The Lord in the midst! Have we sufficiently realised the definite and positive character of this truth? Do we see how profound and important it is? And do we comprehend the meaning of it? Not merely so many believers gathered together—blessed, undoubtedly, as that is—but Christ occupying the supreme place. We read of the eleven being gathered together, and them that were with them. Who cannot see the difference between that fact, and what was true a moment after when Christ stood amongst them? Not only was the whole character of the assembly altered—the very atmosphere, so to speak, changed—but the outlook and standpoint of everyone present became different, and the blessing realised was of an infinitely higher order. Each one would be affected. They could not do exactly what they had done before, or, at least, not in the same way. Every eye would be directed to the One in the midst, and His absolute control at once acknowledged. His presence would pervade and direct all.

Are we sufficiently alive to the fact that the picture we have presented to us both in Luke xxiv. and John xx. is not of some passing phase, but represents a permanent institution? The double allusion to it in the gospels—the particularity with which the incident is described, the action and words of our Lord on the occasion, the striking effect upon the disciples—all combine to show that this event, far from being of a merely transitory character, was intended to cast its light upon the future, and become a pattern for all time.

What preceded the occurrence tends to support this view. Our Lord had employed the earlier part of the day in gathering His scattered sheep. He had accompanied two on their way to Emmaus. His dealings with them became a preparation for what was to follow. Their eyes were holden in order that they should no longer know Him in connection with Jewish hopes; and that they might listen undistractedly to the unfolding of the

Scriptures concerning Himself ; that they might see how all that they thought so fortuitous and calamitous had a meaning, and was, indeed, the very fulfilment of Scripture. But He had more to teach them even than this. When he reveals Himself, and they know Him, He vanishes out of their sight (v. 31.) He will not stay with them. He wanted them to know His presence in the midst of His own. Consequently, when they return to Jerusalem and rejoin the others, He appears in the midst of the company He had gathered, and then He doesn't vanish. On the contrary, He takes pains to make Himself known. He would have them realise all that His presence meant. He and His were associated in the closest possible way ; and in this manner He brought them to realise one outstanding truth of the new dispensation that was dawning—a heavenly company on earth—the assembly of God—separated from Jew and Gentile, as such, and members of His body, to which He would in a special way grant His presence.

We can understand, then, what it meant to our Lord when the moment came and He could take His place in the midst. Redemption was accomplished, and He had risen victorious over every foe. His own were not only delivered from God's judgment, Satan's power, and the effect of all their sins, but they were associated with Him in a position to which sin and death could never apply. As He had declared to Mary, "*I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*" (John xx. 17.) The fullest relationship is established, and He comes into the midst of His own with a message of Peace. If one can imagine, in any way, what this meant to Him, do we realise what it means to us? The inconceivable blessedness and unique character of it is apparent. Yet for many centuries the Church well-nigh lost all apprehension of it.

II.

Nearly a hundred years ago, now, it was given to some of the Lord's people to realise anew the true character of God's assembly. But amongst all the truths thus recovered none was so important as the one which now engages our attention. It is scarcely too much to say that this was the pivot upon which all turned. The recovery of this one truth really involved the recovery of all. For if Christ's presence is known and enjoyed, it means that forgiveness of sins is known ; and our place before

the Father as associated with Christ, as well as our union with Him as members of His body, are also realised. Moreover, Christ's presence cannot be known without the Holy Ghost, so that the presence of the other Comforter, and all that flows from it, become a reality. While to be in our Lord's presence without a shade of distance, and be led by Him to the banqueting house where His banner over us is love, means that we understand all that His work has accomplished—viz., that in Him we who sometime were far off "are made nigh by the blood of Christ," and "through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." In addition to all this, the greatness of the Assembly is understood, if we realise whose presence we are in. Is it any wonder that Satan would seek to rob us of this truth, when so much depends upon it? The Lord in the midst constitutes the gathering together of His people something more than a "Believers' Meeting." We have already pointed out the difference it made when everyone became conscious that the Lord was there. There was a moment, as can be easily seen from the narrative, when only believers were present. A moment after, and the same gathering became something infinitely higher. And it makes all the difference whether we meet together simply as believers—precious as communion of saints is—to give out hymns and read, and speak upon, portions of Scripture, or whether we meet, first and foremost, to give the Lord His place and wait upon Him. How vast the chasm between the two—whether the hymns and the passages are our own selection, or the taking part in worship is under His direction. The realisation of His presence, the submission to His authority and control, are the crux of everything.

We do not understand the difference between some gatherings of Christians and others to be the mere difference as to the number taking part—a question of one or several. If that were all, the one might be preferable to the many. But we understand the difference to be that the Lord's place is recognised in the one to an extent to which it cannot be in the others; and the ordering of the meeting is in His hands. But this demands faith. And not only faith, but patience and spiritual discernment, and the refusal of the activities of the flesh. Such an assembly is the most august in the world. It may lack everything from a spectacular point of view; there may be no appeal to the flesh or to sense; it derives all from one thing—the

presence of Christ. The Apostle Paul could write to certain believers in Corinth and address them as *the assembly of God*. And in chapter xii. of that epistle he informs us the gifts bestowed upon that assembly were of the Spirit; the various ministries were under the direction of the Lord; and the diversities of operations were of God. Could anything be greater?

But we say again, this demands *faith*. And faith knows how to wait. It does not rush in to fill up a gap, or terminate a pause. No one is present to *officiate*. Silence may be as truly worship, and as truly edifying, as speech. To regard such a gathering simply as an opportunity for taking part may degrade it below an ordinary social function (where we should not think of intruding), and rob the occasion of all power and benefit. The fact is, no one has any right to take part, except under direction. We have heard of a meeting, years ago, where silence reigned for more than half-an-hour at the close; and the assembly broke up without a word being uttered, but such power was felt, that everyone seemed united in one act of silent worship, and each left with a sense that something remarkable had happened. It was not unlike the worship of heaven described by another, in the lines:—

Hark! Ten thousand voices crying
 'Lamb of God'! with one accord:
 Thousand thousand saints replying,
 Wakes, at once, the echoing chord!"

"Long with free and glad devotion,
 Universal praise prevails,
 Till, blest fruit of deep emotion,
 'Voice by voice in silence falls."

(*To be continued.*)

"Thou hidden Life of faithful souls. Thou Light
 Of that mysterious inner world of thought,
 O give us grace to follow Thee aright,
 From Cross and toil and sorrow shrinking not;
 Content to be but little known,
 Content to wander here alone;
 Here—hidden inwardly in Thee;
 There—Light in Thine own Light to be."

1916.

Welcome, New Year !
Another period hastening the time
Of that new age in yonder strifeless World !
Till it arrives we still will keep unfurled
The banners of God's grace and Truth sublime.
Welcome, New Year !

Welcome, New Year !
We know not what it brings of circumstance—
Of earthly history—but we know this :
It will bring proof afresh of the old bliss—
That Love guides all,—to saints comes no mischance.
Welcome, New Year !

Welcome, New Year !
In these twelve months may I grow like my Lord
And like to God in Him, and so fulfil
The purposes of His Creative will—
"Let Us make man like Us," so ran the Word.
Welcome, New Year !

Welcome, New Year !
The business of my Father I will make
My own, so far as 'tis revealed to me ;
And I will seek to labour savingly
To win the lost to Christ, for His dear sake.
Welcome, New Year !

WILLIAM OLNEY.

New Start in Righteousness.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

The history of man has been a history of sin. Turning away from God at the beginning, man has utterly failed to realize the divine ideal in his creation. Successive dispensations have only served to emphasize this solemn fact. Tried without law and under law, favoured with the ministry of priest, king, and prophet, nothing but corruption has resulted. The hopeless evil of flesh has been fully demonstrated. If any proof were previously wanting, the treatment meted out to the Son of God at His coming would have amply testified to man's incorrigibility. The cross of Calvary was the close, morally, of the history of the first man as before God.

But no divine purpose can ever fail. God never knows defeat. He must and will have pleasure in man. Accordingly a second man has come upon the scene—"out of heaven"—(I. Cor. xv. 17). Behold Him in Matt. iii. 16-17 with the heavens opened above Him, the Spirit descending upon Him (in recognition of His perfection), and the Father's voice speaking with exultation concerning Him. This was a new thing in the earth. The days of divine disappointment were past. From that moment the heart of God found its rest.

The Second Man is also the Last Adam. As the Second Man, He has superseded the first man for ever; as the Last Adam, He has brought in finality for God. That is to say, in Him is summed up God's full thought for man. In Him the purpose of God finds its full and complete expression. There is, accordingly, nothing to follow Christ. He is *the Last Adam*.

As the Last Adam He is "a life-giving Spirit"—(I. Cor. xv. 15). Thus we see Him in John xx. 22 breathing into His disciples. The cross being past and over, the complete victory over sin and death having been gained, He could bring His own into association with Himself in resurrection life. Next, we see Him ascending up where He was before, and welcomed into heaven's glory. Righteousness has granted Him the seat at the right hand of the majesty on high. A new order of man has

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thus been established before the face of God, and we belong to that order, for we are "in Christ." This is put very strongly in II. Cor. v. 21: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become God's righteousness in Him." The position in which God has set Christ, and in which we are set in Him, is the very expression of divine righteousness. So perfect is the work of Christ, whereby every question has been settled for ever, and so complete is the delight of the heart of God in Him, that it was righteous to establish Him where He is, and to establish us there in association with Him. Nothing else—nothing less—would have been *right*. Wondrous thought!

Those who belong to the new order should now earnestly eschew the ways of the old order. Our very Christianity implies that we "have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him that created him."—(Col. iii. 9-10). Heavenly men should cultivate heavenly ways. The customs of the old creation ill become those who belong to God's new creation. What we shall be morally by and by that we should seek by the Spirit's power to be to-day. Thus will the miracle that has been wrought within us become manifest to all, and God will be glorified.

There is an interesting little story about the wonderful soprano singer, Jenny Lind. She was born in Stockholm in 1820, and was able to sing as soon as she was able to walk. She moved England and America by the beauty of her voice, and was called the Swedish nightingale. When she was in the height of her popularity in America she was asked to write a few lines in an album. She wrote:

"In vain I seek for rest,
In all created good;
It leaves me still unblest,
And makes me cry for God:
And sure at rest I ne'er can be,
Until my soul finds rest in Thee."

On Assurance.

By E. ADAMS.

ASSURANCE is undoubtedly one of the greatest blessings we can enjoy. Without assurance of sins forgiven there can be no "dawn of heaven" in the soul, and but little true service. It is to be feared that some professors work in order to keep away thoughts of mistrust and fear. Their very misgivings as to their eternal safety act as a goad to spur them on to feverish activity in the service of the Lord. Others again, through doubting their interest in the Saviour's redemptive work, are filled with lethargy, and any attempt to minister saving truth to others is nipped in the bud by the paralysing thought that perhaps they themselves are not saved.

Much has been written on the subject of assurance, especially on the line of referring the doubter to the plain statements of God's Word that "he that believeth hath." The clear, emphatic assertion that every one who believes *has* eternal life, because God says so, has brought peace to multitudes of distressed souls. Over and over again is it repeated that the work of Christ makes us safe, while the word of God about the work makes us sure. And this is most blessedly true. At the same time there are difficulties that are not met by this teaching, and which require other aspects of the truth to set them at rest. And there is the danger in these days of shallow views and easy profession, of souls that are not "trees of the Lord's planting" taking false comfort from the truth that "he that believeth hath." "Make-believers" and "half-believers" are lulled into a fatal slumber and dream they are right with God simply because they have said, "Yes, I believe."

A young man when asked, on more than one occasion, how he knew he was saved, replied quite glibly, and with a smile, "Oh, you see, it says, 'He that believeth hath'; I believe, therefore I have eternal life." Before his professed conversion he had been an actor. A Christian worker with whom he had been associated for some time in the Lord's service, one day made enquiries about the young man, and arrived at the startling discovery that although he was no longer *on* the stage, he was *behind* it, and living in gross immorality!

If we believe on Christ we have eternal life. Nothing could be plainer. It is not a question whether, *if* I believe I have; that is perfectly clear. The question is rather, "*Do* I believe?" Souls are pointed to John three and sixteen, and asked "Do you believe that?" "Yes, certainly," is the reply. "Then you are saved." What a delusion! The demons believe that John 3/16 is true! If I believe, I am saved. But how do I know that I do believe to the saving of the soul?

We know that we believe, by our inner consciousness. Because this inner consciousness is a consequence of true faith. He that believeth hath the witness in himself. I cannot explain how it is that I know that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. My mental intuition tells me that it is so. I know that I believe in the same way that I know that I think and breathe and exist. But this inner consciousness is not always present with us. Our minds may be so bemuddled by conflicting thoughts and harassed by doubts that we cannot, at all times, be sure whether we believe or not.

Hence a second way of arriving at assurance of salvation is by accepting the witness of the Spirit. "By this we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." If a person possesses a spirit of adoption which teaches him to cry, "Abba, Father," then, inasmuch as this sense of sonship is not the natural production of the human heart, but a creation of the Holy Spirit, he may count that he has the Spirit's witness that he is a child of God.

The Apostle John's first letter is the epistle of assurance. One of the aims of the writer is to show that the possession of eternal life manifests itself in righteousness and love. "Hereby do we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." As soon as anyone is converted to God he longs to be holy. Holiness is doing the will of God. "Lord, what would'st Thou have me do"? is the attitude of the newborn soul. Conversion is getting right with God. At conversion God becomes real, and the standard of living is henceforth what pleases Him, instead of what pleases oneself or others. Again, "By this we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." The newborn soul regards every believer

he meets as a fellow-traveller to glory, with whom he is joined by links forged in the eternities by the everlasting God Himself. This affection is not a natural one, but a spiritual one, begotten in the renewed soul by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The truly converted soul has "many infallible proofs" within him that he really believes. Life is viewed from a different angle. He rests in the finished work of Christ. Heaven and hell are now intense realities. The thoughts and affections are now engrossed with things spiritual and eternal. The world is seen to be in a state of condemnation. Old things fail to attract and satisfy. The soul has new hopes and fears, new joys and sorrows, new ambitions and pursuits. Prayer is a habit and delight. The Bible is understood and loved. These are some of the "evidences" which are wrought into the very texture of the believer's life and experience. Of course, these things are not all realised at once, and where the soul has been renewed in childhood, the memory may not be able to recall any sudden or dramatic *change*. But if, after some period has elapsed since the profession of Christianity, these experiences are unknown as a present and abiding reality, we must conclude that the soul is not a tree of God's planting. There may be faith of a sort, but it is "dead."

Saving faith may exist where there is little assurance. For faith may exist, without a clear knowledge of it. But if a soul has faith he should not rest until he is certain of his interest in Christ's redemption.

Yet we should fall into a snare if we made a saviour of faith, or wish to be satisfied with it. By so doing we are seeking to turn our faith into a Christ and rest upon it, rather than repose the soul entirely upon Him. It has helped many to see that there is all the difference between being satisfied with the work of Christ, and being satisfied with the faith that apprehends that work! We are snared when we feel that we are satisfied with Christ now that we are satisfied with our faith; and if we cannot become satisfied with our faith—and the Lord will not permit us long to remain in this self-complacent attitude—we feel as much discouraged because our faith is not quite perfect as if Christ was a not quite perfect Saviour! We must draw our assurance

not from *how well* we believe, but from Christ, in *Whom* we do believe.

We may desire assurance in order that we may feel comfortable and settle down and take things easily and give up strenuous warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil. If this be our motive, we must not be surprised if we lack the coveted blessing. And assurance may be partially lost by our walking carelessly. On the other hand, peace and joy in believing will be the portion of those who "*give diligence to make their calling and election sure.*"

"The Lord Heard It."

A Sequel to "They will say."

Ex. iv. and Num. xii.

By J. H.

There is a sequel surely to the statement of Moses "they will say." Was he justified in making such a remark? Subsequent events proved at anyrate that he had accurately gauged the nature of his brethren. That little slip in acting without the Lord, and anticipating his rôle as Deliverer, revealed the necessity for the 40 years training and discipline at the back-side of the desert. This time the tessellated floor of the palace gives place to the burning sands of the desert, privilege of position is succeeded by the place of obscurity, and alone with God, in the school of discipline he is prepared, until as Jehovah's servant he is again called to take up the work, where it was so ignominiously laid down. But the lapse of time has not effaced from memory those scornful words—"Who made thee a ruler and a judge," he has not forgotten those tongues. There is undoubtedly an element of unbelief in the attitude of Moses towards God, but the expression was perfectly natural "they will say," and what is more, they did—(Ex. v. 21). Where the fault lay was his lack of dependence upon God, who, as he afterwards proved, was well able to take care of and vindicate his servant.

Surely, here, the lesson is especially for the servant of the Lord in these days when the truth of James iii. vv. 5-6, is so manifested. The lamentable fact, so marked at the present

time, is a tendency to retort, a seeking to justify ourselves, rushing into print on the slightest pretext, and thrusting or parrying in the deadly conflict of words. To what end? To justify oneself before God? He knows us better than we know our own hearts. Before men, as defenders of the truth of God? The Author of the Word needs no human assistance in this. To safeguard the flock? The Chief Shepherd is pledged for their safety. No, no, these subterfuges to explain our conduct are too shallow, the real bottom is seen and summed up in one word, SELF, dominated by a restless feverish pride, or vanity, as you will, emanating from the flesh. What then is the remedy, or panacea, where such is the case? To Moses the promise was "certainly I will be with thee"; and again, centuries after, "Lo I am with you alway." No change, thus revealing a Divine, loving, personal and ever-present interest in the one so blessed and honoured, who, through sovereign grace has been chosen a servant of the Lord.

Supposing, then, against the three words, "they will say," we place four of still greater import "The Lord heard it," and view them, not as an ornamental text on the wall to be admired, but, as a divinely imparted fact to be the warp and woof of our life, how relatively insignificant the first becomes. "They say," well, what of it? "The Lord heard it," so that if "IT" is causing you anxiety, simply leave it to the Lord to adjust, but if you would enjoy His peace don't meddle in the process. Perhaps someone misjudged you, and unkind suggestions were whispered in the ears of those whom you loved in the Faith, still, remember, "The Lord heard it," and as quickly as His ear caught the barbed arrow of slander, so quickly did His heart move to administer comfort. Do not forget He knows the meaning of being misunderstood in a way that you never will, yet "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." It may be, however, your chief concern is *who* has heard; bad reports spread so quickly, and your reputation may suffer. Think again, He, whose servant you are, "made himself of no reputation." Of one thing you can be sure, the Lord heard it, and as long as all is well between servant and Lord nought else need trouble.

The foregoing pre-supposes the servant of God under un-

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just criticism, but if we take a glance at the instances where the Lord himself is revealed as taking a special interest in what "They say," it might perhaps be profitable.

COMPLAINING.

Numbers xi. 1—"the Lord heard it" and His anger was kindled. Viewing the matter in the light of history, we would say, what base ingratitude. It hardly seems credible that a redeemed people should be found complaining so soon after deliverance. "The people complained"! What a sound for the ear of God, and yet may we not find that the conditions which brought it about have a lesson for us to-day? Significant sentences, full of meaning in a spiritual sense, "mixed multitude" worldliness in the church; "we remember . . . Egypt," one would have thought they would only be too glad to forget it, but no; "our soul is dried away" and again ". . . nothing at all, beside this manna" . . . plain symptoms indeed, illustrative of neglected prayer, loss of appetite for the word of God, opening up the way for the inroads of the enemy through the lusts of the flesh, culminating in spiritual declension, congregational complaining, and disaster. As then, so now, the purging fires of God alone can remove such dross and remedy the evil. What a blessing to read Malachi iii, and to know the "Refiner" sits by in grace and love while the refining is in operation to make us as of old "pleasant unto the Lord."

CONTENTION.

Numbers xii, 2—"The Lord heard it." In this chapter there is seen something of the secret "leaven" working, which brought about the sad condition of affairs in chapter xi. After all, congregations are made up of individuals, and it is the individual life that affects the assembly. Here notice the contention is taking place in the most prominent family circle, those upon whom has been conferred the dignity and privilege of leaders, and what is more, the closest in touch with God, and yet, the family difference recorded, shows how intimately connected are the private and public life, and how the Adversary is ready to seize such an opportunity. Seemingly quite a simple matter which really concerned Moses alone, his marriage. True, it was a little slander, and a little pride and perhaps a little temper,

but it was in the tent probably, and therefore between themselves only. Was it? Listen to the inspired record:—"The Lord heard it." Would to God this solemn truth was more pressed home to-day on heart and conscience; there would be less heart-ache amongst the children of God, if such were the case. Instantly God takes up the conversation, and how quickly he justifies Moses, first of all in revealing his character as He sees it (v. 3) and again in identifying Himself with Moses (v. 7). Observe the personal note introduced—"My servant," and how searching the awful challenge, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" How deeply solemn, then, even to breathe a whisper in a contentious spirit against any servant of the Lord, or to repeat idle gossip; and the unspoken hint or suggestive shrug (worse than actual slander) that might reflect more than we dare say openly is equally to be avoided. How we should guard our lips if we realized the truth here revealed, and how carefully we should choose our words in referring to the servants of the Lord. A quiet prayerful reading of this chapter before God would effectively deal with many differences that seem to be so stubbornly maintained. What grace, though, is shown in making the slandered one a Mediator, the channel of blessing to those contentious individuals, and how complete the justification when God moves.

COMMUNION.

Mal. iii. 16—"The Lord heard it." From this we see that it is not all complaining and contention. There is, blessed be God, a state and occupation of soul, in which the ear of the Lord listens to sweeter sounds, and it is significant that the last mention of the same sentence in the Old Testament brings before us the glorious possibility of holy and happy communion in spite of every surrounding influence being contrary. What a delight to the heart of the Lord, "then . . ." amid all that was corrupt and dark, when the majority were robbing God and anything was considered good enough to offer as a matter of form, then, at that time . . . "they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another"! What do "they say." Ah! This is of special interest to God, and not only are we told the Lord heard, but that He hearkened and heard. Hearkened (*i.e.*, a bending

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down and listening intently and eagerly.) Why such interest? Listen to the unfolding of his heart in chapter I.—“ I have loved you.” Again, in chapter III, it is Himself the Refiner, and now the dross has been purged away, and the precious separated from the vile, the soul is in a condition to enjoy His love and presence, consequently, their conversation is of Himself. What a blessed theme; no wonder He listens. Yes, EVERY word is recorded and even the thought upon His name treasured up in the “book of remembrance.” In the writer’s garden is a plant, and sometimes visitors ask, What is this? We who know its secret simply say, “just touch it.” Immediately, to the surprise of the uninitiated, the pleasant odour of the scented verbena fills the air, The touch is necessary to make it give forth its fragrance. A beautiful and constant reminder that where the fragrance of Christ is discerned in the life, it is because somebody has been in touch with Him. Hallowed communion indeed, when the “savour of His good ointments is poured forth,” and the odour fills the house.

Many “sayings” of gifted servants of the Lord have been published for the joy of the saints, but if there is one thing more than another to be longed for in “that Day” it is to find that, through sovereign grace, many conversations and precious thoughts of Christ (it may be long-forgotten personally) are written in that book of remembrance as having given joy to the heart of God.

There are many other instances recorded where the Lord is shown to be interested in the cry of His people, but these three should bring a very pointed lesson to every heart, showing the evil, its source and remedy.

In every moment of the Christian’s life, however, the practical effect of this truth holds good. In our moments of joy or sorrow, of prosperity or adversity, of confidence or doubt, of strength or weakness, of boldness or shame, of communion or backsliding, of fruitfulness or barrenness, in the home or business, in suffering or health, amid crowds or in loneliness, in the prayer-meeting of the firing line, whether the strong cry, or it be the faintest whisper or even the unspoken breathings of the heart, there is never a moment when it cannot be said,

THE LORD HEARD IT.

The Administration of the Ages :

Being Brief Notes on Ephesians, Chapter v. 1-17.

IN the first place, notice some contrasts, and how solemn they are. Christ's love (v. 2)—the wrath of God (v. 6). Followers (or imitators) of God (v. 1), and then the very opposite (v. 3-4). Those Christ has given Himself for, who are by this made fit for the the Kingdom of God (v. 2), and those who have "no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God" (v. 5). Then we have Christ's sacrifice—self surrender (v. 2) and all the self gratification represented by the sins of verses 3/5. We may well ponder these solemn realities.

In order to understand the force of v. 1, we must read it in connection with what precedes. We are to behave to one another as God has behaved to us, and so be imitators of Him, for the children should imitate their Father. Notice how Christianity, in contrast to law, always presents a motive. We are to walk in love, as *Christ also hath loved us.*" Both precept and example are furnished for us under grace: "Christ also hath loved us." Let us dwell upon that, let us drink deeply here. It is the portion of *every* child of God. Think too, of the greatness of it. "*Gave Himself.*" What love! what *true* love! Love which gives all it could give. Love which serves us even to the giving up of everything. Love which does the very *best* for us. Christ's death was both an *offering* and a *sacrifice*. He offered Himself to God, and this involved the surrender of Himself. In taking our place, He was forsaken even of God. He became poor; while by man He was insulted. He was cruelly treated. What love! And what was the effect of it? This offering and sacrifice *to* God, *for* us, are of unspeakable preciousness. All went up to God as a sweet smelling savour. That is what it was to God. But then it was *for* us, the same verse tells us so. It means therefore, that all this sweet savor covers us before the holy eye of our Creator. God no longer sees us in connection with our sins, or demerits or shortcomings of any kind, those hideous sins are gone from His eye and He sees us

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covered with all the value and fragrance of what His own Son has given to Him. Could we want more than this? If our first parents had remained innocent and we had shared that condition should we have been so well off as we are now? Clothed in the merits of Christ Himself. Seen as He is. Covered by all His perfection. Or should we ever have known the love of God as it is possible to know it now? Our need—desperate beyond all human power to meet it—has brought out God's love. Our sin brought Christ to the Cross. But there is another thought, too. Love may be real and intense, but it is sometimes helpless. How often it is so in human affairs. But in this case it is not so. Christ's act of love suffices. It removes sin. It takes away the guilt, and leaves only its own perfection behind.

And this love enables us to become like itself,—and instead of those sins which in themselves rendered us absolutely unfit ever to have part in the Kingdom of Christ and of God—we are to become, not like Adam innocent, but even like Christ Himself. And as surely as there has been the love (and oh, how foolish men are to slight it) so surely will there be the *wrath*. Verse 6 is as true and as certain as v. 2.

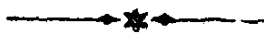
But we who have been delivered are to walk now as children of light. That is, all God's nature and His hatred of sin and His saving grace are all revealed in Christ who is Lord, and as we are in the light of it all we become conformed to it and walk accordingly. "For the fruit of the *light* (it should be, not spirit here) is in all *goodness* and righteousness and truth." And we are to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord. What it means by the light is that God has become manifest in Christ—both as to His willingness and power to save and as to His abhorrence of sin and determination to punish it—and it is the knowledge of God thus revealed that of itself produces fruit according to God when the heart is in subjection to the revealed will of God.

Verse 10 reads, according to another translation, "Learn in your own experience what is fully pleasing to the Lord." That means, I think, if we *really desire* to know if a thing is pleasing to God He will shew us. Sometimes it takes time. We do not discern all at once whether a certain matter is agreeable to God. In other cases we can see at once either that it is, or is not. If we happen to

be in doubt, God will give us time to put it to the proof. The all important consideration is not to be in a sleepy state of soul (see v. 14). Sleep, in the Bible, when used in such a connection, always refers to spiritual stagnation and indifference. We are to awake from that, and be alive to Christ and he will shine upon us. It means that if our spiritual affections are awake and going out to Christ, He will continually reveal Himself to us. Compare Song of Sol. v. 2/8; which gives a description of a sleepy condition. Communion is interrupted, though afterwards restored. See also Rev. iii., 20. We are not to be dormant spiritually, or amongst the dead, but the heart alive to Christ's love and worth, and then He will make Himself known—He will shine upon us.

We need circumspection for we are in a world of difficulties and dangers, and we are not to give Satan any advantage. And in the use of our time we are to buy it back again. Redeem it. That is, so use it that it is not wasted but used to a good purpose, and time *so* spent is *not* lost, otherwise it is gone for ever. We need to think more of how we use our time. Trying to ascertain the will of God for each hour and day, and then we are redeeming the time (v. 17.) It is this constant dependence upon God which makes life so useful and happy, and saves us from much that is unprofitable.

How we should rejoice when this light reaches us. Think what it means to bring this light to a soul, to be able to say what the Apostle says of these Gentile Converts of his day "Ye were sometimes *darkness* but now ye are *light* in the Lord" (v. 8). To learn all that God can be to you in Christ, this is the wonderful light that has come from God into the world and is reaching the hearts of men and women. In darkness once, not knowing even our own need or danger, or God's thoughts about us; in the light now—the light that brings the knowledge of sins forgiven—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ.*" It is as we let this light shine into our hearts, that we shall reflect the Father's glory, so that people will ask us for "a reason of the hope that is in us."



RELIGION without Christ is a sunless sky. None can tread this world beneath their feet till they see a fairer world above their head.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 3

MARCH 1916

Price 1d

Notes and Extracts.

Do we realise the loss we incur by withholding from God what is His due? "The Windows of Heaven." Is there not an urgent need to remind ourselves of this fact? We feel impelled to do so. Scripture speaks with no uncertain voice on this subject. It declares with unmistakable clearness that we reap what we sow; that we are cursed or blessed, according as we give or withhold. "*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*" (Prov. xi 24-25). Again, "But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand." (Isa. xxxii. 8). "*But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*" "*God loveth a cheerful giver.*" (II. Cor. ix. 6-7). Nor would we forget how Paul recalls some words of the Lord Jesus, which are not recorded in the Gospels, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

With such passages before us, it might be thought impossible for any believer, acquainted with them, to be characterised in any other way than by the greatest generosity. Experience, however, teaches otherwise, and the following sentences culled from a well known religious weekly tend to confirm it:—

"There are still professed followers of Jesus whose last will and testament is a miserable revelation of the life they have lived; a life in which income has been very carefully marked off from capital. It is fast becoming an axiom of the consecrated life that until a man has commenced to attack capital for the Kingdom of God's sake, he is unable to appreciate the meaning of self-sacrifice and self-denial. A will is one of the most revealing documents in the world, so far as applied consecration is concerned. A celebrated man passed away a few months ago, and everybody expected that he would leave a million of money; but no, he had commenced spending capital for Christ's sake, and he left very much less than was expected."

A will is indeed, as this writer says, "one of the most revealing documents in the world." Such documents have

many times, filled us with astonishment. It almost seemed as if the testator's only thought was, How can I save myself and my executors the most trouble? Instead of, How can I benefit the greatest number without sacrificing the interests of those who have the first claim?

But we are not concerned so much with wills. What people leave behind them, when they have no longer any use for the money, is a secondary matter, as far as they are concerned. The Bible does not enlighten us as to whether legacies form part of treasure laid up in heaven. The great matter which concerns us all is, How do we use our money while we still retain the power to spend it? We were told the other day of a Christian who had recently spent five or six hundred pounds on a *new* motor car (he was already in possession of one), and this in spite of being war time; and, worse still, *an indebtedness existing in connection with the Lord's interests for which he was partly responsible*. This car was not needed for business, but for his own convenience!

With such instances around us, can we wonder that the Lord withholds his blessing? "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." The thought of robbing God did not even occur to them, any more than it occurs, probably, to the good man referred to above. But *they* were doing it, and *he* is doing it. There is the Lord's work languishing for want of funds. Deeds of charity have to be left undone for lack of means. Promoters and organisers of philanthropic enterprises there are who live in daily, and almost hourly, anxiety because in continual uncertainty as to how expenses will be met; while tens of thousands are homeless and without sufficient food in Poland, Belgium, and Serbia; yet hundreds of pounds can be spent on what, after all, are luxuries.

Christian people who withhold money from the Lord's cause and squander it on themselves are robbing God, and not only God, but their own souls. "YE ARE CURSED WITH A CURSE, FOR YE HAVE ROBBED ME, EVEN THIS WHOLE NATION," are the solemn, burning words in which God denounces this kind of sin. It brings its own retribution. There is a *nemesis* which

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accompanies meanness that can never be evaded. "Ye are cursed with a curse," rings out through all time," and dogs the footsteps of the illiberal one everywhere. Milton describes Mammon as "the least erected spirit that fell from heaven, for even in heaven his looks and thoughts were always downward bent." It is so still. A love of money betrays itself. Nor does the improper use of it go unpunished. How much blessing, for instance, is missed. "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove Me now, herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*"

How often one has felt God's blessing to be in a special way with the "cheerful giver." He may have his troubles; he may be afflicted; but there is an atmosphere about him which is unmistakable. Is it any wonder? He enjoys God's love as another does not, for "God loveth a cheerful giver." According to the words we have quoted, his spiritual, and often his temporal, prosperity increases: he is watered; liberal things are his portion; and he reaps bountifully. Need it surprise us he is happy? God's pleasure in such a man is revealed, again and again, in His written Word, and He puts special favour upon him. Witness Cornelius! And of him we are told that, amongst other characteristics, he "*gave much alms to the people.*" While in Luke xi. 42, we read, "But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you." Such is the Divine estimate of giving.

Some years ago, a servant of the Lord was labouring in a northern town, when, one day, a letter reached him containing a five pound note. Five pound notes were scarce in those days, and he wondered what rich steward of the Lord had bestowed such an unexpected gift upon him. He took an early opportunity of going to see his benefactor (or benefactress, as it turned out to be.) He expected to find her the occupant of a comfortable residence, and became more and more surprised as the address given led him to a poor part of the town. At last he entered a narrow street and stopped opposite a small shop. He entered, and found to his amazement the business carried on could hardly be dignified by being called a grocer's. There

were a few loaves of bread and various small sundries on sale. Have I made a mistake? he thought. Has the dealer in these few commodities been able to spare *five pounds* for the Lord's work? The donor herself soon appeared, and it proved to be even so. . . . Never will he forget the sense of the Lord's presence in that little room at the back of the shop as the tale was told of how cheerfully, for the Lord's sake, and because of blessing received, the five pounds had been spared.

What glimpses of heaven come to the one who has learned to be a cheerful giver. The windows of heaven are open upon such an one. His are the bounties bestowed; his are the visions of the glory that is to be revealed. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Are the windows of heaven open or shut over *you*? Remember that depends upon one thing. It is possible by withholding more than is meet to keep them closed over yourself and over others too. We do not really begin to live until we begin to give, and know the joy and gladness of being a *cheerful* giver.

We cannot write less urgently or emphatically on this theme than we have done. Not to be faithful in the unrighteous mammon brings into our lives a dearth and disappointment of which we are sometimes little aware. We are apt to forget that God takes account of all, and deals with us accordingly. Some do not give because, perhaps, no appeal is made to them. But this is not a sufficient excuse. We ought to be on the look out for opportunities to make use of whatever God has entrusted to us. To treat what has been committed to us as if it were wholly and exclusively our own is a flat denial of the Word of God, and eventuates in our own loss now and hereafter. As well might the Apostle Paul have kept the gospel to himself. He knew better, and what a penalty he would have incurred. "*Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*" he exclaims. And every Christian should exclaim likewise, "Woe is unto me, if I use not my money aright."

The Lord in the Midst.

"Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." (Luke xxiv. 36).

"The first day of the week . . . came Jesus and stood in the midst."
(John xx. 19).

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20).

III.

Let us turn for a moment to see what occurred when our Lord constituted His assembly on earth by taking His place in the midst. There can be no doubt, as we have seen, that this final act, as recorded in Luke xxiv., was in view all through, and fulfilled the purpose He had in going to Emmaus, and His dealings with the two.

First of all it was necessary to allay the fears of the disciples. The *lesson one learns from this is, that Christ would have us at home in His presence.* There is to be no feeling of awkwardness; no distance; no reserve; only "great delight." But this cannot be until Christ has assured us of the effect of His work, and of His love. The heart that is least conscious of sin, is not at home with Christ, really, until these things are known. There is much in our ways and in ourselves calculated to produce misgiving. It was so in the case of these disciples. They had forsaken Him; and one had denied Him. Their hearts were full of unbelief—the most natural product of the human heart since sin came in. Christ's first word is PEACE. With that one word He silences all doubts and removes all distance. 'Let there be no questions—no misgivings'—it seems to say: 'all is settled. You have failed, you have not been all you ought to have been; but that belongs to the *past*—and the past is gone. It is not now what you have been, but what I am; and what I have done.' We are on new ground entirely. A new history has begun. The old is dead and done with. PEACE. That is the atmosphere in which we are to live in future. The Victor who has conquered all our foes speaks the word on the morning of His resurrection. Peace with God, peace with one

another; peace as to everything. Such is the atmosphere of God's Assembly.

But we can go deeper and further. Christ proceeds to say, "*Behold, My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.*" Here were the very marks of His passion. They identified Him. He had come back to them. The marks told of the conflict—of all that had happened since last they had met. The One they had loved, however feebly; and followed, however falteringly, was restored to them. And with how much added to their knowledge of Him, those marks told. He had been through suffering and forsaking for them. And, moreover, in those very wounds they saw the fulfilment of their own Scriptures. What meaning they now saw in His death. And the hands and feet told them, as nothing else could, of His love. What mute, but powerful, witnesses they were; with a language all their own.

Do they not indicate to us the meaning of the Lord's Supper? It is then He shows us His hands and feet. When we are gathered in His presence it is to remember Him, and to be reminded specially of His love. The hands and feet reminded those early disciples of His death. The bread and wine do the same service for us; and His death is the greatest and most forcible expression of His love. The partaking of the bread and wine should mean just this:—Christ showing us His hands and feet. In other words, a reminder of all He went through for us. We should come away from the memorial feast with an ever deeper sense of the love that passeth knowledge.

The Apostle John gives us an additional thought. He mentions the *side* in place of the feet. "He showed unto them His hands and His side." He is the one—the only one—who tells us of the soldier with a spear piercing the side. *The side is nearest the heart.* This seems to bring us closer than even hands and feet. The love that gave all—all for our cleansing—so that love might find its rest and its satisfaction, seems specially indicated here. Who but Christ can show us these things? Who but he can bring us into such a banqueting house?

Hands, feet, and side. In this way Christ reveals Himself. They remind us of the work He has done for us; His coming to the world, and His journey through it; and the side tells us of the nearness that is ours, as a consequence.

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“Close to Thy trusted side
 In fellowship divine,
 No cloud no distance ere shall hide
 Glories that then shall shine.”

Such is the meaning of the Supper.

IV.

Let us now ask, What is the effect of knowing the Lord in the midst? First, gladness. “*Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*” Their doubts and fears were gone. The clouds that oppressed them had lifted. They were assembled with doors shut, and in fear. The presence of Christ changed everything. He was with them once more; and they could scarcely believe it for joy and wonder. Have we, to-day, nothing like this? Was it only once or twice, and only to those early disciples, that such seasons were granted? Does the Lord never manifest Himself in the midst of His own now? Or is it only that He comes at the bidding of priests when they claim to convert the bread into His actual body? Is there *no PRESENCE*? Impoverished indeed is the Church, if this is so. But we neither admit nor believe it. Rather do we believe that it is still true. “*I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the MIDST of the Church will I sing praise unto thee.*” And, “Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, *there am I in the midst of them.*”

It is this very fact which is the source of strength and joy to His people to-day. In His presence we forget every care and fear, every want and woe. They cannot come where He is, any more than darkness can come where the sun shines. The past week is forgotten with its toil and trouble; the first morning of another week is commenced with Him, and we are renewed and braced for all that is to follow. But this is only realised when we see the Lord. If we choose to sing and speak about ourselves and our wilderness experiences, we do not, of course, rise above ourselves. Nor is it merely what He has done for us that is to occupy us, but HIMSELF. Only as we behold His glory are we transformed and uplifted. How varied are these glories—personal, moral, official. His glory as Son—

in relationship with the Father: as man, in relationship with us: as Lord, in relationship to the entire universe. In contemplation of such we are made glad; and the joy of the Lord becomes our strength.

Another effect of His presence is, *we become conscious of our relationship to God.* "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren." We meet as His brethren, and He declares to us the Father's Name. His brethren! Are we not content? Our relationship to one another flows from our relationship to Him. Alas, that we should so often make this holy relation, for all practical purposes, a dead letter by making its enjoyment conditional upon some other standpoint. And we treat *His* brethren as if they were not *our* brethren.

He regards us as His brethren and His friends. In the happy and holy seclusion of His presence He leads us into the deep meaning of those words: "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God." We are in His company—He leads us into His own relationship with the Father; and we *worship*.

Thirdly, *His presence is the place of instruction.* We learn more at such times, either in quiet meditation, or in the ministry which follows, than at any other. The recovery of truth, as the Lord's presence was realised, has been amazing. Nor need this surprise us, in the light of what we read in Luke xxiv. 45: "*Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.*" Who but He can make these holy writings—these oracles of God—familiar and intelligible to us? They all concern Him, and He alone can interpret them. The more we come to know Him, the more light is cast upon the word; and it is when we seek His presence He reveals Himself. The reason that darkness began to settle down upon the Church, not very long after the Apostolic age, was because the truth of Luke xxiv. and John xx. became less and less of a reality; faith declined; the Holy Spirit was quenched; while human arrangements and activities became the substitutes of divine power.

Further, in the Lord's presence we become qualified for service and receive directions as to it. "*As My Father hath sent*

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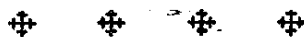
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Me, even so send I you." It is the Lord in the midst uttering these words. We go forth from Him in more senses than one. And the power is indicated. The only power for service or any spiritual exercise. "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you. but tarry . . . until ye be endued with power from on high." This is Luke xxiv. In John xx. we read, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye Holy Ghost." The last Adam, risen from the dead, head of a new order, imparts to them life in the power of the Spirit. Not that there is any contradiction between the two passages. In the one case, He is the Son of God giving of His own; in the other, Son of Man about to receive the promise of the Father. The Holy Ghost was not officially and actually given until Pentecost.

Such then are the constitution, the privileges, the greatness of God's Assembly on earth. Christ in the midst and all that flows from it: the revelation of Himself, in all the wealth of His love and of the Father in Him: the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and the mission on which He sends His own. Those privileges belong to all believers. Would that all knew them. It is a question of faith. Those who have acted in faith in these last days, have found the promise true, "Where *two or three* are gathered together in My Name there am I." "In My Name" implies the recognition of the authority and supremacy of Christ—that He alone counts. It also implies that He is not actually and visibly present. Yet He is *really* so to those who, in faith and in the power of the Spirit, recognise the meaning and value of His Name, and accord Him His place in the midst.



"Remember, whatever may change, whoever may change thy God is in one mind and none can turn Him; therefore trust in *Him*."



The "reproach of Christ" is a well-known reproach. Shame for His name is what His saints have been enduring, and shall endure until He comes again, but soon the world's taunt shall cease. Their enemies shall be put to shame. It is but one day's reviling before men, and then an eternity of glory in the presence of God and of the Lamb.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

IV.—THE NEW CRUSE.

The ministry of the "Son of thunder" being ended, that of the "Son of consolation" began. Its general character savoured of the grace of Christianity, and no wonder, for it flowed (typically) from death and resurrection, as we have seen. Mark here the goodness of the Divine heart. Sentence had been already passed upon guilty Israel, and its very executors had been named—Hazeel and Jehu—(I. Kings xix. 15-17), yet God instituted a new ministry of grace. The avenging sword was held back awhile in forbearing mercy. Even so is it with the world at this time. Its doom was long ago pronounced—(John xii. 31; xvi. 11); yet, no sooner had it been pronounced, than the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven with that wonderful message of love and mercy with which our hearts are so blessedly familiar, and which far exceeds all other divine overtures in earlier ages of the world's history. But when the present divine mission is finished, the stroke will fall irremediably.

After the rapture of Elijah, Elisha tarried at Jericho, and there a very serious complaint was addressed to him by "the men of the city"—(II. Kings ii. 18-19.) *The situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is naught, and the ground barren.* Thus man's infidel pride, while it could rebuild the city in defiance of the Word of God, was powerless to remove the curse which lay upon it. And what are men able to accomplish in their little world to-day? With many schemes, long and laboriously matured, they are constrained everywhere to acknowledge that the world is very far from what they would like it to be. A blight manifestly rests on every creature device. The high hopes of to-day are the bitter disappointments of to-morrow. The "pleasantness" is there, for God has created it, but "the water"—the spring from which men would draw satisfaction and pleasure—"is bad"; and "the ground is barren"—

no fruit is produced for God. Both for God and for man everything is the exact opposite of what it should be.

God's man was the only hope of the needy men of Jericho, even as the Man of God's right hand is men's only hope to-day, though they understand it not. Elisha called for a new cruse, with salt therein, "*and he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, I have healed these waters, there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.*" The remedy was thus "a new cruse, with salt therein," with its contents cast into "the spring of the waters." Here we learn God's way of blessing for man. It is not by the patching up of an old thing, but by the introduction of something altogether new. Those who have not lost confidence in flesh are all the time seeking to repair its glaring defects. It is frequently said at the present crisis that we should have more hope in humanity, *i.e.*, in flesh. But God has long since declared flesh to be incurable in its evil, and He condemned it as such in the death of Christ—(Rom. viii. 3-8). Nothing avails but a new nature.* Hence the Lord Jesus speaks in Luke v. 36-38 of a new garment, new wine, and new bottles; and the Apostle tells us in Eph. iv. 24 of a "new man," which, according to God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Nicodemus was taught in John iii. that his great need was to be born wholly anew. Apart from this, religious person though he was, he could neither see, nor enter into, the kingdom of God. God thus puts something "new" into the very "spring" of a man's moral being.

Elisha's cruse was full of salt. This great preservative represents the power which separates a man from evil, and keeps it far away. Only the man born of the Spirit possesses this. The religious man may indeed escape "the *pollutions* of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," but such an one is always in danger of being again entangled therein. There is no capacity for moral resistance, and so it happens to him "*according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to*

* It was quite refreshing to read some time ago in a leading article in a London newspaper dealing with the Socialistic ideals: "It is not a change of institutions that is needed, but a change of hearts." Surely the writer was "not far from the Kingdom of God!"

her wallowing in the mire"—(II. Peter ii. 20-22.) The man born of the Spirit escapes "the *corruption* that is in the world through lust"—(II. i. 10), a much much deeper thing than the world's *pollutions*, which are but external.

At Jericho fruit followed the application of the salt. So in our case having "salt in ourselves"—(Mark ix. 50), we are enabled to be fruitful for God in the midst of a barren world.

V.—SCOFFERS JUDGED.

Only at Bethel do we find Elisha calling down judgment upon his foes—(II. Kings ii. 23-24). Grace derided and rejected must of necessity be avenged, whatever the dispensation may be. Men in Christendom are in even graver peril than the young people of Bethel. "Little children" is an improper and misleading translation. In many other old Testament passages the same Hebrew word is rendered "young men." The offenders were similar in character and years to many who stand loudly at our street corners to-day, with no respect for either God or man. Bethel ("house of God") had truly become Bethaven ("house of folly") when God's venerable servant could be pursued with the mocking cry: "Go up, thou baldhead; go up, thou baldhead." Not one of Jeroboam's priests intervened to protect God's witness, how, indeed, could it be expected? What cared they for the wonderful story of God's rapture of His despised prophet. As little did they care for the new witness whom God had raised up in His stead. Accordingly, Elisha turned back, and looking upon his tormentors, he "cursed them in the name of Jehovah." The chronicler adds:—"and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." Whether "tare" means killed or simply injured is not stated. It is a solemn thing to join issue with God. The heavy judgment of II. Kings 1., when two captains with their fifties were destroyed for their impiety had no deterrent effect upon the scoffers of Bethel. How often is the rod of God unheeded! But however long drawn out His longsuffering may be, the judgment of God upon rejectors is sure, in this dispensation as in every other.

(To be Continued.)

The Nightingale.

"God Who giveth songs in the night." (Job xxxv. 10)
"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. (II. Cor. vi. 10.)"

The Nightingale of classic lore,
 Upon its breast
 A thorn is pressed,
To make it sing the more.

Ah! many a piercing, painful thorn,
 My heart has pressed,
 Till sore distressed,
'Twas bleeding, faint and torn.

I mourned and murmured as a dove;
 Yet in my grief
 I found relief
In my dear Saviour's love.

The Nightingale sings in the dark—
 How strange to hear
 Her warblings clear!
More pleasing than the lark.

Teach me to sing, Lord, in the night;
 Sore pressed and sad,
 Make Thou me glad—
Be thou my glorious light—

Till, like the lark on joyful wing,
 I gladly rise
 Into the skies,
At heaven's gate to sing.

T. ROBINSON.

Heather Lea,
Kirkby in Furness.

What is Death ?

By WALTER SCOTT.

Death is a universal fact. Death is not a law in the original constitution of man's being. It came in by sin : Man was not created mortal. Death is the inevitable consequence of sin—(Gen. ii. 17 ; Rom. v. 12), and has a valid claim upon the entire human family. But there are exceptions to the reign and rule of death, both from amongst the ranks of believers and unbelievers. Of the former, we may instance the case of Enoch and Elijah, who were taken up to heaven, also the entire company of saints alive on the earth at the coming into the air who are also caught up—(I. Thess. iv., 17) ; of unbelievers, the Beast, and the False Prophet—(Rev. xix. 20)—may be adduced. In all these instances God arrested the law of death “appointed unto men”—(Heb. ix. 27).

Then we have the record in both Testaments of persons absolutely dead raised up to natural life and to resume their place amongst the living on earth : see I. Kings xvii. 20-22 ; II. Kings iv. 20, 32-35 ; II. Kings xiii. 20, 21 ; Luke vii. 12-15 ; Luke viii. 42, 49-55 ; John xi. 11-44 ; Acts ix. 36-41 ; Acts xx. 9-12. It is a remarkable fact that none of those eight persons who returned from Sheol or Hades have recorded their impressions of the state of being after death. What they saw, felt, and experienced in the place of departed souls has been withheld. What death is, and the mode and character of existence after it have not been revealed by any raised from the dead. Can science solve the problems of life and death, and tell us what lies beyond ? If you look for a definition of death in the Dictionaries or in the Science of Physiology you are simply told what every school boy knows. Death, say they, is the total suspension of the organic forces in the human body, the vital energizing force has ceased, the blood refuses to circulate, heart and pulse are absolutely silent. The incompetence of the creature to explain the complex questions of life and death sends us with increased zest and earnestness to our Bibles. There only is found an answer to our question *What is Death?* All we would like to know is not revealed, but all needful to know lies open for reverent enquiry.

Our question, What is Death? first of all demands a strong and unqualified negative answer. *Death is not cessation of existence; is not extinction of being; is not a state of unconsciousness.* Personality remains equally after death as before it. "Kill the *body*" is the limit of man's power. He cannot "kill the *soul*." Its life remains untouched (Matt. x. 28). The soul and spirit in the body change their environment at death. The I, the real person *in* or *out* of the body, is an immortal spirit, and cannot die. Physical death—the subject of our present enquiry—refers solely to the body.

Death breaks up the unity of our being—spirit, soul, and body. The immediate effect is to release the two former from their thralldom and limitation in the sinful body. In the resurrection-state, the three constituent parts of the believer will be in happy and holy accord—never again to be separated, for "death itself shall die." Death and resurrection are terms which apply only to the body—of saints, and sinners alike.

Twice the apostle Paul terms the body a tabernacle or tent—(II. Cor. v. 1, 4)—and twice his fellow-apostle Peter does the same—(II. Peter i, 13, 14), and in each of those four occurrences of the word, the person is regarded as distinct from the tabernacle in which he temporarily resides. In the Pauline reference the Revisers have inserted as an alternative reading, in the margin, *bodily frame*. The body of the believer when raised, or changed, at the coming is likened to a house, a permanent dwelling for the spirit. The body *now* a tabernacle, *then* a house. The dissolution or break up of the tabernacle frees the spirit which goes back to "God who gave it"—(Ecc. xii. 7). The departure of the spirit leaves the body dead—(James ii. 26). Peter writes thus of death, "my decease"—or *departure* or *exodus*—(II. Peter i. 15). Again, "Shortly I must put off my tabernacle." Death then is the separation of soul and body. The tabernacle breaks up, and the soul and spirit go elsewhere. Such is death. To confound the soul or spirit with the body is a piece of gross materialism. In the case of Stephen, he called upon the Lord Jesus to receive his *spirit*—(Acts vii. 59), "and devout men buried Stephen" *i.e.* the *body*—(Acts viii. 2, R.V.)

We are spoken of as "spirits" when absent from the body—(Heb. xii. 23). The wicked dead are also termed "spirits," in

that much disputed passage I. Peter iii. 19. The body, then, is the vehicle for the spirit's action.

Sleep and death in their application to Christians are equivalent terms. Thus Stephen "fell asleep," that is, he died. "Lazarus is *dead*"—(John xi. 14), is thus explained by our Lord, "Lazarus *sleepeth*"—(verse 11.) Undeniably, the dead are referred to in I. Cor. xv. 18; I. Thess. iv. 13-15, but sleep is the word used. And even saints who died under the disciplinary dealing of God, are said to sleep—(I. Cor. xi. 30). This sweet word used for the death of believers is not applied to the death of Christ. In His mighty work of redeeming love, He destroyed Him that had the power of death, and so removed fear and dread from burdened hearts that they can calmly contemplate death as *sleep*!—(Heb. ii. 14). The authority of death and Hades are lodged in Christ risen from the dead. He has the keys, complete authority is His.

Sleep is not applied to the spirit, nor to the soul, but to the body only. After death the souls of good and bad are witnessed in conscious activity. "The graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose"—(Matt. xxviii. 52).

Death is the breaking up of the tent we live in. Death is sleep. Death is exodus or departure. Death is the separation of soul and body. Death is the severance of the link which now unites in one trinity—spirit, and soul, and body.

The Peerless Supremacy of Scripture.

"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. xv. 9).

'Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition' (Mark vii. 13). Here is a most significant statement—that simple obedience of Scripture is, in our Lord's view, necessary to acceptable worship.

"Yet *think* how much we may have *short* of that—what reverence of manner and feeling, what refinement, what beautiful simplicity of art—how much to move the sentiments of the soul! Yet He tells us all is empty—it is only a "vain oblation"

(Isa. i. 13)—if men's opinions, mere human tradition, however venerable, be allowed to *interfere* with loyalty to the *written* revelation. Those two syllables, "*in vain*,"—"in vain do ye worship me"—*cut* deep. What a contrast between Christ's view of acceptable worship and the popular one! Let *us* beware, however, lest we apply to our neighbour the rebuke which we also need.

"With the most Protestant among us there may be much blindness to the *real revelation*—through bondage to conventional traditional Christianity. Do we not need the warning that to *obey* what is *already revealed* is *better* than sacrifice? Is there with us no *slavery* to the *opinions of men*?—to our world, though it be such a very religious one? Are we always men who tremble at *the Word of God*?"

The Administration of the Ages :

Being Brief Notes on Ephesians, Chapter v., 18-25.

At once we come to a great truth: "Be filled with the Spirit." Notice what we have been told already concerning the Spirit. "*Sealed with the Spirit*"—(chapter i. 13.) God marking us off—taking possession of us—for His special purpose. Next verse speaks of "*the earnest*." We have foretastes of coming joy and glory. Then "*Access by one Spirit*"—(chapter ii. 18). Before we reach heaven we can draw near to God, and enter His presence. "*Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man*"—(chapter iii. 16). He brings Christ to our hearts, and enables us to enter into God's purpose concerning Him, in which we have part. "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit*"—(chapter iv. 30). He is our companion and friend. And now, "*be filled with the Spirit*." Notice it is in contrast to being drunk with wine. The contrast really is between being under the influence of natural things and being under the Spirit's influence. Wine, in Scripture, is usually the symbol of earthly joy. We should not be so under the influence of this as to become intoxicated with it. It does not say you are not to have

any of it, but don't be carried away by it. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. And then what a joyful life the Christian life becomes, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody *to the Lord*. If we are filled with the Spirit we have such a joyful sense of all that Christ is that we cannot help singing—our hearts are full of gladness. And then we give thanks always for *all things*. These are the works of a Spirit-filled life. It is all the result of v. 14. The soul awakes to Christ. Not as if we were amongst the dead, but fully alive to Him—His worth, His glory, and, in addition, all that He is to the believer.

Then comes submission (v. 21)—because God has ordained these relationships; they are not of man's creating; and it is only when their divine character is maintained that the blessing of them is realised. The wife is to submit to her husband, *as unto the Lord*. He is in the place of Lord to her (see I. Peter iii. 6) and has the Lord's authority. Of course, the Apostle is addressing Christians.

Moreover, the relationship of husband and wife is taken as a figure of the Church (v. 23). What a spiritual character marriage has, then; and it is because this is so little understood that there are so many unhappy marriages. The husband on his part is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church; and there follows a beautiful unfolding of that love, and the service that it has undertaken. *He "gave Himself for it."* That was in dying for it. The greatest act of love is to give oneself. But His service did not end there. There is a present service of sanctification and cleansing. Another proof of love—for love desires its object to conform to itself, and so by the washing of water the Church is being set apart and cleansed. As the word of God is followed, Christians become more and more separate from all that is unsuited to Christ. They belong to Christ, and He wants them to be like Himself, having the same tastes and caring for the same things. With His blood He has bought us, and He is still *servicing* us to make us like Himself. Out of His side poured blood and water. Perfect cleansing. The blood to expiate our sin—the water to cleanse us from all defects and defilement. We might see something about a person we

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loved that we could not say perhaps was sinful, but it does not suit us, it is something we dislike, and the more truly we love that person the more we would try to alter it. This is just what Christ is doing for every member of His Church. How much, surely, He can see which He would like to remove, not sins, exactly, but spots and blemishes. And why? Because He so loves the Church. He wants it to be altogether to His mind. And so, through His death, and by His present service for her He will one day present the Church to Himself. "*A glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy, without blemish.*"

If we as Christians thought more of this—of what the Church is to Christ—would it not make a difference to us? If one saw that there is something in this world that Christ loves, which He died for, which is the object of His regard—a church which He lives to serve, and which is in the closest relationship to Him, so close that we are said to be members of His body and His "own flesh"—looks upon it in fact as part of Himself which He nourishes and cherishes (verses 28/30—should we not have higher thoughts of the Church, and say to ourselves with ever increasing wonder, "I form part of that?" We should go over these verses one by one, and say to ourselves, "That Church for which Christ has done, and is doing, so much, is composed of saved sinners like myself."

"One flesh," which is the very essence of marriage (v. 31)—becomes a symbol of the union of Christ and His Church, and so the Apostle adds, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning *Christ and the Church.*" "*Christ and the Church:*" not the Pope and the Church, nor the Archbishops and Bishops and the Church, but "Christ and the Church" and nothing between. And it is His *own* ministry that is spoken of in verses 26/29.

It is good to think of all that the Church is to Christ; and all He has done, is doing, and will yet do, for her, until one day she is perfected in glory, and with Him and like Him for ever. "*Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.*"

The Observatory.

The Church—Prayer—and the War—At some recent meetings for special prayer on account of the war a bishop of the Church of England spoke some plain words. He told his hearers that the Church was mainly responsible for the war. He carried their minds back to the time—more than 1800 years ago—when St Paul heard that cry of the Macedonian, “Come over and help us,” and in response to which he first planted the gospel in Europe. Since that time Europe has been the headquarters of Christianity. If, he said, during the whole of the time, from that day until now, the Church had remained stedfastly in the Apostle’s doctrine, and practice, and the preaching had been the same, could this war have ever taken place? Could the six leading Christian nations have been in deadly strife with one another? It was the failure of the Church to bear its proper testimony and live its proper life which had made such a calamity possible.

He also made another very pertinent statement. It was his experience, he said, that Christians talked about the war very much as non-Christian people did. He mentioned instances of where he had conversed with men he knew to be believers, and he had not found their remarks any different from those of others who made no profession. They criticised statesmen or generals, and left God out entirely. One of these was saying some very severe things about one of the British commanders. The bishop turned to him and said, “Have you ever spent five minutes, in praying for that man?” He had to confess that he had not.

The bishop went on to urge the necessity of prayer. Over his study desk hang the words, “Prayer changes things.” Do we believe that? He quoted Sir Douglas Haig, the present commander-in-chief of the British forces, as saying, recently, to a chaplain, “Your prayers can do more than anything else to win the victory.”

Another speaker referred to the prayer meeting mentioned in the first chapter of *the Acts*. All the Apostles were present; not one delegated to conduct it. All the believers were present. There was one accord. It was in an upper room. What a different state of things to-day. Within the Metropolitan area there were churches and chapels with no prayer meeting at all. In other places where prayer meetings were held a few, only, attended. He advised his hearers to insist on a prayer meeting being held in their district, and if this was not agreed to, they should provide an “upper room” in their own houses. The “upper room” in the early days was not the worst room, but the best—the guest chamber—there Christ would come.

More than one speaker seemed to feel that it was a *weakened Church*

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that was accountable for so much. The nation could not be really strong, or one that God could use, with the Church weak. The fundamentals of the faith were not preached as they should be. One speaker told how he had listened to a sermon the other day, from the words, "*Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price*"; and from beginning to end there was not a reference to the death of Christ. "How anyone—from such a text—could preach without bringing in the Cross," said the speaker, "was an intellectual achievement which was altogether beyond him."

The story was told, as showing the need of revival at home, of a lad at the front who wrote home to his mother telling her how different life was out there. He told of how he was changed; of how he attended the chaplain's daily prayer meeting. "But mother," he continued, "I am afraid to come home." The lad did not know how he would get on when he came back to the old associations, with the old worldliness and temptations.

This touches the most vital point of the whole matter. Is the church going to be changed? Is the nation going to be changed? or shall we come out of the war very much the same as we went into it? There is one hopeful sign. The meetings we have alluded to revealed the fact that there are men alive to the great and pressing need of the hour—the need of prayer and of a revived Church.

"Them that honour Me I will honour," &c.—These words of Scripture came spontaneously to mind in thinking over R. J. Campbell's latest *mode*. He changed his doctrines to begin with; now he has forsaken his old ordination for a new one. Instead of the Congregationalists refusing him along with his *New Theology*, they kept him, and tried to smooth things over; until, at last, a reconciliation was achieved, and the champion of this new system of doctrine was retained at the expense of the truth and even welcomed to their platforms without any disavowal of his errors. This dishonour to God and His Word has resulted in the Congregationalists being called upon to swallow a very bitter pill. In becoming a clergyman of the Church of England, Campbell has to seek re-ordination. This act casts a serious reflection upon the *status* of every Congregational minister. From the point of view of the Establishment they are not recognised. That one, who formerly ranked with them, should tacitly acknowledge this, they feel to be a slur cast upon their order. But could they expect anything else from such a man? One who has no consideration for the doctrines of God's holy Word, and the feelings of those who hold them, is not likely to be very considerate at any time. But the point is this—and it contains a very impressive lesson—had those who were formerly allied with R. J. Campbell acted a proper part, and refused him on account of his evil doctrines, they would have been saved the humiliation which has now come upon them. "*Them that honour Me, I will honour; and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.*"

The Obedience and Perfection of Christ.

Christian obedience is the obedience of Christ. It is the obedience of the Son, in manhood, to the Father's will. He had said in eternity, "Lo, I come. I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart."

His obedience was learned in the deepest suffering. His ear was opened morning by morning to hear and learn the will of the Father. He heard as the learner, that He might have the perfect delight of carrying out amidst much suffering all the Father's desire. He was never less than the Son, the Almighty Creator, God over all blessed for ever. But as man, He delighted in the place of subjection.

When Satan came to Him in the temptation he said, "If Thou be the Son of God *command* that these stones be made bread." A commander He once had been, but now He was a learner. He would not now command, but obey. In weakness and suffering and obedience He completely foiled the power of Satan. Satan said, "If Thou be the Son of God *command*." Jesus says, "*Man* shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

If He laid down His life, He laid it down in obedience to the Father's will. If He took up life again, He took it up in obedience to the Father, quite as much as when He spoke the Father's words, or did the Father's works.

No one but a Divine Person could lay down his own life and take up again the life he laid down. But all was done in obedience. This was His highest glory as Man. *Obedience is the highest glory of a creature. To be perfectly obeyed is the highest honour rendered to the Creator.*

If He was in an agony, and prayed the more earnestly, He said, "*O, My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me.*" This showed His holy perfection. He hated sin with the most utter hatred. He dreaded its defiling contact. Yet, hear Him say, "Not My will, but Thine be done." "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

What matchless submissiveness in the midst of such a fiery

ordeal which caused Him to sweat as it were great drops of blood. He truly resisted unto blood striving against sin.

If He went on to the cross, He had joy set before Him in fully accomplishing the Father's will, and bringing in a world of pleasure for the Father's heart. "He was obedient unto death." But mark the last sentence. "*Even the death of the cross.*"

If He, for the moment, in His agony in the garden shrunk back from it, it was because of His holiness. What it meant for the Holy One of God to be made sin, and bear sin's heavy judgment, no mind can think, no tongue declare. The depth of the sufferings of the cross is known only to Himself and the One from whose hand He suffered.

We see His perfection in the very language used on the cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "My God." How significant that it is only on the cross He uses those words. It was "My Father" before the cross, but now it is "My God." His love to God and His entire confidence in Him is expressed. He shows that in the midst of all His deepest sufferings He clung to the very One who smote Him. It was not for Himself, but for others, He was forsaken.

His obedience unto death supplied the Father with a fresh motive for His love to Him. "*Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again.*" We have but the faintest idea what it all meant to the Father's heart to have such a Son, and to see Him here in the weakness and reality of manhood doing His will to the uttermost.

As the Father's only begotten Son, the heavens were opened upon Him. Of Him only could the Father say, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found all My delight.*" When the Son, in reciprocating the Father's affection, said, "*I do always those things that please Him,*" that proved the mutuality that existed between them. The pleasure and joy of the Father filled the Son. This was His support in all His loneliness and isolation amongst men who misunderstood Him, and put a false colour on all His words.

What deep, divine perfection marked Him in all His words, ways, and works. If we feel how far short we come of being

like Him we must bow our hearts in shame. Yet the very contrast of our failure in gracious bearing to men, and faithfulness to God, brings His obedience, graciousness, and faithfulness into greater relief. It should lead the true heart into deeper appreciation of His matchless moral glory. We are left, when contemplating Him, to wonder and adore.

But we shall have the full satisfaction of being yet conformed to His image and likeness. That will never be in this world. When we shall see Him, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

P-W-L-S.

Serbia's Need.

We do not usually publish appeals of this kind, but there are exceptions to every rule, and this is one. We hope our readers will respond, if they have not already sent help through other channels.

To avoid any possibility of confusion in the administration of contributions intended for the benefit of the distressed Serbian population, the Serbian Legation requests that subscriptions intended for the Serbian Relief Fund, of which H.M. the Queen is Patroness, should be sent to the Earl of Desart, K.C.B., at the Offices of the Fund, 5 Cromwell Road, South Kensington, S.W.

The Serbian Legation will continue to receive subscriptions for the following Serbian Funds :—

1. The Archbishop of Belgrade's Fund for the families of the killed and wounded soldiers.
2. The Society of the Serbian Red Cross.
3. The Parliamentary Commission for the Refugees.
4. The Society of St Helena for the orphans whose parents have been killed in the war.

All contributions addressed to the Serbian Legation (195 Queen's Gate, S.W., London) for these Funds will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 4

APRIL 1916

Price 1d

Notes and Extracts.

An esteemed correspondent writes:—"I notice that on page 282 of your December issue, you say that 'the old man is an expression denoting the flesh or evil nature with its characteristics.' Do you think this is either psychologically or scripturally true? We are said to 'put off the old man'; and yet so far as I can see we never 'put off' the flesh or evil nature. I am inclined to think that a proper rendering of the Greek in Romans vi. 6 and Col. iii. 9 will show that the use of the Aorist implies an absolute fact in the past, namely, that we did put off the 'old man.' Some of our leading commentators define the 'old man' as 'our unregenerate self,' namely, all that we were in Adam. I know the matter is one of difficulty, but somehow I cannot feel satisfied that 'the old man' and 'the flesh' are one and the same thing."

Perhaps not. And, yet, can the two ideas be entirely separated, even though they may be, for certain purposes, distinguished? One distinction seems to be the way in which each term is used; the "old man," in contrast to Christ: "the flesh," in contrast to the Spirit. Another, that the term "old man" is never found in the Old Testament, whereas the term "flesh" is. Perhaps for this reason, that you cannot have an "old" till you have the "new." I do not speak of my old coat unless I have bought a *new* one. It is the *new* one makes the other old. So until Christ appeared as man there could be no "old man." A third distinction is that, the term "old man" seems to stand for the flesh *fully developed*. All that the flesh is, and would do, was never seen—its full character was never known—until God appeared in the Person of Christ and the flesh hated Him and put Him to death. "Man" is an expression denoting full development. A boy has the same *nature* as a man, but not

that nature fully developed. We believe this applies in the case of "flesh" and "old man." It is the flesh full blown. Thus in Romans vi. 6 we read, immediately after the reference to the "old man" being crucified, "that the body of sin (sin in its totality) might be destroyed." Lastly, the "old man" seems to be regarded *objectively*, and the "flesh" *subjectively*. And the first is invariably connected with "manner of life," "deeds."

There seem to be these *distinctions*, yet apart from the *flesh* we cannot imagine how there could be an "old man." Moreover, very similar statements are made regarding both. In Rom. vi. 6 if "our old man is crucified with Him," it is "that the body of *sin* might be destroyed"; while in Romans viii. 3 we read, "*God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.*" In Galations ii. 20, Paul writes, "I am crucified with Christ." Here, evidently, he means the flesh. To guard against any misconception he immediately adds, "nevertheless I live." He himself as a responsible individual had not come to an end, only the "I" in a certain relation: *i.e.*, as to the "flesh" and under law. Thus the term "crucified" is applied to the "flesh" as well as to the "old man." And this is confirmed by chapter v. 24 of the same epistle. "And they that are Christ's have *crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts."

It seems very much as if the "old man" is the flesh presented objectively—and in a heightened, intensified form. It is a conception, an idea, we have to grasp. It is presented to us in connection with a certain defined manner of life, and we definitely in our minds put that off. Thus it is spoken of as "our" old man, never "my." Though we do find the expression "my" flesh (Rom. vii. 18). The "our" again seems to connect "old man" with the idea of totality—all that the flesh means in its sum total ever since it had a history.

In the letter already quoted, our attention is called to the fact that "we are said to 'put off the old man,' but, 'never 'put off' the flesh or evil nature." And another has said, "It is never spoken of as existing in the Christian, but always as crucified or put off." Is not this last accounted for by the fact already dwelt upon, that "old man" is used objectively—it is the flesh seen characteristically; but this does not necessarily imply that the old man is

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something entirely different from the flesh. And, as a matter of fact, we are told in so many words that the body of "the flesh," has been put off. For, as is well known, Col. ii. 11 should read "in putting off the body of the flesh." So that the flesh in its totality is put off, just as we saw in connection with Rom. vi. 6, sin in its totality is destroyed on account of "our old man" having been crucified with Christ. It seems therefore to be clear that the flesh is crucified, and is to be treated as done with, equally with the "old man." In Christ's death the flesh was dealt with just as "our old man" was dealt with—condemned and set aside. The believer has to accept this and act accordingly. So in Romans viii. it is predicated of us "ye are not in the flesh"—it has been put off. (cf. Rom. viii. 3 ; Gal. ii. 20 ; and v. 24).

If we come now to consider, briefly, the passages wherein the terms "old man" and "new man" occur—and they occur only in St Paul's epistles and are confined to three passages—(excepting Eph. ii. 15) we may gain further light as to their meaning.

The first mention is in Rom. vi. 6, and the context speaks of "Christ being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." Here we have an entirely new life—a life raised from the dead because absolutely suited to the nature and character of God—"the glory of the Father." God could not leave in death One Who responded in every way to Himself. Founded upon this fact is the statement: "Even so we also should walk in newness of life": *i.e.*, a life that accords with Him Whom God has raised. This *newness* of life is unique. There had never been anything like it before; there was nothing resembling it elsewhere. But there had been what Scripture calls "the flesh," which had been tried and tested by God in various ways, and had produced fruit of an entirely different character from Christ. *That* is now termed "our old man"; and we are to take account of it as judged by God in the death of Christ—"crucified with Him"—and to refuse it altogether. This is the ground we take in our baptism—"buried with Him by baptism *unto* death." Henceforth we are to walk in "newness of life." Christ, and not the "old man," is to characterise us.

This last thought is further emphasised and unfolded in

the next reference—Eph. iv. 22-24. Here, again, we must take into account the context. The Apostle has been depicting the life of the Gentiles in their unregenerate condition. But, he says, “ye have not so learned CHRIST”; and the teaching of Christ is said to be “according as (the) truth is in JESUS” (N.T.) A very different life from that of the Gentiles. As another has said: “He does not say, as the truth is *in Christ*. The truth ‘in Jesus’ is the practical walk, such as His walk was. . . . He is thinking. . . . of His example. . . . It is as we see Him in the world. . . . As Jesus He has come into the sphere of practical life, lived before our eyes.” (F.W.G.) It is this life which is to be ours, which we are to follow; and this is involved in “*that ye have put away as concerning your former manner of life the old man. . . . and that ye are being renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye have put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*” (N.T.) It is as we are taught by Christ and renewed in the spirit of our mind that we do this. Though, as our friend has reminded us in his letter, “the Aorist implies an absolute fact in the past, namely that we did put off the ‘old man.’” All the features of the “new man” are seen in Christ. They are before our eyes. But this makes everything else “old.” Consequently we have what is termed the “old man.” And as we look at the two we discard the one and adopt the other. We say, giving the words their deepest meaning, “Christ for me.” It is to be noted that “renewed” in Eph. iv. 23 is a *continual* process. It “is what is kept fresh and new.”* Implying that while “putting off” and “putting on” is a position once taken, it has to be continually and practically maintained.

Scripture never, so far as we know, calls Christ, “the new man.” Both in Ephesians and Colossians the “new man” is spoken of as created by God. It is therefore a new creation or a new creature, but it is in Christ, and takes all its character from Him. So, in the last passage we shall refer to, Col. iii. 9-11, we find first of all, an exhortation to put off all lusts and evil habits which were characteristic of the “old man” and in which we once found our life (v. 7) because we have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new in which we have the full knowledge

* See *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Colossians iii. Note.

of what is according to God and where nothing has any place but Christ—He is ALL objectively, and ALL subjectively.

We leave the study of this subject with a profound sense of the importance of the truth contained in it. Doubtless some of our readers will be able to throw further light upon the passages we have briefly considered, and if so, we shall be glad to hear from them. May we be so taught by Christ as the truth is in Jesus, that we may in deed and in truth become imitators of God as dear children and walk in love in accordance with righteousness and holiness of truth. And thus come to a definite decision that the "old" must in every way be refused. This can only be done as Christ becomes the attraction

"It is not craving for the world and its amusements that is the hardest thing I have to fight against, it is against *myself*." Yes, that is *the* battle, and how well most of us know it, and it is the battle which generally begins in real earnest with the Christian after he has got his first blessing; that is, when he knows that his sins are forgiven, and he is a child of God. Then he becomes conscious of self in a manner he has never dreamt of before, and there is only one way of overcoming self, it is by finding a superior object; having the heart engaged with Christ. Christ's work in all its value before God sets my *conscience* free, but only Christ Himself can displace self. And it is only as we find out how this self spoils our happiness that we turn to One who alone can make us truly happy, and then we gain the victory. It is a heart-breaking discovery, but a very necessary one, that I have a self within that can never please God and is always seeking to please itself. It is this self that Paul looked upon as crucified when he said (Gal. ii. 20)—"I am crucified with Christ." He found another object in One who loved him even better than he had ever loved *himself*. It is this that delivers us: to meet with a love, higher, deeper, broader, than the love which we have for ourselves. To be able to say, "The Son of God who loved me and *gave Himself for me*." That is how well He loved us—a pure unselfish love. In the presence of such a person and such a love, self becomes a wretched thing to be hated and left.

“Our inward experiences ebb and flow, and are not the resting place for faith. Faith looks ever to Christ’s finished work, and rests only upon God’s *word*. So you see that there are the two works. Christ’s work and the Holy Spirit’s work. The first finished (as regards the Cross) absolutely and entirely—the other still proceeding. But God’s feelings about us are all based upon His estimate of the finished work of His Son, and His love to us flows from what He is, and not what we are. And the more I look where God looks and see that everything is the result of Christ’s death, in which God found all He wanted as a reason for blessing me, the more even and constant will be the enjoyment of peace within, and the more uninterrupted the joy. Communion with God about His beloved Son is the secret of abiding happiness. Speaking of this the Apostle John in the first chapter of his Epistle says, “these things write we unto you that *your joy may be full*.” *Fulness of joy*, nothing less, is our portion.

Timothy, even as a babe, learnt “the sacred letters” (ta hiera grammata). The book of God is the best of spelling books for any *child*, and “the *man* of God needs nothing more to fully equip him.” Its very *letters* are sacred; its *words* are “pure” (Ps. xii.); its *dots* and *strokes*—Hebrew tittle and Greek iota—are *imperishable* (Matt. v. 18); its *writings* are God-breathed; its *doctrine* is complete (Col. i. 25); its *canon* “as a measuring rod” is perfect (Rev. xxii. 18, 19); and its *authority* is final and supreme (Isa. viii. 20).

My only safeguard against licentiousness on the one hand, and monasticism and all the chimerical notions of human piety, on the other, is “What *saieth* the Scripture?” for it forms the only infallible test wherewith to “prove the spirits whether they be of God.”—(I. John iv. 6.)

I cannot trust the voice of the Church, she has so many voices. I cannot trust the voice of my brethren—it changes too often. I cannot trust the voice of my own heart, it is so often fanciful and false. But when I open the Bible I hear a voice which I can trust. It is my Father’s voice, the Good Shepherd’s voice, the Spirit’s voice, and I reverently bow to it as the voice of God, and believe and confess what it says as the Word of God.

Biblical Notes.

The *first* prophetic reference is contained in Gen. iii. 15 :
the *last* in Rev. xxii. 20.

Three things Satan has done :—

- (1) Falsified the Character of God.
- (2) Ruined Man morally and physically.
- (3) Dragged down the creation to him.

Three results of the Cross :—

- (1) God everlastingly glorified.
- (2) The basis of eternal blessing.
- (3) The ground of reconciliation.

Three Spheres of Divine Government :—

- (1) Christ and the Inheritance.—Eph. i.
- (2) Son of Man and the Dominion—Ps. viii.
- (3) King and the Kingdom—Ps. ii.

Three grounds of rejoicing in heaven :—

- (1) Destruction of the harlot.
- (2) Reign of the Lord God.
- (3) Marriage of the Lamb.

See Rev. xix.

The first eleven chapters of the Bible are quoted from or referred to upwards of 60 times in the New Testament. These chapters form a book of SCIENCE and HISTORY, without which the world would be groping in darkness to-day. They cover a third of human history. Can the world's literature furnish such a compendium of exact scientific, moral, and historic truth?

Four things to hold fast :—

- (1) Christ's Word.
- (2) Christ's Name.
- (3) Christ's Patience.
- (4) Christ's Coming.

See Rev. ii. 7-11.

Inspiration, *God breathed*, is applied to the writers and writings of the Bible: for the former see I. Peter i. 10-12; for the latter see II. Tim. iii. 16.

“Scripture,” with its plural, occurs more than 40 times in the New Testament and in every instance refers to the sacred writings. This is an important fact to bear in mind in connection with II Tim. iii. 16.

Conviction of sin brought the people to Jordan. Righteousness brought Christ there. Jordan had no claim upon *Him*. Jordan had a righteous claim upon *them*: see Matt. iii.

Ours is a threefold Deliverance:—

From the *guilt* of sin by the blood of Christ.

From the *dominion* of sin by our death with Christ.

From sin *itself* by our death or His Coming.

See Rom. iii.-viii.

Our former condition was threefold:—

Guilty, hence God the Justifier.—(Romans.)

Dead, hence God the Quickener.—(Ephesians.)

Defiled, hence God the Sanctifier.—(Hebrews.)

Every religious system keeps man at a moral distance from God. Christianity brings men into *immediate* touch with God, and in peace.

The four great facts of Christianity:—

(1) The Incarnation.

(2) The Cross.

(3) The Holy Ghost.

(4) The Coming.

The threefold result of Justification:—

(1) Peace with God.

(2) Standing in Grace.

(3) Hope of God's Glory.

See Rom. v. 1, 2.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK.

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The *faith* is settled for us in I. Cor. xv.

The *order* of God's House is arranged in I. Cor. xiv.

The great central and controlling fact of the universe—
GOD IS.

To be stalwart Christians, combine the objective and subjective aspects of Christianity in faith and experience.

There are *nine* manifestations of the Spirit enumerated in I. Cor. xii. 8-10, and *nine* fruits of the Spirit in Gal. v. 22, 23. The former are widely distributed; the latter are all found in greater or less degree in every Christian and are termed "fruit of the Spirit." This precious cluster of Divine fruit was produced in perfection by our Lord on earth. It is the very embodiment of Christian character.

There is offered to each member of the human race numbering sixteen hundred millions:—*One God. One Saviour. One Cross. One Book. One Home.* These five great verities meet the deepest longing of the souls of these millions. For human sin and misery Christianity is the grandest remedy conceivable.

The *world* waits for peace and safety on the establishment of a new and regenerated Europe, on the conclusion of this war. *Christians* wait for the personal return of the Lord to bring in a lasting peace and set up (not Europe), but the world on a new basis. Then shall be struck the triumphant note—"JEHOVAH REIGNETH FOR EVER AND EVER." WALTER SCOTT.

Sound Mind.

"One special mark of a sound mind is a readiness to take counsel of God, and a bringing into subjection all preconceived notions of our own or of others to His revealed will. It is only as we have God's thoughts that we get our thoughts rectified."

"The only way to be a witness for Jesus is to be much in His company, to hear His voice, and to observe His actions. How can we understand the character of a person with whom we have little or no intercourse?"

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK.

Gethsemane.

'Twas eve in Judah's land !
 Slowly the shadows had longer grown,
 Till the last faint ray of the setting sun
 Had faded and fled from the western sky ;
 Then on they came with a sweeping train,
 Noiseless, yet sure and swift !
 Down from the mountain and over the plain,
 Flinging around their shroud of gloom,
 And locking in silence, deep as the tomb,
 The daylight hum of man—and clouds arose,
 Dark sombre clouds, in strange wild groups.
 Now hiding from sight the moonbeam's light,
 Then swiftly hurrying—struggling on.
 E'en the lights in the city grew pale and dim
 As the midnight hours drew near ;
 And only the sound of the watchman's round
 Fell sharp and clear on the listening ear,
 And echoing rose to the silent sky.—

When, list, 'twas the voice of music !
 A low sweet burst of song,
 Coming floating through the midnight,
 Borne by the winds along ;
 'Twas the sound of many voices,
 And the strain was soft and deep,
 For it came from hearts of sadness—
 Strange mingling of praise and grief.
 It ceased—and forth from an upper room
 A band of watchers came ;
 Sadly they wound through the gloomy streets
 Towards the city's eastern wall ;
 Passed through the gate, and o'er Kedron's brook,
 Till they came to Olivet's hillside lone,
 And the deep, dark shade of Gethsemane.

In their midst there was ONE whose weary frame
 Knew little of earth's repose—a lonely man—
 Lone in his heart's deep sympathy,
 Lone in his hour of agony ;
 Lone—and yet not alone, if human woe
 Or human want had need of Him—
 Then every wayside sufferer urged his claim,
 And none was e'er denied. Then thronging multitudes
 In crowds around Him prest—for Jesus
Came to heal, to seek and save the lost.
 No crowd was with Him now—but a lowly band,
 Whom He had chosen out from humble life :
 Not earth's nobility, but sons of toil.
 They owed Him much—yet little gave
 Which met His soul's deep yearning.
 On them He lavished all His love,
 And in return got lukewarm wavering faith.
 One day they knew Him and adored. The next
 Would ask again, " Who art Thou, Lord ? "
 Once, as He told them of His hour of agony,
 And spoke of coming shame and death,
 They listened—heard—and heeded not ; their hearts
 Were filled with other thoughts, with curious strife
 Disputing—who should be the greatest !
 And now they sorrow, scarcely knowing why,
 Save that His farewell words are sounding in their ears,
 And they see His heart is wrung.
 He chooses three among them, who of old
 Have known and loved him best,
 And bids the others tarry there, while they move on.
 Deeper and deeper yet within the gloomy shade—
 All may not see the anguish of His heart,
 All in that sorrow may not bear a part.
 Then turning unto them He saith,
 " Tarry ye here awhile and watch :
 My soul is sorrowful exceedingly,
 Yea, e'en to death ! " He leaves them there
 And passes on.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK.

Ah! earth and sky, what saw ye then?
 And you, ye angel hosts before the throne,
 In that dread hour what witnessed ye?
 Bowed down to earth heaven's highest Majesty,
 Fullness of Godhead, the Eternal One,
 Firstborn of all creation! He, Jehovah's Son
 Arrayed in human garb, and bending low
 In untold agony!
 Ah! words—poor human words,
 Vainly ye seek to tell of grief like this:—
 Ye may not—One alone has known it,
 One whose agony of love no floods could drown,
 And He, the One who knows it, tells it not!
 But thou, O ransomed soul, with unveiled sight
 Gaze on that mystery—
 Gaze, and, with rapture filled,
 Bow down and worship Him, who died for thee!

“They Know Not What They Do.”—“In this sublime and simple petition, not the slightest, most shadowy trace of self-consideration. It is from a heart occupied with thought for others, and not with its own woes; it is out of the depths of an infinite love and pity that no waters—not the coldest and most tumultuous which can be thrown upon it—can quench, that there comes forth the purest and highest petition for mercy that ever ascended to the Father of Mercies in the heavens. It is from the lips of a Man that this petition comes, yet from One Who can speak to God as to His Own Father. It is from Jesus on the Cross it comes; from Him Who submits to all the shame and agony of His crucifixion that, as the Lamb that once was slain for us, He might earn, as it were, the right to pray thus, and furnish Himself with a plea in praying, such as none but He possesseth and can employ.”



“There are mysteries of grace and love in every page of the Bible. That is a thriving soul to whom this blessed book becomes increasingly precious.”

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

VI.—THE THREE KINGS.

Three Kings were in sore trouble; two of them ungodly men, the other a backsliding servant of Jehovah (II. Kings iii.) Jehoram, King of Israel, was at least a religious professor. On occasion he could wear sackcloth upon his flesh, and make use of Jehovah's name (II. Kings vi. 27-30); and he could even purge away some of the grosser evils introduced by his parents (II. Kings iii. 2). The King of Edom was just a man of the world, with no pretension whatever to relationship with God. How could Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, associate himself with such a pair, with any expectation of aid or blessing from Jehovah? This was neither the first nor the second time that he had weakly allied himself with evil men. When he returned from helping Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead, the prophet remonstrated with him thus: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate Jehovah?" (II. Chron. xix. 2). When he joined himself with Ahaziah in a commercial enterprise, he was divinely informed that Jehovah would break his ships, a catastrophe which really happened (II. Chron. xx. 35-37). What is sorely needed amongst God's saints is the spiritual energy to say "No" (at whatever cost) when invited by the world to co-operate with it in its schemes, of whatever character the schemes may be.

The three Kings sought to subjugate Mesha, King of Moab, who had repudiated the suzerainty of the King of Israel after the death of Ahab. Instead of exercising his conscience before God as to why this had been permitted, Jehoram had recourse to arms. This is the only remedy known to men who are destitute of the knowledge of God. When Jehoshaphat was invited to help, he replied: "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses." Oh, the shame of it! Should he not rather have replied: "I am *the opposite* of what thou art?"

The allied sovereigns took a circuitous route in order to

avoid Moab's fortified cities, and presently they found themselves with no water for their host. Jehoram cried out in despair: "Alas! that Jehovah hath called these three Kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab!" Jehoshaphat asked if there was available a prophet of Jehovah by whose means they might inquire of Him. One of the King of Israel's servants remarking that Elisha was within reach, the three Kings went down to him, Jehoshaphat saying, "the word of Jehovah is with him." If the King of Judah had sought the word of God before venturing forth, he would not have found himself in such a strait. Elisha at first bade Jehoram go to the prophets of his father and mother, knowing well that he sought water, not God; but presently he said: "As Jehovah liveth, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." Elisha thus distinguished between God's saint (even though in a backsliding condition), and the evil men with whom he was associated.

His next words are remarkable: "But now bring me a minstrel." Why was this? The fact is, his spirit was checked while the ungodly were before him, and he felt it imperative to abstract himself in order to get into proper touch with God. What a lesson is here! Oh, that we all understood it! How different would Jehoshaphat's course have been had he understood it! While the minstrel played, the hand of Jehovah came upon Elisha, and he said: "Thus saith Jehovah, make this valley full of ditches," etc. This being done, the valley should be filled with water—an ample supply for both men and beasts. Moreover, victory should follow over rebellious Moab. How good of our God! What an appeal to the consciences of all the confederate Kings!

God's way of blessing on this occasion contains some very important principles. Note, the scene of it was a valley. The low place is the place of repentance and self-judgment. When God's people get down low enough before God, the blessing is never lacking. Ditches must be dug in order to receive and hold what God had to give. The deeper the ditches, the more energy thus displayed, the more water they got, the greater the

blessing from God. There is tremendous need of spade and shovel work to-day. Brethren, there is a vast amount of earth to be got rid of ere the blessing of God can really fill our souls. Dare we deny that earth has taken large possession of us? Has not the extraordinary prosperity of recent years affected even God's saints adversely? It may be that now God is withdrawing it from us in order to uplift our souls. Christ is the Christian's only true object. Not to this world of sin and death, but to the other world of life and glory, where Christ is, does the Christian really belong. By the Spirit's power we are enabled to enter even now into the enjoyment of things invisible and eternal. But earthly-mindedness is a grave hindrance to this.

The blessing came "in the morning, when the meal-offering was offered" (9 a.m.) Frequently in Scripture do we find the blessing vouchsafed at the hour of sacrifice (compare I. Kings xviii. 36, Ezra ix. 5, Dan. ix. 21, Acts ii. 15, iii. 1, x. 3). God has no good thing for man apart from the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The work of God for the Kings was in two parts: (1) water for themselves and their hosts; and (2) victory over the enemy. "This is but a light thing in the sight of Jehovah: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand." The refreshment of the army was thus only a means to an end. In like manner to-day the work of the Spirit goes far beyond getting Christians right. He does indeed meet our need most blessedly, ministering Christ to our souls, and rebuking and restoring us whenever we go astray; but He does more than this. He strengthens us for God, that we may be enabled to war successfully against His foes and ours. The life of the believer should be characterised by victory from first to last.

The victory being gained over Moab, the Kings were told: "Ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones." An unsparing judgment, assuredly. The lesson for us is plain. Our only safeguard is to overthrow for ourselves all that in which flesh might trust or delight itself, for God would have us find our all in Christ. We dare not give quarter to anything that might draw our hearts away from Him. *(To be Continued.)*

“Good Pleasure.”**Substance of an Address to Missionaries leaving for the Foreign Field.**

By J. H.

“If there is a blue patch in the sky you are sure to see it,” was remarked recently by one child of God to another. The circumstances under discussion were certainly somewhat dark, and the one was seeking to cheer the other by drawing his attention to hopeful signs unnoticed by him. Blue patches are not the monopoly of a few, but, like “angels in white,” are there for all who are seers through exercising the like precious faith given.

I know of no chapter in the word of God more full of them than Luke xii., and would commend it to any who may be depressed or discouraged. You will find them in verses—4, “My friends”; 6, “Not one of them is forgotten”; 7, “The very hairs of your head are all numbered (even the white ones—see Is. 46, 4), fear not, therefore”; 24, “God feedeth them”; 28, “God clothes . . .”; 30, “Your Father knoweth”; 32, “Fear not little flock”; and the two-fold blessing for the servant, 37, “Blessed are those . . . watching”; 43, “Blessed the servant . . . so doing.”

The 32nd verse, however, seems to embrace all the others in its fulness, and covers every experience that a Christian may be called to undergo, whether abroad or at home.

“Fear not (you who are the) little flock, for it is your Father’s *good pleasure* to give you the kingdom.”

A singularly beautiful and comforting message from the One who so graciously begins, “I say unto you, My friends” (truly the voice of the Beloved), in which He not only suggests the Shepherd’s tender care, the Father’s love and glory, but uses the very word that expressed the Father’s delight in Himself on those special occasions which bring to mind the same precious truths, “Eudokew” (well-pleased), in this verse translated “good pleasure”—see Matt. xii., 18—“Behold, My servant, whom I have chosen My Beloved, in whom My soul is *well pleased*.” Again, in Matt. iii., 17, “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased*” (Mk. i., 11, and Luke iii., 22, record

the same.) Another occurrence is in Matt. xvii., 5, for the third time, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased*."

The last occasion the word is used of the Lord is in Col. i. 19, and shows the infinite resources of God in Him the exalted one, upon which, may we not reverently say, the believer may draw at all times. "It pleased (well pleased) the Father that IN HIM SHOULD ALL FULNESS DWELL."

Thus in connection with the Lord the word is recorded seven times in all, showing the perfect satisfaction and delight of the Father in Him. So that when He wishes to comfort and encourage His own amid scenes of danger, loneliness, difficulty, and trial, He selects this word to show the heart of the Father is the same towards them as toward Himself, "Your Father's GOOD PLEASURE."

No wonder then, in outlining his call and career, the Apostle Paul glories in repeating the same word, as applied to himself and others, translated respectively "pleased," "pleasure," "willing," and "thought it good." Have they not all a message for to-day?

I do not think there is anything more inspiring than a meeting to commend to the Lord those who are called to labour in the Missionary field, and to listen to the testimonies as to how God has been leading and opened up the way for one and another. But do we lay sufficient stress on what seems to me the most comforting and encouraging of all truths connected with the Missionary's (or home-worker for that matter) charter as given by the Apostle in relating the facts concerning his great commission?

THE COMMISSION (Gal. i., 15)—"It pleased (well pleased) God to set me apart as one in whom through grace His Son should be revealed, THAT I might preach Him among the heathen." We may note the transcendent dignity and grace of the Lord when before Pilate, and the way in which He spoke of His mission. His position at that moment, humanly-speaking, was one of ignominy, shame, and failure, but, "though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in thine eyes." Yes, the quiet tone of triumph revealed that wonderful heart resting in the Father's *good pleasure*. Love confides and is confident under all circumstances. Child of God, called to service, or called to

give up dear ones for service, the same infinite wisdom that planned the ages has marked out your path, and the infinite love of the Father has anticipated, and provided for, every incident of the way. Should even an anxious thought, then, be given a place in the life so honoured of God as to be called and commissioned "to preach Christ among the heathen?"

Hence in the next scripture before us, containing the same word, we naturally expect to find:—

CONFIDENCE. (II. Cor. vii. 5-9.)—"We are confident and willing (well pleased) . . ." The glorious end, or the ending in glory, is kept in view here. It is, indeed, the pathway of "faith, not sight." God is seen working, and, that we may not only know, but acquiesce in his mind, to us is given the "earnest of the Spirit." We are His workmanship, created unto . . . and therefore fully equipped for every step of the journey. Hence we are always confident, knowing if at home in the body, or absent from it and present with the Lord, it is His will, and must be best. Some lives have been laid down immediately on arrival, almost before any definite work was started, and it has been a source of sadness to those who loved them, in the thought as to whether this meant a mistaken call. The apostle here shows clearly he was prepared for short or long service, as the Lord willed, and therefore he could be "willing" (well-pleased) even if death intervened. In fact, so far as the latter is concerned, he repeats, "we are confident and willing." Whether in life or death, come what will, it is the same to Paul, and absent or present "we labour," no lagging, but one absorbing desire "to be accepted of Him." Thus the incidents of a pathway travelled in confidence will be recognised as the means towards the end (the end of the Lord), and this enables the worker to continue in perfect peace, unruffled by contrary winds and messengers to buffet, even though they come thick and fast or unexpectedly

(To be continued).

"The believer's cause for rejoicing is ever the same. Whatever his *outward* circumstances may be, his *joy* is *in the Lord*, and it is his privilege to rejoice in the Lord always."

The Observatory.

The Dragons.—A well-known public man once said that “he believed any man of even moderate endowment could attain any given aim which he set before him with unremitting effort and ‘enduring to the end.’” In answer to the question, “Why, then, do so many men fall short of their ambition?” he replied, “They come to the place where they turn back. They may have killed the dragon at the first bridge, and at the second, perhaps even at the third, but the dragons are all the more formidable the further we go. Many turn back disheartened, and very few will meet the monsters to the end. Almost none is willing to have a try with the demon at the last bridge; but if he does, he has won for ever.”

Many must have experienced this. Especially is it true in the Christian life. The statement, “He that endureth to *the end* shall be saved,” contains a principle of very wide application. The fiercest ordeal will be during what is known as “the great tribulation,” and it is to that period the above words primarily apply. But there are tribulations which we all have to face, and we are apt to grow disheartened. As we advance in the Christian life, for instance, opposition often increases. There have to be the breaking of ties and associations; customs and habits have to be given up; life at many points has to be altered. Dragon after dragon has to be met and overcome. David had to meet the dragons. He slew the lion and the bear. Then he had to slay Goliath. But he overcame. Faith increases as we go on. But the difficulties often increase, as we have been reminded. Faith must correspondingly increase, or we grow disheartened and give up. And faith can only increase as we keep the eye on God.

These dragons are to be met with in a path of service and dependence upon God. We wait upon God and expect the difficulties to disappear. Sometimes it is exactly the opposite, they multiply. The load is added to instead of being diminished—the burden grows heavier. We wait and wait, expecting God to appear on our behalf. But He tarries, and the case seems to grow more hopeless—the clouds thicken and darken. We are called upon to slay dragon after dragon. Only in the strength of God can it be done. And we have to remember that His strength is always available, it is never impaired. He does not leave us to ourselves. It is just when we are ready to give up He appears. Some time ago a man was in deep distress. Owing to misfortune and ill-health his circumstances had become reduced. He struggled on. He appealed for help, but there seemed no response. At last he gave up and put an end to his life. Had he waited one day, or even a few hours longer, this sad calamity would have been averted. A letter containing help

was on its way and the next post brought it. It was too late. He had failed at the last dragon.

If we have some special work to do in life, there are often dragons ready to hinder. Unexpected difficulties sometimes arise, or even opposition is encountered, or results disappoint us. We do not give up at first, but we are tempted to do so before the end. We read once of a man who secured a property reputed to contain valuable gold deposits. He worked the mine and expended a lot of money but with no result. At last he relinquished the attempt and sold the plot to someone else. It turned out that he had arrived within a few feet of the gold. He had given up too soon. His successor reaped a fortune.

Paul had to meet the dragons. They were always appearing to stop up his path and in various forms. There was the opposition of his fellow-countrymen—the defection of his own converts—the toilsome and perilous journeys that had to be undertaken (they did not run express trains in those days, well lighted and heated, the Apostle had to depend upon his own feet, when he was not in some rickety ship)—while again and again his life was attempted. And after all these dragons were overcome, there yet remained another—the then Emperor of Rome: but he says, “I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” “The Lord stood with me and strengthened me.” It is as we realise this that the dragons can be overcome.

A Meditation on Psalm XLV.

“The things which I have made touching the King.”

PSALM XLV.

Psalm xlv. was written as the fruit of meditation. The inspiration of the Spirit of God is there, beyond all doubt, as in every other portion of Holy Scripture; but on its human side we owe this precious Psalm to the writer's ecstatic meditation upon the coming King. Hence the words: “I speak of the things *which I have made* touching the King.” While he was musing the fire burned, and his tongue became the pen of a ready writer. Happy man!

There is an important principle in this. In all ages God appreciates that which flows fresh and warm from His peoples' hearts. Stereotyped utterances, however Scriptural and beautiful, are poor substitutes for this. All printed liturgies are necessarily faulty here. However excellent the words of a collect may be, they are but the words of one long since gone to his rest, and may not express what living men feel at the moment. But while we may eschew printed liturgies altogether, under the con-

viction that they are out of place in a dispensation characterised by the abiding presence of the Spirit of God, it is only too easy to become stereotyped in another way. The Assembly of the living God being God's house, the gathered company should leave room for Him who dwells therein to operate upon renewed hearts, as the hands of a skilful musician play upon an instrument, producing harmony therefrom. When the divine Spirit really does this, heavenly music ascends to the ear and the heart of God. But this is only possible when those present are in real enjoyment of God's things as the fruit of spiritual meditation.

Along this line there is frequently deplorable weakness. Meditation is at a low ebb in this day of rush and bustle. How else can we explain the cut and dried utterances which so often fall upon our ears? Language borrowed from magazines and hymns, and from those to whose ministry we listen. Language so similar on each occasion that we almost know what a brother will say in prayer when he opens his lips. Nothing is easier than to catch up the phraseology of others, and to use it without real exercise of heart in the presence of both God and man. In such cases, can the speakers truly say: "I speak of the things *which I have made* touching the King?"

Oh, for divine originality! Whether the language be eloquent and grammatical, or neither, let it be *ourselves* who speak. But this can be only as we give ourselves to the divine exercise of meditation. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things."—(Matt. xii. 34-35.) The Lord help us to bring full baskets whenever we come before Him.—(Deu. xxvi.)

W. W. FEREDAY.

"If we are God's children our great desire should be to glorify Him. And He, whose wisdom cannot err, knows the way in which He will be most glorified *in us*, and *by us*, and surely we ought to rejoice in the way which He appoints, and desire grace to *glorify Him in that way*, under *whatever* circumstances He is *pleased* to appoint." May the joy of the Lord be our strength, and may we realise more and more the blessedness of having *God for our "Portion."*

Grain from Joseph's Granary.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Author of God's Gospel in War-Time.

SECOND SACKFUL.

A GERMAN OFFICER'S BIBLE.—An evangelist tells of a wounded soldier who showed him a small New Testament given him by a German officer whom he had himself bayoneted, and who with his dying words bade him take it, keep it, and read it. "I would not part with it at any price," he said, "for he told me it was the message of life." How sad, and yet how beautiful! Is it not thus the Saviour, whom my sins have pierced, offers me pardon and life: not "a message of life," but life itself, and shall I not value the gift?

"The soldier as he pierced Thee,
Proved man's hatred, Lord to Thee:
While in the blood that stained that spear,
Love, only love, I see."



NOT TOO OLD TO FIGHT AT 55.—From the Law Courts we gathered the following:—Counsel mentioned, in the King's Bench, with an air of incredulity, that he was told that a man of 55 had been able to enlist. Mr Justice Avory:—"Why not? Plenty of men of 55 are fit to fight." Is there not a tendency among experienced saints to think they are too old for the fighting line of Christian warfare? Such an one as Paul the aged (Phile. 9) is not past work, for the last we hear of him is, "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts xxviii., 30-31).



AIRMAN SINKS SUBMARINE.—As we read this bit of news we said, "One from above overcomes one from below." It was so with our God. He came from above, and he overcame Satan, who came from below. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all

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cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel " (Gen. iii., 14-15.) " Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil : and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage " (Heb. ii., 14-15.)



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE.—We read, " As a safeguard against their being run down whilst on traffic duty at night, Brixton policemen are carrying their bullseye lanterns with red lights on their back." Capital plan ! Shining Christians always find safety in their own light. Dark-lantern believers are sure to suffer from a collision. So as the darkness of the days increases, shine the brighter. " Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light " (Eph. v., 8—see also Matt. v., 16.)

Jesus bids us shine with a clear pure light,
Like a little candle burning in the night ;
In this world of darkness we must shine—
You in your small corner, and I in mine.

" **INSTANT** in season, out of season " (2 Tim. iv., 2.)

" **HOLDING** forth the word of life " (Phil. ii., 16.)



Twelve Points in which Believers are Partakers.

" By grace a partaker." I. Cor. x. 30.

" Partakers of the Holy Ghost." Heb. vi. 4.

" Partakers of Christ." Heb. iii. 16.

" Partakers of Christ's suffering." I. Peter iv. 13.

" Partakers of His promise." Eph. iii. 6.

" Partakers of the divine nature." II. Peter i. 4.

" Partakers of that one bread." I. Cor. x. 17.

" Partakers of spiritual things." Rom. xv. 27.

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"Partakers of His holiness." Heb. xii. 10.

"Partakers of the heavenly calling." Heb. iii. 1.

"Partakers of the inheritance." Col. i. 10.

"Partakers of the glory." I. Peter v. 1.

**Where to Find Fulness.**

"The fulness . . . of the Gospel" Rom. xv. 29.

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

"In Him, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9

"Of His fulness have all we received." John i. 16.

"In Him ye are made full." Col. ii. 10, R.V.

"He hath filled the hungry." Luke i. 53.

"Filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 19.

NEW SHOES.—We were shown a picture of some Brittany children, who had been used to wearing the old customary shoes, wooden sabot; but someone had treated them to pairs of modern boots, and the old things were cast behind them, while with delight they were declaring they would never wear them any more. It illustrated the experience of many a new-born soul, "For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (I. Peter iv. 3, 4.)

WHERE SOULS ARE SAFE.—A bird is not always safe, even in the nest; a rabbit is not always safe in its burrow; a plant is not perfectly safe, even in a conservatory; a sheep is not sure of security, even when the shepherd is nigh; a parent cannot insure safety even to a loved child; nor a fond husband insure safety to a cherished wife; but our Lord says to us—1 Sam. xxii., 23, "With Me thou shalt be in safe guard"; Ps. xxix., 25, "Whoso trusteth in the Lord shall be safe"; Prov. xviii., 10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe"; Phil. iv., 7, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep (garrison) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Those who are in Christ are safe, even in war time.

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Vol. VIII—No 5

MAY 1916

Price 1d

1874-1914.

A Remarkable Forecast.

[What follows is from the pen of the late W. Kelly and was published in the year 1874. It is reproduced from the author's work on the Minor Prophets—the particular subject being Joel. Read in relation to all that this war has revealed it will be found that the writer, forty years before it broke out, clearly discerned the trend of German philosophy, while the German writer from whom he quotes was simply writing history beforehand. Long as these extracts are, we think our readers will thank us for giving them the opportunity of becoming acquainted with so startling and accurate a forecast.]

“In this passage I do not think that the repeated call to ‘awake’ has any reference to actual resurrection, which is incompatible with a national or time condition for this world. Jehovah pursues the style of His challenge, and warns the nations that they will need all their watchfulness as well as every resource. He invites them to that valley of Jehosaphat where the quick are destined to meet a never-to-be-forgotten judgment. The ‘valley of Jehoshaphat’ is a literal place in the land of Israel; and this again disproves the notion of a resurrection scene which is set forth by the solemnities of the great white throne, not by figures taken from the sickle or wine-vat, which really belong exclusively to the Son of Man's dealing with nations. In quite another way the harvest is used for the ingathering of the wheat into the heavenly granary and the subsequent burning of the tares. In this place shall the gathered Gentiles find their graves. There is not a single object on which man prides himself which will not come into the dust of death. The favour which the world now affects toward the Jew will turn into hatred before its day is over. False appearances and fair glosses will then fade and leave man in the naked deformity of sin for God to judge.”

“It is well-known that some far-seeing philosophers of the day have come to very grave conclusions on other grounds than scripture can give to those who believe it. Everyone acquainted with the men of this age knows that the author of the latter-day pamphlets is no believer, but a man of the world; nevertheless none, except the foolish, can doubt that he is a person of bold, if not profound, thought in his own peculiar way and style. But he, too, issues the latter-day pamphlets, no less than such as believe the prophetic word. He has got a strong sense that things cannot go on as now; that there will shortly be a crisis and complete rupture of all existing institutions, and that influences powerfully at work now are destined to bring about that end. And what then? He knows nothing; nor can any, save so far as he believes the word of God.”

“I was reading only a few days ago the words of a late philosophic poet and man of letters in general, whom I need not name, a daring personage who once troubled the German government so much that he was obliged to leave the country, and spend not a little of his life in Paris. This man wrote freely enough there of course, and gave his opinion that the French Revolution was only child's play compared with what is coming. Frenchmen he thought incapable of deep feelings. They do little more than mock at things sacred or political, all their feelings being of a light order which disposes them to fight by jokes and persiflage; but as for Germans their love and hate are serious, their very thoughts having not only wings but hands. When the Germans have their revolution it will be grave for all mankind—coldly calm in conception, passionate in execution. They struggle not for the human rights of nations, but for the divine rights of humanity! They think that men owe to matter great expiatory sacrifices, that the old offences against her may be pardoned. For Christianity, incapable of destroying has on every occasion outraged her; discountenanced the noblest enjoyments; reduced the senses to hypocrisy; and one heard everywhere of nothing but sins! Christianity, therefore, they are determined to destroy. The sentiment of his own divinity will excite man to erect himself, and it is from that moment that true greatness and true heroism will appear to glorify this earth.”

“Such are the audacious sentiments of modern Pantheism.

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Can any strides bring us closer to Antichrist? Thus the only God is man, who ought to live, and must live according to the laws of his nature! Away with morality! 'We desire to found a democracy of terrestrial gods, all equals in happiness and in holiness. You (French revolutionists) ask simple raiment, austere manners, cheap pleasures; we, on the contrary, wish for nectar and ambrosia, mantles of purple, the voluptuousness of the best wines, the dancing of nymphs, music, and comedies.' 'Away with judgment! We destroy not priests only, but the religion that restrains and warns, the faith of Him who suffered on the Cross! We shall enjoy to our heart's content, when our day comes, to call the world and religion to a reckoning for the chains they have put so long on the human race.' Such is the general strain of his work on Germany."

"It is awful to think how truly the yearnings of this Hegelian spirit coalesce with the picture prophecy furnishes of the apostacy and man of sin. I believe that amidst such revolutionary dreams sounds a witness deep from the heart of one who knows what is working in the infidel men of progress, and who was more than usually frank in uttering their hopes and desires, as being one of them. He was, no doubt, an outspoken person, a little before the time; and consequently he suffered the penalty; nevertheless he expresses and lets us hear what men wish. Lawlessness will be the predominant sign of the change which is coming—the rejection of all restraint. 'The philosophy of Germany is an important affair which concerns the whole human race; and our great grandchildren alone will be in a position to decide whether we should have praise or blame for having worked out our philosophy in the first place—our revolution in the second. I think the order we have adopted was worthy of a methodical people. Heads which philosophy has employed in meditation might have been mowed down at pleasure by revolution; but philosophy could have made no use of heads thus dealt with by revolution.'"

'But nevertheless, my dear countrymen, be in no distress; the German revolution will neither be the more gay nor the more mild that it was preceded by the Critik of Kant, the transcendental Idealism of Fichte, and the Philosophy of Nature. These doctrines have developed revolutionary forces which now

only await the moment to explode and fill the world with terror and admiration. Then will appear the Kantists, who will hear no more of reverence in the world of deeds than in the world of ideas, and who will turn up without pity, with axe and sword, the soil of our European life in order to extirpate the last roots of the past. On the same scene will come the Fichteans, whose fanaticism of will can be mastered neither by fear nor by interest, for they live in spirit and despise matter. But the most fearful of all will be the philosophers of Nature when they take an active part in a German revolution, and identify themselves in the work of destruction; for if the hand of the Kantist strikes firmly and surely, because his heart is inaccessible to any traditional respect; if the Fichtean despises all dangers, because they have for him no real existence, the philosopher of Nature will be terrible indeed when he places himself in communication with the original power of the earth, conjures up the hidden resources of tradition, evokes the whole force of the antique German Pantheism, and reawakens the ardour of battle which the old Germans displayed—an ardour which had not for its object destruction nor even victory, but merely the pleasure of the combat itself. Christianity has softened to a certain extent that brutal rage of battle, but it has not been able to extinguish it; and soon as the Cross, the restraining talisman, is broken, you shall see it let loose again all the ferocity and frenzied exaltation of the Berserkers, sung by the poets of the north. The old warlike divinities will rouse themselves from their fabulous tombs, and wipe the dust of ages from their eyelids; Thor will be stirring again with his gigantic hammer, and woe to the cathedrals! There will be performed a drama, compared to which the French Revolution was but an innocent idyll. The nations will group themselves around Germany as on the ascending benches of an amphitheatre, and great and terrible are the games which await their eyes.”

“Little did the German cited think that he was unconsciously anticipating the anti-Christian state of Christendom. Men will appear to succeed, but the effect of the success will be to bring the Lord forth to consume with the breath of His mouth, and to destroy the lawless one with the shining forth of His appearing. He knows well that the bulwarks of society will

prove a mere house of cards, and that the will of man will not long bear the feeble resistance. Men are determined to have their way, and they will to their own perdition, to which consummation the wits and thinkers, the doctrinaires of this day, are pushing them on. The upper classes are listening largely, and will yet more, as the lower classes have been led away long ago. They will have their suited leader, who will at length, make war with the Lamb; but the Lamb shall overcome; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings."

"Doubtless, if the word of God did not warn us plainly of such a future, I should not attach the smallest importance to any man's prognostications, but rather consider so awful an issue the ravings of a fanatic. But the believer who searches the word of God is enabled to say beforehand what God has said and written there, and he sees the principles at work in these so-called Christian lands. The word of God springing from the highest source (namely, His own perfect knowledge of what is coming) is equally worthy of trust, whether He speak to us of things present, past or future."

"In that day, then, it is a question not so much of the heavens as of the earth. Jehovah intends to take the earth under his care. 'Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.' Jehovah will appear, and demolish first the western powers, with their religious head in Jerusalem. For we know from Daniel and the Revelation of John that the Roman Empire will be established again. I do not understand the Pope by this, but the imperial power. The Italians are certainly rather tired of the Papacy. But the old Roman Empire will be resuscitated once more. It will re-appear, repeat its old sins in new forms, and be judged for what it did from the beginning to the end. The empire of Rome was that which had the responsibility of the crucifixion of the Son of God, and God has not forgotten this, but means to judge them for it. Thus the Latin Empire revived will be the western political power, which utterly rejects Christianity as a fable. The religious power, or what is now Christendom, amalgamating

with renegade Judaism, will be apostate too. Both will make the apostacy complete. It is very evident that the beast will have his seat at Rome; and the false prophet at Jerusalem. The religious or second beast will be where Christ was crucified, and there the beast or imperial civil power with its supporters will find themselves before the Lord appear. I have no doubt that for this, things are preparing, and that the stripping of his temporal dominion from the Pope and giving Rome to Italy are steps on the way to the restored Roman Empire, as well as to a new form of religious chief in the Holy Land."

"Good Pleasure."

Substance of an Address to Missionaries leaving for the Foreign Field.—*Concluded.*

This brings us to consider—

CONTENTMENT. II. Cor. xii. 10—"I take *pleasure* (am well pleased) in weaknesses, insults, necessities, persecutions, straits. . . ."—(New trans.) A list of clouds verily, and an ominously dark sky, but the "blue patch" is immediately seen, revealing the reason of his good pleasure. It was "for Christ." This meant power through weakness, grace under insults, supply for necessities, courage in face of persecution, and confidence in straits. This marvellous pupil in the school of Christ could say "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

CONVERTING POWER. I. Cor. i. 21—"It pleased (well pleased) God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save. . . ." The messenger is provided with the message, "the preaching of the Cross"—foolishness to the world—and enlightened as to the method used of God in saving, added to which the power is outside of himself, so that as a channel only his business is to convey the blessing just where God wills to use it, and not to be over-anxious if things are not quite what he expected in regard to effect. It was indeed God's good pleasure to use the weak things, that the power and the glory might be His own. No room for the flesh at all. In other words, leave results with God, and be neither unduly elated at success, nor depressed under seeming failure, either may be needful in His purposes.

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CONSTRAINING LOVE. I. Thess. ii. 8—“*So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing (well pleased) to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls; because ye were dear unto us. . . .*” What a revelation of the spirit of Christ in the chief of sinners saved by grace. Could any language more fully express the boundless joy of the soul-winner? How the sower exults over the harvest, and the worker glories in the result of his toil. What are the trials compared with the triumph, or what matters self when the saints are in question, bearing in mind that grand review “in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming.” Does this not reveal the motive power that calls the worker back again, and yet again, to those so-called unattractive fields of toil and self-negation. A power stronger than home-ties, an unfathomable love that will not be denied. Having had them in the “nursery” (v. 7) their growth in grace is Paul’s chief concern. They are indeed his glory and crown. Not the gospel only, but ourselves! How truly is the constraining love of Christ seen in activity in that great missionary heart. “Because ye were dear to us, we were well pleased.”

COMFORT. I. Thess. iii. 1—“ . . . We thought it good (were well pleased) to be left at Athens alone . . . and send Timothy our brother . . . to comfort and establish you . . .” *Alone!* Consider all that Timothy was to him as a son to a father, companionship, love, help, encouragement, then think what his absence would mean to this much-tried servant. Paul not only counted the cost, but counted it all joy to be alone for the sake of those trophies of grace at Thessalonica. In the enthusiasm of a missionary “send-off,” little, if any, thought seems to be given to those parents and others who are being left at home. To whom, amid the farewells, handshakes, and good wishes, the awful blank of being alone means even more than the wrench to those “going out.” Yet not a word, look, or action of any kind that would make it harder for the one the Lord “hath need of” to go. No. Mightier conflicts, greater heroism, deeper love, nobler sacrifice is called for on the part of those fathers and mothers in “Israel,” the “Abrahams” who bind their all to the altar, or the “Hannahs” who return God’s gift again to Him, for ever. But in this, as in the keeping of

His commandments, is there not "great reward." Surely the Day will declare it. Ought we not then in our prayers, ever to remember these dear saints, to whom grace is given to say "we thought it good to be alone . . ." as well as those at the battlefront of heathen darkness.

CONTRIBUTIONS. Rom. xv. 26—"It hath *pleased* them . . . to make a certain contribution. . . ." An important part indeed in the Lord's work, not always one fears entered upon in the spirit of those at Macedonia and Achaia, who were pleased (well-pleased.) Certainly, in the apostle's day, it seemed as though he realised the necessity of impressing the fact of their joy, for he emphasizes it by reiterating what must have appeared strange in that selfish age: "*It hath pleased them verily.*" There was no doubt about it. What may we not be missing, in losing the opportunity of cultivating this necessary office, as stewards of the Lord. It is not merely a question of how much or how little we can contribute, but how much pleasure (well-pleased) we derive in so doing. This will be in measure as we appreciate or apprehend Christ. (See Deut. xv.) The lamb, ram, bullock and increasing measure of other offerings to correspond.

May this wonderful word "Eudokew" prove effectual in unlocking the treasure chests of God's dear people, for depend upon it, where your heart is the treasure will soon follow. The trend of the treasure is a sure index to the state of the soul. Here, as in Phil. iv. 17, and II. Cor. viii., the spirit of the true missionary is seen, not so much in the benefit derived personally, as in the wonderful fruit that would abound to the account of the givers, and consequently to the glory of the Lord. See that ye come not short in this grace also.

We have been contemplating one who belonged to Christ, noticing each step of a career marked out by God definitely for missionary work. It began with "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," and closed with "I have finished my course," and between the two extremes a life of dependence and devotion to the One who ordered that course. Success may vary, suffering be experienced, saints may fail of their responsibility and even forsake him, but his confidence does not waver, his joy in the saints still abounds, and his trials only give him occasion to glory in the Lord.

J. H.

The Comforter.

By J. H. LOWE.

If ye love Me, keep My Commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth.

John xiv., 15-17.

Three things are stated respecting the Holy Ghost in John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7:—

The Comforter is the Holy Ghost, the Great Teacher, for He shall teach you all things.

The Comforter is the Spirit of Truth Who proceedeth from the Father, and testifies of Christ.

His Presence is so necessary, that it is expedient for us that the Lord Himself should depart, so that the Comforter may come to us.

Among the many titles of the Holy Spirit this is one of the sweetest, and is used just the four times of Him, mentioned above.

Jesus Christ the RIGHTEOUS has the same title, once mentioned, in I. John ii. 1. There it is translated advocate, but it is the same name, Comforter. Above, where our Lord first mentions the Spirit by this name, He implies that Himself is one comforter, and the Holy Spirit is another. In the original language of the New Testament there are words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and which we should compare (I. Cor. ii. 13). The name Comforter; and the comfort He brings; and His act of comforting, are words closely related. He comforts those in trial with the comfort of God, and therefore is named the COMFORTER. These words in the English Bible exactly correspond with the three original words. Sometimes we read consolation instead of comfort, but it means the same. (II. Cor. i. 3-4.)

In these verses God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is called the Father of Mercies, and THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT; (as also in Romans 15, 5, He is called the God of CONSOLATION;) and see how God's act in comforting, and the comfort He gives, are interwoven; how comfort flows from the very heart of God, the God of ALL Comfort, into hearts in

trouble, with the purpose that the same Divine comfort may overflow into other tried hearts.—(II. Cor. i. 3-7.)

The verb "to comfort" is so used 24 times in the New Testament, as in the few following examples:—

The God of ALL Comfort records the scene in which He rejoices with His people, as "they brought the young man alive and were not a little comforted."—(Acts xx. 12).

"God that comforteth—comforted us—therefore we were comforted, in your comfort."—(II. Cor. vii. 6, 7, and 13).

That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love.—(Col. ii. 2.)

Comfort one another with these words.—(I. Thess. iv. 18.)

Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another.—(I. Thess. v. 11.)

Now we will find some verses where the noun "Comfort" is found:—

Simeon was waiting for the CONSOLATION of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him,—He sees the person of the Consolation Himself, the Salvation of God, in the child Jesus.—(Luke ii. 25).

I am filled with Comfort—exceeding joyful—in tribulation—(II. Cor. vii. 4).

Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, Who hath loved us and, hath given us everlasting Consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts—(II. Thess. ii. 16, 17).

Now it is very remarkable that the original word that means Consolation, also means EXHORTATION. Here are some examples of this use of the same word:—

Titus—accepted the exhortation—and went—as desired.—(II. Cor. viii. 17).

Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto—children—despise not,—nor faint.—(Heb. xii. 5.)

Suffer the word of exhortation.—(Heb. xiii. 22).

Likewise the verb "to comfort" also means "to exhort" as in the following verses:—

(Barnabas) exhorted them all that they would cleave unto the Lord.—(Acts xi. 23).

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Exhorting them to continue in the faith.—(Acts xiv. 22).

Exhorting one another; not to forsake assembling together.—(Heb. x. 25).

Elders are exhorted to feed the flock of God.—(I. Peter v. 1, 2).

“Exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith.”—(Jude 3.)

Read carefully, and you will see all these are plain words of exhortation, and that in every case an obligation is imposed; a claim is made, calling for some response from us. Exhortation always does this. Consolation expresses no claim, but only a gracious provision to meet us in need, anxiety, or distress. Thus we find these words have a double meaning; moreover two meanings widely different; for Consolation comes from God to us; Exhortation always asks something from us, for God.

And these are words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Though so strangely dissimilar, and yet so closely combined, we shall find both meanings meet us together, and if the exhortation presses hard on our conscience, a consolation will come with it, and relieve our heart. The loving comfort warms the heart with responsive love and gratitude, which delights to fulfil the exhortation. Every exhortation comes from the loving Saviour and Father, always seeking the very best for us. If we so assured our hearts, the very fact of an exhortation given, would be a consolation, for it says I am His child.

The exhortation speaketh unto us as unto children, “My son,” despise not thou—nor faint—for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. The God of all Comfort asks nothing of us, but what the Holy Ghost teacheth, and He is the COMFORTER.—(Heb. xii. 5).

The name, the Comforter, therefore stands conjoined to the other two words expressing the COMFORT He gives, and His act of COMFORTING, and is the source of them both.

The Comforter is also the TEACHER, and where His comfort enters, so does His exhortation. When Barnabas exhorted the converts at Antioch, he was full of the Holy Ghost, so that he spoke the very words of the Comforter, from the Lord Jesus.

If when an exhortation comes to us, we should fail of a true response to His gracious teaching, we have yet another Comforter, One Who is with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

If ye love Me, keep my commandments.—(John xiv. 15.)

Most loving, tender, gracious exhortation. How much have we proved our love to Him? How much do we now? How shall we answer Him when He asks as before, "Lovest thou Me"?

Can we now connect His next word, "AND I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever?" If we take to heart His words in verse 15, we cannot bear their weight without the answer to His prayer in verse 16.

We need not disparage our love to Him, if it is because He first loved us. He wants it; He wants it to continue as at the first; and proved by the first works; and there is no such love unless it be the fruit of the Spirit,—(Gal. v. 22).

But how many are His commandments? What are they? How am I to keep them? Answer, He shall teach you all things.—(John xiv. 16).

Here a charge has to be kept. And the word is that good thing, kept by the Holy Ghost, Who dwelleth in us. Timothy must keep it, without any power of his own; solely by the power of the Spirit.—(II. Tim. i. 14.)

By no other means, or power, shall we keep His commandments. By His presence in us, and His power in us, if we will, we can. And He abides in us in order to work in us both to will, and to do of His good pleasure.—(Phil. ii. 13).

The Lord continues, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you" (John xiv. 18). The word here is "Orphans." The expression reveals to us the heart of God. An orphan is bereft of its parents; speaking of comforting a child.

The Spirit says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." So our blessed Lord says, when going away, I will not leave you bereft, as an orphan whose mother is gone, and has no comforter left: Not so; *I will come to you.* "And ye shall be comforted."—(Isa. lxvi. 13.)

Let us take in this word, "I will come to you." He was going to depart (xvi. 7.) And the Comforter was coming, yet He says, referring to the coming of the Comforter, "I will come to you." In bodily human form, the Lord Jesus left His people and went

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to His Father; when the Comforter came Christ came, in His Spirit presence, with Him; fulfilling His word I will come to you. When on earth before, He dwelt with or among His disciples; now with the Comforter He dwells in His saints; *I in you*. Of the Comforter He says (He) shall be in you (xiv. 17.) Again He says (verse 20) at that day ye shall know that I am in you. He is closer to us now, than when on earth with His disciples.

In the letters to the churches in Asia, (Rev. ii. and iii.) each address begins as the word of the Son of God, and ends, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Hence what the Lord says, the Spirit says; Two Persons speak as One; with One voice; so closely are both together.

Thus we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Comforter speak to us as One; come to us as One; dwell in us as One. And that the incoming Comforter brings with Him, into the heart of the child of God, the Lord Jesus Himself; not His body, but His Spirit.

"Abide in Me, and I in you."—(John xv. 4.) Here is another exhortation, the most searching; the deep reaching secret of fruitfulness for the glory of the Father. What does it mean? How are we to respond to it?

The Comforter will teach you what it means.—(John xiv. 26.)

Ye have received Him; He teaches all things. As HE hath taught you ye shall abide in Him.—(I. John ii. 27).

"And now little children ABIDE IN HIM; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Surely we have proved how liable we are to forget our Lord's Word just when we should be doing what He has said; the Comforter has come to bring to remembrance, and we did not give heed to Him. We shall have no confidence unless we remember that "Thou Lord hast wrought all our works in us."—(Isa. xxvi. 12.) "Working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever."—(Heb. xiii. 21).

How essential then to trust the Comforter, and not to grieve Him whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.—(Eph. iv. 30.)

As the Comforter flows forth from the Father, through the Christ, into the heart of the child of God, He sheds abroad

therein the love of God.—(Rom. v. 5.) He makes it know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.—(Eph. iii. 19.) This awakens within a responsive love—(I. John iv. 19)—that wants to please Him. The Comforter brings in the comfort of the God of all Comfort, and becomes the Spring within of true desire to keep His word, and the power to do His will. Wherefore “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”

“If ye love ME keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you ANOTHER COMFORTER.”

The King's Highway.

“Fear not thou for I am with thee.”

The sunny day is overcast,
The threatening clouds are gathering fast,
And dark and drear
Our way (but now all light and bloom)
Lies shrowded in the deepening gloom
Of care and fear.

Yet, shall we wonder or complain
To tread the road mid blinding rain,
And gusty breath
Of tempest? He who leads the way
Left far behind the heavenly Day,
And passed—to death.

No death for us; though Satan's wrath
Sweeps lurid terrors o'er the path.
Our gracious Lord
Will safely guide our trembling feet,
And cheer the night with promise sweet,
And tender word.

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The darkness hideth nought from Him,
 Then let the glad triumphant hymn
 Of faith arise,
 And ring along the weary track
 Till other hearts shall echo back
 Faith's melodies.

Well may we sing with Christ to walk,
 Well may we joy with Him to talk ;
 Though darkness veils
 The Face of Light we long to see ;
 The Voice of Love victoriously
 O'er fear prevails.

Across the storm we hear His call
 "Come, follow Me, forsaking all:"
 Yea Lord, we come
 Singing, for Thou dost lead the way
 To golden realms of cloudless day,
 The songs of Home.

Hands reaching out to clasp Thy own,
 Feet following Thine towards the Throne,
 Eyes raised to catch
 The first upleaping shaft of dawn—
 Ere rose and gold proclaim the morn
 We wake to watch.

To watch with Thee, whose piercéd feet
 Ne'er rested till the Mercy-Seat
 Was reached with blood,—
 Thy own ; now led by Thee we tread
 The path of life amid the dead,
 Straight up to God.

E. STACY-WATSON.

"Oh for grace that Christ in all things may be magnified
 in my body."

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

VI.—THE POT OF OIL.

In 2 Kings iii. we have Elisha ministering to the necessities of Kings; in chap. iv., 1-7, he ministers to a widow and her sons, for there is room in the divine compassions for both the exalted and the lowly. Remarkably, both Elijah and Elisha had dealings with a widow, and in each case a little oil in a vessel constituted an important item in their worldly possessions.

“Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear Jehovah: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondsmen.”—(2 Kin. iv. 1.) A pitiful story is here—a story suggestive of the meditations which drove Asaph to the very verge of infidelity.—(Psalm lxxiii.) That the godly should suffer while the ungodly prosper, has frequently been a sore puzzle to tried hearts. In the present case, the widow laid emphasis upon the fact that her husband feared Jehovah, yet he had been snatched from her by death, with no remainder but debts, slavery for her children being the only possible result, so far as the eye could see. Unbelief is apt to cry in such circumstances, “All these things are against me” (Gen. xlii. 36); faith quietly says, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to purpose.”—(Rom. viii. 28.)

The greater the emergency, the greater the opportunity for God to show Himself on behalf of his people. When the men of Israel magnified the prowess of the nations of Canaan, Joshua and Caleb—true men of faith—said, “They are bread for us . . . Jehovah is with us; fear them not.”—(Num. xiv. 9.) Bread indeed! for every difficulty surmounted by faith in God yields strength and nourishment to the soul. Our wonder-working God is able to make the eater yield meat, and the strong one

sweetness.—(Judges xiv. 14.) It is a great reality to have to do with God. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."—(Heb. xi. 6.)

The widow of our chapter proved the truth of this most blessedly. Let us note that in her trouble she sought the aid of "the man of God." This is a title more frequently applied to Elisha than to any other person named in Holy Scripture. Seventy times we read of "the man of God" in the Old Testament, twenty-two of the passages referring to Elisha. What are we to understand by the title? Is it the equivalent of "saint," and therefore applicable to every man born of the Spirit? The Spirit's sparing use of the term forbids the thought. It is first applied to Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 1. This gives us the key to its meaning. Moses was one who cut himself entirely adrift from the world, renouncing absolutely all its honours and advantages in order that he might be wholly for God. Only persons of this stamp may rightly be regarded as men of God. In the midst of general ruin and departure, the man of God is God's emergency instrument. It is open to us all to be in this blessed position, if so our hearts desire. The Church in these days needs men of God.

But what had Elisha for the distressed widow? Nothing, as far as his own resources were concerned, and yet he more than met her need. He could have said with the apostle, "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."—(2 Cor. vi. 10.)

And what have we wherewith to meet the need of souls? The amount contained in our pockets is a small matter; the question is, what have we in our hearts? Blessed be God, we have that enshrined there which is capable of meeting every form of human necessity. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—(2 Cor. iv. 6.) Our hearts have thus been illuminated by the knowledge of God, and from us that knowledge should radiate to others. Herein lies an immense opportunity for spiritual usefulness in a dreary world.

But Elisha asked the woman, "What hast thou in the house?" She replied, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." But there were great potentialities in the pot of oil, though the widow knew it not. Whatever else we lack, every Christian has his pot of oil. In other words, every Christian has the power of the Holy Spirit within him. Let us use it in faith, and all our difficulties become as nothing. So the widow must beg empty vessels of her neighbours—not a few. "And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full."

Picture the scene in that humble house. What had the widow to look upon that day? Just a small vessel of oil, a number of empty receptacles, and two poor orphan lads earmarked for slavery. This was what the eye saw; but there was something else that no natural sight could behold—GOD. In Matt. vi. 1-18 we are taught that the Father's eye is upon us, and in verses 19-34 that our eye should, in consequence, be solely upon Him. In this is rest and peace.

Now observe a remarkable thing. The oil flowed while a vessel remained to take it. It was only when the son said "there is not a vessel more" that the oil stayed. What a lesson is here! The blessing is limited by man only. In chapter iii., the Kings obtained water according to the depth of the ditches that were prepared. In chapter xiii. 18, Joash, King of Israel, missed the opportunity of his life, when in the presence of the dying prophet, and with full knowledge that the actions of that day were significant, he smote upon the ground thrice only. This meant three victories over his enemies, instead of total annihilation. Abraham in Gen. xviii., when making intercession for the guilty cities of the plain, paused at ten persons, though God had given no indication of weariness in listening to His servant's voice. Alas! alas! It is always man who limits the blessing. "Oft we credit not, that God e'er *gives as God.*"

But the widow's need was now met, so the prophet bade her "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." Brethren, we have a debt to discharge, which only the power of the Spirit can enable us to discharge.

Paul felt this deeply in Rom. i. 14: "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." How he paid the debt is described in Rom. xv. 19: "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." How far have we entered into the spirit of the devoted Apostle, as expressed in these words? The cold principle of formal ministerialism has doubtless damaged the zeal of many a child of God. What is needed is to get our souls so divinely full of the things that we profess to believe that our lips must speak. Like Peter and John when they said to the Jewish council, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."—(Acts iv. 20.) Like Paul again, when he exclaimed in II. Cor. iv. 13, "We believe, and therefore speak." Men who are profoundly convinced of the truth of the Christian verities, and who are persuaded of men's deep need of the knowledge of them, will surely seek to "pay their debt." And for this the power of the Spirit is divinely sufficient.

But Elisha added: "Live thou and thy children of the rest." Testimony to others, however important, is not everything. There is a life to be lived, with all its hard facts, and varied circumstances. For this none of us possesses the smallest power in ourselves. But the power of the spirit of God is our competency. It enables us to worship, suffer, and bear fruit at all seasons. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"—(Gal. v. 16.)

(To be continued).

"Meditation on the Word of God is the grand means of our growth in grace; without it, even prayer itself will be an empty service. Meditation on the Word of God nourishes faith, and faith and prayer are the keys which unlock its hidden treasures. We must be prepared for the trial of faith in such a mighty business as reading the Word of God, for if the Lord did not try our faith in reading His Word, we should soon 'sacrifice to our own net, and burn incense to our own drag.'"

The Observatory.

The Y. M. C. A.—It is distressing to think of the *drift* of this Association. An account has been published of a recent interview with the Secretary, Mr A. K. Yapp, in which attention is called to “the curious change that had crept over the spirit of the movement.” The interviewer evidently agrees with the change. The original founders of the movement were deeply and sincerely spiritual, he admits, but “they were fanatics in their interpretation and exposition of ‘the faith once delivered to the saints.’” This is how the General Secretary describes the changes:—“What I feel we are doing is this—we are naturalising religion; we are making it human we do not hesitate to sandwich a religious address between two comic songs. . . . People entirely unconnected with the religious world have come forward to help us in every possible way. For instance, the Variety Artists’ Federation actually gave us a splendid hut.”

Someone writes to a religious weekly saying certain things have been laid to the charge of the Y.M.C.A. which, on investigation, have proved to be unfounded. Granting that this is so, it makes little difference while we are confronted with such a plain confession on the part of the General Secretary, just quoted. If the attempt of the Y.M.C.A. is to naturalise religion and make it human, unfaithfulness is thereby openly declared, and they are taking the shortest cut to spiritual bankruptcy. No wonder they can “sandwich a religious address between two comic songs”! Nothing is easier than to sink to a human level; we had always thought Christianity was designed to lift men to a higher. What is purely human, and all that suits human nature and appeals to its tastes, belongs to a category of its own. For human nature is adrift from God, and unable of itself to comprehend the spiritual; because it is a fallen nature and under sin. What the Y.M.C.A. is attempting is exactly what the Apostle Paul refused to attempt. “My speech and my preaching,” he says, “was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.” And again—“They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” By the time Christianity is naturalised and made palatable to the natural man it will be denuded of its power to bless and of all its meaning. Mr Yapp writes an article in which he quotes almost the

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last words of Sir George Williams addressed to a very large conference of delegates :—" Young men, give your hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ while you are young." And he adds, " Thank God, that has always been the dominant note of the Movement. Our aim has ever been and must ever be, not merely to please men or interest them, but to win them for the Saviour." So far, so good. But Mr Yapp's two statements do not agree. Either he does not understand the meaning of his own words, or he is attempting two lines of policy utterly at variance. He will never succeed in both, any more than he can make oil and water mix. And there is abundant evidence that he is not succeeding. " The admixture of spiritual with worldly things is distressing," writes one of his own helpers, " and the dishonour brought to the Lord is great. The workers are often afraid to give the first place to the spiritual side, lest the men should be driven away. But did the Y.M.C.A. leaders really know the men's thoughts about their worldly methods, they would be surprised to find that they appreciate the ' out and out ' Christian, and the faithful preaching of the Gospel far more than the ' religious address and comic-song sandwich.' " The fact is, nothing is so detestable, so nauseous, and so useless as the attempt to harness the world and nature to the work of the Lord. It results in a mongrel production which the world, even, learns to despise, and good men abominate.

A Sudden Translation.—With reference to the Zeppelin raid of January 31st, when a lady was killed by a bomb while in the act of addressing a meeting in the Midlands, her husband, who is known to us, sends the following particulars :—" Mrs M. had just concluded a twelve-day mission for young women at ——— and was in the very act of giving her final address, and with her Bible in her hand was making a most passionate appeal to the undecided to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Personal Saviour, when a bomb struck her and she was instantly translated to glory; and with her four of the new converts. What an honour did her precious Lord thus confer upon her in translating her from Service to Song, from soul-winning to Glory! For my beloved one there was no death. O no! not death! All was, and is, Victory, through the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Prophets and the War.—Someone has been asking in one of our daily papers :—" Shall we ever be able to forecast the future?" With regard to the present war he says :—" Above all is it astonishing and almost inconceivable that this universal war, the most stupendous

catastrophe that has overwhelmed humanity since the origin of things, should not, while it was approaching, bearing in its womb innumerable woes which were about to affect almost every one of us, have thrown upon us more plainly, from the recesses of those days in which it was making ready, its menacing shadow. We lived and moved without uneasiness beneath the disaster which from year to year, from day to day, from hour to hour, was descending upon the world; and we perceived it only when it touched our heads. True, it was more or less foreseen by our reason; but our reason hardly believed in it; and, besides, I am not for the moment speaking of the inductions of the understanding, which are always uncertain and which are resigned beforehand to the capricious contradictions which they are daily accustomed to receive from facts. But I repeat, beside or above these inductions of our everyday logic, in the less familiar domain of supernatural intuitions, of divination, prediction or prophecy properly so-called, we find that there was practically nothing to warn us of the vast peril. This does not mean that there was any lack of predictions or prophecies collected after the event; these number, it appears, no fewer than eighty-three; but none of them, except the 'Sonrel' prediction, which we shall examine immediately, is worthy of serious discussion."

After referring to undeniable instances where incidents of a purely personal nature have been foretold, he concludes:—"Apart, then, from these strictly personal cases, which for the moment we will agree to set aside, it appears more than ever certain that there is no communication between ourselves and the vast store of events which have not yet occurred, and which nevertheless seem already to exist at some place where they await the hour to advance upon us, or rather the moment when we shall pass before them."

Another writer says:—"It is the fact that in many of the almanacks that contained solemn predictions for each month of the year 1915, there was not so much as a hint as to this stupendous event which overwhelmed Europe at the beginning of August 1914! No doubt the explanation of this is the fact that the predictions for 1915 were drawn up and printed in the earlier part of 1914, and that would be a reasonable explanation in any other sphere of enterprise. But it can hardly be advanced by a prophet, as it is his business not to wait and see, as the rest of us must, but to tell us what we shall see. It is not easy, however, to discourage your prophet. I remember that when the coronation of King Edward VII. was suddenly postponed there were herds of busy people each of whom

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was saying, 'What did I tell you? I always said that though His Majesty would come to the throne he would never be crowned.' As a matter of fact I imagine that not one of them had said anything of the sort, but in this way they gained 'grace and some credit' for a time. But when a little later King Edward VII. was duly crowned with the usual solemnities, these confident people could not be discovered, or if any were encountered they were talking about other matters, and were pestering their fellow-men with their eternal question, "What did I tell you?" about something else. Indeed, it may be said with confidence that the prowess of the modern prophet is shown not so much in predicting events, though he does quite enough in that direction, as in claiming with the utmost assurance after the event that he did predict it, when he did not."

In the face of these statements how remarkable becomes the fact that the Bible is full of prophecies. So much is this a feature of this wonderful book that it must stand or fall by the fulfilment or otherwise of its predictions. Not only have many of these already been proved to be correct, there remain quite a number still to be put to the test. When the Apostle Peter is referring to the sufferings of Christ he makes this remarkable pronouncement:—"But those things which God *before* had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." And then referring to the future and events connected with the second coming of Christ, he adds:—"Which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." God alone can foretell the future; and He has done so in the widest and most important sense. What a position this gives the Bible.

How blessed it is, when our dearest outward enjoyments are gone, to feel that the Lord is our "*Portion*," and that *for ever*. He never fails, but is ever present, ever the same faithful God. He is a "little Sanctuary" to His people in the midst of the wilderness."



"Contentment is indeed a blessing, though it is a hard lesson to learn. It is easier to talk of than to practice, the Apostle's lesson, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.' Only those taught of the Holy Spirit *can* understand and practice it."

Biblical Notes

By WALTER SCOTT.

Reader, face the naked truth:—

The ARK of safety or the DELUGE (Gen. vi.)

The BLOOD of the Lamb or the SWORD of Judgment
(Exod. xii.)

The CROSS or the LAKE OF FIRE (Gal. vi. 14; Rev.
xx. 15.)

In ADAM or in CHRIST? (Rom. v. 12-19.)
SAVED or LOST—Which?



Guilty Sinners need Justification.

Dead Sinners need Life.

Unclean Sinners need Sanctification.



The denial of Eternal Punishment necessarily involves Annihilation, or Restoration without the new birth. New birth is on earth, not in heaven, and certainly not in hell.



The sacrifice of Christ has secured four things for all believers:—

- (1) Rent the Veil
- (2) An Eternal Redemption
- (3) Purged the Conscience
- (4) Perfected us for ever

See Heb. ix. and x.



The Heavenly and Glorified Saints fear not. Why should they? The Lamb before the THRONE (Rev. v.) was the Lamb on the ALTAR (Gen. xxii. 8.)



Creatorial Name—God.

Patriarchial Name—Almighty God.

Covenant Name—Jehovah.

Relationship Name—Father.

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Vol. VIII—No 6

JUNE 1916

Price 1d

Bible Notes.

By WALTER SCOTT.

Sin must be judged either by the *Blood* for you, or by the *Sword* on you.

The threefold result of Justification:—

- (1) Peace with God.
- (2) Present Standing in Grace.
- (3) Hope of the Glory of God.

See Rom. v. 1-2.

The first 25 words of the fourth Gospel contain the following sublime truths concerning Christ:—

- (1) "Was the Word"—*Eternal Existence.*
- (2) "With God"—*Divine Personality.*
- (3) "Was God"—*Deity.*
- (4) "In the beginning with God"—*Divine Companionship.*

The Word *was* and *is* a Divine Person, for "all things were made by HIM," *i.e.*, the Word. He is "The Word of Life" (1 John i. 1), and "The Word of God" (Rev. xix. 13.) The absolute expression of Eternal Life, and the perfect witness of God in Judgment.

Presumptuous sins, as in Num. xv. 30-31; Deut. xvii. 12-13 and Heb. vi. 1-8; x. 26-29 are *not* forgiven. They take the character of Apostacy, for which there is no remedy. Mere professors only are contemplated in the texts in the Hebrews, and not true children of God; for these latter SACRIFICE, PRIESTHOOD, and ADVOCACY are provided.

We are living between the *close* of the 69th Prophetic Week and the *opening* of the 70th—weeks of years (Dan. ix. 24-27.)

The order of the following great events :—

- (1) *The Air*—the appointed meeting-place. 1 Thess. iv. 17
- (2) *The Father's House*—the great family-gathering. John xiv. 2
- (3) *The Judgment-Seat*—where all is adjusted. 2 Cor. v. 10
- (4) *The Kingdom* lasting a thousand years. Rev. xx. 6
- (5) *The Eternal State*—all light, all love. Rev. xxi. 1-5

The woman was made of a *living* organism. God did not breathe into her nostrils the breath of life. The woman was brought to the man, not the man to the woman (Gen. ii. 22.)

The present great war is not a subject of prophecy, but it is clearing the ground for the prophetic situation to be *soon* developed. Events in the East are of deepest significance—*watch them.*

The Old Testament Scriptures throw their assembled rays of light onward to the Man Christ Jesus. From the first prediction (Gen. iii. 15) to the last (Mal. iv. 5), and from the first sacrificial type (Gen. iii. 21) to the last (Mal. i. 8, 14), the Lamb of God, who is also the Lion of Judah, is prefigured.

The coming glory of Israel pales before the greater glory of the Messiah. The future glory of the Church is outshone in the magnificent disclosures of the Christ of God.

Dispensational-types in Genesis. *Redemption*-types in Exodus. *Sacrificial*-types in Leviticus. *Heavenly*-types in Joshua. *Kingdom*-types in the historical books. *Prophetic*-types in the Prophets.

The prayer of *glory* is addressed to the GOD of Jesus Christ (Eph. i. 17-23). The prayer of *love* to the FATHER of Jesus Christ (iii. 14-21)—this latter on bended knees.

Lord Jesus Christ, is the full written title of our Lord—thus connecting His *authority, manhood, and glory.*

Note the distinction in the terms in the early chapters of Leviticus. "*Sacrifice*" involved the shedding of blood of bullocks, lambs, etc. "*Oblation*" referred to the presentation of fruits, etc., in which no blood was shed. "*Offering*" is the more general word and could apply to either of the foregoing.

Leviticus deals at length with the Jewish sacrificial system, consisting of *Sanctuary*, *Sacrifice*, and *Priesthood*. During the Millennium all Israel is saved, and arranged in their tribes across the face of the greatly enlarged country, in straight parallel bands from east to west. The New City and the New Temple—both of great extent—are situated between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.—See Ezek. xlvi.

There are five characteristic blessings not to be found in any portion of the Old Testament.

1. THE KNOWLEDGE OF ETERNAL LIFE.—I. John v.
2. THE CONSCIENCE PERMANENTLY PURGED.—Heb. x.
3. IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO GOD—THE VEIL RENT—Heb. x.
4. UNITED TO CHRIST BY THE HOLY GHOST.—Eph. i.
5. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF RELATIONSHIP—"FATHER."—Rom. viii.

The life of the Church was for a time vigorously maintained. She continued stedfastly in the—

1. APOSTLES' DOCTRINE, or teaching.
2. FELLOWSHIP, that formed by the teaching.
3. BREAKING OF BREAD, or the Lord's Supper.
4. PRAYERS—Church or public prayers are referred to.

Officialism grows on the decline of Spirituality. It must be either the guidance of the Spirit, or Human arrangement. In the Church of the twentieth century, the Holy Ghost is practically ignored.

OUR GOD.

The God of Salvation.—(Psalm lxxviii. 20.)

A God ready to pardon.—(Neh. ix. 17).

The God of all grace.—(I. Peter v. 10).

The God of love and peace.—(II. Cor. xiii. 11).

The God of hope.—(Rom. xv. 13).

The God of Comfort.—(II. Cor. i. 3-4.)

The God of Patience.—(Rom xv. 5).

A God of truth and without iniquity: just and right.—
(Deut. xxxii. 4).

Repentance.

II. Cor. vii. 8-11.

Two things are said to lead to repentance—"the goodness of God" and "godly sorrow." The first is mentioned in Rom. ii. 4; the second in the passage before us. The two passages should be read in conjunction.

In the second passage, the Apostle speaks of being made sorry after a godly sort (or "according to God" margin). Some of the Corinthians had sinned, and the apostle had written rebuking them, but not to make them sorry, simply, but that they might sorrow according to God. "To be sorry for sin is not enough, there must be something further, the "sorrow according to God." A sorrow that He produces, which His Holy Spirit can put into your heart, *so that you feel exactly as He would wish you to feel.* This is the supreme blessing, the very sorrow that God Himself feels about sin, this may be yours.

Then the apostle goes on to speak of the salvation that "Godly sorrow," which worketh repentance, leads to—(v. 10). First of all it worketh repentance. It produces a complete change of mind—all our thoughts are turned inside out. We regard sin in a different light altogether. But we also see God in a different light—how good He is, how loving, how kind—and that it was against such an One that we sinned. We can see what a radical difference true repentance makes, when it changes all our thoughts. For as the Bible says—"As a man *thinketh in his heart* so is he." What our thoughts are, we are. If repentance means, as it does, a change of mind, changing all our thoughts—turning them in a different direction—giving them a new color—we can see how much depends on it. And this is brought about by sorrow—not by joy or gladness—and this sorrow is produced by the knowledge of God. Until God gives us this sorrow there is no genuine repentance. Thus in the parable of the sower, the seed falling upon stony ground is likened to those who receive the word with joy, but who only for a while believe, and in time of trial fall away. That is, their faith is not founded upon repentance—there is no depth of earth.—(see Luke viii. 13.)

This "Godly sorrow" is "to salvation," and nothing else

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is. Apart from it no salvation is genuine. What does this salvation mean? It means that we are no longer the slaves of sin, but are delivered from it; no more in the service of the devil, but we have a new master: "Ye serve the Lord Christ." We no longer choose the evil, but we love the good. The sorrow that is according to God leads to the salvation that is according to God—pardon, peace, holiness, joy, service—good work and good fruit. Something which, as the apostle says, is "not to be repented of." For when once we are pardoned, justified, sanctified and free, we never want to change, we never ask to go back to the old life.

So then, this *GODLY sorrow* leads to true repentance and salvation with all that it means.

Then how does this "Godly sorrow" manifest itself? How may we know it?—(v. 11)—"What *carefulness* it wrought in you." The first thing to be mentioned is carefulness. We are careful to avoid all company, all places, all amusements, all occupations that either directly or indirectly might help to make sin appear less sinful, or in some way bring us into contact with it. We are careful also about the little matters as well as the big. A careful housewife is one who pays attention to details, and who does not overlook small means that can be used to advantage. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." When the Apostle therefore alludes to the carefulness manifested by the Corinthians he is admiring one of the very strongest evidences of their repentance. And so with ourselves to-day, true repentance will make us careful of our words, of our looks, of our thoughts, of how much time we spend over the newspaper and in idle talk. One of the most conspicuous differences between a converted and an unconverted person is this, that one is *careless* about the matters just referred to, and the other is *careful*. The one thinks it does not matter, because he has only himself to please or the company he keeps, the other thinks of everything in connection with his Lord.

The next is "clearing of yourselves." This means making manifest that they were entirely clear. Getting rid of everything connected with their former failure. The word translated "clearing" is derived from two words, one of which means "off," "separation," "cessation."

Then the Apostle speaks of their *indignation*. This is a very strong word and is connected with "to be greatly afflicted," "much displeased" (with ourselves). Then look at what words follow; "fear," "vehement desire," "zeal," "revenge." Fear to do wrong, vehement desire to do right, zeal in performing it, and a feeling that they must vindicate themselves and show that they no longer deserved an unfavourable judgment.

The Name of Jesus.

Several years ago, whilst visiting in one of the London Infirmarys I came to the bedside of a man who was suffering much. Though we were perfect strangers to one another we soon found that we were in reality united by the strongest of ties, even that which "binds believer's hearts in one."

As time went on the poor sufferer gradually grew worse, and one day I found to my sorrow that the pain had caused his mind to wander, and it was quite impossible to carry on a conversation with him.

Not liking to leave him without trying to speak a word of comfort, I quoted one Scripture bringing in "The Name which is above every name." The effect was beautiful to see, for though his mind was wandering sadly, yet the mention of the Name he loved brought such a look of deep joy into his face that one could not soon forget. Truly he was "rejoicing in the Lord."

I passed on to the next patient whose physical condition was similar to the one just referred to. His spiritual state was, alas! sadly different. The same precious name was made mention of to him, but although he was unable to answer coherently he made known by the look of utter hatred that came over his face, and by gestures, that he had no desire to hear about that Blessed One, and I turned away with a heavy heart.

Reader, "What think ye of Christ?" Is His Name precious to you? "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek Thee."—(Psalm ix. 10.)

"But let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy Name be joyful in Thee."—(Psalm v. 11.)

The Grace of God and the Backslider.

AN APPEAL.

It has been truly said that "God always remembers our brightest day." "I remember thee, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness." This is a comfort to all who have backslidden in heart, and who may in secret be sorely struggling against some sin that holds them down, and from which they would fain be free.

No one knows the desperate struggle of such a one but God only, and He is not indifferent to our struggles. No one knows the groaning of such a soul when it is brought under the power of secret sin, hating the sin, yea loathing it: brought under its power, longing to get deliverance, yet bound like a newly entrapped lion in a cage or an eagle chained to a rock.

To such, it is most difficult to convey the sense of God's great love. The soul cannot be persuaded that God's love in Christ (which is an eternal love and therefore unchanging) is as strong and deep and faithful as in its brightest day. Yet it is so. God did not love His people less at the bitter waters of Marah, when they murmured against Him and reproached Him for the lack of consideration for them, than He did when they, in the jubilation of victory, sang the wonderful song of Exodus xv. That chapter gives their brightest and one of their darkest days.

It was in the day of the triumphant deliverance from Pharaoh's power and Egypt's thralldom that their hearts swelled with joyful emotion, and they celebrated in the noblest song in history their wonderful deliverance. But soon that happy song of victory died away. What a contrast the end of the chapter presents. Could we believe that the same people who had lately sung so triumphantly were now filled with murmuring?

But their sad failure did not make any difference in God's thoughts about them. He was not in the least disappointed in them. Why not? Because He knew all about them, and how the trial of bitterness would bring out what was in them—what was in their hearts. That trial and their murmuring served to prove afresh His love to them.

The resources of His love and patience were proved to be

inexhaustible. The tree, which represents the love set forth in the Cross of the Lord Jesus, was cast forth into the bitter waters, and those waters of bitterness were turned into sweetness. *Love brought into every trial sweetens the cup however bitter.* Such is God's way. He ever turns the curse into a blessing, and He ever makes the Valley of Achor (the place of shame and failure in Israel) a door of hope or of victorious salvation when we humble ourselves before Him.

"If we have failed in the race, we are always welcome Home." This is quite true. The love of God was set upon us when we were at our worst and weakest. It was not anything in us that attracted Him.

But Satan works by torturing fear; by making us think that our failure has changed God and that all is hopeless. Another has well said, "I cannot get the affections into full play if I think of God only as a Judge. If I sin or do wrong, I must run to my Father directly, as a child that has fallen into the gutter runs to its mother, because I know that my Father is not going to judge me for it, save as a Father now, for correction by the way. Therefore boldness is needed for the exercise of spiritual affections in me. Satan can act on the conscience as well as God, but you may always detect the difference. Satan always acts in the way of despair, while the Spirit always points to a resource in God, and the soul, however much distressed, feels that there is goodness in God (which is the glory of God in the midst of evil, overcoming evil) if it can only get to it." The weakest, most erring are welcome to His heart.

The same writer says, "The true believer longs for rest from all that now offends, but God leaves him here to learn many lessons. The world, constituted as it is at present, is a means by which God teaches us what we should not learn in a world of glory. It is here that the believer is instructed in the long suffering and patience of God. *His wants, his weaknesses, his barrenness, his deadness, display most touchingly the patience of God.* Here, too, he learns the astonishing proof of God's love in Christ, giving Him for such sinners, that they might be pardoned and reconciled. *Notwithstanding all our weakness, shortcomings and misdeeds, there is no feeling of hostility in God's mind*

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towards us, not even an impatient word or look. All is love." Nothing is more difficult to believe, but it is true, nevertheless. Peter's restoration is the fullest evidence of it. It is all grace, and grace is love undeserved, for if we deserved it, it would not be grace.

The unfallen angels do not need grace, and the fallen ones have never been offered grace. Perhaps in their pride, were it offered, they would not receive it. It is only the humble who receive grace. There is a wealth of grace in God, of forgiveness, pitifulness, compassion, and mercy, that even the chief of sinners saved knows but little, and the most advanced saint has only touched the fringe of. God is marvellously prodigal in nature. This is seen in its vastness and variety, but God is much more prodigal or abundant in grace. There is nothing so difficult as to keep ourselves in the constant sense of grace. When we fail, there is nothing more difficult than to believe that God delights to be gracious still. "He giveth more grace."

How could we judge ourselves and turn back to Him, did He not show us grace? If there is the least desire in the heart of the failing one to turn to God, that desire is produced by grace. When we turn to God against ourselves, we are, in that measure, in self judgment and in communion with Him. It is the realised sense in the soul of the erring one of the goodness of God, that humbles it and turns it again to Him.

"And, oh, to find Thee still the same,
'Tis this that humbles us with shame."

The tender appeals to backsliding Israel in Jeremiah and Hosea all go right home to the heart, and are meant to convey the sense of how the blessed Lord on His part longs for the restoration of the departing ones. Is God less pitiful than a true father? Is God less tender and loving than the most tender-hearted mother? No.

Look at the tales that could be told of how far many fathers and mothers have gone to restore and bring back a fallen child.

Think of the depth of compassion there is conveyed in that tenderest of appeals, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" He as much as says, "If you do not repent and come back, it

will break My heart." "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely." What sweet and touching words! If this is so, how must He pity, with the deepest, truest, most tender pity, the soul that has been caught in the Devil's snare, and who struggles to get free. *God hates sin, but He loves and pities the sinning one who, though caught in the snare, loathes the thing that has ensnared him.* Broken-heartedness on account of sin draws forth compassion which expresses the heart of God's love to the bankrupt, and needy and distressed.

Jesus glorified is not different from the Jesus who in the days of His flesh drew a woman of the city to His blessed feet, when He allowed her to pour out her heart's love upon Him in tears. He is ever and always "this same Jesus" who said to another "Where are these thine accusers, hath no man condemned thee? And she said, No man, Lord. Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

After that, who that is broken-hearted or cast down or cast out of society might not come to Him, whether he be a broken-hearted saint, on account of his past, or a sinner who has never known His love? "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He does not specify who that "him" is. If a backsliding one who desires to come back, I should say from my little knowledge of Him, "*You are all the more welcome.*" He knows all about you, His heart really pities you, and truly grieves that you should allow your sins to detain you when He in love gave Himself to bear the heavy burden of them.

He knows the worst of them—He knows the darkest spot in our life. None were left out of His counting when He died. He willingly drank up the cup of wrath that He might receive you to Himself,—to His loving heart, and bring you back to God.

Believe it and come to Him in your despair, and He will receive you back into His heart's deepest affection and make you feel the warmth of His love, as in your brightest day. Neither a falling saint nor a poor benighted sinner need ever despair, if he will only turn to the God of all grace. There is no glory in failure, but there is great glory in seeing a man rise when he

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does fall. "The just man falls seven times but he rises up again." A saint in his failure should not dwell on second causes. Through our failure we learn the weakness and untrustworthiness of the flesh and its treacherous cha

God is never surprised or taken aback at our failure. We are, but He never. Nothing surprises Him. He knew the worst about Israel when He delivered them out of Egypt. They learned the worst about themselves during the forty years' trials of the desert, the place of testing and failure. We are like them—we are still in the place of testing. He never grew weary with Israel, nor does He ever grow weary of us any more than a true mother is weary of her fretful, changeable child. Blessed thought! It should cast us more on the unchanging love of God in CHRIST.

"Others are indebted to Thee,
But I far more than all;
From many a deadly snare set free
And raised from many a fall.
O'erwhelm me from above
Daily with Thy boundless love."

P-W-L-S.

Acceptable to Him.

As those redeemed by precious blood
From Satan's pow'er and thrall set free;
God help us day by day to live
A life wellpleasing unto Thee.

May every weight be laid aside
With every sin whate'er it be;
Thus only can we hope to live
A life wellpleasing unto Thee.

Each thought, O blessed Lord, subdue,
And bring into captivity
Unto Thyself, that we may live
A life wellpleasing unto Thee.

O daily may we seek Thy grace;
Saviour, Thou know'st no strength have we
Apart from Thee, no power to live
A life wellpleasing unto Thee.

E. L. W.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

VIII.—THE SHUNAMMITE.

The adjective "great," as applied to the woman of Shunem, doubtless refers in its first significance to her position in the world as a person of substance; but she was also "great" in that which alone counts for greatness with God—in faith—(II. Kings iv. 8). In this she was conspicuous in her generation. We find a number of God's "great" ones in Heb. xi.—men and women "of whom the world was not worthy."

The Shunammite was spiritually superior to the widow of Zarephath, in that she was persuaded that Elisha was a holy man of God *before* the miracle was wrought; the widow got the same assurance concerning Elijah *after* the miracle—(I. Kings xvii. 24). "I perceive —," said the woman of II. Kings iv., 9. Oh, that we were all more keen in our spiritual perception!

As a lover of hospitality, the Shunammite frequently lodged Elisha. Those who are unable to bestow loving attentions upon the Son of God Himself, as Martha and Mary did, may always lavish care upon those who represent Him, if they have the heart for it, and this is good and acceptable with God—(I. Tim. iii. 3; v. 10.) It was her reading of Elisha's life which constrained the Shunammite to say to her husband:—"Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually." It is well when a man's ways are thus eloquent for God. The Apostle could remind the Thessalonians of what manner of men he and his fellow-labourers were among them for their sakes. Indeed, he could say, "ye are witnesses, and God also"—(I. Thess. i. 5; ii. 10). With Timothy he could appeal, not only to his doctrine, which was sound, but also to his "manner of life, purpose, faith," etc.—(II. Tim. iii. 10.) In his last conversation with his Ephesian friends, he was able to review his whole course amongst them as in every way an example for them to follow—(Acts xx. 18-35). Faithful servant! True ambassador for the absent Christ!

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One day, when Elisha was in the Shunammite's house, he bade Gehazi, his servant, call her to him. He expressed the desire to do something for her in recognition of her many kindnesses to himself. "Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the host?" (Possibly Elisha's services at the time of the expedition to Moab had given him some influence at Court.) The woman's reply was excellent:—"I dwell among mine own people." Worldly honours had no attraction for her; she loved the simplicity of her own proper surroundings. How would we have replied to a similar inquiry? What is the world to us—anything or nothing? Would we be spoken for to the king? For the Christian, "mine own people," means the assembly. Is it really there that we find our truest joys, albeit the assembly is composed of "the poor of the flock," the weak, the base, the despised, etc.—(I. Cor. i. 26-29)? Sometimes the blunder is made of regarding the saints as they are naturally instead of regarding them in the light of the infinite grace of God. What they are to Christ, and the fact that His presence is known in their midst should endear the saints to our hearts beyond everything else. Happy are we if our souls are so fully satisfied with the communion of saints that each one of us is able to reply to every overture: "I dwell among mine own people." In the shade with God, apart from the world, is the safest place for us all, and the only proper place.

If worldly honours were nothing to the Shunammite, her family joys should be increased. Accordingly, Elisha promised her a son, and in due time the son was born. The death of the lad brought out all that was spiritually noble in the mother. Her reticence to her husband concerning the great sorrow is suggestive that he was either not born of God at all, or that his faith was not up to the level of her own. Behold her hastening across the plain of Jezreel (perhaps 30 miles) in order to spread out her grief at the feet of the man of God at Mount Carmel. Such was her confidence in God that in reply to the inquiry: "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" she could reply, "It is well." Brethren, it is always "well." We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to purpose"—(Rom. viii. 28.)

Contrary to the principle laid down in Amos iii. 7, Jehovah had not seen fit to acquaint Elisha beforehand with the object of the woman's errand. As soon as he understood it, he bade Gehazi take his staff, and lay it upon the face of the child. This, however well meant, did not satisfy the Shunammite. She said to the prophet:—"As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." She preferred the living person to the lifeless staff, symbol of power though the latter might be. Perhaps Elisha was testing her, as Elijah tested him on the day of his translation. If so, her faith responded nobly. Alas, how many in our time cling to lifeless forms (sacraments, etc.) to the neglect of the living Christ!

On their way to Shunem, the prophet and the mother met the returning Gehazi with his report. "The child is not awaked." Entering into the house, Elisha "went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm." Even so, it is only contact with the living Christ that can give life, and also sustain the life when it has been received.

"Call this Shunammite," said Elisha to Gehazi. "Take up thy son," said he to the mother. "Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out." The scene is full of moral grandeur. No expression of rapture and surprise at what had happened; nay, she expected it. Her faith had gripped the God of resurrection. Through faith . . . women received their dead raised to life again."—(Heb. xi. 35). The Shunammite could but fall at the feet of the one who had brought life to her. In like manner, we prostrate ourselves before Him who has shattered the power of death on our behalf, and secured for us life for evermore.

(To be continued).

Humanity is viewed as *innocent* in Adam when created; *sinful* in us in natural birth; *holy* in Christ when He entered the World.

The father *ran*. The prodigal *walked*—(Luke xv. 20). The only instance in the Bible of God being in a hurry.

Some Thoughts on the Lord's Supper.

It is a most significant act by which we remember Him and announce His death till He come. We are to remember that He was betrayed—that dark betrayal night with all its attendant circumstances is to be recalled: and all from that point onward to the Cross—Gethsemane, the Judgment Hall, Calvary: all that He suffered on our account is to come before us. His body was given for us. We are reminded, too, of the new relationships which are ours. “This cup is the new testament in My blood.” It is no longer the old covenant of law and works, but of grace. We are on new ground entirely—all that God is pleased to be to us because of the work of Christ. God has bound himself to bless all who come under the blood—thus Christ calls it “the new testament (or covenant) IN MY BLOOD.” All rests upon that. Is it not blessed to be able to think in perfect peace on Christ Himself? The bread and the wine remind us of Him and of the work He accomplished. That work establishes our blessing, obtains our pardon, sets us entirely free, so that we are at perfect leisure to think of Him.

Then, again, not only do the bread and wine remind us of His work as meeting all our need, but they speak of His death as the greatest expression of His love. How much all this brings Him to mind, as we sit in the presence of the emblems. His finished work is present to our view—we have perfect peace and rest—and with His love, too, present to our mind, how can we help having Himself before us? We think of all that that suffering meant to Him. Do we not see how blessedly this institution achieves a most important object, that of bringing Christ Himself, in connection with His work for us, and His love to us, directly before our souls? To meditate upon Him in relation to all this becomes the highest enjoyment which we can taste this side or heaven.

Further, all this naturally leads us to Him Who gave Christ—Who sent Him into the world. That One is now our Father, through the work which has been accomplished, and as we meditate upon Christ and feel how precious He has become

to us, because of all He has done and all He is, our hearts rise to the source of all, and we worship God as Father. For the source of the love of Christ is the heart of God. God and Christ are one. Thus a true remembrance of Christ will inevitably lead to true worship—the worship of the Father, in spirit and in truth.—(John iv.) For was it not God Who gave His Son? Did He not lay on Him the iniquity of us all? This brings to mind not only what we owe to God, but how precious Christ must be to Him—"the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." As these thoughts fill our minds, we bow in worship.

Then, again, we keep this feast only "till He come." He is absent now, and so we remember Him; but one day we shall be with Him, and then there will be no need for remembrance. He Himself will be ever before us, and we shall live in the enjoyment of all that He is without a cloud between. He is coming back to earth to *reign* in the very place of His sorrow and His suffering. We *remember* Him in this period of His rejection. To the world, His sufferings and death are only a fact in history—even if they are that—to us and to God they mean everything. "We show the Lord's death till He come." For God and for us, in one sense, there is nothing worth remembering but the fact of His death and all that it means, and His return, with all that *it* means. Between these two events many things have happened, and will happen, but the two points for God and the believer are the Lord's death behind and the Lord's coming in front, and all between a blank, except to follow Him in His path. Nothing *really* counts in the world's history but those two circumstances, and so the Lord's Supper connects the past with the future. We remember Him, and we await His return. May it be with hearts that are altogether true to Him—hearts filled with His love, and throbbing with joyful anticipation of His coming.

"Spread the Bible before the Lord, ask Him to teach you *your* ignorance and *His* wisdom."

"A careless reader of the Scriptures never made a close walker with God."

Grain from Joseph's Granary.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Author of God's Gospel in War-Time.

(THIRD SACKFUL.)

AN INTERNAL EXPLOSION.—It was sad reading! "H.M.S. Natal sunk in harbour, through internal explosion." Great loss of life, and one of our best ships, gone through internal trouble. Not in battle with a foe: not by a bursting shell, while engaged in conflict; but sunk in harbour through internal explosion. Have not individuals and assemblies of individuals also sunk in harbour through an internal explosion? What need for the exhortation,—“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”—(Heb. iii. 12, 13).

SEPTUAGENARIAN HERO'S DEATH.—Many will remember the red shirt worn by Garibaldi's brave men: We were reminded of it by reading of the septuagenarian Lavezzari, belonging to the famous Garibaldian Legion. Long ago, Lavezzari had sworn that, should war ensue, he would perish with his face to the Austrian foe. He was one of the men who had stormed the Austrian trenches and had survived. He dashed forward anew, this time against the main Austrian position, and, flinging aside his grey military tunic, he revealed the red shirt of the Legion. Lavezzari, crying “Long live Italy! The victory is ours!” fell riddled with a dozen bullets. Shall not they who wear the crimson of Christ shew it, and be as bold as he of the Garibaldian Legion, knowing, “The victory is ours.” “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven.”—(Matt. x. 32).

CHOOSING HIS OWN WAY.—A soldier thus wrote of an experience he did not repeat. He said:—“It was my duty to go out and visit a detached post about fifty yards away three times during the night. The easiest way of getting there was over the parapet in front, and I decided to go that way in preference to wading through mud up to the thighs. It was a most

uncanny experience getting over the parapet for the first time. I can only compare it to the first time I took a dive into deep water. The first journey went well, as it was dark. On the second occasion the moon was up, and it was almost as light as day. Perhaps it was unwise of me to go out over the top, but I had not gone more than ten yards before a machine gun was trained on me. I dropped flat while the bullets spat all round me, and, strange to say, I was not hit. After waiting about two minutes I made a bee line for the safer route and waded to my destination through the slush." In our folly we sometimes choose our own way, but it is risky: better listen to Him who says, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee, in the way which thou shalt go."—(Psalm xxxii. 8.)

MIND THE MINES.—What dangers beset the fishermen of to-day: here is a sample which cost the life of the skipper and third hand, William Patterson, better known as "Billy." "The 'King William' brought a mine up in her trawl; when it was seen W. Patterson ran to the winch to slacken the gear, hoping in this way to save the ship, but as the gear loosened, unfortunately, the mine struck the side of the vessel, and immediately the explosion did its deadly work. The skipper and Patterson were never seen again, but the rest of the crew were able to get into their boat, and after some hours were picked up by another Grimsby trawler and brought safely home." Beware of picking up the devil's mines: in the business net, the pleasure net, or any other net. Thank God, he casts our sins into the depths of of the sea, where they can never be fished up: but it is as well not even to let the memory of them have a resurrection.—(Micah vii. 19.)



HIS FAITHFULNESS.

A faithful Creator—(I. Peter iv. 19).

The faithful God . . . keepeth covenant.—(Deut. vii. 9).

A faithful High Priest.—(Heb. ii. 17).

Faithful and just to forgive.—(I. John i. 9.)

Faithful to cleanse.—(I John 1, 9).

He is faithful that promised.—(Heb. x. 23).

He abideth faithful.—(II. Tim. ii. 13).

He was called Faithful and True.—(Rev. xix. 11.)

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WORK, WATCH, WAIT.



ORK for I am with you."—(Hag. ii. 4).

ATCH for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.—(Matt. xxiv. 42).

AITING for the coming."—(I. Cor. i. 17).



THEY NEED WATCHING.—As sure as a tram conductor begins to collect the fares, a boy (sometimes even a girl) is up behind the car, enjoying a free ride. These urchins seem to spring out of the ground, and only want the opportunity to avail themselves thereof. One even shut the door and bolted it. He bolted too, but left the attendant a prisoner. They are as quick as sin, and as ready to take advantage of opportune moments. Even electric trams are not too quick for their nimble limbs. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation—(Matt. xxvi. 41). And that temptation enters not into you.



WITH FATHER'S HELP.—Much of a child's success depends upon a father's help. Papa—"Don't you think you might get a prize this term if you tried hard?" Small Son—"No use. Sammy Smart takes all the prizes in our school." "Why is that?" "I don't know, but I suppose he's got a papa wot knows enough about arithmetic to help him in his sums." Our Father is interested in His children, and in their welfare. If any doubt it, let them read Matt. vi. from which we select a few texts:—"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall ye be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." With such a Father to help us, we ought to win a prize.—(I. Cor. ix. 24).

Extracts.

Spiritual Strength.—"Spiritual strength consists of two things—power of will, and power of self-restraint. It requires two things, therefore, for its existence—strong feelings and strong command over them."

"'The Child waxed strong'—spiritual strength is reached by successive steps. Fresh strength is got by every mastery of self. It is the belief of the savage, that the spirit of every enemy he slays enters into him, and becomes added to his own, accumulating a warrior's strength for the day of battle, therefore he slays all he can. It is true in the spiritual warfare. Every sin you slay becomes transformed into strength, every passion, not merely kept in abeyance by asceticism but, subdued by a higher impulse, is so much character strengthened. The strength of the passion not expended is yours still. Understand then, you are not a man of spiritual power because your impulses are irresistible. They sweep over your soul like a tornado—lay all flat before them; whereupon you feel a secret pride of strength. Last week men saw a vessel on this coast borne headlong on the breakers, and dashing itself with terrific force against the shore. It embedded itself, a miserable wreck, deep in sand and shingle. Was that brig in her convulsive throes strong? or was it powerless and helpless?"

"No, my brethren; God's Spirit in the soul—an inward power of doing the things we will and ought—that is strength and nothing else. All other force in us is only our weakness, the violence of driving passion. 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me,' this is Christian strength. 'I cannot do the things I would,' that is the weakness of an unredeemed slave." "I instance one single evidence of strength in the early years of the Lord Jesus: I find it in that calm long waiting of thirty years before He began His work, and yet, all the evils He was to redress were there, provoking indignation, crying for interference. The hollowness of social life—the misinterpretation of Scripture—the forms of worship and phraseology which had hidden moral truth—the injustice—the priestcraft—the cowardice—the hypocrisies—He had long seen them all."

"All those years His soul burned within Him with a divine zeal and heavenly indignation. A mere man—a weak emotional man of spasmodic feeling—a hot enthusiast, would have spoken out at once, and at once been crushed. The everlasting Word incarnate bided His own time—'Mine hour is not yet come'—matured His energies, condensed them by repression, and then went forth to speak, and do, and suffer. His hour was come. This is strength—the power of a divine silence, the strong will to keep force till it is wanted, the power to wait God's time. 'He that believeth' said the wise prophet, 'shall not make haste.'"

(SELECTED).



"A well-known preacher a few years ago made the statement that he did not believe in the use of the word '*saved*.'"

Among his hearers was a new convert. When the preacher gave opportunity to ask questions this man got up and with a trembling voice said the following:—'Doctor, if a man has fallen into the water, and has gone down for the third time and a strong arm pulled him out and brought him back to life, what would you call that?' The preacher replied, 'I would say the man was saved.' The man, who had been a drunkard and a saloon keeper for twenty two years, answered the preacher and said: 'And if a man has been a habitual drunkard and all that which goes with a vile life, and knows now that his sins are forgiven and has all the former lusts and desires under his heel, living a clean Christian life—what would you call such an experience?' The reply was, 'I do not know.'"



Killed at the Front.—What a useful life Ronald Poulton Palmer's might have been! We had heard of him as one of the finest Rugby football players in the world—who only last year was captain of England—but we did not know so well his other side.

A friend of his tells how last year, after the Rugby International between England and Ireland, he went to the pavilion to congratulate him on the English victory. The English captain looked up

from his bath and, though it was but five minutes after the hard-won match, turned and said, "Oh, I want to talk to you about a book I have been reading. I don't quite understand the relation of conversion and grace." To the same friend on another occasion he came and said, "Will you help me to find out the best way to teach my club boys to pray?"—and when, a year or two ago, he came into a large fortune, he determined "to go on living quietly and save my money with a view to finding some object on which it can worthily be spent." No, that life has not been wasted—there is higher service to which he has been called.

He Careth for You

(I. Peter 5, 7.)

"It matters to Him about you,"
This Friend so loving and true;
Then why should you fear, when He is so near,
And always is thinking of you?

"It matters to Him about you,"
He keepeth you ever in view;
No foe need alarm, for nothing can harm—
He always is thinking of you.

"It matters to Him about you,"
He meaneth to see you quite through;
The might of His hand, no power can withstand,
He always is thinking of you.

"It matters to Him about you,"
And nothing He asks you to do,
But simply each hour, to trust in His power,
Who always is thinking of you.

E. L. W.

A Meditation.

SONG OF SONGS.—Chapter vii. 14

“Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.” Dear Lord, Thou hast made thyself precious to our hearts, Thou hast breathed such heavenly music into our souls, and given us such glimpses of Thy beauty that we long to see Thee as Thou art. What we know of Thee leads us to say “Thou are altogether lovely,” but we are not satisfied, for our comprehension of Thee is very imperfect. What rapture it will be when faith is lost in sight, and we behold Thy face, once marred more than any man’s, now resplendent with heavenly brightness, and see the nail prints in Thy hands and feet and gaze upon Thee as the Lamb once slain. This will fill our hearts, dear Lord, with jubilant song.

For Thy sake also, we would say “make haste, my Beloved,” for if Thou could’st endure the agonies of Gethsemane, and the shame and suffering of Calvary to redeem us, Thine heart must yearn to embrace Thy bride. As Isaac was out in the field at eventide meditating with anticipative joy the moment when he should receive Rebekah to his heart and be comforted, (Gen. xxiv. 63-67), so, dear Lord, Thy Word reveals to us Thou art waiting for the set time to come to receive Thy bride for eternity. The Holy Spirit has taught us this, for He has put the words in our hearts so that we can say of Thee “Behold, He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” (ii. 8.)

We would cry unto Thee, “make haste, my Beloved,” for the sake of Thine Ancient People whom Thou lovest with an everlasting love. They are as sheep without a shepherd, no one caring for them. The lion roars at them, the leopard and the panther seek them as prey, and the wolves tear and devour them. Turn away Thy just anger from them, blessed Lord, and come as their Great Deliverer, mighty to save. The whole creation is waiting for Thee to come and deliver it from the bondage of corruption. Creatures Thou did’st give to man for his pleasure and profit are groaning beneath cruel burdens.

The Church also longs for Thy return, Thou gracious Redeemer; she cannot rest in this scene where her Beloved was despised, rejected, cast out and crucified; she is "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen." In spite of our failures, fickleness and forgetfulness we long to behold Thee, dear Lord; to be rid of these bodies of humiliation, these treacherous hearts, and sinful minds, so that we may be like Thee. Until Thou shalt see fit to call us home, graciously make thyself more real to our hearts that we may the better understand the fervour and devotedness of Thy love, and how precious we are to Thee. Keep our eyes looking upward, watching for Thy return. Seeing we look for such things let us give diligence that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless—(II. Peter iii. 14.) Our minds cannot conceive the glory which awaits us, when we shall not only see our Beloved, but be transformed into His likeness; the very thought thrills our souls with rapture. All praise to our God. Hallelujah! See Rev. xix. 7, 8.

We shall be satisfied, fully satisfied, when we awake in Thy likeness. Thou blessed Christ of God; and we know Thou wilt be satisfied when in grace, we are sharers of Thy glory—(John xvii. 22); then Thou wilt see of the travail of Thy soul and be satisfied.

"God tries His children for His own glory and their own good. But what comfort! He will never make the furnace hotter than He will give strength to bear it. Yes, Jesus, who 'Himself hath suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted.'"

CHRISTIAN UNITY—"God's people are all 'one in Christ.' But they do not always realize that union, as it is their duty and privilege to do. They seem afraid of each other oftentimes. Now this ought not to be between members of the same family; they may realize somewhat of the union when engaged in prayer one for another at the Throne of Grace, and this interceding one for another would be a means of uniting their hearts much closer to each other in the Lord."

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 7

JULY 1916

Price 1d

“The Lord Hath His Way.”

**“The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm,
and the Clouds are the dust of His feet.”—Nahum i. 3.**

Storms are more common, and work greater havoc, in the East than in our own country, but even here they are often sufficiently alarming, and accompanied by considerable loss of property and even of life. The storm which raged over part of England during the afternoon and evening of Tuesday, March 28, will not soon be forgotten. In certain districts trains were completely snowed up, while on most of the lines they were many hours late. Communication was interrupted all over the country. But perhaps the most singular feature was the number of large trees levelled to the ground by the force of the gale. In one park, not far from where we write, a dozen huge elms may be seen prostrate within a very small area. A tree suddenly swept down by the wind is an impressive sight. It reminds us of departed greatness, and of the instability of all things seen. That which was once so stately, and firmly rooted as it seemed to be, towering above all other vegetation, is suddenly brought low. No more will any sit beneath its branches or enjoy its shade. The ruthless storm has done its work.

Are there not storms in human life? The fair prospect is suddenly overcast; the lofty hopes are shattered; the endearing ties are broken—the hurricane sweeps over the landscape, and all is changed. What desolation marks its path! Nothing is spared—nothing is saved. The light has become dim, the glory is departed; the heart is rent, and hope seems dead!

How unrestrained, how heedless, how purposeless a whirlwind seems! It does not appear to take account of its doings. It listens to no appeal, but strikes out of its path whatever may

come in its way. It regards nothing, and cares for nothing. Do not some of the sorrows of life seem very much of this character? The other day, a Christian man, who had lived an exemplary life and whose faith was unquestioned, walked out of his house and never returned. His body was not found until seven weeks after, and then it was discovered in a lake. What days of anxious suspense this involved for those dear to him. We cannot explain these things, we can only say, "*The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.*" The whirlwind and the storm are His ways. And not only that, but He controls and uses them. *He has His way in them.* They are not really going against His will, but doing it. They are part of it. And that which seems so aimless has a purpose. After all, they are only doing His work. Yes, He is *in* it. When we discover that, the bitterness is gone. His presence is indicated in the very words we are dwelling upon—"the *clouds* are the dust of HIS *feet.*" These dark, disastrous clouds, as we think, those clouds so full of gloom—they are part of His track—they are the dust of HIS feet. The dust may seem to hide Him, but He is there. If He were not, there would be no dust.

Storms often come suddenly. And very often, the more sudden they are the worse they are. As we travelled home on the Tuesday morning, we have referred to, the sun shone out brightly and seemed to betoken a fine day. An hour or two after, the wind had reached a hurricane and the snow was driving before it. How suddenly, at last, this awful war fell upon the nations of Europe. To thousands in this country the news that the war was at their doors came like a thunderclap, as they were leaving home for the August Bank holiday. Do you wish that you had received longer notice of the sorrow that has riven your heart? The other day, a letter came from a wife whose husband had recently been taken to the asylum. The Sunday before, the preacher had taken for his text:—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons"—(Acts i. 7). Having read the words, he leaned forward and said in a most impressive way: "Have you ever thanked God that you did not know the future? I have many times." Husband and wife sat together as they heard these words. Neither knew the future. Before the week

was out the blow had fallen. They were separated. No, the storm in the physical world does not give long notice of its coming; and it is wisely ordered that in human affairs we know not what a day may bring forth. How little that old saint, Sir Alexander Simpson, knew when he left a meeting to go home on a recent evening that death was just in front of him. "Proceeding homeward alone and on foot to his residence in Queen Street (Edinburgh), he was crossing Frederick Street when a motor car came upon him in the darkness, and knocked him down." To add to the tragedy, it was a friend's motor car. The eminent surgeon was carried to the Royal Infirmary where he soon passed away. But he needed no preparation. He had been a believer from his early days. At the close of his professional career, when speaking at the Edinburgh Graduation Ceremony he had borne this testimony:—"I do not know in what mood of pessimism I might have stood before you to-day had it not been that ere the dew of youth had dried from off me I made friends with the sinless Son of Man, who is the well-head of the stream that vitalises all advancing civilisation, and who claims to be the First and the Last and the Living One, and has the keys of death and the unseen. My experience compels me to own that claim." Curiously enough, he had printed with his own hand on the first page of his 1916 pocket diary these words:—

"He knoweth what is in the darkness,
He knoweth the way that I take."

How good to be reminded of this. Many an event is dark to us; not one is dark to *Him*. Things do not baffle His knowledge because they baffle ours.

God's way is indeed "in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." And yet the same chapter tells us "The Lord is *good*, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."—(Nahum i. 3-7). There are matters and happenings we cannot attempt to explain. Our trust must be all the deeper. "He knoweth them that trust in Him." He loves to be trusted—and He puts our trust to the test. He tells us He is good—"The Lord is good." Do we believe that? Many things *seem* to contradict it. In the very same verse we read of "the day of trouble."

Why does God allow trouble if He is good? The answer is, that we may experience what He can be to us in the trouble. Instead of the trouble being a reason for doubting Him, it is to be an occasion for a deeper trust. Then we discover what a God He is.

After the storm of March 28 there was an extraordinary calm. Within a few hours, comparatively, blue skies were overhead, and the stormy wind had passed. Are we tempted to think the calm and brightness of former years will never come into our life again? So we might have thought as to the weather during that fatal Tuesday. Yet on the Thursday the sun smiled upon us, and gentle zephyrs fanned our cheek. God can do the same in the moral atmosphere of our life as He does in the physical atmosphere, if we will let Him. The calm in nature, to which we refer, did not indeed restore what had perished; and with you there may be no restoration of the thing your heart clung to, or hoped for; but God Himself may fill the blank; and a deeper peace and even richer and more useful life, be the consequence. Put these two verses together and ponder them: "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet"—verse 3: and then verse 7—"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

It is our *faith* that He wants. And when and where can we trust Him better than in the whirlwind and the storm and with the clouds round about Him? The disciples needed no faith when they started on that voyage across the lake of Gennesaret. The storm tested their faith and revealed more of Christ to them. They cried out, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" This response to their appeal showed that He did care, and disclosed Him in a new light; so that they were constrained to say, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

With you it may not be a question of danger but of loss. Nevertheless, and none the less, you are ready to cry, "Master, carest Thou not?" And He has to say to you, as He said to those others, "Where is your faith?"

The other day, a mother stood watching her only son leave for the front. She was a widow, and had, in addition, lately

been bereaved of her only daughter. And now she was called to waive farewell—perhaps, a last farewell—to her boy. As she did so, her eyes filled with tears, and she turned back into the house, with the thought that her loneliness and grief were literally beyond comfort. But on her table stood a small cardboard receptacle for texts, written on paper and folded up. She took one, perhaps almost mechanically, and the word of comfort God had in reserve for her was this: "*Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord: AND THEY SHALL COME AGAIN FROM THE LAND OF THE ENEMY.*"—(Jer. xxxi. 16).

Could any words have been more appropriate? or could anything have brought God so near?

Let us remember, then, that the whirlwind and the storm can do His work and His will, and that He permits it, even if He does not ordain it, in order that you may make Him your stronghold in the day of trouble, and trust in Him. Do not think you are being driven about like a leaf before the wind; He has His way in it all; and these rushing winds and stormy blasts that seem to make you their sport are doing His work just as unerringly as methods which seem less rude: they are but the "stormy wind fulfilling His word."—(Ps. cxlviii. 8).

What is of all importance is the frame of mind in which we accept these rough dealings and pass through these fiery ordeals. We are either made or marred in the process. The other day a beautiful story was told in connection with the Royal visit to the Potteries, some time ago. While the King was on his way to see some special china which was being made for use in Buckingham Palace two vases were shown to him. Both were made of the same material and both had been painted in the same style and manner, but one was a beautiful ornament, and the other blurred and unsightly. And the reason? One had *taken* the fire, and the other had not! Passing on, the King came to the china he was to inspect. A young lady was busily engaged painting the inside of the cups *black*. He could not understand, and asked to see the special cups that were being prepared for him. He had not given any orders for black. Again he was pointed to the same cups. And then the young lady explained that underneath the black was gold, and when

the cups passed through the fire the black would be burnt *off*, and the gold would be burnt *in*.

Black and gold! The black has to be burnt *off* and the gold has to be burnt *in*! What lessons we can still learn in the Potter's house. This is what God is doing, burning *off* the black and burning *in* the gold, and He has many processes by which He will reach His end. And in recognition of this, when the whirlwind and the storm strike across our life, may we have grace to bow the head while we say,

"And let the storm which does Thy will
Deal with me as it may."

Someone has said: "A bar of iron worth £1 when wrought into horse shoes is worth £2. If made into needles it is worth £70. If into penknife blades it is worth £650. If into springs for watches it is worth £50,000. What a drilling the poor bar must undergo to be worth this! But the more it is manipulated, the more it is hammered, and passes through the fire, and beaten, and pounded, and polished, the greater its value. May this parable help us to be silent, still and long-suffering. Those who suffer most are capable of yielding most and it is through pain that God is getting the most out of us, for His glory and the blessing of others."

The other day, in a friend's house, we were struck by some words, within a frame which spanned nearly the whole of one side of the room. In the centre, in large letters, was the one word **LOVED**. To the left these lines:—

"Loved with all the love
That fills the heavens
With eternal song"—

and to the right:—

"Weep not weary heart!
How short the sorrow,
And the love how long!"

Loved! that is all we need to know.

"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm": but the storm passes: and we hear instead: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and *He knoweth* them that trust in Him."
R. E.

The Heart of God.

Thoughts on Worship.

By J. H.

The love of God is revealed on every page of His word, and one might go further, and say, in almost every verse from cover to cover; but have you ever noticed how rarely the heart of God is actually mentioned? So rarely that the occurrences—about ten in all—must have special significance. The first mention is

Gen. vi. 6.—“*. . . and He was grieved at His heart.*” Grieved! How completely had the entrance of sin reversed the original purpose of God in creating man . . . “for His pleasure”—(Rev. iv. 11). Still, amid such conditions, as always, the grace of God is immediately seen in activity, and suited to the need. Christ is presented as typified in the ark, faith is in exercise, redemption is accomplished, and we see an elect company who have, in figure, passed through death, standing on resurrection ground. What follows?

Gen. viii. 21.—“*. . . and the Lord said in His heart.*” You will have observed that in bidding them go forth God makes no special claim upon them. It is as though He said, “go forth and enjoy all that My grace has made possible.” In carefully reading the context, however, I seem to recognise the same One “who made as though He would have gone further,” waiting here, as at Emmaus, for the invitation to share their joy. Nor was He disappointed. The sequence is beautiful. “And Noah went forth, . . . builded an altar unto the Lord, . . . and offered.” It must have been a “sweet savour” indeed, for it is immediately identified with the secret thoughts of God “in His heart,” showing His pleasure in that little gathering of worshippers whose first thought was the Lord’s portion.

II. Chron. vii. 12.—“*. . . and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*” The little company in the mountains of Ararat have their counterpart in the great congregation on Mount Moriah actively engaged in the same blessed occupation of rendering their offerings unto the Lord in love. Seldom, if ever, in the history of Israel was there such oneness of heart and mind

as on this occasion. The marvellous structure of heavenly pattern, exquisite without and all-glorious within, erected under distinct and definite guidance of the Spirit through David, was the outward expression of their portion in God, and at the same time of God's portion in them, the latter truth being pre-eminent in their thoughts ". . . *not for man, but for the Lord God.*" This is in keeping with Solomon's prayer ". . . Arise O Lord God unto Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength." The response of God to the desire of His people is remarkable. What wondrous condescension in so quickly manifesting His glorious presence among them. Inasmuch as the Temple set forth the beauties of Christ, and songs of praise based on sacrifice ascended, there was indeed something for the eyes and ears.—(chap. vi. 40). But this was not all, as the Lord so very graciously shows in the Scripture before us. He unfolds to them a deeper truth than they had apprehended, a more intimate relationship. Mine eyes and mine ears certainly, but MY HEART too, and that perpetually. Love wants its satisfaction. How God delights to reveal His unbounded pleasure in that which foreshadows His Beloved Son. True worship is here indicated as not for the ear and eye, but for the heart. So that outwardly all may be plain and unattractive, and the voice anything but pleasing, but oh what a feast for the heart of God when Christ fills the soul and is in faith presented a "sweet savour." Does this not explain why "the Father seeketh . . ." and the purpose for which "... many sons are being brought to glory." The failure to recognise this in Christendom to-day accounts for the remarks so often heard of "splendid services," "lovely singing," "fine sermons" and so on. No wonder God says ". . . behold I stand at the door, and knock." Apparently in the desire for self-gratification He "is not in all their thoughts" and the noise of human voices prevents that knock being heard. But there is also an equal danger of self-complacency in being on scriptural ground. Of meeting in a simple way. Even this, with all perfectly correct in every detail, may become mechanical, without the preciousness of Christ in the soul. Not the filling up of ninety minutes, but that which is of the Spirit, meeting the requirements of the heart of God, constitutes real and acceptable worship. "They shall not come before me empty," was

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the Divine decree in early times, and the same principle holds good to-day. On the very site where the Temple was raised David scorned the temptation of economy in regard to God's portion. "How shall I offer . . . that which costs me nothing"—(II. Sam. xxiv. 24) and in the same scene, if not on the actual spot, this was exemplified in the case of Abraham—(Gen. xxii. 2). "*Take now thy son, thine only Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him there.*" Isaac! The gift that had brought gladness into their home, and joy into their lives, whose name "Laughter" expressed all he was to them. That is what God asks for. Can you imagine what that home was like, when father and son left on that momentous journey? What Abraham's feelings were as he went? His selection of the knife that would so soon be uplifted in his hand? The cleaving of the wood—fuel for the most precious sacrifice ever offered by that faithful "Friend of God"? Undoubtedly friendship with God carries great responsibilities. ". . . A friend loveth at *all* times. . ." even in face of such a tremendous demand. What a test. God says "Abraham, I want your very best," and how readily he responds. Consider all those preparations which must have wrung his very heart-strings, and then listen to his noble language as the place of sacrifice came into sight. "Abide ye here . . . and I and the lad will go yonder and WORSHIP"! Think of it. Ponder it well. Then quietly in the presence of the Lord, ask yourself: Have I ever risen to such a lofty conception of worship, as the one whom God called His friend? The meaning of a word is largely governed by first mention and its context. The word "worship" is used for the first time here, and could there be a finer setting for the Divine revelation of what it implies?

Another similar case that may be cited is that of Hannah—(I. Sam. i. 28). Having received the gift from God in response to her heart's petition, she unreservedly yields him up again for ever. "*He whom I have obtained by petition, I have returned to the Lord.*" Both of these incidents strikingly illustrate that remarkable sentence in Job xxxiv—" . . . If He cause *His* Heart to return unto Himself—(R.V., margin). It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost finding its source. "Of thine own have we given Thee."

May it be ours to enter more fully into the inestimable privilege and dignity conferred upon us of being, as purged worshippers, able to minister to the pleasure of God. Only, however, as our hearts are in harmony with his own thoughts of, and joy in, Christ will this be possible; and even though it may be easy for our lips to say "of Thine own have we given Thee" it will cost us much in the path of discipleship to learn the secret of the Father's joy in Him who alone could say "I do always those things that please Thee." This indeed is holy ground and the shoes of the fleshly energy must be removed. Conscious of needed wisdom we ask of the One who giveth liberally, and at once we hear His gracious reply.

Matt. xi. 28—"Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly *in heart* . . . and ye shall find rest to your souls." This is the first and only reference to His heart in the New Testament (excepting the two quotations in Acts). If in the first Old Testament occurrence the heart of God is shown as grieved through sin, it is abounding grace that connects the only mention of that same heart in the New Testament with "rest of soul" to the response of faith. What untold blessing underlies His invitation. The word He uses, translated "come" is a special one, and conveys the thought of cheer, and sharing what the caller is personally enjoying (It occurs only ten times in the New Testament, and is worth studying in its connections). How simple the Lord makes the way to wisdom. I will give, you take. I will teach, you learn. May we have the simplicity of babes (v. 25) to receive the revelation that matchless heart would unfold as to the secret of His own rest in this scene of sin, strife and sorrow, in order that we too may share the joy of "The bosom of the Father" (The heart of God).

Briefly, the remaining four direct references under this head are Jer. xxx. 24 ". . . the intents of His heart," (judgment); and Isa. lxiii. 4 ". . . the day of vengeance in His heart," both speaking of His "strange work." His heart is only dwelling thereon because of the consequent deliverance of His own. It is love defending and delivering. The other two are connected with the "man"—(I. Sam. xiii. 14)—and the "Shepherds"—(Jer. iii. 15)—"after His own heart." Each of these having its peculiar lesson for the seeker after wisdom.

Regarding that pathway "uncheered by earthly smiles that led only to the cross," David could prophetically say, "My heart is glad."—(Psalm xvi. 9)—and the reference in Song of Solomon iii. 11 as to the "day of the gladness of his heart" reminds us of that morning without clouds when The Beloved shall enter into the "joy set before Him." Meantime in the little while between the suffering and the glory "We wait. . ."

Coming up from the Wilderness.

Who is this that cometh up
 From the wasteful wilderness,
 Clear and bright as noonday sun,
 In her perfect spotless dress?
 Leaning on her well-beloved,
 Trusting in His Love and Might;
 Fearing nought while He is near—
 He her Lord, her Life, her Light.

'Tis the church, the precious bride
 Of the Father's only Son;
 She for whom, His all He gave,
 That with Him she might be one.
 His the grace in which she stands,
 His her robe of righteousness;
 Nothing can she call her own,
 Yet doth all in Him possess.

Trav'ling through the wilderness;
 Yes, but ever 'coming up';
 In the Father's House received
 She will soon in glory sup.
 There in blessedness complete,
 Trav'ling days for ever past,
 In the Home of joy and bliss,
 Bride and Bridegroom rest at last.

E. L. W.

"The laying open the heart of God is the great design of the Scriptures; happy the reader who falls in with that design."

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

This incident, and that which follows, furnish us with a sort of typical picture of man's history from the Creation to the Millennial age. Christ in His two comings is suggested in the deliverances wrought by the man of God.

"And Elisha came again to Gilgal"—(II. Kings iv. 38). Gilgal was originally the place of blessing. There the presence and power of God were experienced by Israel, in a remarkable degree. The earth could once be described in the same way. But for man's defection it might be so described still. The sons of the prophets being assembled around Elisha, he said to his servant. "Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets." And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap-full, and came and shred them into the pottage; for they knew them not." The gourds were poisonous. The man had gathered a lapful of colocynths, really a wild cucumber, though in appearance like a vine. His eyes deceived him, and so he introduced a death-dealing element into the food of his fellows. How like to what happened in Eden! The forbidden tree was pleasant to the eyes, and in every way so desirable that the woman yielded to the temptation of the Evil One, and so ate thereof, "and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat"—(Gen. iii. 6). Death followed. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin"—(Rom. v. 12). "O, thou man of God," cried the sons of the prophets, "there is death in the pot."

But the remedy was at hand, for God is very good. He desires not the death of any. Elisha said, "then bring meal." "And he cast it into the pot,; and he said, 'Pour out for the people, that they may eat.' And there was no harm in the pot." The meal (as in the Levitical sacrifices) typifies Christ. He is God's great remedy for all the mischief which man's sin has brought into the world. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—(Rom. v. 20, 21). His death is our de-

liverance from the old sin-stricken order of things to which once we belonged ; it has become the means of life to us ; and eternal life is ours now in Christ risen. We belong to another sphere where death can never come, and where the power of Satan is unknown.

For the Christian, while walking here, there is always "a dearth in the land." There is absolutely nothing that can satisfy the new man. Whatever men provide for their own satisfaction, there is always "death in the pot." The simplest things that men devise they spoil. Science, art, music—all those occupations with which men seek to delight themselves, and which are not necessarily sinful, yet contain in them the element of death, as many unwary saints have proved to their hurt. Only when the meal is cast in is anything fit or safe for the people of God. Everything earthly that we venture to handle *apart* from Christ is to our spiritual damage. When shall we learn the lesson for ourselves, and for our children? How many once-faithful witnesses lie scattered and wrecked upon the rocks through lack of vigilance and care ; and how many of the children of God's saints have been ruined from the same cause? There is "death in the pot" at every turn in this scene where Christ is not, yet how often do we forget it!

The feeding of the hundred men, follows suitably. The two incidents seem designed to be considered together, if only because, in each case, the miracle was wrought in connection with eating. "And there came a man from Baal-Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, 'Give unto the people, that they may eat.' And his servant said, 'What should I set this before an hundred men?' He said again, 'Give the people that they may eat ; for thus said the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.' So he set it before the men, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord."—(II. Kings iv. 42-44). The firstfruits were properly the portion of the priests—(Num. xviii. 8-12), but everything was in disorder in Israel. Aaron's sons were in exile, Jeroboam's priests doing duty, instead, at his idolatrous altars ; the firstfruits were accordingly presented to the man of

God, as Jehovah's true representative in the land. Observe that the offering came "from Baal Shalisha." From the place of Baal's abode, where Satan reigned, something was brought to God. Even so will it be in the Millennial age. This poor world, where Satan's throne now is, will yet yield its true offering to God. The usurper is destined ere long to be overthrown, in order that the Man of God's good pleasure may be established in the place of power and glory. "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this"—(Isa. ix. 7).

Then the feeding time will come. No longer will there be "dearth in the land;" never again will there be "death in the pot." Of Zion it is written: "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread"—(Ps. cxxxii. 15). The Lord Jesus gave an earnest of this when He fed the five thousand. So enthusiastic were the people after that marvel that they were disposed to take Him by force, and make Him King.—(John vi. 15.) He refused their desire, and retired to the mountain alone. When the hour for the appointed kingdom comes, He will receive it neither from men nor from Satan, but from the Father, who alone has authority to delegate it to any.

In Elisha's day, "they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord." There was plenty for all. In the Millennial age, "there shall be abundance of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains (surely a most unlikely place); the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon"—(Ps. lxxii. 16). To Israel "the Lord hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength. Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine for the which thou hast laboured; but they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of My holiness."—(Isa. lxii. 8-9.)

How blessed when all the woes of Israel and the nations are healed, and when all men's wants are fully met! "According to the word of the Lord"; so it shall be. But this awaits the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(To be Continued.)

Biblical Notes.

By WALTER SCOTT.

The natural man reasons from effect to cause; the Christian travels from cause to effect. The human mind is limited in its range and capacity. Its utmost stretch is to *suppose* a Creator endowed with omnipotence, supremacy, and perhaps eternal existence. The Christian *knows* the Creator as endowed with moral attributes as, *love*, goodness, mercy, life and *light*—the first and last of these describe His nature—what He is.

* * * *

There is considerable confusion as to the two little Horns of Daniel vii. and viii., and of the two Beasts of Revelation xiii. The "little horn" of Dan. vii. is the personal head of the revived Empire of Rome. The "little horn" of Dan. viii. is the King of the North and the great political enemy and oppressor of Israel when restored to her land. *Historically* the great Syrian King who destroyed Judaism, *typically* the future Assyrian. Carefully note that in chap. viii. there is no mention whatever of either the first or the fourth empires—only the second and third. As to the two Beasts of Revelation xiii. the first (verses 1-10) is the revived Roman Empire controlled by Satan through its personal head the "little horn" of Dan. vii. The second Beast (verses 11-17) is the personal Antichrist. This latter is more dangerous, more subtle, than his greater associate, who acts in brutal force. The Antichrist sets himself to ruin the *souls* of men; the former destroys the *bodies* of men. The two perish together—(Rev. xix. 20).

* * * *

The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in the Synoptical Gospels. The supper of John xiii. refers to the Passover. In chap. vi. we eat His flesh and drink His blood. We appropriate His death. It refers to what is vital. In the Lord's Supper we read of "bread" and a "cup" whereas in John vi. it speaks of "flesh" and "blood." John vi. has no reference to the Lord's supper. In fact, John never once speaks or writes of the Lord's Supper or, of Christian Baptism. His themes are of a vital character.

There are two things for which urgent prayer is needed. *First*, that God would enlarge our hearts and widen our sympathies towards *all* who are His—irrespective of sect or party. *Second*, that our feet may tread a path neither broader nor narrower than the Word would warrant.

Amidst present Church ruin and confusion the following abide and can always be counted upon:—

- 1.—THE HOLY SCRIPTURE—A permanent source of authority.
- 2.—THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRESENCE AND ACTION.
- 3.—THE LORD'S SUPPER—Combined privilege and responsibility.
- 4.—A COMPETENT AND EFFECTIVE MINISTRY.
- 5.—Gathering of even two or three to the Lord's name.

The Coming of the Lord to the "air."—(I. Thess. iv. 17). and His descent to "Olivet" (Zech. xiv. 4) are distinguished in time, circumstances, and objects.

Utter weakness grips the Throne of the Living God: faith clings to 'God Himself and can thus laugh at the word *impossibility*.

First step in Christian life:—**DEAD** with Christ—(Rom. vi. 8).

Second step in Christian life:—**RISEN** with Christ—(Col. iii. 1).

Third step in Christian life:—**SEATED** in Heavenly places in Christ—(Eph. ii. 6).

Four circles of Divine interest:—

- (1) *Israel* loved by Jehovah—(Mal. i. 1).
- (2) *World* loved by God.—(John iii. 16).
- (3) *Church* loved by Christ.—(Eph. v. 25).
- (4) *Family* loved by the Father—(I. John iii. 1).

The Administration of the Ages.

Being Notes on Ephesians, Chapter VI.

It is unnecessary to say much about the opening verses, except that Christianity touches and transforms every department and relationship of life ; and if all who profess and call themselves Christians were acting in the spirit of these verses, how different things would be, even in the world.

With verse 10 the Apostle comes to the concluding section of the Epistle—“*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*” He is about to speak of Christian conflict, and of the armour which alone can enable us to come off victorious. In order to wear armour and fight, strength is the great requisite ; and so he begins by saying, “Be strong in the Lord.” In other words, “Understand that Christ is your Lord, and that you are fighting under a Leader who has already vanquished the foe which will come against you ; you have no need, therefore, to be defeated.” It is an immense gain for soldiers in battle to have confidence in their leader. It is half the battle. And so, before telling us the details of the conflict or even mentioning the enemy, we are told, as it were, to look at our Leader. He is Lord. He has overcome every form of evil. (See Luke x. 17-19). Be strong, therefore, in the Lord and in the power of His might, for you are following this One in the fight. You are not called to go against the foe in your own strength. Our Captain goes before us. He became Lord after proving superior to every foe. Then, next, “*Put on the whole armour of God.*” Before we are told about the armour we are informed as to the nature of our enemies. We are to stand against the *wiles* of the Devil. Notice that word “*wiles.*” In vain is the net spread in the *sight* of any bird. If Satan, always gave us notice of His coming ; always said, “I am Satan” ; always presented as a temptation something we knew to be wrong, he would have comparatively small success. He pursues the opposite plan. He is wily. He tries to take us unawares. He tries to persuade the people of God that the thing he suggests is not evil. And so we need to be fully armed and fully prepared. That is why it says, “Put on the whole armour of God.”

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." (See margin). These are the foes that are against God's people.

Perhaps you have never thought that these evil agencies, spoken of as principalities and powers, are in heavenly places. This does not mean in the immediate presence of God and of Christ, but if you will turn back to chapter ii., you will see what it means. In v. 2 you read of "the prince of the power of *the air!*" The effort of this Prince, which is Satan, is to defeat God's purpose, by deceiving God's people as to their true calling and getting them engrossed with present things. And he has all these evil agencies we read of in the sixth chapter, the wicked spirits, to help him. The air is full of them.

You remember how at the beginning of the Epistle we are told that God chose us in Christ, and that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. We see how God has exalted Christ, as man, to His own right hand, and is going to give Him universal dominion, the Church to be associated with Him. Satan's effort is to prevent the children of God enjoying their true portion. That is why we see such a mixture in Christendom to-day. By his wiles he has induced the Church to join the world, and the world to enter the Church. Thus Christians have lost the idea of God's calling and of what their true blessing is. They have become earthly, and this has deprived them of both joy and power.

In order to stand against Satan's attack we are exhorted to take the whole armour of God (v. 13). There are several parts to it.

(1) "Loins girt about with *truth*." If we are to fight, we must not have loose flowing robes. This is true in actual warfare. What it means in the spiritual conflict is, that truth must hold us in its separating power. If we are mixed up with evil, choosing the company of the world, Satan will soon get an advantage over us, and we shall not enjoy our blessings. He will keep us away from Christ. The *truth*, then, is the first requisite: to know the truth that God has saved me and associated me with Christ in heaven. To know the truth about

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the world, that its course is contrary to God. Satan is its Prince, and I am to walk through it with garments tucked up, not trailing in the mud. This is the idea of "*Loins girt about with truth.*" I realise that I am walking through a scene that is contrary to God, and that I belong to Christ and heaven.

(2) "*The breastplate of righteousness.*" I must be practically righteous in all my doings and relations. If not, Satan will soon trouble me, and any defect in this respect will lay me open to his attack, like a warrior without a breastplate. How soon the enemy could get in a dart. But if I am doing right and pleasing God, Satan cannot harm me.

(3) "*Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*" The gospel is one of *peace*. God wants to be at peace with all men, and He would like all men to be at peace with Him. This truth is to affect all our relations with people. We are to seek peace and pursue it. "*Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace.*" This is the idea. I am to represent a God of peace to all men. Because if we create bitterness and ill feeling it gives Satan a point of attack; he can make mischief and do harm to ourselves and others.

(4) "*Over all the shield of faith.*" We are never to lose faith in God. Perfect trust in Him; unswerving confidence in His goodness is one of the surest safeguards against Satan. But if the shield of faith is lowered, if we begin to question God's goodness, and mistrust His dealings with us, then the fiery darts of the wicked one will soon hit us, for Satan (the wicked one) delights to misrepresent God, and thus turn the heart away from Him.

(5) "*The helmet of salvation.*" We can always look to God for salvation. We must never think that He cannot deliver. We are *saved*, we are *being* saved every day, and we look for salvation in the future. There is salvation, whatever our circumstances; and if we know this it will be like a helmet to us. What courage this will give us in meeting the foe.

(6) "*The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*" This is our only instrument of *attack*. All the rest is defensive. And how can I use a sword unless I practise with it. How necessary, then, to know my Bible well, for that is the Word of

God, and Satan cannot stand before it. But if I do not know my Bible, I have nothing with which to drive Satan off when he comes. Have you ever noticed that in our Lord's temptation, He again and again quoted the Bible, and that is how He defeated Satan. (Luke iv.)

(7) Finally, *Prayer*. Praying always. Fight Satan upon your knees. Nearly every downfall could be traced to neglect of the Bible and prayer. And so it says, "Watching thereunto." Watch your opportunities to pray and never neglect them. And besides praying for ourselves, we are told to pray "for all saints."

Here, then, we have what is to afford us protection. With this armour on the soul enjoys its proper portion, and cannot be decoyed from it by the wiles of the enemy. Remember there are enemies seeking to rob you, but this is God's armour, and Satan and all his darts can never penetrate that or touch the one who is clothed with it.

Then think for a moment of the closing verse, "*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity.*" If love to Him fills your heart, all will be well. And the grace spoken of here is for those who love Him. May He say of you as He said once of one on earth, "She loved *much*." Turn back to chapter iii. 19, and see how much Christ loves you. This love is great enough to create a response. And as you have welcomed this love that passeth knowledge into your heart, so the response is sure to come. May you love Him in return with incorruption (see margin). That is a love that retains its first ardour and depth and doesn't change. In the first chapter of this wonderful epistle Christ is spoken of as God's Beloved, the One in Whom we are taken into favour. Is it not fitting that He should be beloved by us? What grace for those who do thus love Him!

Tribulation is not to cause disbelief in God's love, but on the contrary we can enjoy His love in it.

The Serbian Legation acknowledges with thanks receipt from K. M. S. of £1 note which has been sent to the Serbian Red Cross Fund.

Extracts.

Is there anything more wonderful than God's work in a soul ?

It means the difference between sin and holiness. Sin with all its shame and sorrow and degradation ; holiness with all its uplifting power and purity. The one darkens our life, and embitters it. The other illuminates and sweetens it. It means the difference between Christ, with all His love, His saving mercy and constant help ; and the world with its unsatisfying pursuits, its passing pleasures, its often bitter disappointments—the difference between a life of contentment and usefulness, and one of vain struggle after happiness with little to recall at the close worth remembering. And finally, it means the difference between all that hell means and all that heaven means. In the one case "the blackness of darkness for ever" without hope and without alleviation ; and in the other to know that One died for us that "whether we wake or sleep *we should live together with Him.*"

"Do not feel afraid of being sad, it leads to a deeper peace in the end. The sadness of the discovery of what we are has a subduing and chastening effect, and lays the foundation deep and broad for all that God intends to build upon it. The deeper the plough goes, the more productive the ground afterwards ; and the deeper the knowledge of ourselves, learned in the presence of God, the more the heart longs for all there is in God. The less satisfied it is with itself, the more satisfied with Him. When the woman realised that the one Who had offered her the living water knew all about her, that He who had spoken so graciously and held out to her such a marvellous gift had not done so in ignorance of who and what she was, it only made the gift and the Giver more precious to her. What rest of heart it gives to find that He Who offers to become everything to us, knows us altogether. He will never have anything to find out, He knew all even before He offered us His blessing, and the heart discovering this, discovers at the same time its all in Him. All fear is dispelled, for He knows all ; and perfect joy takes its place, for He *gives* all—forgiveness, salvation and His Holy Spirit. 'There is no fear in love, but per-

fect love casteth out fear.¹ Cast yourself at His feet believing that He has everything to give you. The God of all grace gave His Son that through Him all might be yours, because purchased by His precious blood. Believe that the living water is for you. It becomes ours just in proportion as we really know Christ and He becomes revealed to us. It was when Jesus said to the woman, "I that speak unto thee am He," that she really tasted satisfaction for the first time. He Who could really tell her all things was there, and He had told her of herself, and told her of the Father. Eternal life, with all that it means, had dawned upon her soul" R. E.

Light—Love—Life.

The times are dark!
 Make *Light*, O Spirit Blest!
 Our blindness is confessed!
 Now by a spark
 Of light Divine show CHRIST:
 We then can leave the rest.

The times are hard
 With hate: Spirit of *Love*
 In our hearts gently move,
 Lest Sin retard
 The work of grace, and we
 In Passion's by-paths rove.

The times lack life;
 The *Life* Divine bestow!
 The most men do not know
 Strength that is rife
 In Thy work, gracious Lord,
 Whence *Light—Love—Life—do* grow.

WILLIAM OLNEY.

Our resources are ample:—

- (1) God is *for* us—(Rom. viii. 31).
- (2) Christ is *with* us—(Matt. xxviii. 20).
- (3) The Spirit is *in* us—(Rom. v. 5).

Dead to sin, the root and principle—(Rom vi. 2)—We are.
 Dead to sins, its practise—(I. Peter ii. 24)—We should be.

Fragments.

When Joseph as "governor over the land" of Egypt charged his brethren with being spies, they replied, "We are true," and tried to prove the same to him "by an interpreter." But notice how quickly they remembered their sin committed twenty-one years, at least, previously, and confessed this to one another—(Gen. xlii. 21).

If God's dealings with us at the present time would as readily bring to our remembrance as individuals, and as a nation, sins committed twenty-one years ago, and likely forgotten by us, forgiveness and blessing will follow as in the case before us; but how slow we are to confess, "We are verily guilty." Are we not more like David, in whose days "there was a famine three years, year after year," and it was not until the third year that "he inquired of the Lord?" The Lord could as readily have told him in the first as in the third year, "It is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites."—(II. Sam. xxi. 11).

David may naturally have thought: This famine cannot be in consequence of my sin, for I have not given occasion for a famine; neither had he, but his duty was to learn the cause, and then act as God bade him.

Seven men "chosen of the Lord" were hanged, but were not buried, as was commanded in Deut. xxi. 23. Their bodies were watched by Rizpah "from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them." This was told to David, and he ordered them to be buried. "And after that God was entreated for the land." Here we see *three* years' chastisement because of unexercised conscience, when *one* year should have served God's purpose; and then months added because His command was slackly dealt with.

Now is our opportunity to learn why such a famine exists, whether it be a famine because of our own sin, or a famine for the sin of others.

"The Bible is always a new book to those best acquainted with it."

The only sword which the Lord Jesus used during His life was the "sword of the Spirit." With this "two-edged sword" He manifested His power in "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" of His enemies, so much so that they put Him to death. Had his "soldiers" used that sword as faithfully as "the captain of their salvation," earthly swords would not have been used for the slaying of one another as is being done to-day.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.—(Col. iv. 1). The only place we can occupy in this world is that of service. (I. Kings xii. 7). Men judge our lives by our service, not by our profession. Our works follow us.—(Rev. xiv. 13).

When we fail to "keep the feast with sincerity and truth" (I. Cor. v. 7-8) the table of the Lord becomes a "weariness" to both God and us.—(Isa i. 14; Mal. i. 12-13).

When others interfere with our work, and tell us we are not qualified for such work we are often discouraged and give way to their charges, forgetting that as servants of Christ we are responsible to Him alone for what we do, and that He will not excuse us for leaving undone what He sends us to do. Had David turned back when Eliab and Saul sought to discourage him, Goliath would not have been slain and would have continued to "defy the armies of the living God."

If God had granted Job what he "requested" (ch. vi. 8), neither he, nor Satan, nor we would have "seen the end of the Lord," and so would have failed to learn that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy" (James v. 11), in permitting us to be deeply tried, as much for the sake of others as for our own sake.

If we do not "deny ourselves" (Matt. xvi. 24), we will certainly deny Jesus, as did Peter.

It was a Peter, who in loyalty to his master drew his sword to defend Him, that cursed and swore the same night, that he did not know him. What an humbling picture of myself, for unless "I watch and pray" I may as readily deny my Lord when tempted, as did Peter.

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Vol. VIII—No 8

AUGUST 1916

Price 1d

Notes and Comments.

A Day of Humiliation and Prayer.* It is a good sign that attention is being publicly called to the need of a Day of Humiliation and Prayer. *Of all the tragedies of this war the outstanding tragedy is that of this nation attempting to win it without God.* We speak of the *nation*, not of individuals. As regards the latter, prayer is incessant with many, and in volume, perhaps, greater than ever. But this is not enough; at least, it is not everything. There is such a thing as the nation. And the nation, as such, seems forgetting its God. We do not say it is altogether unaffected; for who could remain unaffected in such an ineffectual struggle as is being carried on, and in the face of repeated calamities. But the point is, there has been no national recognition of God in the war; no cessation of business; no day set apart for general humiliation and prayer. We trust it may yet come; and surely no time is more appropriate than just now, when the nation is under the shadow of a supreme loss in being suddenly deprived of the services of one to whom she owes so much, and in view of the great military offensive of the near future.

There are two outstanding features of the war, so far. How closely they stand related to our national attitude as regards God, we will not pretend to say, but no one can deny the facts themselves. One is, that all the actual achievements on land

* We regret to say since this was written the Prime Minister has, in response to a special appeal, definitely declined to appoint a day for national humiliation and prayer. The great offensive on the Somme has also commenced since the above was penned.

(we speak for the moment of that only) have not been accomplished by Britain, but by Russia. The other, that we have met with repeated failures and disasters. It is not a question of individual or collective bravery and achievement, or of the tremendous sacrifices and unparalleled efforts that have been made. These are undoubted. But these make the absence of success only the more emphatic and apparent. Look where we will, money and lives have been poured out with prodigal profusion, but no tangible success has been gained. Britain had to withdraw from Gallipoli ; she had to surrender at Kut. While on top of it all she has had to face rebellion in Ireland. What is remarkable throughout every phase of this contest is: so often matters might have turned out differently but for causes over which we had no control. (But has no one control?) And where we have been weakest and least able to help ourselves there we have been strongest. The Germans were not allowed to annihilate that little army at Mons. They could not, with all their efforts, break through that thin line at Ypres. When Gallipoli had to be evacuated it was done without loss, and under the most favourable conditions.

We should not think of recording these matters here simply for their own sake. If we refer to them, it is only because they declare with one voice that God all through has been trying to teach the nation a lesson. "Look," it all seems to say, "how much I have done for you when and where you most needed my help, because most helpless. And look again, and see how your supremest efforts have been futile because as a nation you have not sought Me."

It is of no use to argue—"But we have been unprepared." Russia was equally unprepared, if not more so, yet she has been successful on every frontier.† And as regards *positive* successes, all the glory of the war on land is, so far, hers. Is it to remain so? That is the question. We are writing solely from the point of view of the nation. In past times she has been greatly favoured of God. He has given her the place she occupies

† We are not saying this is because she has sought God more ; we are merely stating the fact.

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amongst the nations of the earth. He has seen fit to allow her armies and her navy to be victorious. He has showered upon her leaders, men of counsel and men of might, who have established her empire and made it glorious—and now we are attempting to do without Him, and are afraid to confess our need of Him. Scarcely a public man thinks of reminding his audience how much we need divine help. Men and munitions are spoken of as if they could do all. And in such a way that it amounts in fact, though not yet in actual words, to saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel." Not one leading Minister of the Crown has, so far as we know, publicly asked for the prayers of God's people.

There is a great deal of unreasonable reticence and false shame about all this. It is as hypocritical not to mention God and prayer and the unseen forces which work in this world, *if we believe in them*, as it is to pretend to believe in them when we don't. To make a false mention of them is bad. To make no mention of them at all is equally bad. Let us not be hypocrites either way. If we have no faith in the unseen, and in a God who rules and intervenes in human affairs, who cares and provides, who hears and answers, let us, at least, be honest and say so. We shall know where we are. But if we do believe, let us cease to be cowards, and avow it. For the highest in the land, men on whose decisions and actions so much depends, to be dumb on these matters—and they the heads, too, of a Christian state—is to be regretted in every way. Do they know that thousands of Christians are praying for them, and do they realise how much they need these prayers? And yet will they never acknowledge their indebtedness, or seek to secure the blessing and deliverance of the country they serve by moving for a day of humiliation and prayer to be appointed? A day in which the nation shall pause and recognise its God and take stock of its moral and spiritual resources. We trust this stigma of forgetfulness may no longer rest upon this people. It is no argument to say—no good would be done, or there would be little reality. To compel either is beyond our power, but it is not beyond our power to do what is right and proper.

In our April issue we dealt with this question, **The Old Man and the New.** quoting from a correspondent who had written to us on the subject. With reference to our comments, he further writes:—"I have now read your article in the April number with care and interest. The one thing beyond all others that I cannot quite see is the suggestion that the term 'old man' stands for the flesh 'fully developed.' It is this idea of the 'old man' as the flesh 'presented objectively' that I find it difficult, if not impossible, to grasp. I am now sending you a booklet by my good friend——, and you will see the line he takes."

Our statement, "the old man stands for the flesh fully developed," refers not to the flesh in any particular individual, but is used in connection with the race. Until Christ came, God was testing the "flesh" in various ways. It stands for an order of man, as well as for an evil principle in man. And when Christ appears—a man after a different order—the flesh becomes the "old man." Its true nature was displayed in its rejection and crucifixion of Him.

In the booklet above referred to, the writer draws an absolute distinction between the "old man" and the "flesh." He says, "One very common mistake is to regard the 'old man,' and the old or fallen nature, otherwise called the 'flesh' as identical. This is clearly a serious mistake. None of the ablest commentators take that view." He then quotes, in support of his statement, the following:—

"The old man is 'our former self, personality, before our new birth.'" (*Strictly* speaking we never lose our personality, and it would be incorrect to say "our *personality* was crucified with Christ," but let that pass.) Taking this definition as it stands it would apply equally to the flesh. "They that are Christ's have crucified the *flesh* with the passions and lusts." "*I* am crucified with Christ." This refers to the flesh as under law. Again, "I know that in *me* (that is, in my flesh.)"

Another quotation is:—

"The fallen sinful nature before regeneration." How can

the writer of the booklet in question quote this as distinguishing the "old man" from the "flesh." Is not the "flesh" the fallen sinful nature before regeneration.?

On the other hand some of the quotations seem rather to support the view given in our own pages.

Here is one. "The old man is the 'personification' of our whole sinful condition before regeneration."

Personification is only another way of saying that the "old man" is the flesh in its full development presented objectively. And the definition "our whole sinful condition" is equally covered by the term "flesh" as it is by the term "old man."

Here is another:—"All that I was as an unregenerate son of Adam." This is also the force of "*flesh*" as used in such passages as "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The fact is that an *absolute* distinction cannot be maintained. Take Rom. vi. 6 as proof of this. "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin (or, sin in its totality) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here the "old man" and sin are not looked upon as something distinct, but as more or less identical. The *old man* is crucified that *sin* may be destroyed.

The same things are predicated of both. "Our *old man* is crucified." "Have crucified the *flesh*."

"Seeing that ye have put off the *old man*." "In putting off the body of the *flesh*."

If the old man is our old ego, so is the flesh. "*I* am crucified with Christ." I know that in *me* (that is in my flesh) good does not dwell."

It has been stated that the "old man" is never spoken of as existing in the Christian. Whether stated in so many words or not, it is surely a fact that the "old man" was once in us (and is still, to all intents and purposes, if the flesh is), as certainly as the "new man" is now in us. If the "old man" was never in us, where did "his deeds" come from? Did they not spring from the old nature—the flesh? Are the deeds of the flesh not identical with the deeds of the old man?

In the present number an able expositor states that the

“old man,” the “flesh,” and “sin” are very closely identified in Scripture.* On the whole, is not this *nearer* the truth than the opposite assertion which we have been considering?

It seems to us that to find the true solution of the expression “old man,” we must regard it not so much as a thing in itself, as standing for something—like the Algebraic expression, X. We do not enquire what X is. It stands for something. So with the expression, the “old man.” There is no *concrete* “old man” (apart from its being a concrete expression of sin, or the flesh), which is crucified; but the term stands for sin in its totality, or the flesh fully tried and tested by God, and completely manifested in the history of Adam’s race up to the Cross. The Cross was both its full revelation and its end. When we accept that we put off the old man.

One Great British Church.†

The Lord Mayor of London’s Proposal.

He recently said to an interviewer, “We want one great National Church. We need an inspired leader in religion.”

The Lord Mayor of London has been speaking his mind; or rather, should we say, giving expression to his heart? for he tells us his heart and mind are often in conflict. At all events, he has pronounced in a very decided way for union and co-operation between all the various so-called churches—in fact, for “one great British Church.” He thinks that after the war people will not tolerate so many ecclesiastical differences, and, to use his own words, “the Church will have to decide between unity and decadence.”

Now there is nothing new, in one sense, in such expressions. Thoughts of unity and closer co-operation have been in many minds for many a day. But there are certain new features about this latest pronouncement which make it important. In the first

* This had, unavoidably, to be omitted, and will appear in our next issue.

† In connection with this article, we refer our readers to “*The Prospects of the Church and the World*,” noticed on page 180.

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place, it comes from one in the highest civil position—the chief Magistrate of the principal city of the world. This, combined with the way the statement is set forth, gives it an emphasis which has called forth a very widespread expression of opinion. Further, great publicity has been given to the utterance—the report occupying two columns in a conspicuous part of one of the principal morning papers. And for several days after double columns appeared containing the comments of leading religious men. But even more interesting and impressive than any of these facts are the statements with which the Lord Mayor unfolds his programme; and it is to these we desire to call attention. When he speaks of “Britain, Russia, and India working together with a religious consecration,” because “India has the secret of mysticism; Russia has the secret of love; Britain has the secret of moral earnestness”; when he further states that what we most need is “an inspired leader in religion”; every careful student of Scripture will perceive whither all this is tending.

Scripture indicates in various ways that one marked feature of the close of the present dispensation will be that of ecclesiastical apostasy. The Church becomes an organisation of abnormal development, a shelter for all kinds of evil, and inwardly corrupt. This is foreshadowed in the parables of the grain of mustard seed and of the leaven. In the one case, the seed becomes a tree, and the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. In the other, the meal becomes an inflated mass. This is in Matt. xiii. In Rev. iii., 17, the last phase of the Church is seen to be characterised by supreme self-importance and self-satisfaction: “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” St Paul’s description is, “Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof.” He tells us that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived;” that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,” and they will heap to themselves teachers who “shall turn away their ears from the truth.” And all this is to culminate in two things—on the one hand, a vast religious system, gaudy and pretentious, but utterly false, represented by the woman seated upon a scarlet coloured beast, of Rev. 17; and on the other, in a religious leader: the

man of sin—the lawless one of II. Thess. ii., in one word, the Antichrist. (See also Rev. xiii., 11-18.)

As to the first of these, a woman frequently, in Scripture, stands for a false religious system. (See Rev. ii., 20; Matt. xiii., 33.) The symbolical representation of Rev. xvii. clearly points to the fact that for a time, at least, a corrupt religious system will control the civil power. It is not a little remarkable that one of the critics of the Lord Mayor's scheme—himself a well known religious leader—clearly foresees this danger. "I fear," he says, "that 'one British Church' . . . would very soon overpower and master the State . . . (and) of all tyrannies that most to be dreaded is a clerically-governed State. If all the Christian Churches were consolidated into one vast ecclesiastical federation, speaking with one voice and marching with one step, it would not be long before such an organisation would dominate Parliament, make or unmake the Government, and control the Throne." This is true; and this is what will come; until the intolerable burden will be submitted to no longer; and this travesty of a Church will be finally overthrown. "*And the ten horns which thou sawest on the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*" In these lurid words the Bible depicts the overthrow of the Church in her final form.

The Lord Mayor says, "We need an inspired leader in religion." This, too, will come, as we have seen. And he will be *inspired* with a vengeance. But his inspiration will come from the bottomless pit—from the Father of Lies and the deceiver of mankind. He will work miracles, he will introduce a universal religion—a religion to suit humanity—and he himself will be its head and chief director.

In view of all this, what are we to think of the Lord Mayor's proposition? Will it not help on the consummation which the Bible declares is surely coming—a very different consummation to that which he seems to anticipate. He is a good man, and we would fain hope a sincere Christian. He is said to be "the first Lord Mayor of London who ever stopped his coach at St Paul's Cathedral to consecrate his year of office to God." Yet some of his statements are extraordinary, and not a little contradictory. He speaks of the central facts of our religion being

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common ground. He states these central facts to be: "The acknowledgement of God as the supreme reality of existence. Second, the confession that through Christ we approach to a knowledge of God's nature, and so love Him. Love of God is the greatest duty of man. Through Christ we learn how to love Him. These are the fundamental truths of religion." And yet goes on to speak of Britain, Russia, and India working together, and of religious unity being possible; not on the basis of all owning Christ but of the formula "love of God and love of our fellowmen."

There is no reference in his remarks to Christ's atoning work or the need of forgiveness. Read in the light of what is said about India, his meaning becomes extremely vague. For if we come to know and love God only through Christ, what about those who refuse to recognise Christ at all, or merely give him a place along with others? It is clear from the Lord Mayor's own showing that they cannot know or love God, and therefore what becomes of his bond of union—"love of God and love of our fellow men?"

Moreover, we beg to say there are other commandments even more imperative than these he cites, for they precede those referred to. "God . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts xvii., 30.) He has revealed Himself in Christ, and therefore demands that men shall come to a true knowledge of Him, which can be only through a "change of mind." A change which can be brought about only by accepting the revelation He has given. Next, "*This is His Commandment, That we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ.*" Until men obey this command it is useless to think of obeying any other.

The Lord Mayor wishes to disencumber the Church of many of her beliefs. For ourselves we are decidedly suspicious of union at the expense of truth, or by getting rid of truth. If a belief is not true, by all means let it go; union or no union; but why part with it, if true? Surely *truth*, and not *union*, or even *unity*, is our first and foremost consideration. A Church which cannot carry more truth than the Lord Mayor demands we are afraid will be driven hither and thither by the winds of error and soon be on the rocks. He says, "I have come to think

that a multitude of dogmas is a mistake and a blunder." If of human origin they certainly are, not if they have a divine warrant. He rests all upon "love of God and love of our fellowmen." Does he need to be told that this programme existed fifteen hundred years before Christianity was introduced? That though it came to man clothed with Divine authority man never responded to it? We do not for a moment suppose the Lord Mayor thinks he can do what God failed to accomplish, yet his words sound strangely like it. He seems to assert that it is only necessary for the scattered forces of the Church to unite on the above basis, to adopt it as her creed, and emblazon it on her banner, and the world would soon be changed "But what a new birth for this nation," he says, "if the Church became a living power in the land, *and calling all those her children who love God and their fellowmen, set out to spiritualise the national existence.* . . . What a difference that would make in our national life! *What a wave of enthusiasm would pass over our whole land!* What a unity is possible here! Why cannot our religious leaders perceive that the hour has come when they may light such a candle in the world as by God's grace shall never be put out? Unity here, sympathy with India and Russia; and then throughout the whole British Empire a new realisation of God and a fresh enthusiasm for Christ!"

And all this is to be accomplished by going back to the platform which existed fifteen centuries before the Christian era. We cannot understand why the Lord Mayor introduces Christ into His programme at all. It would be more coherent and less mystifying if He were entirely left out. Men were told to love God and their neighbour before ever Christ came. If that is all He came to tell us His mission was superfluous. If *religion* is all that is necessary (and this is all that is spoken of) we do not need Christ for that either. He surely came to do something more than add another religion, even the best, to those that already existed. What gives Christianity its unique place is that it is infinitely more than a religion; it is a *revelation*. And Christ came to introduce something entirely new. But like everything else which has come from God men have refused it; and so they are seeking everywhere for something

fresh and more in harmony with natural ideas. And we have the spectacle of this most eminent Christian layman advising us to get rid of our encumbrances (for if his words have any meaning such is nearly everything that Christ and His apostles introduced) and return not to Calvary but to Sinai.

Some have gone into ecstasies over this suggestion, showing how little even religious leaders are capable of discerning between truth and error. But we were glad to read the following expression of dissent under a well known name. "I do not agree, however, that the divisions of the Church are its worst evil. The divisions are only a symptom; the disease lies deeper. The truth is the Church has largely banished its Founder. We have lost His Spirit. We twist His teaching to suit the times. We think more of patriotism than we do of piety. . . . Hence the utter failure of the Church to heal the open sores of the world. . . . If the Church can get back the spirit of its Founder the divisions will heal of themselves; failing in that, the Church will remain an empty tomb."

The Lord Mayor's declaration is not only self-destructive, for the parts do not hang together (he speaks of learning to love God through Christ and yet of uniting with India in this love, where Christ is unknown and even refused), but it reveals a failure to understand the truth of Christianity, and the signs of the times as they relate to the Church. It is with extreme regret we criticise a man so earnest and well-intentioned, but he is all at sea as to the real situation. His programme, if carried into effect, would demolish both Christianity and the Church as established by Christ. Yet, strange as it may seem, no doubt can be entertained, that what is there outlined is destined to come. The Gospel of the grace of God, which reveals Him as He was never revealed before (and no one can love God except as He is therein revealed) is falling upon deaf ears; and the Church which should have been a witness to this truth has sunk to the level of a mere worldly institution and a purveyor of *religion*. It will become more and more corrupt and worldly, with the human element more and more largely developed and with less and less of *spiritual* power, until finally rejected by Christ. This is the truth as to the Church, looked at on the human side, and this will be its

end as a witness for God on the earth. But there is something else to be said, thank God, which is equally true. God has His people in it—sealed with the Holy Spirit—Christ's members. These await His coming, when, with those who have passed on before, they will be changed and caught up to meet Him. Those who merely professed to be Christ's without ever having His Spirit, will be left behind and will share the judgment of the world. The Lord Mayor spoke the truth when he said: "My conviction is that the present time is one of great peril for the Church." It is, but in a different way, perhaps, to what he supposes. The Lord's coming is near when the true shall be separated from the false, the wheat from the chaff, the wise from the foolish, the possessor from the mere professor. While the last end of the Church, as the world sees it, will be this: "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

R. E.

The absence of all mention of elders or of a ruling body in the Corinthian Church is remarkable. The discipline (1st Cor. v.) and order of worship and ministry (xi-xiv), and firm maintenance of the faith (xv), are matters in which the conscience of each and all are to be exercised. The responsibility to act on these detailed instructions is obligatory on all irrespective of a governing body.

* * * *

WE wish heartily to recommend a pamphlet from the pen of our esteemed contributor, Mr W. W. Fereday, entitled "*The Prospects of the Church and the World.*" In the light of the recent pronouncement of the Lord Mayor of London as to the amalgamation of all sections of Christendom, and the formation of "One Great British Church," the above statement of what Scripture teaches of the Church's future should be widely read. It deals with what God calls the Church and what men call the Church, and shows the destiny of each. The booklet also contains a brief but comprehensive unfolding of the prospects of the world. Price one penny. From the Author, "Normanhirst," Bakewell; or, Alfred Holness, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C.

Thoughts on Romans xi. 36.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

I have been meditating somewhat on Romans xi. 36. It is a truly marvellous verse. GOD fills it throughout its entire length and breadth. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen."

God is the great source and originator of everything. "Of Him . . . are all things." All that which meets our eyes, both above and around us, and all that which the eye cannot see (the "invisible" of Col. i. 16, of which we know absolutely nothing) owes its being to Him. He is *Creator*, and the whole universe is the work of His hands. Coming to that which is nearer to our hearts, He is the originator of our salvation and blessing.

"'Twas great to call a world from naught,
'Twas greater to redeem."

Those wonderful thoughts of love and grace which found their ultimate expression on the Cross of Calvary sprang up spontaneously in the divine heart. There was no counsellor capable of offering suggestions to Him.

"For, sure, no other mind,
For thoughts so bold, so free,
Greatness or strength could ever find,
His only it could be."

It was a wonderful moment for our souls when we learned that "Salvation is of the Lord." How often the awakened one turns to his own devices, looking within for some power to help, like the "wretched man" of Romans vii. But how great the deliverance, how complete the victory, when the eye travels away from self altogether, and gets fixed upon God as the alone source of all good and blessing!

But not only "of Him," but also "through Him" are all things. What He planned, He has Himself carried into execution. Amongst men, master minds prepare the plans, and

lesser minds perform the labour. But who, of all the creatures of God's hand, was competent to carry into effect His "thoughts of grace?" No angel, and certainly no man, could attempt anything of the kind. *God* has done it all. He became incarnate amongst us in the person of the Lord Jesus. He undertook the Sin question Himself, and perfectly solved it at the Cross of Calvary. Where does man come in here? Nowhere, save to wonder and adore.

Further, "to Him are all things." He is Himself the object for whom everything was created, and for whose glory and delight every divine purpose was framed. Was the earth created merely as a habitation for man, where he might disport himself at his pleasure? Far from it. The earth was created as a scene where God might glorify Himself in the Man of His counsels, the Lord Jesus. Was our salvation planned merely that we might escape the damnation of hell? Higher thoughts than this filled the mind of God. When He delivered Israel from Egypt it was to make for Himself an everlasting and a glorious name—(Isa. lxiii. 12-14). Luke xv. reveals to us the blessed fact that whatever joy sinners may experience in being favoured by God, each of the three Persons in the Godhead finds His own joy in the gracious work. The joy of our salvation and the glory of it are peculiarly God's, hence the words of the Apostle in Eph. iii. 21, "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Romans xi. 36 comes at the end of a lengthy discussion of the Israel question. The ways of God in this connection are opened up with remarkable lucidity. The nation as such has been put aside because of sin and unbelief; others are now being blessed as a result of their defection; presently, when God's due moment comes for it, the people will be taken up again, not upon the ground of law, but in sovereign mercy, and so "all Israel shall be saved." As the Apostle's soul dwelt upon this matchless divine working, the complete triumph of divine good over creature evil, he burst forth in praise—"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Creation and Redemption.

“God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.”—(*Ep. 3, 9-10.*)

The spangled dome of Heaven swells
The Great Creator's praise,
Ten thousand orbs, like golden bells
Majestic music raise.

The opening day pours out its song,
Till evening shadows fall,
Then softly night the strains prolong
Around this shining ball.

Behind those orbs sunk deep in space,
Beyond all mortal sight,
Th' Invisible doth hide his face,
In uncreated light.

Is this the only sphere in which
God's wonders are displayed?
No, there is one of Grace in which
His being is portrayed.

Nature reveals her Maker's skill—
He spake, and it was done;
But Grace the counsels of His will
All centred in His Son.

When sin had marred our fallen race,
And the Creator's plan,
Then in the riches of His Grace,
Himself became a Man.

A Man on earth for men he died,
Upon the shameful tree,
A Man in Heaven, now glorified,
Our Great Redeemer He.

Immanuel! His wondrous Name—
Now sing, ye heaven's above,
Till countless worlds shall hear His fame,
The triumphs of His love.

T. ROBINSON.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FREDAY.

XI.—NAAMAN, THE SYRIAN.

There are two men of this name spoken of in Holy Scripture, the one a son of Benjamin, and the other a Syrian officer—(Gen. xlv. 21 ; 2 Kings v.) Doubtless, to contracted Jewish minds, the Benjamite was much more to God than the Gentile ; and, in fact, our Lord's audience in the Synagogue of Nazareth were so enraged at His mention of the Syrian that they forthwith cast Him out—(Luke iv. 27.) Our Lord cited the case to show that there is goodness in the heart of God for strangers, and also that Israel's rejection of Himself would have the effect of diverting the stream of divine grace in their direction. This is how the blessing has reached to us, reader and writer alike.

In Naaman we see man at his best estate. He was successful in his undertakings, highly esteemed by his master, and evidently capable of winning the affections of those who served him. But everything was blighted by the terrible disease which afflicted him, for he was a leper. Other foes trembled before him ; to this foe he was a helpless victim. Leprosy is ever in Scripture a type of sin—that loathsome moral disease which unfits every man for the divine presence, and from which no man is able to deliver himself.

The captive maid is an attractive character. She was a true child of faith. The graciousness of her spirit is remarkable. Though a victim of Naaman's military operations, no resentful feeling was permitted to lurk in her mind. Her sufferings became fruitful in blessing to others. She might almost have said with the Apostle in 2 Cor. i. 6, "if we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation." Assured that there was goodness in the heart of God even for the Gentile, and longing that her master might be blessed, she said, "would God, my lord

were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." But when had God ever done such a thing? From the day that Lev. xii.-xiv. was written, no case is recorded of any man being recovered of his leprosy. Even at that very time there were "many lepers in Israel"—(Luke iv. 27)—and none of them was cleansed. We are reminded of Abraham at Moriah, who accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead, though no person had been raised since the world's foundation—(Heb. xi. 19.) It is blessed to note the confidence that faith has in God. Faith refuses to believe that anything is impossible with Him.

But Naaman knew not God as the maid knew Him. Accordingly he went armed with a letter from his own sovereign to the King of Israel. The healing, if it could be brought about, must come through official channels, with all due pomp and ceremony. But the maid said nothing about the King of Israel. The latter was dismayed at the letter, suspecting only an excuse for a quarrel. This was really shameful in Jehoram. Jehovah had taken great pains with this man in order to teach him that He is GOD. Had the King quite forgotten the water in the desert?—(2 Kin. iii. 20.) Had not Jehovah said, "I kill, and I make alive; I wound and I heal?"—(Deu. xxxii. 39.) Why did not Jehoram at once think of the prophet of God? Alas, flesh learns no lessons, let divine favours be ever so abundant.

How often in our own time do souls turn in wrong directions in their search for good! Lawkeeping, sacraments, &c.—anything and everything but the Christ of God.

Presently, however, Naaman found himself at the door of Elisha. The prophet, hearing of the King's alarm, sent him a messenger, saying, "*Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*" Now behold the famous captain at the prophet's door. He had his own thoughts as to how the cure should be effected, and he was prepared to pay a big fee for the blessing. He had already humbled himself considerably in order to be blessed.

He was following the advice of a mere servant-girl, he was seeking a favour in the land of a beaten foe, and he was now halting with his equipage at the humble lodging of Elisha. Surely nothing more in the way of condescension could be expected! But he must come down a great deal lower ere God could meet him. Flesh in all ages resents this coming down. A toilsome pilgrimage, a burdensome pledge, or a huge fee would suit flesh to-day better than God's simple terms of salvation by grace alone, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Men's devices put honour upon the flesh. But God's plan is to utterly abase it, "that no flesh should glory in His presence"—(1 Cor. i. 29.)

It was a tremendous set-back for Naaman when the prophet sent a messenger out to him, saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This was more than flesh and blood could bear. The Syrian was deeply affronted. As he turned away in rage, he said, "*Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.*" We all have our own ideas as to how God should work. But He has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways"—(Isa. lv. 8.) How blessed to come to the end of ourselves, and give up "I thought" once and for ever! The soul only then begins to truly learn.

If men in Israel felt scorn for the uncircumcised Syrian (as evidenced by the anger of the men of Nazarath in our Lord's day), the Syrian returned the scorn upon them to the full. He could even rail against their streams! "*Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?*"

Naaman may well be eternally grateful to his servants who forthwith pleaded with him, venturing to point out the unreasonableness of his wrath. "If the prophet had bid thee do some

great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he said to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

To Jordan then. Let the word of Jehovah through the prophet be tested. When did His Word ever fail? When were any disappointed who had staked little, or much, or even their all, upon His Word? "*Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*" Let us not misunderstand this type. Not blood, but water, was the element in which Naaman dipped himself. Cleansing by blood has reference to what a man *has done* (for nothing but atoning blood can put away sins); cleansing by water has reference to what a man *is*, as scion of a ruined stock. In God's great plan, *the sinner must be got rid of as well as his sins.* Now Jordan is typical of death. In the picture before us, we have the man of military fame, the man who would have purchased with money the gift of God; the man of "I thought," taking his plunge into death, and seen as such no more. "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child." So to speak, he made a new start with God. In like manner, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"—2 Cor. v, 17.) The believing soul endorses the sentence of death upon himself, and gratefully accepts the death of Christ as the door out of his former sinful state, that hence-forward he may "walk in newness of life"—(Rom. vi., 4.) Baptism is connected with this truth. The soul which has entered into the significance of it delights to say with the Apostle: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"—(Gal. ii., 20.) The old "I" has gone (for faith) with all its appurtenances, and Christ alone remains.

(To be continued.)

The Book of Psalms

(Continued.)

By WALTER SCOTT.

We purpose, subject to the Divine will, to resume our Studies on the Psalter—interrupted through illness. It may prove helpful to our readers to present a brief synopsis of each Psalm; also noting its divisions or sections. These latter if transferred to their respective places in the Psalter will, we trust, facilitate a better understanding of this marvellous compendium of Holy Song.

The Psalms abound in moral and prophetic teaching. But the instruction is conveyed to us in the warmth of human feeling and experience as felt by the actors and writers—by men of “like passions with ourselves.” In this respect the Psalms are unique, and differ from the communication of truth as presented in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, or in the epistles of the New Testament. Persons who have difficulty in grasping the outlines of prophecy from the glowing pages of Isaiah, or from the sacred page of the weeping Jeremiah, should read the Psalter. The Psalter makes you live in the scenes described. Little wonder indeed at the universal adaptation of the Psalter to all ages and to all circumstances. It is a wonderful book, and every Christian should ring out its praises.

In the first book of the Psalter the scenes and sphere of operation are, in the main, witnessed in the land of Immanuel, consequently the Jewish people are in the forefront. But the moral bearing cannot be circumscribed by geographical limits, and is of universal application.

The first two Psalms form a preface to the Psalter. In the union of the two are combined the moral and prophetic—human character and Divine counsel. Jehovah is witnessed in both Psalms. In the first He is occupied with His people; in the second with the rebellious Gentile world. In the former the ungodly are driven away as chaff; in the latter they are broken to pieces. In both Psalms the righteous are pronounced “*blessed.*”

Book One—Psalms 1-41.

Psalm 1. Here we have two classes described—the godly and the ungodly. The doctrines held and the measure of truth professed are not here the characteristic traits of the righteous. The practical life lived is the point in our Psalm. *Christian* godliness flows from direct association with Christ, and is produced by the Spirit of God. The godly Jew is first described in negative terms (verse 1) a helpful form of instruction. Then the positive is stated (verse 2.) Observe the gradation from bad to worse. *Walking* in the place and counsel of sinners; then *standing* or consorting with the wicked; lastly, *sitting* in the seat of the mocker and blasphemer. The order presented here is on the downward road and is true to life. The race is going down, down, down. The third and last stage of human history brings down the vengeance of God—(Rev. xviii., 2-8.)

Our Psalm *opens* with a benediction—“*Blessed.*” The second Psalm *closes* with it. There are other five Psalms which commence with the Divine benediction—Nos. 32, 41, 119, 128, 144. The great Kingdom-sermon on the Mount preached by the Royal Lawgiver arrests our attention at once by the nine-fold repetition of “Blessed”—(Matt. v.) Weigh it well, dear reader; it is a word of priceless value, a deep reality, and of present force to all who love the Lord and earnestly seek to personally appropriate the Divine blessing.

Delight in the law of Jehovah and continual meditation therein (verse 2) are two outstanding features of a pious life. For the Christian “the law” is the whole counsel and will of God fully revealed in the 66 books of the sacred Volume.

“*Planted by the rivers of water*”: Compare with Psalms xxxvi. 8; lxxv. 9-13.

“*Fruit in his season.*” The fruit is mentioned before the leaf. To man the inward springs and sources of action are necessarily hid. To God they are openly revealed. Man reasons from leaf to fruit, from works to faith. God’s point of observation is the opposite of all this. With Him it is from faith to works, from the heart to the life, from the inward to the outward. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23) presents in its entirety a

beautiful cluster of Christian graces, all produced in their proper time, place, and season. There is no forcing of the Lord's trees. They are all evergreens and all fruit-bearers.

"*His leaf also shall not wither.*" Old age may overtake the Christian, but his leaf, his profession remains green as ever.

"*Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper,*" by no means implies that worldly riches and honours shall be the portion of a believer. Adversity, affliction may be your *happy* lot (Rom. v. 3), but in these things is the life of the spirit, and that is true spiritual prosperity.

Now comes the vivid contrast, "*the ungodly are not so.*" They are as chaff, intrinsically worthless. They shall not stand (*i.e.*, abide the test) in the Judgment when the throne of Jehovah is set up on earth, nor have part or lot in the assembly of the righteous. The mixed congregations now of good and bad will in the coming day no longer exist. The Son of Man in the day of His glory will gather under His personal sway an unmixed company of saints.

The Psalm concludes with the expression of Jehovah's appreciation of His people, but the ungodly and their ways together perish.

The absolute application of the Psalm can apply only to the Lord. His path and its consequent rewards are in the first instance the burden of the Psalm; so also in Psalm xxiii.

Divisions.

1. The character and practical life of the godly (verses 1-3.)
2. The character and doom of the ungodly (verses 4, 5.)
3. Jehovah's estimate of the godly and the ungodly (verse 6.)

Ever the personal Name *God* in the book of Ecclesiastes.
Ever the relationship Name *Lord* in the book of Proverbs.



"In the beginning God created," refers to a primal creation—not to the six days work. Whether the creation of the heavens and the earth was the result of a series of acts or one act of Divine Power we are not informed. Neither date nor particulars are given in Scripture; nor can science help us.

Reviews.

THE INVINCIBLE LOVE. By J. P. Lilley, D.D.

A valuable exposition of Romans viii., 34-35, in which the love of Christ is viewed in the light of His death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession.

THE FORGOTTEN FRIEND. By Bessie Porter Head.

This is a book emphasising the need of prayer in relation to all the great problems of life, and specially in regard to the present war. It shows the lack as well as the need. "Alas! there has seldom been a time," it says, "when the impotence of the Church in prayer that prevails has been more obvious than at present." It is a loud call to the Church to assume its place of privilege and power as intercessor, and thus accomplish what no other agency can effect. We most heartily commend this book.

THE SHINING PATH. By Dr Townsend.

This is one of the choicest books we have ever read. It contains several messages, and they are as pointed and illuminating as they are brief. There are some most suggestive and comforting thoughts on the various storms referred to in Scripture—Jonah; the disciples in the boat on the Lake of Galilee; and a fortnight's storm, when Paul crossed to Rome. Also a short chapter on various miracles of Christ in relation to service. But perhaps the sweetest and most instructive of all are "three cameos of Old Testament history," illustrating Prayer, Holiness, and Power. We feel sure our readers will thank us for recommending this book to them.

THE WAY HOME FROM THE HOMELAND

Is a communication from the well-known missionary, Dan Crawford, telling of how he arrived once more at Luanza, his African home, and will be appreciated by all who admire his racy style.

WHEN THE BOYS COME HOME

Is the story of a song, by Lettice Bell, author of "Go-to-Bed Stories." She tells us that the last clause of Habakkuk in the Septuagint version is, "I may conquer by His Song." The book is really a series of stories, all of which are touching in their presentation of everyday life, and two, at least, contain distinct spiritual teaching. The stories are not fiction, but narratives of what actually occurred.

THE SUPREME NEED. By Andrew Murray.

This book, which is a companion to *The Forgotten Friend*, will be read with advantage, and cannot fail to produce a deep impression. The supreme need is *Prayer*. The burden of it is: "Pray for the Church of Christ, that she may be convinced of the sin of prayerlessness." "The sin of restraining prayer is greater, much greater, than we have felt it to be." There is one point insisted upon which is of great importance for Christian workers. We may be so busy with work for God that we have no time or heart for giving ourselves to much prayer. "They have never thought that work is much easier than prayer. Work rouses a man's energies, gives him the consciousness of helping and influencing others. . . . Prayer, on the contrary, calls for a sense of weakness and emptiness. Its deepest root is the denial of self, the confession of impotence, and the humble, patient waiting upon God, till, in His way and His time, He clothes us with the power to do efficient work, and to bring true spiritual blessing to those for whom we labour." These words deserve to be deeply pondered. They throw great light upon the deplorable lack of the present day. The lack to-day is not effort, nor is it organisation. It is not sermons. There is plenty of activity of all sorts on every hand. The lack is, true depth and power in our spiritual life and service. If we prayed more and did less, what we did do would have infinitely better results in the long run. For there are no *spiritual* results at all from much of present day activity. "Prayer is the chief thing in the Christian life, and intercessory prayer its highest power."

All the above books are most tastefully got up. The price is 6d each, and they are published by Messrs Oliphant, Ltd., 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

The Glory.

Called unto eternal glory,
 Oh, the blessed glorious thought;
 Tell, oh tell, the wondrous story,
 Tell what God, our God, hath wrought.

Not alone by God forgiven,
 Not alone to Him brought nigh;
 Not alone with hopes of heaven—
 Seated now in Christ on high.

And to share His heavenly glory,
 Evermore with Him to reign;
 Blessed Saviour we adore Thee,
 Hallelujah, Lord, Amen.

E. L. W.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 9

SEPTEMBER 1916

Price 1d

Notes and Comments.

The Coming Dawn.

A prominent politician said recently:—"It is a day of darkness, a day of destruction. It is not only the day, but the night—the night which precedes the dawn. When the dawn will come I do not know. But when the dawn comes you will find a new era. The old world will be changed, and from the sound of battle and the tribulations of war there will be a new earth and a new heaven for us all." But only God can do this. A new era—the dawn of a new day—is to come. But how? That is the question. If men think they will accomplish it, they will find themselves as mistaken in the future as they have been in the past. *God has a controversy with the world.* Until that is settled (and before it is, "God will arise to shake terribly the earth") there can be no peace, though men proclaim it from every platform and every house-top. But what we shall see in the future, we believe, will be tremendous efforts to set the world right, with a show of religiousness and external improvement, but with the heart of man more lifted up, reposing in his own goodness and achievements, yet more than ever alienated from God and His truth. "Peace and safety" is to be the precursor of "sudden destruction." The effect of the war will be to bring the nations into far closer relationship, the outcome of which will be a greater leavening, and those only who are firmly rooted in the truth will escape the demoralisation. Impatience of restraint, and resistance of authority, both divine and human, will increase rather than diminish. What the world needs is Christ. In his absence the darkness will continue. The dawn will come when He appears,

Very instructive is it to notice how faith—**Faith that Counts on God.** true faith—counts on God even where there is no previous promise. Faith does so of its own initiative and intuition. It *counts* on God. Abraham is an illustration, when he offered up Isaac. He had no promise of deliverance. But he did not sink down in despair, thinking that all was over. He *expected* God to work in some new way. "Accounting," it says, "that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." "*Even from the dead.*" The fresh emergency would only be the occasion for some fresh display on God's part. The unexpected trial would call forth a new intervention. This is the way of faith, and faith is never disappointed. "From whence also he received him in a figure." Faith never expects God to fail or to falter in His purpose. Instead of expecting less than God has promised, it looks for more.

The little maid, referred to in 2nd Kings v., furnishes another illustration. She had probably never seen anyone healed of leprosy. In fact, the New Testament informs us there were many lepers in Israel at that time, and none of them was healed. But she *expected* God to do it.

And again, in the case of Mary (John ii.) we see faith expecting, without any special promise. Rather, hers was a faith in the face of what seemed like rebuke. What encouragement did our Lord's words give to warrant her in a belief that He would supply the need? She *expected* Him to do it; and she was not disappointed. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Here was the expectation of faith. And the Lord Jesus responds to it immediately. It was Mary's *faith* as well as Christ's power which furnished the wine for that waiting company. Have we this faith? Are we counting upon God? Are we expecting? Why does God not do more? Because He is not expected to do it! Our faith sometimes does not rise up to what He has promised, much less make new demands. God has actually said, "*Command ye Me.*"

Is there any Comparison between the Christian Revelation and Religions, such as Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mahommedanism, &c.?

[In conversation with a man of intelligence, the other day, he spoke of Christianity as one amongst many religions, and of the Lord Jesus Christ as if He were only a little superior to Buddha.]

It is designedly that we speak of Christianity as a *revelation**, and other forms of belief as *religions*. This one fact alone—for it is a fact—differentiates the former from all other creeds. These latter are not revelations in the sense that Christianity is. They are gropings in the dark; vain efforts to recover something that has been lost; a confession of ignorance and blindness. For man had once the knowledge of God, and became deprived of it through his own folly and wilfulness. Here is the divine account of heathenism:—“Because that, *when they knew God*, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, *and their foolish heart was darkened.*” These various religions are not evidences of man’s knowledge of God, but his ignorance of Him. They reveal, not how much, but how little is known of the Unseen.

Buddhism, Brahmanism, Confucianism, the ancient religion of Persia, can tell us next to nothing about God. They are at best but *attempts* to explain the existing state of things and efforts to show how man can escape the evil and enjoy the good. They do not propound any way of settlement of the sin question. They do not present to us any Person as the object of faith and trust. God, as He is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, is unknown. They tell us nothing of any distinct purpose as re-

* We speak of special revelation. There may be religion where this is unknown.

gards the world, and have but the haziest conception of a future life. Christianity, in contrast with this, comes to us with a distinct revelation on all these matters.

1. It presents to us a unique Person, Who is said to be "*the only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father*"; and tells us He came to declare God. This is exactly what we need. For God to make Himself known to us (if He is the source and sustainer of our being) must be the greatest and best of blessings. It is just here that all other religions beside Christianity utterly break down. Nor is it any wonder. Who but God can reveal God? And How is He revealed? Under what character? "*Full of grace and truth.*" Not merely God's almightiness, majesty, and greatness, but His very nature. Such words as "grace" and "truth" are utterly foreign to all these religions that have been named. In them man is set to secure the best he can for himself, either by self repression or fulfilment of certain duties, but of *grace* there is not an idea; nor of truth. They are the confession that God is unknown, both as to Himself and in His relation to the world He has made. Moreover, there are truths connected with Our Lord Jesus Christ that find no counterpart in any other religious leaders such as Buddha, Confucius, and Mahomet. He made claims which they never even attempted to make. And in any claims they may make He infinitely surpasses them. He is the eternal Word with titles and qualifications which denote His absolute deity. He is declared to have made all things; without Him was not anything made that was made. He "became" flesh—He was "manifested" in flesh—terms which have no application to a mere man. He died for others. He gave His life a ransom for all. His death is said to commend the love of God to sinners. He is the alone Mediator between God and men. He is the Anointed. He is the Son of God. He is King. As Son of Man He is to inherit a universal empire. And not only has He a past without a boundary, and a present in which He lives enthroned at God's right hand, but He is to fill time and eternity; and the future of earth and heaven will witness His glory. He is to fill all things. Buddha and other religious leaders are left so far behind as to be completely lost sight of. They do not even enter the race.

2. This leads to a second point—the Cross. Have the various religious systems named anything to present in comparison with this? It is only the bare truth to say they have simply nothing to offer. There is, in fact, no comparison here, for there is nothing to compare. As regards the central figure of Christianity, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the death that He died, all other religions in comparison are an absolute void. None of these religions speaks of a death that declared God's love, or of a sacrifice that put away sin. A profound silence reigns upon a theme so vital to mankind. Yet this is the chief subject of Christianity. It flames through the entire revelation. It forms the very thread upon which all depends, and links all together, harmonising all the parts. And the Bible will not admit any other Saviour. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved."

3. How about the Bible? The Bible claims to be the Word of God, divinely inspired, and profitable for all things. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Is this claimed for the sacred books of the east? Did they take 1500 years to complete, and do they embrace authors as far apart as Moses and John, with a score or more in between? Do they contain the fulfilment of prophecies made thousands of years earlier, as well as predictions yet unfulfilled? It is safe to say that the Bible, like the One of Whom it testifies, possesses features which are absent from all other writings. The Koran is simply a mass of incoherences *in comparison*. The best parts are borrowed from the Bible. What other representative book of any of the religions we have mentioned contains anything that for a moment will compare with passages in Job, Isaiah, and John? Every form of composition and literary style are to be found in the Bible. The most perfect expression and the highest truth are harnessed together. Simplicity and grandeur, depth and fervour, terribleness and tenderness, power of description and historical narration, poetry and prose go hand in hand. The Bible speaks to every age, and upon every subject which

* For the matter of that almost any other portion might have been selected with equal propriety.

affects man in time and eternity. It addresses men about their past, their present and their future; about sin, its origin, character, and punishment; about God, His dealings with men, and His whole purpose concerning them; about mankind, its history and destiny. No other book in the world attempts to deal with such themes in a similar way. No other book speaks with the same authority and intelligence. No other book has the same scope, or enters into the same detail. Creation and Redemption; Heaven and Hell; God and eternity; Sin and Holiness; reward and punishment—all come within the purview of this marvellous book. But its account of the Lord Jesus Christ is perhaps the most wonderful part about it. What other account of any religious leader have we that will for a moment compare with the four Gospels?

4. Christianity possesses credentials which belong to no other religion. It is attested by miracles and signs without parallel. There is the miracle of our Lord's birth; the miracle of His life; the miracle of His resurrection, beside all the other supernatural manifestations of His power. "*Jesus of Nazareth,*" declares the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, "*a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs.*" And again, "Who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the Devil." His resurrection was the crowning miracle of all. And about this there can be no question, if ordinary evidence is to be received. Paul summons an array of witnesses—various individuals, as well as small and large companies—who saw our Lord. "*To whom also He showed Himself alive,*" says Luke, "*after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days.*" And Peter declares, "Him God raised up the third day and *showed Him openly*; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead."

Can these other religions provide such an array of facts? Have they such wonders to tell? In respect to such a challenge they utterly break down. They have nothing to tell of One able and willing to die for all men, out of love to them. No one who having died can rise again. And Buddha and Confucius have no history beyond the grave, as has the Lord Jesus Christ!

He ever lives to make intercession for His people. He is coming again the second time to receive them to Himself. Such statements and truths are unknown outside of Christianity. The coming of Christ, His birth, life, and death, and the manner of each, were described ages before He appeared. Can this be said of any other religious leader?

5. The doctrines of Christianity find no place in other religions. They know nothing of justification by faith, nor the peace which flows therefrom, nor the faith whereby we become the children of God. They do not speak of a Holy Spirit, as Christianity does—a spirit given to all who believe God's testimony concerning His Son—and Who bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, and sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts. Who forms believers into the habitation of God, where God dwells, and baptises them into one body. There is nothing in these religions corresponding to the Church as the pillar and support of the Truth, the House of God, and the body of Christ. If these religions have nothing to tell us about all these vital and wondrous themes, in what sense can there be any comparison?

6. Lastly, but certainly not least, their conception of God tells the real tale of their poverty, while it is just here that Christianity shines brightest, gives the clearest light, and becomes the surest guide to our feet. *"This then is the Message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."* It tells us God is love. It speaks of Him as Father. It reveals Him as a just God and yet as a Saviour. Judge any religion by what it has to tell us of God, and Christianity not only surpasses but eclipses them all. A pall of thick darkness settles down over Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, and every other *ism*, when it is a question of revealing God. These religions are at best only a feeling after Him without ever finding Him. It is true that the Koran speaks of God as "the Compassionate, the Merciful," the "Forgiver of sin and receiver of penitence," but we must remember this form of belief did not exist until five centuries after Christ and that it has borrowed from both Judaism and Christianity. It retains and reflects the fading light of each. For in Mahomet's day Christianity was at a very low ebb.

It is only fair that before closing this article, a few quotations should be given, in order that the reader may make a comparison for himself. They are taken from "*The Faiths of the World*," a series of lectures given some years ago in Glasgow by various doctors and professors.

Here is what Brahmanism teaches:—"There is one and only one reality—one being that is and never changes—one permanent substance of all things—and that is Brahma. I cannot tell what Brahma is: I can only say that he is. He who would know Brahma must turn away from all the senses perceive, and think only of an existence that is like pure, void space, without division or distinction, quality or dimension."

"God being conceived of simply as abstract substance . . . union with Him is possible only in one way—by the cessation of all positive thought, even of all personal consciousness and by identifying ourselves in a kind of ecstatic vacuity of mind, with that emptiness in which the divine fulness is supposed to dwell."

Such is the conception of God in Brahmanism. Is there anything in such a conception to influence the life, or satisfy the heart? No revelation of goodness or holiness—no one who loves and to be loved. Need we wonder that such a creed led "as it actually did, to a social life in which the grossest sensual excesses are not only permitted, but perpetrated under the sanction of religion."

"Buddhism is in one point of view a reaction against Brahmanism." It is, "nominally at least, the religion of five hundred millions of the human race." "It is a religion which seems to deny the very being of God, and which refuses to man the hope of immortality. It teaches, as one of its cardinal doctrines, that existence is wretchedness, and the love of it a feeling to be repressed and exterminated—that the highest happiness attainable on earth is in the extinction of all natural desires and affections, and the only heaven beyond it utter and final annihilation."

"In one of Buddha's discourses he is said to have summed up his whole system in the following comprehensive formula: 'To cease from all sin; to get virtue; to cleanse one's own heart—this is the doctrine of Buddha.'" But Buddhism provides no Saviour, and therefore no means by which this ideal can be

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attained. To many the remedy offered appears worse than the disease. Self extinction here, as far as possible, and Nirvana beyond, "which, according to the generally accepted interpretation, means simply annihilation"—is all that Buddhism offers. No doubt it presents a fairly high standard of practical living, but it is life without interest and without a hope.

Confucius was more of a materialist. He taught his countrymen that this life is the principal thing to be considered. "You cannot figure to yourself the nature of God," he said. "You cannot certainly know that there is any point of contact between His nature and yours; and in the absence of such knowledge the efficacy of your prayers and of your sacrifices must ever be an open question. But there is a region lying at your door which he who will may enter—that region is the world of duty; this is the door by which a man must enter the Kingdom of Heaven." This is "the substitution of a morality for a theology." "Buddha held this earthly existence to be so bad that the only happiness for man was the hope of death, and he therefore taught a morality that would prepare for death. Confucius held the present world, as represented in the Chinese Empire, to be the best possible world—the very Kingdom of Heaven—and therefore he taught a morality which might tend to strengthen and perpetuate the things that are seen and temporal."

In conclusion, may these few remarks help us to realise: (1) the treasure we possess in Christianity. We speak here of Christianity as a revelation from God, and not as it may be expressed in the lives of its adherents. As a revelation it is unique. Other religions may present to us codes of morals, but there is no comparison in other respects, as we have shown. (2) The possession of it, far from causing us to be proud or to look down upon others, should humble us on account of the little response we make and because we do not value it more. (3) That the other religions reveal not how much men possess of the knowledge of God but how much they have lost—looking at the race as one, and in its historical connection. (4) That between these various religions and Christianity there is no ground of comparison, and that we cannot talk of Comparative Religions where little or nothing exists to compare. One pur-

pose these religions do serve. They serve to show that if this is the best man can achieve unaided, then Christianity must indeed be a divine revelation.

It is surely a sign of the times that some are giving up the light of Christianity for the darkness of heathendom or for a blank materialism.

R. E.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

XII.—“IS IT A TIME TO RECEIVE — ?”

He who has received blessing from God is of necessity grateful, and his lips hasten to make their due confession. Accordingly we find Naaman returning from Jordan to the house of Elisha. In the presence of all his retinue he said, “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel” (2nd Kings v., 15). This was a great deal for the famous captain to say after all his victories over that people. But God, not men, was now before his soul, and God had become his light and his salvation. How could he do aught but publicly confess Him? Moreover, in his gratitude, he would leave a tangible blessing behind him. Had he not brought ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment with him from Syria? Payment was doubtless his thought when he started out; to leave behind him a grateful offering was now his heart’s desire. But the circumstances forbade Elisha to accept it. *“As Jehovah liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none.”* Even urgent pressure from Naaman would not induce him to touch what he had brought. The healing of the Syrian was intended to be a picture of absolutely free grace to Gentiles (a great lesson to Israel and a notable testimony to the nations); and it must not be marred by the passing of gold and silver.

Naaman then asked the favour of two mules’ burden of earth, *“for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto Jehovah.”* He would raise a testimony to Jehovah on his return home, and

that not with hewn stone (product of human effort); his altar should be of earth only, according to the word of Exodus xx., 24. Whatever the cost, he would confess Jehovah in the face of all the idolatry of Syria. This is the spirit that is a delight to God in all ages.

But Naaman had a difficulty, and this he frankly laid before the prophet. His official duties required him to attend his Sovereign when he went into the house of Rimmon to worship there. This would naturally be painful to him in days to come, and so he pleaded, "When I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, Jehovah pardon thy servant in this thing." Elisha replied, "Go in peace." Every newborn soul has his exercises as he returns to his former surroundings. A teacher taught of God, as was Elisha, would never grant a license in connection with doubtful matters, but he would be equally unwilling to impose a burden upon the conscience by demanding a pledge. Left to itself with God, the soul that only desires to please Him will soon learn what is comely, and grace will infallibly be granted to carry it out. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv., 18).

So the Syrian started for home. Alas, there was one (connected with the testimony of God) who watched his well laden equipage with covetous eyes. It was Gehazi, "the servant of the man of God." It was too much for him that so willing a giver as Naaman should be allowed to return to Syria as rich as he came. "As Jehovah liveth (said he), I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." Sin is aggravated a thousandfold when the divine name is brought into it. Covetousness led to lying, for sins seldom travel alone. The fabrication concerning the two young men from Ephraim secured a fine booty for Gehazi. Yet another lie followed to cover these transgressions. Challenged by Elisha as to his errand, he denied that he had been anywhere at all. Then followed the terrible denunciation: "Went not mine heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy there-

fore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever." "And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

Gehazi is here a type of his nation, once outwardly near to Jehovah, but evidencing by their behaviour that their hearts were far from Him. As His responsible witness in the earth, Israel has utterly misrepresented Him to the nations, (Isaiah xlii, 18-20; xliii, 8-10; Rom. ii., 24); and as a consequence His hand has come down upon the people in judgment, and for the time being they have been put outside the place of testimony altogether. Gehazi's case reminds us somewhat of Miriam in Num. xii. She was smitten with leprosy for her rebellion against Moses in the matter of the Ethiopian woman whom he had taken to wife. Both Miriam and Gehazi were utterly out of harmony with the mind of God concerning Gentiles. Their contracted hearts objected to Gentiles having a free share in the goodness of God to His people. Thank God, Israel's heart will yet be changed, and they will gladly disseminate blessing far and wide. But they must themselves be restored to God on the ground of mercy ere this can be (Rom. xi., 26-32).

Let us take warning for ourselves. We stand in the place of the smitten witness, and we are here to represent the gracious God who has revealed Himself so wonderfully in the Man Christ Jesus. Our ways must correspond to our words. If our words are to have weight with men, our lives must be eloquent for God. A censorious or covetous spirit absolutely belies the God of all grace. The departing Apostle could appeal in Acts xx. to his manner of life; could we do the same? The ministry with which he was entrusted moulded the minister. Is it the same with ourselves? The ministry of the unveiled Christ (2 Cor. iii) produced an unveiled man (2 Cor. iv); i.e., he walked transparently before both God and man. God was truly represented in his life. From him radiated the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Hear his appeal to ourselves: "Brethren, be imitators of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. iii., 17). "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1st Cor. xi., 1).

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Earth's Sabbath.

"The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the seas."—Hab. ii. 14.

Sweep happy tides round happy shores,
In rhythmic sweetness flowing;
Run rivers over golden floors
Your gleaming wealth bestowing.

Oh rosy fragrant lands give out
The fulness of your treasure;
Oh dancing waters leap, and shout
For ecstasy of pleasure.

Roll blissful Earth, ensphered in song,
Adown the radiant spaces,
And bear thy Monarch's praise along
Through all the silent places.

Thy "golden age" has dawned at last,
Thy Adam rules creation,
His Royal purple round him cast,
In reverent exultation.

Emmanuel, "God with us," thy sum
Of utmost exaltation;
To Him thy ransomed myriads come
In thankful adoration.

Beneath His eyes thy fruitful year
Fulfils its gracious story,
His Breath is thy sweet atmosphere,
His shining Face thy glory.

Oh beauteous world float on in light,—
Thy orbit's iridescence
The dazzling proof of thy delight,—
Thy Maker's Royal Presence.

Float on in music with thy King
And His beloved Immortals,
And let thy mighty anthem ring
To GOD'S celestial Portals.

Thence, wave on wave of rapturous sound,
Wide seas of song out-spreading,
Shall sweep the distant Orbs around,
Their mutual gladness wedding.

Thus happy tides clasp happy shores,
New blessedness attaining;
God's Universe God's Son adores,
And Righteous LOVE is reigning.

E. STACY-WATSON.

The Book of Psalms

(Continued.)

BY WALTER SCOTT.

PSALM 2.—The two introductory Psalms are set in sharp contrast. The first opens with a Divine word of blessedness. The second opens with an abrupt and angry interrogation to the nations and rulers of earth, in mad rebellion against Jehovah and His Anointed. "Blessed" opens the first Psalm and closes the second. The godly are first spoken of in the earlier Psalm. Believers are last regarded in the latter. The contrasts are many and interesting.

We have read again and again, and with ever deepening horror, the first three verses of our Psalm. The awful tale of a world in open revolt against God and His Son—of creatures in direct opposition to the Creator—is told in 45 words, and with striking dramatic force. It is not a sudden frenzied outburst of rage that is contemplated. The challenge to the nations is why *meditate* a vain thing (see margin, verse 1); whilst of kings and rulers (verse 2) it is declared they *set* themselves and take *counsel*. This universal rising of men against God is deliberate, and of determined purpose. "Heathen" and "people" are in the plural; read "*nations*" and "*peoples*."

What a lurid picture, soon to be fully resolved into fact! Think what it means! an armed rebellious world gathered in deliberate concert to break down the throne of Jehovah and of His Anointed (*Messiah* in Hebrew, *Christ* in Greek). This God-defying, Christ-hating confederacy was first formed at the Cross (Acts iv. 25-27). The confederacy has been scotched, but not killed. The introduction of the Church, and consequent presence of the Holy Ghost, is the hindering power to the full development of the confederacy. It will break out afresh just before the Lord returns in glory. The Lord in Person confronts the most gigantic confederation of peoples and their rulers ever witnessed (Rev. xix. 19). Everlasting ruin overtakes the mighty

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hosts of Europe and Asia, and probably those of even a wider area (verses 17, 20, 21). The confederacy is broken up and punished at the Coming in Power.

But let us learn from themselves what has been decided upon in the council-hall of the nations: what is the result of their deliberations? "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." In other words, haughty independence of God is loudly asserted. Divine restraints must go. We must be free to do as we like. Divine intervention in human affairs cannot, and must not, be tolerated. Such is man.

Now we turn from the discordant sounds on earth—a rage which can only be compared to the roaring of the sea. Another sound falls upon our ear. It is the laughter of Jehovah in the heavens. He pours contempt and scorn upon the confederacy and its fell purpose (verse 4). Jehovah "sitteth in the heavens" in undisturbed peace, and His throne remains unmoved. To know this is the strength of faith at all times and under all circumstances. Jehovah laughs at the impotent ravings of His rebellious creatures on earth. He speaks to them in deserved wrath. What He says will be known when this awful picture of human depravity is resolved into fact.

"Yet" (in spite of earth's opposition), "*Yet* have I set *my* King upon *my* holy hill of Zion." The King, the throne, and the seat of royalty are Jehovah's. The counsel here announced will soon be an accomplished reality. After the removal of the heavenly saints to the Father's House (John xiv. 3: *how* accomplished see I. Thess. iv. 15-17), and the judgment of the Gentile nations (Rev. xix. 11-21), the throne of Jehovah will be set up in Jerusalem, and Christ will administer its authority and display its glory for one thousand years.

In this sublime Psalm various speakers are introduced. We have had the counsel of the ungodly voiced in the words, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." We have also listened to the voice of Jehovah announcing His calm and settled purpose, "Yet have I set my King upon

my holy hill of Zion." Now the sound of another voice falls upon the listening soul, "I will declare the decree, Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (verse 7). The Incarnation and the Cross are the two great pillars of Christianity. Both are essential. The one is the complement of the other. There are heavenly and earthly glories, both the subject of Divine counsel. The Church is in association with Christ in His heavenly glories. Israel shares the earthly glories of the Messiah, when He assumes His Headship over the nations. Evidently there were communications between Jehovah and His Son on the day of the Incarnation (Acts xiii. 33; verse 34 refers to the Resurrection). The Son opens up the Divine decree; His Sonship is owned, and the nations and earth given him for inheritance. The Church fills up the gap, in time, between the decree and its accomplishment. In the Lord's prayer (John xvii.) He says, "I pray not for the world." When he does ask for it, then the rebellious nations will be handed over to Him, not for redemption, but for destruction (verse 9). The "rod of iron," *i.e., inflexible righteousness*, would intimate as much. The will of the rebellious earth must be broken. In the day of the Lord's power the wicked, proud and haughty, will be brittle in His hands, dashed in pieces to their everlasting ruin. Overwhelming Judgment will most surely overtake the workers of iniquity.

This Davidic Psalm (Acts iv. 25) closes with an urgent appeal to earth's governing authorities to yield unquestioning obedience, ere it is too late. "Kiss the Son" intimates lowly and reverent submission, especially so in light of His wrath now revealed from heaven (Rom. i. 18), from which believers have been delivered (1 Thess. i. 10), and soon to be executed (Rev. xvi.) How patient is our God! how gracious! "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," fitly brings the Psalm to a close. Faith in Him at all times, but especially in the day when His glory is triumphantly witnessed, earns the benediction

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of our God. . May it be ours! May reader and writer ever live in the perpetual sunshine of God's smile.

DIVISIONS.

1. The wild rage of the confederacy against Jehovah and His Anointed—verses 1-3.
2. The scorn of Jehovah and His determinate purpose—verses 4-6.
3. The Son Himself proclaims the decree—verses 7-9.
4. Obedience and faith ever secure blessing—verses 10-12.

The Divine Touch; or, Alone with God.

BY J. HARRAD.

GEN. 33, 24-25. *"Jacob was left alone. . . . He touched the hollow of his thigh . . ."*

Jacob's experience was a painful one so far as the flesh was concerned. There was danger ahead, darkness had overtaken him, he was alone, and moreover he was afraid. In view of a possible crisis on the morrow he had made all his plans to safeguard his own person. Even the mother and children he seemed so concerned about when speaking to God were sent over the brook with the rest that night.

Although presumably he had left matters in God's hands, he still schemes, in spite of the bitter lesson of the birthright. The Lord therefore who loves Jacob must deal with the flesh, and he is "left alone" in the darkness, facing an unknown tomorrow.

Do we not find, oftentimes, God has to get us alone before He can in love help us out of the difficulties which, through our acting without Him, overtake us. It may be the one whose eyes are on this page is, at this very moment, in just such a position. Not necessarily through any known cause of similar fear or failure, for it is quite possible, as shown in Is. 1, 10, to be obedient to His voice yet "walking in darkness, having no light," God having some important lesson to teach, that could be learned in no other way.

Thus it was with Jacob—alone. Alone in the darkness. But—and this makes all the difference—alone with God. At first the flesh asserts itself and is seen in opposition to the spiritual with such persistency that Divine power only will overcome it. Therefore God acts in love, and humbling though the experience may be, He simply touches the source of natural strength, and immediately fleshly persistency gives place for faith's plea, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

One touch was sufficient to cast him entirely upon God, to take away the fear of man, and make the trembling patriarch a prevailing Prince.

I. KINGS 19, 3-7. " . . . *He left his servant . . . , and an angel (the Angel of the Lord) touched him . . . and came again the second time and touched him. . . "*

Disappointments, even for the servants of the Lord, are hard to bear. So Elijah found. It was very humiliating after being so prominently in the public eye, to be cold-shouldered and then threatened; especially when anticipating a great triumph for God as the result of his bold fearless testimony. Wounded to the very quick, feeling somehow (like Jonah) he had been let down, he wants to be alone. So, leaving his servant behind, away he goes on the path that always leads to a "juniper tree"; when everything and everybody is wrong and "I, only I" am right. Had he forgotten the ravens? Had he forgotten Sarepta? Had he forgotten God? One thing is evident from what followed, God had not forgotten Elijah. The servant may be wearied in the "solitary" journey of his own choosing, but an unwearied Master, though unseen, accompanied him every step of the way. The servant may sleep, but there is an unslumbering eye watching, and an unchanging heart arranging for his need. God entered into his feelings (as He does ours) and knew the cloud of depression was largely due to physical weakness, brought about through hunger. Then, when all was ready, came the "touch" that not only awakened but showed that God was near and had provided (Jehovah-jireh). Jacob was awed at that Presence at Bethel, apparently, not so Elijah here. "And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again"! How utterly wearied he seemed.

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The Lord, however, not only knew the present need, but also the future, therefore the "second touch" and the reason; the journey too great to be undertaken without further Divine refreshment. Thank God for the grace of these second "touches." The Great Physician correctly diagnoses the case. With Jacob it was the fear of man, and the touch that weakened was required to make him cling to God; here, however, it was the fainting servant, and the strengthening touch is twice applied with the blessed result ". . . and he arose, and did eat . . . and drink . . . and went . . ."

Centuries later, the keen disappointment marked in the statements "I go a-fishing" and "we also go with thee" is met in the same blessed way. He, the God of Elijah, provides a feast to cheer and strengthen those wearied disciples, and invites them to "come and dine." Are you hurt, because not appreciated; are you disappointed at seeming lack of success, are your hopes shattered; do you ask, "where is the God of Elijah"? The answer to all is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

DAN. 10, 8—"*therefore was I left alone; (10)—and behold an hand touched me; (16)—and behold One touched my lips; (18)—there came again and touched me, one like the appearance of a man.*"

With Jacob and Elijah there was a measure of failure, and their being alone with God was more or less for correction, but in the case of Daniel there is an absence of anything that would suggest fear of man or despondency. "God my Judge," as his name implies, seems to have been his motto. His was a life of confidence and communion, although, being an exile, the opposite might naturally have been expected. He was as one "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High," having the mind of God, and like that disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned upon His bosom, he enjoyed the place of nearness.

This is the position of privilege, and the one who occupies it is favoured with visions of glory rarely accorded to human beings. If the journey was too great for Elijah, the vision carried still greater responsibility, and the glory was too much for mortal eyes, therefore as with John later, Daniel is seen

prostrated in the dust before that Exalted One, and all natural comeliness is turned to corruption. Then the voice is heard, and "an hand touched him" bringing him to his knees, the posture of supplication. Next, the man "greatly beloved" is bidden to stand upright, showing he has a standing before God. He responds with fear and trembling, but on hearing the voice again voluntarily resumes the low position, not daring to open his mouth. Again, "One like unto the similitude of the sons of men" touched him, the second time—"Touched my lips," then "I opened my mouth and spake," once more to confess weakness and unworthiness, and for the third time there came One like the appearance of a man . . . and touched me." The three-fold touch of love imparted perfect confidence, perfect peace and perfect strength. Thus to maintain the favoured one in the place of nearness, not one, nor two, but three touches are employed, showing that constant communion is essential to prepare the saint for further revelations of God's glory.

In each of the above cases, it is important to notice, the individual had to be alone with God before experiencing the touch that carried so much blessing

"God makes no mistakes in the government of His family. The wisest and best earthly parent may err in the treatment of his children, but not so God. His discipline is perfect, it is one of infinite love, of unerring wisdom, and almighty power. He orders and directs the concerns of each member of His family, and arranges *all* well concerning them. Oh, how full of sweet encouragement is His word for His children to exercise full and perfect confidence in Him at all times! They who wait on the Lord shall not be ashamed! He whose Word is true, and very faithful has said that, trusting in Him, they "shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." In the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength; and it is the privilege of His children to stay their souls on Him, to repose upon His constant, unchanging love and faithfulness in every trial and distress. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

Bible Notes.

By WALTER SCOTT.

Courtesy is beautiful in all and on all occasions, especially when exhibited in language and deportment by an aged servant of the Lord, "I beseech thee, *Lady*."—(II. John 5.)

God himself as *light* settles every question as to right and wrong. Hence we dare not on any plea whatever sanction evil. It is a principle of eternal right that God as *light* and *love* is the one and only standard, and everything short of His Moral Character is *sin*, and must be condemned as such.

The old nature: the old man: the flesh: the carnal mind: are expressions substantially meaning the same thing. There are shades of difference in the use of each term, but all refer to the inbred corruption of the life and nature derived from Adam, and existing in every human being on earth—saved and unsaved. Conversion neither changes the moral character of the flesh nor removes it. This latter is effected at death or at the Coming.

Why is it that in one year alone 800 publications were issued assailing the Holy Scriptures? If the Bible is a fraud why not let it alone? Why? because *it* wont let people alone. It speaks to, and troubles, more or less, the conscience of every man, and this is why men try to prove it untrue.

There are two Sanctuaries—the earthly and the heavenly. Aaron ministered in the former: Christ officiates in the latter. Both were entered by blood. When Christ was on earth He could not be a priest—(Heb. viii. 4.) He never entered the earthly or Jewish Sanctuary. His priesthood is exercised in the Sanctuary above. Aaron's ministry in the Sanctuary on earth was on behalf of the nation. Christ's service in the heavenly Sanctuary is for believers only.

The Observatory.

The Casement Trial.—A newspaper reporter thus describes the summing-up:—"I think that few men who heard him will ever forget the summing-up of the Lord Chief Justice. Instead of passionate defence, on the one hand, and instead of cold and deadly accusation on the other, we heard the quiet, even, passionless voice of Justice seeking neither to take a man's life nor to save it, but seeking to find something which transcends human life, something which is spiritual and not physical, something which is above the fate of individuals and the fortunes of nations, Truth.

"For many of us, as the deep voice sounded through the breathless court, it seemed that justice is so immeasurably a higher and a grander thing even than mercy, that pity for the prisoner ceased to move our minds.

"The brilliance of Mr Sullivan and the power of the Attorney-General appeared to us small, paltry, and inferior. Here was something to which all men could look up, all men could honour, all men could reverence—truth and justice; truth and justice unswayed by interest, truth and justice impersonal, unprejudiced and unsparing, truth and justice such as strong men in every civilised race have always named as attributes of God."

We cannot but be thankful for such sentiments as these; especially in the present day when "expediency" and "policy" seem to fill such a large place, and play such a large part in the affairs of men; and *justice* does not always sit enthroned as she deserves.

What a wonderful fact is discovered to us in the gospel of God, where we see justice and mercy harmonised. We behold them through the ways of God moving, at last, hand in hand. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." In the Cross we see both. Justice is vindicated; for "sin's full debt is paid." But it is equally true that "mercy can dispense her store." God's justice is wonderful. He can never depart from it. It must always be upheld. Its rights must ever be maintained. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." But He also delights in mercy. And one has only to turn to a concordance to discover that in Scripture mercy is a far more frequent word than "justice." "Mercy shall be built up for ever." Were it not so, what would become of us? If God dealt with us on the ground of mere justice there would be an end. In that wonderful 89th Psalm which speaks of God's purpose concerning Israel, and in which we find a two-fold promise to David thrice repeated, mercy fills a large place. We have the promise, "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore." While in Eph. ii., in connection with our own blessing we have the same quality present: "But God, Who is rich in mercy."

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And what is the quality of mercy? Mercy spares. Mercy keeps back the punishment we richly merited. Mercy pities our need and helplessness. Mercy does not deal with us as we deserve. Think of the description of our natural condition as given in this very chapter just quoted. "Children of disobedience"; "children of wrath," "dead in sins"; the world, the flesh, and the devil in complete control. All this called for wrath and judgment on God's part. But mercy is exercised; and not at the expense of justice either. God has discovered how this can be. He spared not His Son. He delivered Him up to death. Christ died the just for the unjust. And in consequence God can be "just and yet the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus." Here is the outstanding wonder of the universe. God loves His justice, and He delights in mercy. And both are maintained. The newspaper reporter quoted, says, "It seemed that justice is so immeasurably a higher and grander thing even than mercy." In human affairs this is perhaps true. Not so in God's dealings with sinners. There the one adorns the other. God's justice is only more splendid because He exercises mercy. And mercy appears all the sweeter and grander because justice is maintained. But the Cross alone made this possible. And when this is seen its glory is realised. Because of it, justice and mercy sit upon two thrones, and neither has to abdicate in favour of the other, nor has one usurped the place of the other. Through the blood of the Cross we reach the Mercy-seat; and that Mercy-seat is God's throne. The Throne of Justice is sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice, and the emblems of justice—the Cherubim on either end—look with their faces one toward another toward the Mercy-seat, as if they gazed with wonder and adoration at that which enables a holy God to embrace a returning sinner.

The Great Arab Revolt.—On Thursday, June 22, the *Times* announced the following news:—"His Highness the Grand Sherif of Mecca, supported by the Arab tribes of West and Central Arabia, has proclaimed Arab independence of Turkey and of Ottoman Rule, under whose maladministration and inaction the country has so long suffered." This rising is due partly to the "growing resentment among Mahommedans of the German domination of Turkey." Thus to this world war is now to be added a conflict amongst Mussulmans. It seems as if every thing was being thrown into the melting pot, as though preparing for some great and radical changes. When such vast forces are set in motion, as is the case in the present war, resulting in disturbance far and wide, there is no knowing when or under what conditions the commotion will cease. All this may or may not lead immediately to the final cataclysm before the Lord is revealed from heaven (2nd Thess. ii.), but that these disturbances will open the way to vast changes and prepare the way for the end, few can doubt.

Mahommedanism presents many features of interest, to say the least. Dr Johnson once remarked: "There are two objects of curiosity, the Christian world and the Mahommedan world; all the rest may be considered as barbarous." It must be remembered that Brahmanism,

Buddhism, and Confucianism are all antecedent to Christianity. One peculiar feature of Mahommedanism is that it dates from the seventh century *after* Christ. Another is, it has been the special foe of Christianity. It has more than once threatened to submerge Christendom. It is a mongrel religion, with elements of Judaism, Christianity, and superstition combined.

In view of the present rising, a few facts concerning this strange faith and its founder may interest our readers. Mahommed was born in the year 570 in the Arabian city of Mecca. In his early years he followed the calling of a shepherd. The religion of the Arabs at that time was idolatrous, but there was also a debased form of Christianity round about, and Mahommed came in contact with Christian communities on the outskirts of Syria, as well as with communities of Jews. It was not until he had reached his fortieth year that the prophet received the supposed angelic visitation which changed his life, and started him on a career of proselytism. In the year 622, when he was fifty-two, he made his famous flight from Mecca to Medinah. Up to that time he had made very few converts. Hitherto his only weapon had been persuasion—now it became force. "If the prophet had a high ideal before, as there is reason to believe he had, he now fell sadly away from it. The peaceful preacher of righteousness spent the last ten years of his life in training an army of fanatical warriors. His character became brutalised, his life sensual. . . . But his outward success was great. One by one the Arab tribes submitted to the conqueror, and paid him tribute. In 632 the prophet died, when about to measure his strength with the power of Rome, but the work he had inaugurated went on. The Arab tribes in myriads poured forth from their desert to the conquest of the world. Like a fire driven over a sun-scorched prairie, they swept on to victory. Within little more than a century they had conquered an empire extending from India to the shores of the Atlantic, and the same call to prayer was heard from the temple area at Jerusalem, and the mosque of Cordova in Spain."

There can be little doubt that all this was permitted by God as a scourge of a degenerate Christendom, which had lapsed into utter worldliness, semi-idolatry, or gross superstition. And some have seen in the vast hosts depicted in Revelation ix. a foreshadowing of these countless hordes of Arabs that overran Europe.

The creed of Mahommedanism is a short one. "There is no deity but God, and Mahommed is the Apostle of God."

As is well known, the Koran is its sacred book. To anyone familiar with the pages of the Bible, it presents no attractions, and would severely test the patience of such a one were he to attempt to read it through. "It seems a chaotic production—a mass of childish stories—a farrag of disconnected rhapsodies—largely sprinkled with legends from the Talmud and the Christian apocryphal books." And yet this curious belief can boast of 175,000,000 followers, and is still a power in the world, and may yet play an important part in its affairs.

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 10 OCTOBER 1916 Price 1d

“Abide with Us.”

“Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.”—Luke xxiv. 29.

“It is toward evening.” Some begin to realise that in their own lives. The high noon is passed; the shadows lengthen. The day of greatest activity is over. They cannot launch out as in former times. New enterprises are no longer contemplated. Certain things are dropped. Many friends and occupations of earlier life have faded from view. “It is toward evening.” What comfort to have someone who will abide! And that One the best. These words seem just the appropriate ones at such a time: “Abide with us.” Let us make the same plea, both for His sake and ours, as these disciples did: “It is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”

“It is then, when it is toward evening, we most need the Lord. These two disciples did not feel they needed Him less but more than when He first joined them. They knew Him better. And the more we know Him the more we need Him. He makes Himself indispensable to us. Is this *our* growing experience? Happy indeed for Him and for us, if so it is. Sometimes it is the other way. As natural energy and vigour slacken, we become less eager in the divine life. It seems to have been so with Isaac. Once we read of him: *“And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great.”* But when we see him later on, old age and blindness, in more senses than one, seem to have overtaken him. In contrast with this, may we turn to the Lord with increasing desire.

when it is "toward evening," and say with fresh emphasis "Abide with us."

Christ had made Himself necessary to these two disciples. He had come to them in their perplexity and sadness, when terribly downcast and upset and almost hopeless. How far this was the case, their own words tell us: "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." And how sorely Israel needed redemption, He knew as well as they. But His words, as He walked and talked with them, made a marvellous change. Their hearts began to burn, and their prospects seemed to brighten. Is it any wonder they said at the close, "Abide?"

Has he not done some great thing for us, too? He has. If we know what sin means, and our own sin, and how He has met all by His own death, then indeed we feel how necessary He is. But that is only one thing. We need Him in other ways beside. Has he not been doing great things for us along the journey of life? Strange it would be if such a Friend, with such power, had never done anything to make us say, "It is the Lord." Has he changed since that day on the Sea of Tiberias, when at His command the erstwhile empty net became full of great fishes? Have we not often had occasion to say—

" I need Thy presence every passing hour ;
 What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power ?
 Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be ?
 Through cloud and sunshine, oh abide with me ? "

And has He not been all to us that we needed? If so, how good, when it is "toward evening," to say afresh to Him, "Abide with me." Happy indeed for those who have thus learned to know Him, and thus desire to have Him. He died for us; He lives for us; He is coming for us, and the approaching evening has no disappointments and no terrors if He is near, and His presence is felt.

How pleasant when it is toward evening to say "Abide with us," *for after a day of toil the rest of evening will be all the sweeter because of His company.* Evening is the time of relax-

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ation and rest. It is peculiarly the time, too, when we need companionship. What better companion than He? Husband and wife who have realised in Him how closely they are united, and who have been drawn closer by the experiences of the way, and by all that He has been to them, may well, as they realise that with both of them "it is toward evening," make this their prayer, "Abide with us." How blessed at the evening of life to desire to know more of Him,

" And in that Light of Life to walk
Till travelling days are done."

But, if all we have already suggested is to be realised, *the day that is far spent must be a day that has known something of His company*. Has the day that is *far* spent been *well* spent? People who have never known Him, and never walked with Him, do not, as a rule, constrain Him to come in and tarry with them when it is "toward evening." They have done without Him so long, they can do without Him still. This is too often their feeling. It is not His feeling. He would come even at the eleventh hour. He is ever waiting to be invited.

"Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20).

What a contrast is here presented! What a difference it makes whether the entreaty comes from our side or from His! He will listen to our appeal. We will not always attend to His.

These two disciples had spent some time in His company. How long that journey took we are not told. But when the conversation is engrossing, the pace perceptibly slackens. Perhaps many a time during the walk they stood still facing that stranger, or with bent heads listened to that unparalleled discourse which carried them from one end of their Scriptures to the other. For it was a Bible talk—that which, above all other means of instruction, edifies, interests and convinces. They wanted to have more. No sermon of fifteen minutes satisfied

them. The day was far spent, but they did not wish it to end too soon. Could they persuade Him to tarry with them? He responds to their invitation.

We must be with Him during the day if He is to abide with us when it is toward evening. Let us not miss the opportunity when it comes. How often he would join us if we would let Him. And the Christ we know must not be a Christ of our own imagination, or one to suit our own temper. He must be the Christ of Scripture—The One of Whom Moses spoke—of Whom all the prophets spoke. How real to the heart He becomes when thus revealed.

Even the evening of life may be the time of further disclosures. It was at the end of the day that the real vision—the crowning revelation—came to these two. Had they not constrained Him to enter their humble dwelling, how much they would have missed. Only as we seek Him and want Him, do we come to know Him. He had on the road shown them much, but it was as He sat at their evening meal, and took the bread, and blessed it, and gave to them, that their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.

And the evening of life may be the time of greatest gain. Not until it is "toward evening" may all our longings be met, all our hopes satisfied, all our expectations realised, and our efforts become achievements. Happy, thrice happy, the one who knows this. "For the end of a thing," as Solomon declares, "is better than the beginning." It is well to have the "good wine" at the end of the feast. Those two disciples could have said, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." That day, which had begun in clouds, and darkness round about them, ended with a clear sky. It was only in one sense the day was far spent; in another, it was morning: a new day had dawned which could never be overshadowed. As surely as the company of Christ is our chief aim and desire, it will be so also with ourselves.

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Let us *constrain* Him to "abide with us." "He made as though He would have gone further." For He wishes to discover the place He has in our hearts. He will not force Himself upon us. When the day is far spent, friends may be few, and loved ones gone before; the years may leave us poorer in these respects; but richer in all that His company can yield to us, if we really desire it.

Nor will He fail or disappoint us. "He went in to tarry with them:"—He the Lord of Glory, "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," and yet perfect Man—He was their guest and companion. Who shall solve the mystery? Who shall explain how he who had made all things could so empty Himself and humble Himself as to be seen of men and become their companion? What immeasurable distances separate Him from us, and yet how near He has come! Let us receive Him with adoring hearts, remembering always the mystery; and also with joy and gratitude, for though reason may be baffled, the heart approves. Once he had invited two who longed for more of His company to "come and see" where HE dwelt, and they "abode with Him" (John I.) He equally abides with *us*. Both are true; and both, in a certain sense, are *now*. The lowly, gracious Son of Man comes to us, and would have free access to our hearts and homes. And yet He has revelations to make to us as Son of God of all that is His and of all that He knows, and He invites us to dwell where He dwells, and abide with Him.

God in Heaven and the Spirit in us act together in meeting our soul's need—needs about which we cannot even pray aright—(Rom. viii. 26, 27.)

Righteousness signifies consistency in every relation in which we stand related to God and man.

Looking *to* Christ is Salvation. Looking *at* Christ is Strength. Looking *for* Christ is the Christian Hope.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

XIII.—“THE IRON DID SWIM.”

To the man who knows not God it may seem puerile to introduce the story of a lost axe-head into a volume of so exalted a character as the Bible. But the fact that it is able to stoop to small matters as well as unfold the highest themes is one of the many proofs to the believing heart that the Bible has really come from God. For it is a most precious fact that every detail concerning His own who are in the world is of the deepest interest to Him with whom we have to do. He numbers our hairs; He takes account of our tears; He remembered Paul's need of a cloak; and He considered the weak condition of Timothy's stomach. A petty raid is of greater importance in the divine sight if saints are involved in it than the mightiest military campaigns if they do not affect them. This is why a whole chapter is devoted to Chedorlaomer's attack upon Southern Palestine (Gen. xiv.), while many of the great military movements of antiquity (dilated upon by historians) receive no notice in Scripture whatever.

In this materialistic day it is considered childish to accredit miracles. An axe-head fetched up from the bed of a river by the simple expedient of casting a stick into the water! (II. Kings vi. 1-7). Here indeed is food for the contempt of the proud. But the narrative presents no difficulty to faith. No reverent mind believes that the Lawgiver of the universe is limited by the natural laws which He has Himself established. While allowing those laws to have their full ordinary operation, He is quite able to act apart from, and in superiority to, them whenever it pleases Him to do so.

The physical miracle of recovering a lifeless axe from the depths may indeed be great, but the moral miracle of recovering for God a man dead in trespasses and sins is immeasurably greater. The latter may well be pictured in the former. The axe-head which broke away from its proper position, where

alone it could be really useful, and which then became an instrument for mischief, is strikingly suggestive of revolted man. If he were still standing in his original God-appointed position, he would be of service for God in the universe; having broken away from that position, he is Satan's most efficient tool for evil.

"Alas, master," cried the hapless woodman, "for it was borrowed." To lose what belongs to another is more serious than to lose what is really our own. Now all that constitutes man what he is, is derived from, and belongs to, Another. No man has anything that he can properly call his own. This truth was pressed upon guilty Belshazzar by the prophet Daniel on the last night of a wasted life. "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Dan. v. 23). To many another the same strong words might be addressed with equal suitability.

"The axe-head fell into the water"—*i.e.*, into Jordan, the familiar Scripture type of death. Is man a fallen creature, or is he not? The wisdom of the twentieth century objects to saying "Yes," and yet men cannot deny that something is radically wrong with the race in every quarter. Civilized Europe, with its barbarous conflict, wherein every convention is ruthlessly trampled under foot, cannot with decency again reproach the uncivilized heathen. Let none deny it—man is fallen, and away from God. Jordan speaks of death, and death unquestionably lies upon men everywhere in consequence of their fallen condition.

"And the man of God said, where fell it?" Having learned, "he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither: and the iron did swim." In like manner, as the living branch was cut down and cast in where the lost iron lay, even so was the living Christ cut down, and went right down into death where lost men lay. We are thus reminded of the words of the Apostle in II. Cor. v. 14-15, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." Readers should beware of the revisers' rendering of this passage. The point before the mind of the Apostle is this—the fact that

Christ died for all is the proof that all men were in a state of death (spiritual death, of course). He who would deliver men must go where men were ; nothing else could avail. The modern Ritualist attaches all possible importance to the Incarnation ; but by so doing, he would rob us of the benefit of Redemption. Such was men's condition by nature and practice that Christ's death and blood-shedding alone could meet it.

Physical miracles may to-day be absent, but moral miracles are being wrought amongst us continually. Men dead towards God are being quickened into new life by the Spirit's power, the instrument used for the mighty transformation being the old Gospel concerning the Saviour who died for sinners upon Calvary's tree, and rose again.

"He that Searcheth the Hearts."

If we forget our mighty Maker's Name,
 If we withhold the homage He doth claim,
 If we forbear to kneel before His Throne,
 Or yield another what is His alone—
 Shall not God search this out ?

If in our heart some evil thing we hide,
 If from the narrow path we turn aside,
 If in the world we seek to find our joy,
 Or earthly thoughts, and hopes our mind employ—
 Shall not God search this out ?

If we neglect to read His Holy Word,
 If by Himself our voice is seldom heard,
 If we to others turn for strength and aid,
 Or trust in idols which our hands have made—
 Shall not God search this out ?

Yes, truly yes, He loveth us too well
 To leave us in the power of such a spell,
 Yes, for our sake, and for His own great name,
 On which by all these things we bring such shame—
 Our God shall search this out.

E. L. W.

Isaiah.***Introduction.**

[In this and the papers which are to follow, we believe our readers will find much suggestive thought and helpful instruction in regard of one of the most precious parts of Inspiration.]

“ Sweet is the harp of prophesy ; too sweet
Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch.”

So sang one of our own poets ; and he sang truthfully, for always sweet to the ear of faith is the music of prophecy. It was never sounded, and its worth is still rarely appreciated, save in days of depression and declension amid the Lord's people ; and whilst it spares not their sins, but exposes them fully, it ever points to a tender grace that is ready to meet and welcome penitence, and to a wisdom that has made provision to meet and welcome it righteously.

If this be true, how peculiarly attractive should dependent and diligent prophetic study be to-day—a day so clearly characterized, not merely by declension, but by incipient apostasy ; and filled with gravest portents. We hear amid the nations, self-styled “ Christian,” boastings of emancipation from the very foundation truths of Christianity ; and we see amid those same nations a mutual destruction that has ever been the clearest token of divine judgment (see Judges vii. 22 ; I. Sam. xiv. 20). Have these two facts no inter-relation ? Is not rather the last a direct consequence of the first ? Nor can any tell with any assurance what will be the end of a conflict, beyond all precedent terrible. There is, most surely, “ distress of nations in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the rolling surge.”

Does it not behove us then, beloved, to humble ourselves before God, and to beseech Him for that light upon His holy Word that can alone come from the Father of Lights, that we may cherish no false expectation, nor abandon any true one ; but that, in quiet peace amid the turmoil, we may hold fast a divinely accredited confidence that shall never make us ashamed ?

* These papers are supplied directly to us by the writer, Mr F. C. Jennings.

In the assurance then *first*, that God's Word has never yet been exhausted ; that there are, and ever will be, depths in it still unfathomed ; and next, that we need to-day, what no other books written in the past can possibly give us, since they were written in a different combination of events than that in which our lot has fallen, let us enter on our meditations on the prophet Isaiah.

ISAIAH ! How little that word conveys to our minds ! It is but a name given to an individual who lived between two and three thousand years ago ; and as far as we get anything of interest or value from it, it might just as well have been anything else. But this is not merely an unworthy way of treating Scripture, it is really irrational ; for this name is simply a compound Hebrew word and would be as full of simple and clear meaning to an Israelite as are "Worldly-Wiseman" or "Valiant-for-Truth" or "Evangelist" in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" to us. What reason can there be for ignoring it ?

Assume that unrivalled allegory to be translated into Chinese, and these names left in their English form, would the native readers get the significance that the writer intended from those names ? They would surely need to be translated as much as any other part of the text. Similarly if the names in Scripture give evidence of divinely intended significance is it not worse than folly to neglect them ? I recognise how limited is our ability, and the danger there is of giving rein to the imagination ; but, giving full weight to both these objections, candour will find a multitude of Scriptural names as clearly evidencing divine significance as that of "Melchizedek, king of Salem" ; and amongst these is "*Isaiah, the son of Amoz.*"

For if we render the word Isaiah into its English equivalents, we get the two ideas of "Jehovah" and "Salvation" : "Jehovah," the covenant-keeping God of Israel, and because He is Jehovah He will save ; for Isaiah means "*Jehovah's salvation.*"

And that this is the very intent of the name being given to this prophet, little as his parents who gave it him may have been conscious of it at the time, is specifically taught us in his eighth chapter and eighteenth verse : "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts that dwelleth in Mount Zion." But in what do the signs consist ? What, for example, do we

know of these children that would make them signs? Not one thing are we told of their doings or sayings; we know absolutely nothing of them but their *names*! Surely, then, it is a conclusion that is inevitable that the whole "sign" must be in those names; and indeed we shall find this to be fully justified if we are permitted to consider them. But this being the case with the children, then the sign in their father, the prophet himself, must also be in his name: *Jehovah's salvation*.

And it is indeed, for in that one name is compressed the whole of the contents of the book. All through it, with all its thunderings of stern reprobation of the sin of Israel—the representative of the race as a whole—the words "save" and "salvation" ring like bells of joy, all the more melodious because of the foil of the awe-filling thunderings of judgment that ever precede the sweet melody; as in our own book of prophecy, Revelation, the constantly recurring "lightnings and voices and thunderings" throw into a clear and sweet relief the "new song," the "harpers harping with their harps," and the God-made tearless scene of endless peace.

But if the name of the prophet and of his children are of such value, is there none at all in that of his progenitor? Surely it is not in vain that we are told that he was "the son of Amoz"; for the meaning of the word is equally clear, since we may even find it translated for us in Psalm xxvii. 14, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall *strengthen* thine heart"; to strengthen is its prime meaning; while in Deut. xxxi. 6, 7, 23 and Joshua i. 6, 7, 9, etc., it is rendered by "be of *good courage*." It speaks, then, of the divinely given strength of faith; as it is written, "in quietness and confidence shall be your strength"; and again "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Isaiah is indeed thus the son of Amoz. Surely those who put aside such significance in names do little honour to the microscopic beauty of the Word of God.

Filled, too, with a significance closely corresponding to these names is the *number* impressed upon the book by its clearly marked divisions; nor will it be profitless to consider them.

But in this too, I am aware that many have an almost invincible distaste for attaching any significance to, or deducing any teaching from, the *numbers* of Scripture. Both by temperament

and by training they are inclined rather to avoid and reprobate this line of study than pursue it. Nor may they lack some grounds for such an attitude in the extravagancies in which some who have followed it may have indulged. But the existence of the spurious is no disproof of the existence of the genuine. Nay, on the contrary, the very existence of a spurious coin is really proof of the existence of the genuine; and the only prudent course is to prove all and hold fast that which is good.

Again, what line of Scripture-truth would not have to be abandoned on the same principle? *Prophecy* certainly has been, and is pre-eminently to-day, the sphere of boundless extravagancies; shall we therefore turn a deaf ear to II. Peter i. 19, and say we do well *not* to take heed to it? Alas, many do this; but it is to their own loss. Nor will we then refrain from seeking to discover if there be not a significance in numbers, and in the numerical structure of His Word; and the more clearly we see the proof of this divine intent, the more will we sing "thou Lord hast made me glad through Thy works," For He who has imprinted on every minute detail of His works in nature the inimitable imprint of His Finger,

" Not a flower

But shews some touch in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivalled pencil"—

has done exactly the same with His Word, and those who refuse it, do so to their own loss.

Nor are there lacking guards and limitations that will serve to keep us from error or extravagance. Nor shall we transgress those guards or go beyond those limits in discerning the number clearly marked on Isaiah.

The main divisions* are unmistakably clear:

1.—Chapters one to thirty-five, in which *Assyria* and Jehovah's salvation holds the prominent place.

2.—Chapters thirty-six to thirty-nine: Historic interlude, linking the other two parts.

3.—Chapters forty to sixty-six, in which *Babylon* and Jehovah's salvation holds the prominent place.

* I am not unaware of the usual division into *two* parts; but no one can deny that the four historic chapters (36 to 39) are of altogether a different character from either of the other two.

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But not only is the book as a whole thus triologically divided; but each of these parts has the same number, *three*, imprinted upon it in its subdivisions. Let us take the most evident first. In the second part, chapters thirty-six to thirty-nine a child could see that the *first* subdivision consists of chapters thirty-six and thirty-seven; the Assyrian invasion and confusion; the second, chapter thirty-eight, the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah; the third, chapter thirty-nine, the visit of the *Babylonian* ambassadors.

The third part, chapters forty to sixty-six, is, we may say, even divinely divided for us into the following three subdivisions:

1.—Chapters forty to forty-eight, the terminus again marked by the words "*no peace to the wicked.*"

2.—Chapters forty-nine to fifty-seven, the terminus again marked by the words "*no peace to the wicked.*"

3.—Chapters fifty-eight to the end.

But Delitsch who, as far as is evidenced, has no idea of any special significance attached to number, and therefore had no motive for forcing to attain a preconceived result, writes, "It is equally certain that each of these three parts consists of 3×3 addresses." It will not be necessary to specify these at the moment; it is sufficient to recognise that here we have "three" in its fullest possible form: 3^3

But turning back now to the first part, a similar structure is marked on chapters thirty-one and thirty-five. For here, too, there are quite unmistakably three main divisions, thus:

First, chapters one to six: a threefold introduction.

Second, chapters seven to twelve: Immanuel and the Assyrian.

The third, chapters thirteen to thirty-five: "burdens," "woes," and finally, "peace."

Each of these is again subdivided into three, as we shall see if we are permitted to continue, but we will not embarrass our text by specifying them now.

It becomes absolutely clear then that this number "*three*" has been impressed on the book in every part and in the fullest way, and we need only ask what is the significance of this num-

ber, to see the *Finger of God*, as we may, in an inferior way, see it in the petal of a flower or a butterfly's wing.

To answer this, let me quote from one to whom we all owe so much, under God, for light on just this hitherto neglected line of truth, the numerical structure of Scripture: "Three is the symbol of cubic measure, solid measure, solidity. It stands for what is solid, real, substantial—for fulness, actuality. It is the number of the Persons in the Godhead: *of the divine fulness, therefore, and until we reach this God is not fully manifested.* Thus it is the number of manifestation."*

Oh, my beloved, in what way has God been "fully manifested" save in being the Saviour, the righteous Saviour of sinful men. This, and this only, tells out all that He is; for none in all the universe but God could effect it. In this salvation are expressed His manifold wisdom, the exceeding riches of His grace. Here *mercy*, in all its sweetness; *truth*, in all its purity, "are met together." Here righteousness, as light unflecked and unsullied by the slightest film; and *peace*, as a river unruffled by one adverse ripple, "kiss each other." In a word, *God is fully manifested as Light and Love* in the salvation of a fallen but beloved race; that is, *three* speaks exactly the same story, gives out the same joyous melody as does the name *Isaiah*: it tells of the *salvation of Jehovah!* Must we not say the number has been imprinted on the book by the very Finger of God?

Thus, too, the book is not sealed, but lies open before us; or, to employ another figure, the key of the structure has been placed in our hands—we have even found it hanging at the front door, as one may say; yet not one step can we enter into it (nor do we desire to), nor tread its courts, nor examine its chambers with profit, till we put our hand dependently and trustfully in His who has given His Spirit to "lead us into all truth," to "take of the things of Christ and show them to us," and "to show us things to come."

Turning, then, to the first subdivision of the first main division of the book, we find it made up of chapters one to six: and this, in its turn, clearly, simply, unmistakably divides for us into just three smaller divisions thus: the *first*, introduced by

* Numerical number.

the words, "the vision" of Isaiah, chapter one, verse one; the second by "the word that Isaiah the Son of Amoz *saw*," chapter two, verse one; the third by "in the year that King Uzziah died, I *saw* the Lord sitting upon a throne," chapter six, verse one. It thus forms, in three visions, a kind of threefold introduction to the whole book and as such let us briefly consider it. F. C. J.

(To be continued.)

Grain from Joseph's Granary.

By WILLIAM LUFF.

Author of "Battles in Air and Sea" Leaflets.

Fourth Sackful.

UNDER DUAL CONTROL.—A friend prayed, "Lord, put Thy hand of control upon us." Soon after, I read an article on teaching to fly, in which the writer said—"In 'dual control' machines there are two sets of control levers—one in the pilot's seat and the other in the pupil's seat. Each is connected and they both work simultaneously, so that whatever movement is made by the one is felt by the other. Thus, if the pupil is guilty of an error the instructor at once makes the necessary correction, and the movement, with its fine grade of judgment, is felt by the student who is holding the duplicate set of controls." After reading this, my friend's prayer had a new meaning. The Christian's life is under a "dual control," so that the Master Hand can correct the mistakes of the uninitiated. "He guided them by the skilfulness of His hands" (Ps. lxxviii. 72). "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts xvi. 6-7). Here is "dual control."

PROTECTED BY A PERSON.—"Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle" (Ps. cxl. 7). This text received a new meaning after reading the following deed, which won the doer a

D.C.M. (a Distinguished Conduct Medal):—“Private G. M’Gill, Fosse 8, when Captain Farmer of his regiment was wounded, dressed his wound under fire. He then lay over his officer for two hours to protect him from shrapnel bullets. Later, still under a hot fire, he dragged Captain Farmer to a trench, a bullet passing through his kilt while he was doing so. Again, near the dressing station he used his own body to shield his officer from the shrapnel fire, which was heavy.” Christ dresses our wounds, and is Himself between us and death. We truly sing, “Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing.”

PRESERVED FROM A BOMB.—I was shown a small house, on which a bomb had fallen; a little child was calmly sleeping in her bed, unconscious that over her hovered a huge Zeppelin, in which were men, perhaps themselves fathers, about to drop their deadly missile upon that unprotected and humble home. It crashed through the fragile roof, tore the corner of the child’s pillow in its terrible downward course; but, strange to say, did not injure the little sleeper, and did not explode. Was not that little one preserved of God? “Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord” (Genesis xlvii. 25). “For Thou hast delivered my soul from death: will not Thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” (Psalm lvi. 13).

DIAMONDS IN WAR-TIME.—A writer in the paper says—“There is one trade that has been almost ruined by the war. That is the diamond trade.” He gives the experience of one diamond merchant. “At the present moment I know of one diamond cutter who has had to dismiss twelve of his employees because there is so little doing. I can see no hope for the future. As our trade was the first to be hit by the war, so it will be the last to recover. People are not going to spend money on unnecessary luxuries.” “There are true riches” (Luke xvi. 11), which never lose their value. “It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No

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mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies" (Job xxviii. 15-18). God's diamonds are more in demand than ever, and He gives them freely.

FAITH.—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I. Peter i. 7). True faith bears testing. It

F ears no . . . Foe;
 A ccepts God's . . . Appointments;
 I s confident in . . . Intercession;
 T riumphs over all . . . Trouble;
 H as assurance of . . . Heaven.

THREE PERSONS, who illustrate the One Person :—

"As Moses lifted up the serpent," illustrates the death of Christ (John iii. 14).

As Jonah was in the fish, yet lived again, illustrates the resurrection of Christ (Matt. xii. 40).

As Noah, illustrates the return of Christ (Matt. xxiv. 37).

It is He that hath made us (Ps. c. 2):

It is He that hath re-made us. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10).

The reason for re-making. "And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it" (Jer. xviii. 4).

TONGUE PRESERVED AND OTHERWISE.—"I've driven my car for over a year now," said he, "and I've never run down anybody." "That's nothing," said she; "I've attended the meetings of our sewing circle for five years and have never run down anybody." To know the power of the tongue see Ps. lii. 2, "Thy tongue . . . like a sharp razor"; Job v. 21, "The scourge of the tongue"; Ps. lvii. 4, "Their tongue a sharp sword"; Jer. ix. 3, 8, "They bend their tongues like their bow for lies. . .

Their tongue is as an arrow shot out"; Jas. iii. 6, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." On the other hand, Prov. x. 11, 20, "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life. . . . The tongue of the just is as choice silver"; xv. 4, "A tree of life"; xvi. 13, "The delight of kings"; Ps. xlv. 1, "The pen of a ready writer"; Song of Sol. v. 13, "Like lilies"; Heb. xiii. 15, "Fruit." Matt. xii. 36, "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." One other passage—"He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (I. Peter iii. 10).

IN THE WAY OF CAIN.—Speaking of a minister who is doing his best to rise in popularity, we somewhat doubted the means he was using. "He is an able man, I suppose?" said my interrogator. "Perfectly able," I said, "only many of the ablest have gone in the way of Cain." Almost unconsciously I had stated a great fact. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 11, 12).

"I AM THE POST OFFICE."—A missionary in Spain writes—"In another small village we enquired for the post-office. 'Here,' said a woman. 'Where is the box?' we asked; 'I am,' was the answer. 'People bring their letters to me and I take them in.' We left the letter with some misgivings as to whether it would ever safely reach its destination, for this is a fanatical village and several, who had received tracts, brought them back to us saying they would rather not keep them." "I am," suggested One of whose ability we never need have a doubt. Not a place, but a Person, and that Person the great "I AM," is the One we trust. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod. iii. 14).

The Book of Psalms

BY WALTER SCOTT.

PSALM 3.—The introductory Psalms (Nos. 1 and 2) widely differ. The first is distinctly *moral* in character and exhibits a perfect pattern of Jewish piety—a life formed and directed by the written law of Jehovah. The second is grandly *prophetic*, opening with the angry nations in open revolt against the authority of Jehovah and of His Anointed, then the central part of the Psalm announces the calm and fixed decree of Jehovah to establish His Son as King on Zion, finally closing with an appeal to obedience and trust on the part of kings, rulers, and peoples. Now, the characteristic features governing these Psalms—the moral and prophetic—are impressed on the five Psalms which follow, and constitute a series by themselves—*i.e.*, 3–7. There are no isolated Psalms; the whole collection of 150 is arranged in groups. A certain Psalm unfolds a dominant idea, and this fact gives character to the series of which it forms a part, or to which it is attached.

The five Psalms referred to are Suffering-Psalms. If the enemy rises up against Jehovah and sets up the “the throne of iniquity,” the godly necessarily resent it, and consequently suffer. Of the exercises and feelings of the pious Jew in the coming day we are now about to learn.

The Prophetic and Dispensational character of the Psalter has been ever a much neglected study, and where this feature of the Psalms is unknown or ignored, grotesque interpretations—especially of the imprecatory Psalms—are advanced.

Psalms 3 and 4 are a pair of eight verses each. The former is a *morning* meditation; the latter is an *evening* prayer. In Psalm 3 the persecuted sufferer appeals in his sore distress to *Jehovah*—the name of covenant relationship. In Psalm 4 the appeal is to *God*—name expressing Creatorial Omnipotence. But in both Psalms confidence in Jehovah is strongly maintained.

Psalm 3 is the first of these holy songs termed a “Psalm” (see the heading), and the first instance of the word “Selah” occurs in our Psalm. In measure the experiences of David

under the heartless conspiracy headed by Absalom are here reproduced. The historical setting of the Psalm is found in 2 Samuel xv. But the sorrows here described, as also the triumphant faith, far exceed that which characterised the de-throned monarch of Israel. The conspiracy under Absalom was but a shadow of the greater confederation of enemies, the subject of Psalm 2.

Under the pressure of *that* great catastrophe in human history—a world in open rebellion against God—the afflicted saint pours out his complaint in touching words of sorrow. Troubles increase by thousands (verses 1, 6) and there is no Divine intervention. Tauntingly, his enemies say, “No help for him in God” (verse 2.) Here we *pause*, for such is the force of the word “Selah”: its first occurrence in the Bible. But these cruel sufferings only lead to deeper intimacy, and a firmer, fuller trust in Jehovah (verse 3.)

Prayer and communion with God, with, of course, study of the Word, are deemed sufficient in the ordinary circumstances of life. But there are occasions, as in our Psalm, when overwhelming troubles press in upon the soul, and the anguished spirit breaks the bounds of reserve, and cries aloud to God, “I *cried* unto Jehovah with my voice.” The cry brought immediate and effectual help, not from innumerable enemies (verse 6), but in Jehovah’s sustaining grace and care (verse 5.) “He heard me”; *that* contained the answer (1 John v., 14, 15.) What touching confidence is expressed in verse 5! What boldness is evinced in verse 6! The judgment of his enemies is assured: “Thou hast smitten all mine enemies.” Thus the sufferer anticipates the judicial authority and judgment of the Kingdom. “Salvation is of Jehovah”: so exclaimed the prophet Jonah and so says the Psalmist (verse 8.)

Salvation—spiritual, temporal, governmental, and eternal—is of and from Jehovah. Salvation is in no wise founded on human merit. God Himself is the alone source of salvation, and that to the absolute exclusion of all else. “Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Selah” (verse 8). Millennial times—nigh at hand—will witness to the truth of the closing words of our Psalm. We may well *pause* here—all is done. “Selah.”

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DIVISIONS.

1. Increasing and overwhelming trouble, verses 1, 2.
2. Confidence in Jehovah who hears his cry, verses 3, 4.
3. Jehovah guards, sustains, and gives boldness, verses 5, 6.
4. Judgment, Jehovah and God appealed to, verse 7.
5. Salvation and Blessing from Jehovah, verse 8.

PSALM 4 is an *evening* prayer. Its companion (Psalm 3) is a *morning* meditation. No doubt the former was sung in accord with its character (Ps. 134, 1). Our Psalm is one of 55 psalmodic compositions entrusted to the chief musician—probably “Asaph the chief” (I. Chron. xvi. 5, 7). This we learn from the inspired headings in the Psalter, of which there are 116, the remaining 34 being termed “Orphan Psalms.” The Temple-choir consisted of 288 skilful musicians (I. Chron. xxv. 7). The three leaders were Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, who sang accompanied with cymbals of brass (I. Chron. xv. 19). The instruments employed in the ornate Temple service were lutes, cymbals, and harps. No doubt the chanting of these “Songs of Jehovah” would powerfully appeal to the heart of the Jew. The headings and titles of the Psalms are in many cases helpful and interesting.

The appeal in our Psalm (4) is to the “God of my righteousness”—not justifying righteousness—but practical integrity in heart and life. This character of righteousness is of priceless value, especially in these days of “loud talk and low practice.” An enlightened and uncondemning conscience gives moral strength and confidence before God and man. The sufferer grounds his appeal to be heard on two considerations. (1) Because of his practical obedience to the law of Jehovah; (2) because of Jehovah’s past favour and goodness. He recalls seasons of Divine help and deliverance. In verse 2 he touchingly appeals to his enemies to cease their slanderous work, and in verse 5 he exhorts them to offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put their trust in Jehovah.

In the future great crisis in Israel’s history, when the Beast in Europe and the Antichrist in Palestine destroy the bodies and souls of men, “goodness” (verse 6) and “faith” (Luke

xviii. 8) will scarcely be found. Wickedness will be in the ascendant. *Then* the godly company of Israel will enjoy the light of Jehovah's countenance and have gladness of heart—compensations infinitely superior to the then temporal prosperity of the wicked, indicated in the abundance of corn and wine (verse 7)—the natural products of Palestine. Luther, the illustrious Reformer, whose heart and work were too big for the land of his birth, greatly delighted in the rest and assured confidence of the closing verse in our Psalm—"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Jehovah, only makest me dwell in safety."

DIVISIONS.

1. A personal cry to the God of righteousness, verse 1.
2. Warns and exhorts the enemies of Jehovah, verses 2-5.
3. The respective portions of the wicked and godly contrasted, verses 6, 7.
4. Jehovah gives peace and safety, verse 8.

Carefully distinguish between the two terms "in the flesh" and the flesh in us. The former describes a *past* condition; the latter refers to a *present* state.

Christ ascended is both Head of a new race and Head of the body. As to the former Headship we are *in* Him; as to the latter we are united *to* Him.

In public and church meetings avoid long and pointless prayers. Be brief and simple. Be specific in your requests. Do not labour at prayer. Pray earnestly and believingly; and, above all, pray in the Holy Ghost.

Two great associated facts are the *confinement* of Satan in the bottomless pit and the *reign* of Christ. The degradation of Satan and the glory of Christ are at the same time and for the same duration—a 1000 years.

A Sinner's Career and Recovery.

There are stages in the downward course of Sin, and Satan makes them as easy as he can. "If our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (II. Cor. iv. 3, 4, R.V.) This alone explains the callous indifference of men to the stern realities of Eternity. Satan has drawn a blind or veil over the human mind, paralysing the perceptive and thinking faculties. The glory of Christ cannot stream in upon the soul. The blind has been drawn down. The lake of fire, necessitated by the Righteousness of God in the judgment of Sin, and the horrors of the lost, are forgotten realities (Mark ix. 43-49; Rev. xx. 15). Satan has drawn the blind down and over mind and memory. Men are 'cute enough and alive enough to money, pleasure, honours: to the dread solemnities of Eternity they are blind.

The Sinner's career is a rapid one. The steps and stages are of easy descent. When the last stage in the journey is reached Death grips its victim and consigns him to Hell (Luke xvi. 23), where he wakes up in conscious, hopeless misery to the awful fact, *I am eternally lost*. The course of a Sinner is always from bad to worse. Well did Jeremy Taylor write as to the way of Sin: "First, it startles him, then it becomes pleasing, then easy, then delightful, then frequent, then habitual, then confirmed. Then the man is impenitent, then obstinate, and then he is damned."

There are three steps in the recovery of a Sinner, stated in Luke xv. *First*, he comes to himself through his need and misery (verse 17). *Second*, he retraces his footsteps and returns to God. The Holy Spirit is at work in his soul (verse 18). *Third*, God hastes to meet and receive the Sinner, folds him in His arms and kisses him (verse 20). What a marvellous story of grace!

WALTER SCOTT.

Reviews.

THE DYNAMIC OF ALL-PRAYER. By G. Granger Fleming.

A book on prayer is always welcome, for the subject never loses its interest, and its importance never grows less. This book is by a layman, and therefore possesses an added interest. Although by no means a bulky volume it contains twenty-five chapters, each treating of a different aspect of prayer. They are brevity itself. Occasionally Mr Fleming seems to us a trifle obscure and high flown, but no one can fail to understand or approve the following: "As usual the very thing which humanity needs has been provided by God. He knows our frame, He understands our deepest needs, He has arranged that each one can find expression. For what is Prayer? It is the opportunity to express oneself." Again: "Meditation and Prayer are in fact twin sisters. Meditation on the Word, on the love of God, on the Grace of Christ, on the operation of the Spirit, and on the needs of man, will lead to an overflow of desire and petition." The main object of the book is to show how essentially prayer is part and parcel of our very existence, of all the arrangements appertaining to it, and of the universe with which it is connected.

Chapters xvi. and xxi. are specially valuable. The first deals with corporate prayer. "A great deal of the showy part of church life would disappear if Prayer became the ruling element in its life." "The Church triumphant, the Church regnant, is the Church at the foot of the steps of the Throne of Mercy" (Grace). "The Church must become influential with God before it can become influential with men. . . . Why has the Church so little influence in many quarters? Because she is sick at heart. Because she has lost touch with God." The other chapter, "In the Workshop of Prayer" is also very excellent. "There is a call for many a Christian worker to revise his estimate of the values of spiritual forces. . . . He speaks, and he preaches, and he organises, but it all comes to very little. It will be well for him to try another plan. This plan is to make Prayer his chief *work*."

The price of this book is 2s 6d net. The reading of it will make prayer appear greater than ever.

CHRIST IN HOLY SCRIPTURE. By Francis L. Denman.

This is an important and entrancing study on the Name of "Jehovah," showing its connection with "Jesus"—Jehovah the Saviour. We have read it with great interest. Price 1s 6d net.

HIDDEN PICTURES. By Ada R. Habershon.

This is a book for young people, and it is worthy of a place amongst others of the same kind with which we have long been familiar. Old Testament stories are re-told, and their spiritual meaning brought out in the light of the New Testament. Price 3s 6d net.

All the above are published by Messrs Oliphants, Ltd., 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

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Vol. VIII—No 11. NOVEMBER 1916 Price 1d

The Book of Psalms

BY WALTER SCOTT.

PSALM 5. We have had a *morning* Psalm (No. 3); then an *evening* Psalm (No. 4); and now a *midnight* Psalm (No. 5; see verse 3 which anticipates the break of day). In these three Psalms we are furnished with a Divine trilogy. The interest deepens the more they are read and studied.

In this series of Psalms, of which this is the third, suffering, prayer, and confidence in Jehovah are striking features. The character of the cry or prayer is determined by the nature of the trouble experienced. The praying saint in these holy compositions represents a company of afflicted Jewish saints in the future crisis of their national history, preceding the advent of the Messiah. Jehovah, in covenant relation; the King, in Sovereign right; and God, supreme and omnipotent, are severally invoked in urgent prayer and intercession.

The nature of God as light in hating wickedness, and as righteous in punishing the guilty, is confidently appealed to. In Israel's night of coming agony, Judea will become the battle-field of the contending nations and powers; the once Holy Land be turned into a pandemonium under satanic government. God's anger burns fiercely. God is justly angry—(Ps. vii. 11). But if God, as the Righteous Judge, is then against the wicked, He is equally strong on behalf of the righteous. The *same* Divine righteousness which consumes the wicked: see verses 4, 5, 6, 10, works in sustaining, defending, and blessing His people. "For Thou, Jehovah, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield" (verse 12). See also verses 7, 8, 11. Need we say that the standing and portion of the Christian under *grace* is incomparably beyond that of a godly Jew under *law*.

DIVISIONS.

1. Prayer to Jehovah who is also King and God, verses 1, 3.
 2. God a Righteous Judge, verses 4, 6.
 3. Jehovah gives mercy and guidance, verses 7, 8.
 4. Character of the Ungodly, verse 9.
 5. Punishment of the wicked invoked, verse 10.
 6. Jehovah in Blessing for His people, verses 11, 12.
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A Divinity Professor on the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

“Salvation is the dealing of a father with his erring children, and not the reckoning of a creditor with his debtors or a King with his rebellious subjects.” So says a professor. But is Luke xv. the only passage dealing with salvation? Is there not room in our theology for Luke vii. 41-43 and Matt. xxii. 1-14? Negatives are proverbially dangerous, and this is no exception.

It is then asserted, “It was not his sin that troubled him (the prodigal), but the misery of his condition. He felt no shame for the ill part that he had played, compunction for the grief that he had cost his father. He did not yearn for his father’s forgiveness.” Is that so? What is the meaning then of his confession: “Father, I have *sinned* against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” These words have to us always embodied true repentance. There was both a sense of his need and that he had wronged his father, and also a recognition of his father’s goodness. And unless there is something of all three there cannot be “repentance toward God,” which is the only genuine repentance. And the faith which is not founded upon this is not worth much.

We are then told that “forgiveness is already ours—it only remains that we should appropriate it.” The meaning of which is: (for we have seen it stated before by the same writer): Everyone is forgiven in virtue of the death of Christ whether he has believed or not. This is not, as far as we understand it, the teaching of Scripture. What is there taught seems to us

rather that forgiveness is offered to everyone, but we become possessed of it only when we believe. To say that everyone *is* forgiven and he only needs to appropriate it, is not the same thing. If I am *forgiven*, I *am* forgiven, and the matter of believing affects only my own ease and satisfaction. God has no longer any ground of judgment if He has already forgiven everyone, believer and unbeliever alike. Some evade this difficulty by saying, it is the sin of unbelief only that calls for judgment now. But there is surely a very conclusive answer to this: If all sins are already forgiven then this must include even the sin of unbelief. But the Bible nowhere, that we can remember, represents God saying to the sinner, you are forgiven, but always as offering forgiveness.

And now we come to quite a new interpretation of "the best robe." This is the professor's version. "The father shouted to his servants: Bring forth (not 'the best robe' but) a robe—the first, or rather 'the former'—that is, the one he used to wear before he left home." It is quite true the word translated "best" may also be rendered "first" or "former" and the professor's idea is that the father had kept the original robe by him that his son used to wear, had often taken it out and looked at it during the young man's absence, and it was now his delight to have him again arrayed in it. This is all very well, but we think something is missed by such an interpretation. Grace does not give us back something we possessed before but had lost. It gives us something new and better. We are not restored to innocence, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. This is what is set forth by the "best" robe; and if we substitute "former" we should be losers and not gainers by the change.

"A celebrated artist, who was asked why he took so much pains about a picture he had in hand, replied,— 'I am painting for eternity.' You and I, dear reader, are living for eternity. This is our seed time, and as we now sow, we shall assuredly reap in another world. By our thoughts, words, and deeds, we are continually moulding our characters and shaping our eternal destiny. Our life, given for that purpose, is at the best but very brief and uncertain, and is by the Great Teacher Himself compared to a day."

Joy in Suffering.

"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have MY JOY fulfilled in themselves."—John xvii. 13.

The *drink-offering* formed part of the offerings under the old dispensation and was their accompaniment. In the book of Numbers, chapter xxviii. v. 7 we read:—"*In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.*"

What is the meaning and significance of thus connecting wine with sacrifice? Sacrifice speaks of death, and death involves suffering. Why should joy—for wine is a symbol of joy—be associated with suffering? We think the explanation can be found in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. His experiences furnish the answer. With Him the drink-offering was never lacking. *He found joy even in suffering.* Not only did He *submit* to the will of God—He found pleasure in doing so. That will involved suffering of the deepest and most mysterious kind. A suffering which no one understood but Himself, and in which there was no alleviation, and could be no human sympathy. Yet, present in it all, there was this element of joy. The joy He had in doing the Father's will, in accepting His Father's appointment, was part of His wondrous offering to God.

This may not seem apparent always. In Gethsemane, for instance, we do not seem to catch any note of joy. Rather, was it not "strong crying and tears?" Yes, that is true. But not because the joy was absent, only because it is hidden from our eyes by the intensity of the ordeal and the anguish. It was scarcely the occasion when joy could be *uppermost*, but it was there—even on the Cross. Underneath the agony and bloody sweat; beneath the Cross and passion, joy lay. We catch the note of it in these words spoken in full prospect of all that awaited Him:—"*These things have I spoken unto you, that MY JOY might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*" And those other words uttered in prayer:—"*These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.*" And, again, these words to Peter:—"*The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*"

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It was "when they had sung a hymn that they went out into the mount of Olives." All that darkness, and distress and desertion faced with a note of triumph! For that "hymn" was probably the 118th Psalm.

Here was His joy—here was the drink-offering. But our Lord and Master prayed, as we have seen, that His joy might be fulfilled in us.

Is it being fulfilled? Have we this joy? To-day is one of intense suffering to many of God's children. The rude hand of war is laid roughly upon them, and is snatching away their nearest and dearest. Mothers hear that their only sons are wounded, and perhaps learn no more for days. Others have to bear the agony of the tidings that those they looked to see again are torn from them—killed and buried in one day. To some there is the still greater agony of suspense; they know only that their boys are missing.

How shall they bear themselves? What can be done in, and with, such sorrow? That is the question many are asking. Is there any answer? Yes. With the sacrifice there was to be the *drink-offering*. Underneath all the agony and the tears there may be joy. Although man is *directly* responsible for this strife and bloodshed, yet God has allowed it, and permits His children, more or less remotely, to become involved in it; and all loss and pain which are the consequence, must be accepted as from His hand. Here only shall we find joy. This does not mean that the joy can ever be in the thing itself, but in God's will. Nor does it mean that there will be neither tears nor heart pangs. There were these in Christ Himself. But with Him there was the joy behind and underneath all, and so it may be with ourselves. His sufferings were deeper than ours can ever be.

It was for this Christ prayed. Joy was His though He knew all that was coming upon Him—the insult, the opposition, the injustice, the ingratitude, the loneliness, the forsaking, the pain of body and agony of soul. But although all this was so near when He uttered that prayer to the Father, the joy does not vanish; and He asks that it may be ours. Joy in doing and bearing the Father's will, whatever that may involve. Nor is this

an impossibility, as we shall see both from the teaching of the Epistles and the direct example of the early Christians.

In Colossians i. 2 we read those remarkable words about "*longsuffering with joyfulness.*" Such a statement, coupled with our Lord's prayer, makes it perfectly evident that this joy our Lord had is to be reproduced in His people. It is God's will, oftentimes, that we should suffer, and suffer long; but the exhortation is to joyfulness. How out of reach such an experience seems! But the contents of verse 10 help us to the realisation of it. We read of "the knowledge of God," and of being "*strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory.*" Every experience along the road tests us as to how much we know of God. And our conduct under trial reveals whether we know much or little. Christ knew God perfectly; and therefore He surrendered everything, and suffered everything, joyfully. The mystery of pain and suffering never clouded His vision of God; albeit His own pain was greater than the world knows anything about.

God is now revealed to us, and if we know Him we shall have the same trust that Christ had. Shall we find fault with anything our Father appoints? Shall we complain because of what He permits? We should not, if we knew Him! He can be more to us than anything He takes from us. And He wants us to have that experience.

" Go not far from me, O my strength,
Whom all my times obey;
Take from me anything Thou wilt,
But go not Thou away."

A deeper knowledge of God will give us victory. It is the effect of the power of His glory. And "this glory" is just the revelation of Himself—we are admitted into the presence of perfect goodness, and love without measure, and we *know* that nothing can go wrong. In that atmosphere, and in view of such a revelation, bitterness, and doubt, and unrelieved grief cannot be. Instead, we give thanks—"Giving thanks unto the Father." This immediately follows the exhortation to "*longsuffering with joyfulness.*" In order to achieve this, all we need is the "true knowledge of God," and to be consciously before Him as revealed in Christ—in the presence of "*the power of His glory.*"

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Such an experience is not transcendental, nor ought it to be exceptional. We have seen already that it was Christ's. And this is brought to our notice on more than one occasion. "In that hour," we read, "Jesus rejoiced in Spirit." And "that hour" was one of special trial, the hour of rejection and want of appreciation, as the context shows us. Here, again, was the drink-offering. He accepted the suffering from His Father's hand, and there was joy. It is in the gospel by Luke that this is recorded. Matthew's account is simply, "At that time Jesus answered and said"—with no mention of joy (Matt xi.). And here we have one of those perfect touches of which the Gospels are full; for it is Luke who specially presents to us the Man Christ Jesus; of which the meat-offering was the type; and the drink-offering and *meat-offering* were ever closely associated: The joy of a man in the will of God, whatever that will might entail. Oh, how different it is oftentimes with ourselves. We are full of regret, if not of secret or open opposition, because God's will is not what one wishes it to be, and we find it is hard to submit. And the reason is because the flesh is in us, and we allow it to govern us, and "the flesh is not *subject* to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

For there was a third thing associated with the meat-offering and drink-offering, and that was *oil*. Interpreted in the light of the New Testament, this is rightly taken to be a figure of the Holy Spirit. For oil has a power at the same time of not mixing, and yet of imparting its own character where it does mix; and it pervades all it touches. It would be strange indeed if the Holy Spirit were not in any way prefigured in connection with the offerings. We find then that the oil was an accompaniment of the meat offering and drink offering. What does this teach us but that it is only in the power of the Holy Spirit we can have this joy of which we are speaking?

This is very plainly set forth in the book of Numbers, chapter xv. Here we have special attention drawn to the meat-offering, and to its double accompaniment, oil and wine. And these last were always to be of *equal measure*, according to the *size* of the meat-offering. The larger the meat-offering the greater the quantity of oil and wine. What does this tell us, but, that our joy will always be in proportion to the Spirit's power

and indwelling, and also that the extent to which He fills us will be according to how large a place Christ has in our hearts and lives. For one tenth deal of flour there was to be the *fourth part* of an hin of oil and of wine. For two tenth deals, a *third part*, and for three tenth deals, a *half*. The more Christ is to us, and the greater He becomes in our eyes the more of power and joy. We shall be filled with the Spirit in proportion as we are occupied with Him; and the more that is so, the more this joy in suffering will be ours in consequence.

How abundantly the early disciples realised this is seen in the Acts and in the various Epistles—and most of all was this the case in times of trial and persecution. When the Apostle's lives were in jeopardy, we read, "they departed from the presence of the council, *rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer." (Acts v. 41). When persecution broke out at Antioch, we are told—Acts xiii. 52—"And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost." When Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi, and their feet fast in the stocks, and their backs bleeding, *they prayed and sang praises*. And Paul could afterwards write to those same Philippians, his own converts, and say, "If I be offered (poured out as a libation—a drink-offering) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, *I joy and rejoice* with you all." While the Thessalonian believers had "received the word with much affliction *with joy of the Holy Ghost*."

Do we not see from all this that sufferings and afflictions are no unaccustomed things—that the fiery trial that is to try us is not to be regarded as strange—but that if in it we bow to the will of God, there will come to us a fulness of blessing we never yet tasted; and we, too, shall be filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. God never allows us to suffer loss, that He does not compensate us in some higher way; He never takes one thing from us, without giving us a better in its place. And it will be with us as it was with Jacob of old, when God brought him back to Bethel, after all his vicissitudes and wanderings and much painful discipline. God changed his name to Israel, and said, "I am God Almighty." (Our blessing is always in some new discovery of God, or by a reminder of what he is). And

God gave him promises and talked with him. And we read,—
 “Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He (God) talked with
 him, even a pillar of stone: *and he poured a drink-offering*
 thereon, and he poured oil thereon.” All God’s dealings—hard
 as they seemed at times—led at last to perfect communion with
 Himself, and to the drink-offering and the oil. Here, in the
 earliest mention we have of these two things, we find them
 associated, and they remain so all through, and will do to the
 end. The Holy Ghost enables us to joy in God—in spite of all
 that His hand may lay upon us. With the sacrifice there will
 be the drink-offering.

May there be in our lives the joy that was Christ’s,
 because enabled to accept everything—however painful—from
 the hands of the Father, Who “will never cause His child a need-
 less tear.”

R. E.

“Send Peace.”

Our hearts are bowed with grief to-day,
 The earth is filled with weeping;
 The ruthless sword doth thousands slay,
 The grave our treasure’s keeping.

Oh, Lord, we pray, put forth Thine hand,
 Stay, stay, the awful slaughter;
 Bid now the warring hosts disband,
 The sad conditions alter.

’Tis Thou who makest war to cease,
 And calm’st the storm’s wild raging;
 ’Tis Thou must speak the word of peace
 To hosts with hosts engaging.

Speak now that word, we pray, O Lord,
 Bow every heart before Thee;
 The nation’s then shall sheathe the sword,
 Rejoicing saints adore Thee. E. L. W.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

XIV.—GOD AND THE KINGS.

In II. Kings vi. 1-7 we have divine goodness to saints; in the verses which follow we have the same goodness extended to others also. This is on the principle of I. Tim. iv. 10, where the living God is declared to be "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." Only folly would introduce the salvation of the soul into such a passage. It simply affirms the truth of God's providential interest in all His creatures. With this agrees Psa cxliv. 9: "The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works."

Continuing our study of II. Kings vi. from verse 8, we have Jehovah first addressing Himself once more to Jehoram, King of Israel's ten tribes. He took great pains with this man, yet we have no reason to believe that anything resulted from it, so hopeless is flesh. We are reminded of the Apostle's warning in Heb. vi. 7, 8: "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." The "rain" of God's goodness fell "oft" upon Jehoram, but no fruit for God is discoverable in the record of his life, in consequence of it.

War having again broken out between Syria and Israel, the King of Syria found that his plans were becoming known to his antagonist in some mysterious way. Being much perplexed thereat, he charged his staff with treachery, and was informed by them, "Elisha the prophet that is in Israel telleth the King of Israel the words that thou speakest in-thy bed-chamber." And indeed this was true, for several times the man of God had sent messages to Jehoram, saying, "Beware that thou pass not such a place, for thither the Syrians are come down." "And the King of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there not once or twice."

Let none suppose that the divine interest is confined to the Church. The Church is indeed a very special thing in the earth, united as one body to Christ its Head in heaven; and being such, is tenderly cared for with all the strength of infinite love. But all men, even though unappreciative of the wonderful grace of God revealed in the gospel, are nevertheless the creatures of His hand, and He cannot but feel an interest in their welfare. It was intended that Jehoram should learn that deliverance does not depend upon "men, money, and munitions." There is at all times a God to be reckoned with, who is well able to circumvent all the designs of the mightiest enemy, and to give deliverance apart from military efforts altogether. Kings and their advisers should remember that the secrets of the council chamber (however carefully kept from the people) are all known to God. "With Him *all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and 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?*" (Dan. iv. 35). These are lessons that God would teach the leaders of men in this day; happy would it be for all concerned if they would but learn them! One of the mightiest monarchs of antiquity was given to understand that "the heavens do rule." Being unwilling to acknowledge it, fearful disaster fell upon him. Ultimately the broken king was enabled to say: "*Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment, and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.*"—(Dan. iv. 37). The schemes of the haughty are speedily frustrated when God is pleased to act. Surely such a God is worthy of men's faith and prayers!

XV.—CHARIOTS OF FIRE.

The special interest of the living God in those who are in relationship with Himself is amply shown in connection with the efforts of the Syrian King against Elisha. Being desirous of getting rid of one whose warnings to Jehoram so thwarted his operations, he sent a great host, with horses and chariots, to Dothan to apprehend him—(II. Kings vi. 13, etc.). What could a helpless man do against such an array? Clearly nothing. But the King of Syria should have known, from the remarkable way

in which his secrets had been revealed, that he was really contending with God—a very serious matter, assuredly. The God whom he entirely overlooked soon covered his fresh schemes with confusion.

To the terror of Elisha's servant, when he arose one morning, the city was encompassed with an army. "Alas, my master," said he, "how shall we do?" "Fear not," the prophet replied, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." The eye of faith in the man of God could see what the eye of nature could not see. When the young man's eyes were opened in answer to his master's prayer, he beheld the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. The man who saw the heavenly vision when his leader was translated had heaven always very near to his soul. His whole course as a servant of Jehovah was deeply coloured by the circumstances of its commencement. It was so with Isaiah. He saw the glory of the Lord—(Isa. vi.) and received his commission from thence, and in how many passages does he speak of the glory of Jehovah in his writings! The apostleship of Paul is even more to the point, in this respect. The fact that he saw Christ in glory at the beginning of his career stamped a special character upon his whole subsequent ministry. Christ glorified is more the theme of Paul than of any other writer.

There were two hosts around Dothan that day. The servant saw the Syrians, and was dismayed; the prophet saw the heavenly armies, and was confident. In like manner when the angels of God met Jacob as recorded in Gen. xxxii. 1, he called the name of the place Mahanaim—"two hosts." As the Psalmist puts it in Psalm cxix. 150-151: "*they draw near that follow after mischief . . . (but) Thou art near.*" "Danger may indeed be imminent, but God is nearer to us than all our foes. We may well ask ourselves, which host do we see to-day—the assemblage of those who hate us, or the company of "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of (inherit) salvation"—(Heb. i. 14). In all our perplexities and perils, surely we can say with Elisha, "*they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*"

A remarkable thing then happened. Elisha prayed that the Syrians might be smitten with blindness. This was as truly

mercy as the smiting of the Sodomites with blindness was judgment.—(Gen. xix. 2). The Syrians were to be taught two great lessons— (1) the impossibility of harming God's people; and (2) the goodness of the heart of God even towards Gentiles. The wording of verse 19 in the Authorised Version has caused Elisha to be suspected of untruthfulness by some; substitute "and" for "but," and all is plain. When the Syrians reached Samaria, and had their eyes opened they were indeed in the presence of the man they sought, i.e., Elisha, there was no subterfuge whatever. The King of Israel was willing on this occasion to obey the directions of the prophet, with the result that the captives were feasted, and then sent away to their master. "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." This astonishing incident closed the campaign. If Israel learnt nothing from the wonderful ways of God, Syria did at least for the time being.

It is interesting to us as Gentiles to observe in the Old Testament these occasional flashes of divine grace to men outside of Israel. Truly the heart of God is good and gracious. It is significant that the exhortation to Christians in Rom. xii. 20, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him" etc., is a quotation from the Old Testament—from Prov. xxv. 21-22.

Our chapter (II. Kings vi.) assuredly teaches us that there is a God who is able to outwit every enemy device, and to bring to naught all his strategy. This is the God to whom His people are entitled to look in this dark period of universal strife.

(To be continued).

We would call attention to a tractate by our friend, Mr H. D. Woolley, entitled, "*The Christ of Scripture and of Millennial Dawn.*" It exposes in a very clear way one of the gravest errors of this erroneous system. A false Christ means everything false; and this is all that Millennial Dawnism offers to its dupes. To be had of Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 12 Paternoster Buildings, E.C. Price 1d, or 1s per dozen, post free.

Isaiah.

THE THREEFOLD INTRODUCTION—Chapters I. to VI.

The First Introduction—Chapter I.

There are five clearly marked divisions of this first chapter ; nor are they arbitrary, for they have been plainly marked in the Hebrew Bible from time immemorial.

1—Verse 1—The superscription.

2—Verses 2 to 9—The court and the charge.

3—Verses 10 to 17—The evil of their best ; and true fruits meet for repentance.

4—Verses 18 to 20—The appeal.

5—Verses 25 to 31—The way and the end.

Let us very briefly examine them.

1. The first verse is the superscription of the whole book which in itself forms one complete Vision. Through four reigns it extends ; reigns in which Judah's path has lain through the sunshine of prosperity, and the shadow of disaster ; along the uplands of an Uzziah and through the swamps of an Ahaz ; and in these vicissitudes was not unlike that of Bunyan's pilgrim, who so well represents us all, for he too went "sometimes singingly and sometimes sighingly."

Judah and Jerusalem are the direct objects of the vision, but these form the centre of a circle, the radii of which stretch far out into the heathen world about, and the circumference of which, ever enlarging, finally includes all mankind. Isaiah then, as the "Isaiah," or "*the salvation of God*" in the New Testament, begins "at Jerusalem" (see Luke xxiv. 47), but also does not end there ; for, before the vision closes, we shall see the light of God's tender favour resting, not only on Jerusalem, but the Gentiles coming to that light, and invited to rejoice in the comforting warmth of its beams.

2. "The Court" has a very grand setting. Jehovah is the Judge, nor is any other Accuser seen here than Himself; the nation that is alone of all the nations of the earth in a recognised relation with Him is the defendant; while both the heavens and the earth are called upon to be the witnesses of the trial; for the Lord never judges in a corner; but openly before all creation, so that every creature, whether the elect angels, or the opposing principalities and powers, with Satan at their head, may witness and confess to the inflexible righteousness of His government. Nor shall even the great accuser—impelled though he be by the strongest motives, and being the keenest in discernment of all creatures—find on the Throne he was "set to cover" (Ezek. xxviii. 14) the faintest film of injustice, even though the chief of sinners be justified by that Throne.

In passing, we may note the harmony between Isaiah—"the salvation of Jehovah"—and the "gospel of God" as given in the epistle to the Romans, for that also begins with an indictment by which "*every mouth is stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before God.*" To convict thus of guilt seems a strange part of *good* news; but it is a very essential part, for as it is only the sick who send for a physician, so do those only who are convicted of sin care for salvation from its penalty and power; and, further, is it not really "good news" that God knows the very worst of us, and *yet* loves us? Indeed it is.

Even the charge itself, far from having any of the malice of the great accuser in it, is full of the most tender affection. If God did not love, would He complain of not being known? That sigh, "how often would I have gathered thy children," speaks the same language and the same Speaker, nor do the words "a people laden with iniquity" form a completed sentence from *that* Speaker's Heart, however it may do so from His Lips, until they are supplemented by "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Alas, that so many, refusing God's testimony as to the sin, are unconscious of any

burden, and never come to Him for rest at all, and so they never do rest—now or forever!

The picture of Judah's condition is so distressing that the prophet appears to soliloquise: "*except the Lord of Hosts had left us a very small remnant we should have been as Sodom, we would have been like unto Gomorrah*"; and with that sigh, in which, however, there is hope, the first part closes.

3. But Jehovah takes up the words "Sodom and Gomorrah," and applies them even to Judah and Jerusalem themselves; it is *they* who are "Sodom and Gomorrah"—*they*, the only people that are the Lord's people on earth, with whom alone is His Dwelling—*they*, who are so faithfully observing all His ordinances as He had appointed—*they*, who are offering all the sacrifices; and from whom the sweet incense is still ascending, by whom sabbaths and feasts are most rigidly observed—it is *they* who are "Sodom and Gomorrah"! And to substantiate this, the Lord goes over, not the terrible moral corruption that characterized Sodom, but all the religious observances that might well be considered quite enough to *save* from such a charge, rather than be the basis of it. And, although He had Himself instituted them, yet He now repudiates them all with disgust; for they are as empty of all that He intended in them, as Cana's water-pots that illustrated them so well. In a word, it was, as with their forefather, Cain, not what might be thought their *worst*, but their very *best*, that He utterly repudiates, as being only empty form; for withal their "hands are full of blood."

But of what practical value is it to us to learn His estimate of Judah's offerings of three thousand years ago, unless it may possibly be that, were our ears keen enough, we might hear Him speaking in the same way to His *present* witness on earth? Is it not possible that Christendom may be fast becoming, if it be not already, "Sodom" to Him? Indeed, many of us are well assured that it *is*; nor is this conviction lessened by the use of the words in Rev. xi. 8: "*and their dead bodies shall lie in th*

street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." For what is this "great city"? Is it the literal Jerusalem? It is quite sure that it was there "our Lord was crucified"; and it is also possible that this has been called "Sodom," as in the Scripture before us, yet even in this Scripture it has a wider application than to the *city*, for it includes Judah; nor has Jerusalem ever, as far as I am aware, been called "Egypt," nor is it in accord with the profoundly spiritual character of this book of "signs" to look for a literal city here. Oh no, we cannot thus easily put on to one city the responsibility for the Lord's death; "the great city" rather stands as a symbol of all that man, away from God, has ever built on the earth. Cain founded it (Gen. iv. 17); Nimrod added to it (Gen. x. 8-12); and while Jerusalem was in its day its most perfect expression, yet it may be discerned even now in all that is being built upon the earth, religiously, under the name of "Christian"; but where apostasy from Christ is daily increasing, it is "Christendom" that is now carrying on Cain's work of city building, the whole edifice forming but one city, from Cain down, and it was in *that* city "our Lord was crucified." It shall be in its "streets" that this last competent testimony of God shall be slain—it is one city (compare Matt. xxiii. 23-36 with Rev. xviii. 24), as there is but one generation that crucified Him, *i.e.*, man in the flesh.

Well may we see to it, then, that we rest not in any ordinance, however certain it is that the Lord Himself may have instituted it; for, in that way, even the Lord's Supper may be as hateful to Him to-day as those holy feasts of which He here says, "my soul hateth them"; "they are a trouble to me"; "I cannot away with them"; "I am weary of them." Once more, then, we learn the secret of the weariness of Him who sat on Sychar's well, "wearied with His journey." This was not the mere physical weariness of a long walk: Surely we must look for something deeper in this gospel in which He is the God who "fainteth not neither is weary," although we would not deny

that He entered, in His grace, into this sinless infirmity ; but this was only the *shadow* of the weariness of His Spirit—nor does the constant coming of the poor and needy, nor the constant appeal of faith, for that may weary an unjust judge, but it refreshes Him ; it is alone the “Judæa” from which He had come—the self-complacency that has “need of nothing”—the self-satisfaction that neglects, and so rejects, His love. See *through* the ordinance, the Lord Jesus alone, and all is a sweet savour ; “discern the Lord’s Body,” and for this it is well to take the best of lenses, a contrite tear, and great is the blessedness ; but rest satisfied with the mere observance of the ordinance, and it becomes as loathsome as the manna kept over night ; till, in Laodicean days, the present professed witness for Christ on the earth, is “spued out of His mouth”—could anything speak more emphatically of loathsome repugnance, and is it not of weightiest significance to us that *those are the very days in which we are living!* Oh, ever be careful, my reader, lest we, too, be dwellers in Sodom, over which judgment, long lingering, impends.

But let us listen to the counsel : “*Wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well.*” It is the cry taken up by John the Baptist : “*Repent and bring forth fruit meet for repentance.*” But well may we say “new fruit means a new tree : the old tree can only bring forth the old fruit. Washing externally will not alter the spring from which all flows. Can good ever be brought out of evil ? Can pure waters come from a mud-pit ? Why then does the Lord tell us to do what He knows we cannot do ?”

Yet this He ever does. It is the way of His righteous government, never relaxed, never modified, never changed ; and what that government demands must be clearly expressed, and must be obeyed, too, in some way or other. For even the grace of the gospel does not set aside these just requirements ; nay, it is this alone that permits their accomplishment. It is through “the grace that is in Christ Jesus” that we are washed “clean every whit” ; it is by the Spirit’s law of a new life in Him, that the righteous requirements of the law of Sinai are fulfilled. Nor, I take it, is the principal different in relation to the sermon on the mount. This comes at the very beginning of the Gospels,

and while it is thus an integral part of those Gospels, far from being in itself the way of salvation, it is but to prove the impossibility of salvation in that way. It is Sinai intensified; the law piercing through all external morality, penetrating the inmost recesses of the heart, revealing the evil that is ever there, either dormant or active; and convincing us of our deep, deep need of Jesus Who alone saves from that evil. It must not then be relegated solely to the Jew, although primarily it was doubtless for him, nor taught to apply to *millennial* days, or we fail to get its value to *us*. It shuts all mouths; yet must its righteous requirements find fulfilment. How can that be? By taking our place under it as being our legal obligation? No indeed; no more than we should take our place under Sinai itself—*that* is not the way that the righteousness of either Sinai or the sermon can be fulfilled. This would either make us self-satisfied with an external morality, or drive us to despair. Let us rather learn our place from that poor leper, who, with the echoes of that sermon hardly passed into silence, comes to Him with the cry, "*If thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.*" *That* is our path. We, too, must ever and always, from the beginning to the end, abide dependently in Christ our Lord alone, for life and for its support, and thus occupied with Himself, and seeing no other beauty for "the glory of that Light," then the righteous requirements even of the sermon on the mount will be fulfilled, without our thinking of the fulfillment or of ourselves at all as fulfilling them. For all the ways of God are to exalt His beloved Son alone: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" in every point of view.

F. C. J.

(*To be continued.*)

"There are some crooked things which are sent to us that we may hammer them out straight, and there are other crooked things sent to hammer us out straight, to make our lives worthy, and to give them a value they could never acquire except by the stroke of sorrow, the smart of disappointment, the bruising of a rebellious heart. To learn to live in right attitude to God's contradictions is the whole art of life."

Words of Comfort.

(ISAIAH XL.)

Amongst Old Testament writers, Isaiah is distinguished as the "Prophet of Good News," because his book contains so many cheerful predictions. His message, moreover, is *true*, and supplies solid comfort to those who receive it.

The people of his day were in need of comfort. Evil had separated them from their God; they said in effect "God has forsaken us" (v. 27). Hence the prophet was inspired to foretell the coming of Christ, Who should reveal God in Zion (v. 9), and Who should also be a Light to lighten the Gentiles. (Isaiah xlix. 5-6).

The prophecy is, in part, fulfilled. The glory of the Lord has been revealed. The life of Jesus on earth was the *unveiling of God*. Against the dark background of evil, He set forth the principle of good, which governs the universe, and the nature of God that expresses itself in sacrifice. The Creator has effected Redemption by the sacrifice of Himself in the Person of His beloved Son. "He was wounded for our transgressions," so that forgiveness is now proclaimed. "Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in His Name, beginning at Jerusalem" (cf. Luke xxiv. 46-47).

His people are not forsaken. If astray, He will gather them, and feed them, like a Shepherd. Consider how great He is! Longer than the earth and wider than the sea, "He has measured the waters in the *hollow of His hand*" (v. 12). The government of the universe is on His shoulder (Isaiah ix. 6), but both His shoulders are engaged in carrying His sheep (Luke xv. 5). He is indeed great, and His greatness is seen in His regard for little things. The Creator of earth and heaven feeds the sparrow. A sparrow is a small thing, and we are also small, yet He numbers the very hairs of our head (Luke xii. 7).

If we feel our weakness, let us not forget that He is the Almighty God. Let us also beware of Theology which is inconsistent with Revelation. Men have, from time to time, made God in their own image (vs. 18-21). They are doing so to-day. They speak of Him as "the God of Battles" and "the God of Forces," but Scripture says He is the "God of Peace" (Heb.

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xiii. 20). He maketh wars to cease (cf. Psalm xlvi. 9), and He has determined the issue of the present conflict. For the moment we may think that *Might* prevails against *Right*, and feel distressed, but if we wait upon God, He will show us that *Right* will triumph in the end. Unbelief says—"My way is hid from the Lord" (v. 27), but nothing escapes His eye. If we wait upon Him, He will lift us out of the place where our vision is confined; we shall mount with wings as eagles, and get a wider outlook; we shall see the final supremacy of Good.

Our path through life may be difficult and our hearts be discouraged by the way, but He assures us that the Everlasting God is not discouraged, neither is He weary; and, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (vs. 28-31).

But since these words were spoken, the Lord has been here and *has experienced* the difficulties of the road Himself. Wearied with His journey, at Sychar's Well, Jesus came within reach of the tired and the oppressed. Samaria's daughter, a weary slave of sin, found blessing there. She talked with Jesus and her soul was refreshed. In the presence of the Lord, she was relieved of her burden, and her feet were made swift to run in His service. Leaving her water-pot—her badge of slavery—she went into the city of Sychar and said to the men—"Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" The men came, and saw for themselves that the Stranger, who had unveiled her life, was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World (John iv. 1-42). Comforted herself, this former drudge of unsatisfied desire thus became a means of blessing to others.

As regards the nation of Israel, the prophecy awaits fulfilment. Meanwhile the Glory of the Lord shines in the face of Jesus Christ for us who are Gentiles (cf. II. Cor. iv. 6, Rom. xv. 16), and we are privileged to drink of the living water that Jesus gives. The spirit of life in Him "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," frees us from the yoke of sin. No longer at Sychar's Well, but seated on the Throne of Grace, He fills with His Spirit all that diligently seek Him.* "If any man thirst," Jesus said, "let him come unto Me

* The sealing of the Spirit is not the subject here. The writer has in mind the exhortation of Eph. v. 5-18, "be filled with the Spirit."

and drink, and out of him shall flow rivers of living water." This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive (John vii. 39).

The spiritual blessings promised to Israel are thus realised by *individuals now* through faith in Christ, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Broken hearts are comforted. He gives moral beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isaiah lxi. 3, cf. Luke iv. 18). The sinner who comes in contact with Jesus is no longer the slave of sin, but the Lord's free-man, henceforth engaged in His service to overcome evil with good. In touch with the Fount of Life, he is able to convey refreshing streams to the thirsty, and to comfort his fellow-men.

The people who listened to Isaiah were cheered by his message of hope, but what effect has it upon ourselves to whom the prophetic word is confirmed? Do we *abound* in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost? The Apostle Peter says we shall do well to take heed to this "sure word of prophecy as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns," and the Morning Star appears, when all that grieves shall pass away.

W. TAYLOR.

Extracts from "Knots Untied."

"What is your God like?" said a sneering infidel one day to a poor Christian. "What is this God of yours like? this God about Whom you make so much ado? Is He great or is He small?" "Why, God," was the wise reply, "is a great and a small God at the same time, so great that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and yet so small that He can dwell in the heart of a poor sinner like me."

"Where is your God, my boy?" said another infidel to a child whom he saw coming out of a school where the Bible was taught. "Where is your God about Whom you have been reading? Show Him to me and I will give you an orange." "Show me where He is not" was the reply "and I will give you two."

Our Lord's Three Commands.

PRAY YE—Luke x. 2 ; GO YE—Mark xvi. 15 ; GIVE YE—Luke ix. 13

I.—WE ARE TO PRAY.

WHY?

- (a) "Lest we enter into temptation."
- (b) "The effectual fervent prayer availeth much."

WHEN?

- (a) "Like Daniel and David—morning, noon, and night."
- (b) Even more frequently—"without ceasing," "always."

FOR WHOM?

- (a) For ourselves. We are so quick to get out of communion with God.
- (b) For Kings and those in authority.
- (c) For all men.

HOW?

In the Spirit.

II.—WE ARE TO GO.

HOW?

As the ships go in great waters—on business. Driven by breezes from heaven, we are to go on the Lord's business, and we must be in the current, in the way of the Spirit ; our sails must be spread to catch His breath.

WHERE?

Into all the world.

WHY?

To let others know about Christ and God.

III.—WE ARE TO GIVE.

Do we give as readily as we used ?

Do we give as the Lord exhorteth us ?

Do we give cheerfully ?

Is all that we have and are ever at His service ?

All of these are searching questions. However, the day will come when the Lord will ask each one of us, Have you kept these My commandments ?

Wrong Directions

"When in America, I was going West one time during the winter. The train had two engines ploughing along. There was a woman, with a little baby in her arms, who wanted to leave the train at a certain small station, where they stop the train if you come from a certain distance.

"The brake-man came in and called the name of the station when we were getting near. The woman said, 'Don't forget me,' and he replied, 'Sure.'

"There was a man in the carriage who said, 'Lady, I will see that the brake-man does not forget you—don't worry.' A little while later he said, 'Here's your station.' She stepped out of the train into the storm.

"The train had gone on about three-quarters of an hour, when the brake-man came in and said, 'Where is that woman?'

"The travelling man said, 'She got off.'

"The brake-man said, 'Then she has gone to her death; we only stopped the train yonder because there was something the matter with the engine.'

"They called for volunteers, and went back and looked for her. They searched for hours, and finally found her out on the prairies, covered with a shroud of ice and snow, woven about her by the pitiless storm, and with the little baby folded to her breast. She had followed the man's directions, but **THEY WERE WRONG!**

"She followed the wrong directions, and they led her to her death, and the death of her little one. How great the responsibility of the man who sent her into the night and the raging storm! Greater still is the responsibility of those who stand up as preachers and teachers of Christianity, and who give to lost men and women and to their children the wrong directions. Instead of warning them to flee from the wrath to come, they preach that all is well. Instead of pointing out God's way of salvation by the atoning Blood, they obscure the Cross, deny Christ's atonement, and send their hearers down the road which leads into eternal darkness and misery.

"May we each one seek to know more of what united prayer will do, and may we be blameless in God's sight in this matter of giving 'wrong directions.'" (Extract.)

The Faith and The Flock

Vol. VIII—No 12. DECEMBER 1916 Price 1d

Notes and Comments.

1916.

We have again reached the last issue of another year—the eighth of the magazine's existence; and, as we think of the close of a further period of time it is not without praise and thanksgiving to God for His help, and the encouragement granted. We desire to thank very heartily, in the Lord's name, each one who has contributed to these pages: also, those helpers who have assisted by personal effort to increase the circulation, or have ordered extra copies to give away. We think that more might be done in this direction by some, and we make an earnest appeal to our readers to expend a little time and money in disseminating copies of this magazine. *The need is tremendous.* Satan is sowing his lies broadcast. The good that may be done by spreading the truth is incalculable. We believe in spending both time, strength, and money to the very best advantage, and we say, unhesitatingly, that one of the greatest needs of the hour is to feed the flock of God with meat in due season, and to combat the errors of darkness by letting in the light. And we are convinced that service in this direction will bring the greatest return both now and hereafter.

It has been an unfeigned pleasure to continue this work through another year, and the labour has not been in vain. The joy of serving God and His people grows with the years. There is the joy of fellowship, also, both in prayer and effort. Some, perhaps, may not have realised that they can have fellowship with the Lord, and with His workmen by distributing the magazine. To any who lack means, free copies of back numbers will gladly be sent for this purpose. Do not fail to write to us.

The other day, we were told of a young Christian at the front who had found great comfort from *The Faith and the*

Flock. It was his companion every night when he retired to rest. He needs it no longer, for he has passed into the presence of his Lord—killed like so many others. But there are many still left who might be glad of a copy.

During the coming year, if the Lord tarries, and it is His will, we hope to publish the articles (too long delayed) on the Coming of the Lord. Mr Scott is continuing his expositions of the Psalms, and Mr Jennings writes on Isaiah. The papers already published are full of promise that the entire series will be very helpful and interesting. Mr Fereday hopes to expound the Epistle to the Colossians, in addition to completing his articles on Elisha.

As we write, the war is not yet ended, nor is the end in sight, though considerable success has been achieved. The year 1916 has for multitudes been one of sadness and gloom. Many a life has been laid down, and other lives have been darkened. Before the year terminates the death-roll will be greater than this country has ever known during a period of twelve months. How we wish that these experiences had driven the nation to its knees, and brought men, generally, back to God. We cannot see any evidence that this result has been reached. On the contrary, there are indications which point in an opposite direction. Men, instead of being humbled, are talking as boastfully and confidently as ever. They are preparing new schemes, and with the end of the war they will be occupied with fresh enterprises, social, political, economical; and the past with its lessons—though written in blood, and echoed in thunder—they will try to forget.

In one sense, they may not forget. They will do their best to secure themselves against the recurrence of such a war. But the *real* lessons they have not learned; and we fear, will not learn. The talk is of better conditions and prospects,—of an era of peace. They are going to do better this time. Never again shall such a disaster overtake mankind! Such is the language heard on every side. The real cause of the war is passed over. Man's true condition is forgotten. With sin still existing, and human nature unaltered: with mankind away from God, and Satan still abroad, how can there be any improve-

ment? Not only does all experience—the experience of six thousand years—negative the idea of betterment, but the Prophetic word does not allow us to entertain such a hope. Gladly would we embrace it, if the Word of God fostered any such expectation; but when everywhere it speaks of increasing evil, what can be said?

There are two lines of truth, we believe will specially safeguard the people of God to-day. They are:—(1) "*The word of His grace*"—(Acts xx. 32): (2) "*The word of prophecy*"—(II. Peter i. 19). When Paul was leaving the Ephesian elders for the last time he commended them to God and to the word of his grace. When the Apostle Peter is thinking of his departure he draws attention to the word of prophecy. These two messages are of special value to-day. Both were given with the state of things which confront us full in view. Delivered under such circumstances they must be of the first importance. If with regard to the closing declaration of two of the foremost apostles, the one is about grace, and the other about prophecy—then grace and prophecy must be the two subjects which chiefly concern us, and these should chiefly occupy us at the present time. Grace, revealing God in all His goodness to sinners, and establishing our hearts before Him: unchanging in its character, and giving absolute security because it is God acting from what He is Himself. Prophecy, a light amidst the surrounding darkness, directing us to the coming day, which will usher in the reign of Christ, with the subjugation of evil under His righteous rule. These two messages from God's word will keep our *hearts* from growing cold and our *feet* from wandering out of the right track.

To this we would add—and we cannot urge it too strongly upon all our readers—it is a time for *faithfulness* and not for display. In the midst of abounding error and departure from the faith, with indifference to Christ—the one quality to be prized above all others is faithfulness. When most are turning away from the truth, to remain faithful is the prime requisite. Men may not esteem us for this, but God will. He does not ask us to do great things, or make a great show. He does ask us to keep His word and not deny His name.

In almost all the later epistles the apostacy of Christendom is contemplated. Do we realise that this was never more pronounced than in our own day? *The truth is being given up!* As to this we are repeatedly warned. Again and again the Apostle John in his second and third epistles dwells upon this point. In the first four verses of the second epistle he mentions "the truth" in every verse. And five times it is mentioned in the brief third epistle. It is the keynote of both. In St Paul's second epistle to Timothy we read of those "who, concerning the truth have erred," and later on of teachers who shall turn away the ears of those who hear them from the truth. In his second epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. ii., "the truth" is mentioned three times over. We are plainly told that there will be an apostacy from it, and that this will make way for the "man of sin." And "because they received not *the love of the truth* that they might be saved . . . for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." The Apostle Peter assures us that "the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

All this, dear reader, is being fulfilled before our eyes. Men—even professing Christians—do not love the truth. It is inconvenient to love it, to be valiant for it—their schemes and projects are interfered with—and, moreover, *the truth* can never be popular in a world such as this. What is required of us, then, is to be faithful—yes, even though faithfulness might seem to interfere with our usefulness. Depend upon it, the world—and this includes the professing Church, for as a whole, it has become thoroughly worldly—will be more and more opposed to the truth, and therefore to Christ Who is *the Truth*,—and this is rapidly paving the way for Antichrist. Let us not only *believe* the truth, but *love* it, and, if necessary, be willing to suffer for it.

"THE LORD HATH HIS WAY," an article which appeared in our July issue, and "JOY IN SUFFERING" which will be found in November, have been published separately, and can be obtained from the author—73 Durham Road, Wimbledon, S.W. Price 7d per dozen, post free.

Isaiah.

Chapter I., verses 18 to 31.

4. Verse 18 : “ *Come now, let us reason together, saith Jehovah ; Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow : though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.* ” For he had said, “ Your hands are full of blood ” :* not that every individual was a murderer ; but it is Judah and Jerusalem that is being dealt with, and was it not Judah and Jerusalem that cried, “ His blood be upon us and upon our children ” ? One can but see a kind of forward look here to a day, even then in the future, when these people should so cry ; and then to another day, still further off, when they shall awaken to the guilt of that cry and to the terror of its consequences, and shall hear this word, “ Come let us plead † together ” ; “ Come into court with Me, hide nothing, shrink not from having everything out, for I have a secret not yet told out—a divine alchemy—that shall turn thy sins, as conspicuous as scarlet—as the blood on thy hands—into invisible white, till even *thou* shalt feel quite at home in the clearest light ; but see to it that your life shows that your heart has been won by My mercy ; then shalt thou have constant tokens of My care. If we might throw the light of the New Testament on this Old Testament gospel, we might quote “ He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ”—John xiv. 21.

5. Verses 21 to 31. We are but too prone to interpret everything in Scripture by the light we now have, as if the readers of Isaiah had the New Testament in their hands, and this causes some of our difficulties. Here, we must remember that Jehovah is not dealing with individuals, who are heavenly by calling, but with a nation on earth, with whom His governmental ways afford pictures of eternal verities. He sorrowfully remembers the past, when Jerusalem was a faithful city (was there not a time when the Church was also a faithful witness to Jesus, her Lord ?) Jerusalem is now a “ harlot ” (has not this history also repeated itself, or very nearly ? See Rev. xvii. 1). And so the contrasts of past with present go on, till Jehovah

intervenes with "*Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries (i.e., the apostates within the nation) and avenge me of my enemies (i.e., the opposing Gentiles without).* And as to thee, the poor remnant, now recognized as the true representative of this city, *I will turn my hand upon thee, and will melt out thy dross with lye, and will clear away all thy lead, and thou shalt be again the faithful city.*"

The closing verses give again a comprehensive view of "Judah and Jerusalem" at the end: *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness—i.e., brought through a furnace of affliction, elsewhere called "the great tribulation";* but as to the apostate mass (the transgressors) and the lawless Gentiles (sinners) their destruction shall be together, and so, too, speaks the New Testament, "*and the beast was taken and with him the false prophet—and they were both cast, alive, into a lake of fire*"; nor shall the apostates find the slightest safety in the gods in whom they place their confidence: "for they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen." Oaks and gardens are here clearly used for the idolatrous worship that was conducted in them. The abrupt change of pronouns is perplexing, as being so different from our manner of speech: but it evidently has its value to Hebrew ears for Delitsch writes; "The excited state of the prophet at the close of his prophecy is evinced by his abrupt leap from an exclamation to a direct address. He still continues in the same excitement," for their end shall show the vanity of their confidence. Do they trust in oaks? They, themselves, shall be as a withered oak; strong to outward appearance, because of their numbers, but with no real vitality, and they are set on fire by their own work ("his work a spark," R.V.)—i.e., their very confidence is their destruction. So this introductory chapter gives a view of Judah's history from first to last, and, in so doing, gives the history of the whole race.

* The word is in the plural, and is literally "bloods," and this is very pregnant with significance; when *in* the body it is "blood," but as soon as it is shed it becomes "*bloods*," as if every drop then had its separate claim to be heard, and uttered its cry of whatever character that cry might be.

† The word is a common one; but is nowhere else rendered "reason," nor does it seem to have exactly the force of our word "reason," but rather to plead together as parties to a lawsuit, as it is used in Job xvi. 21, and xix. 5.

A Reminder and a Promise.

By WILLIAM BOUSFIELD.

"Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers of yellow gold."—(Psalm 68, verse 13).

We are constantly reminded in Scripture of what we have been delivered from. When the Israelite brought his basket of first fruits to God he was to say—"A Syrian ready to perish was my father."—(Deut. xxvi. 5); and verses 1-3 of Ephesians ii. are a vivid reminder of the dark past, only to pass on at once to one of the precious "Buts" of Scripture. "But God who is rich in mercy"—"hath quickened"—"hath raised."

In the glorious future awaiting us, I fully believe—

"Remembrance no sadness shall raise;
It will bring but new thoughts of His love,
New themes for our wonder and praise."

"Thou hast lien among the pots," was a reminder of the days of slavery, when the joys of home and of the family circle and life were untasted pleasures, their place was outside among the pots, ever surrounded by that which reminded them of their abject condition.

It is said that when night came, the slave, wearied with his daily round of domestic and other duties, would throw his poor tired body on the hearth stone "among the pots" and forget in sleep his daily task and hapless condition, only to awake in the morn to the grim reality of it all.

There is no slavery like the slavery of sin; it is ever present to its votaries; and from which they can never escape.

Thank God then for the good news of the gospel, the gospel that brings liberty, power, and blessing to all who hear and believe its message.

The poor eastern slave would no doubt readily understand this precious promise. Often, as the sun rose in his majestic splendour, will he have seen this lovely bird of the golden feathers spread its silvern wings, and leaving the shelter of the cleft of the rock soar in delightful freedom in a liberty which

contrasted strangely with the abject slavery of the poor captive, and would make his heart envious and deepen the longing for the same power and freedom.

King David himself wearied with his royal burdens and the sorrows and pressure of the life he lived, standing at the door of his palace saw, too, this every day, but ever wonderful, sight, and he longingly sighed and said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest."—(Psalm lv. 6).

The wonder of the gospel is, that it exactly meets the need and satisfies the longings of all to whom it is sent, and who accept its benefits.

Four blessings are here mentioned—Wings, dove, silver, and gold are each wonderfully suggestive, and all intensely real in their spiritual significance. The wings are to give expression to the power of life in the living bird, to enable it to enjoy that liberty which is its heritage. Everybody can understand the difference between the flight of a bird and the flight of an arrow. One is proof of life and the power of life; the other is only the effect of "the propulsive power of an external force," and the result is only of limited duration.

We cannot live the Christian life by a series of spurts, nor by the stimulus of an outside influence, but only in the power of a new life, and by the Holy Spirit.

The wings promised are the wings of a *dove*. Surely suggesting—purity, gentleness, harmlessness—characteristics of the new creation.

The raven could find satisfaction in the scene of devastation caused by the flood, the carrion its food; but the pure and gentle dove could only return to the ark, finding no rest for the sole of its foot, until bearing the olive branch of peace and rest of the new world.

The dove, too, was the form in which the Holy Spirit rested on the blessed Lord when he was here. We are exhorted to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves.—(Matt. x. 16).

The wings were *covered* with *silver*. Silver is redemption's price. The boards of the tabernacle were set in sockets of silver. The ransom money of Exodus xxx. was to be not less

than half a shekel of silver. This was silver in its typical character—the antitype being something infinitely more precious, even the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.—(I. Peter i. 18). The life in which we have power to mount and to enjoy Christian liberty is in the new life in Christ Jesus, based upon redemption. It is not of the flesh, for they “that are in the flesh cannot please God,” cannot enjoy divine and spiritual blessings.

The feathers of a bird are its beauty, its adornment, they are *yellow* gold. “Yellow”; for this adornment is a beauty all its own, distinctive in its character. *Gold* tells us of a righteousness, not of our seeking or making, but one made ours in Christ Jesus. All that *He is* made ours. God sees us in Him. What a wonderful four-fold blessing to enter into, and enjoy; and to exchange for the old condition of sin’s slavery and misery.

Wings: life, liberty and power; *Dove*: purity, gentleness; *Silver*: Redemption’s blessings—a new life in Him; *Gold*: divine righteousness—radiant and reflective in the rays of the glorious sun of righteousness. This bird, (for it is a real dove) must be a beautiful object with its silver wings and golden breast flashing in the brightness of an eastern sky. But not more beautiful than the “beauty of holiness,” the purity and the power of life in the redeemed child of God, when he or she enters by the Spirit into God’s fulness of liberty and blessing for all His beloved children.

It is said that a traveller once made one of these doves a captive, but the moaning and the evident misery of the poor bird so wrought upon its captor that he was compelled to set it free.

In the bush of New Zealand there is a quick growing undergrowth, called, I think, climbing Jack. This spreads from bush to bush, from tree to tree, in horizontal fashion, forming a kind of network above the ground, so effectually shutting out the light that birds born under this network lose their power to see and of flight, developing only rudimentary wings.

I fear there are many climbing Jacks that most effectually shut out the light and warmth of divine love and keep from us the pure air of heaven; and that this accounts for so many hav-

ing only rudimentary powers of flight, and is the reason they enjoy such little liberty.

Blessings are given to be possessed and enjoyed. Let us enter into God's purposes and the fulness of blessing He gives even now, before we enter into them fully and eternally in the glorious future awaiting all the children of God.

Elisha, the Prophet.

By W. W. FEREDAY.

XVI.—THE LESSON OF WAR.

“It came to pass after this.” Note the words. Not for long does the enemy allow the people of God to enjoy quietness. His restless hatred watches every opportunity to stir up trouble for them. So it was in Elisha's day, and so it is in our own time also. Still, II. Kings vi. 24 reads strangely after the remarkable story related in the preceding verses. We might almost have supposed that after the feeding of the Syrian host by Israel, for very shame they would not have attacked them again, and in that generation. But the human heart is incorrigible in its evil. The richest grace produces no effect upon it apart from new birth. This alone explains the world-wide revolt spoken of in Rev. xx. 7-9 as following our Lord's thousand years' reign. Even the marvellous blessing of that era of glory will not reconcile flesh to God.

But nothing happens without a cause. The Syrians' new war against Israel was altogether evil. God was not taken into account in their mischievous plans. But, while this is true, there was also that in the condition of God's people which called for discipline, and which could only be corrected by the stern ordeal of war. So we find the citizens of Samaria reduced to direst extremity, the awful need of the hour being vividly brought home to the king by the pitiful story of the woman who had been compelled to boil her son. How true is God's word, in its warnings as well as in its promises! In Lev. xxvi., and also in Deut. xxviii. the calamities which would result from disobedience were solemnly described to the people by Moses before they

entered into the promised land at all; now in Jehoram's reign we find that literally fulfilled.

We are now passing through a grave crisis ourselves. In these favoured islands, whatever our inconveniences, losses, and sorrows, we are hardly able to realise what is taking place in lands more directly touched by the ravages of war. In the midst of all the suffering, experiencing weariness and painfulness, cold and nakedness, the people of God are found. Is it without a cause that affliction has thus fallen upon the Church as well as upon the world? What has our record been during many years of tranquillity and prosperity? Halfheartedness, worldliness, and division. Are we learning the lessons of this terrible time? If men at large will not hear the rod, and Him who has appointed it, are we, the redeemed people of God, willing to hear? Have we yet humbled ourselves before God concerning our shortcomings and sins? Jehoram was not the worst of Israel's kings. He wrought evil in the sight of Jehovah, but not like his father and like his mother. —(II. Kings iii. 2). There was with him even a show of piety. He made use of Jehovah's name, and wore "sackcloth within upon his flesh." But his heart was never right towards God. Accordingly the fiery trial of war only served to bring out the terrible evil of his heart. Like the rocky-ground hearers of Matt. xiii. 21, he could not face tribulation. Thus when he heard the painful story of the woman and her son, he exclaimed, "God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him this day." Instead of humbling himself before God in dust and ashes and so drawing down mercy from on high, he lifted up his hand to strike. Who would he strike? God, if he could reach Him; but, as that was impossible, he would murder the man who represented Him.

"Why does not God stop the war?" is the irritable demand of our own time. "If there be a God, why does He allow all this sorrow?" That their own sins have made the war inevitable and that it might not be for their good for the cloud to be lifted too soon, does not seem to occur to the mass of our fellow-men. In their eyes God is a sort of public officer who should hasten to the rescue, asked or unasked, whenever men get into trouble. In their blindness they forget that instead He is a moral governor, whose claims they have set at nought, and whose

very existence they have practically ignored. Men have sown to the wind, and they are now reaping the whirlwind. It could not have been otherwise. The road to deliverance lies along the line of repentance. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Behold the instrument of Jehoram's wrath, with his master at his heels, proceeding to the home of the prophet. Unlike his predecessor, who fled at Jezebel's threat, Elisha sat still in the house. When the would-be murderer appeared, instead of a divine denunciation, lo! a wonderful announcement of divine grace was sounded forth. Elisha said: "Hear ye the word of Jehovah; thus saith Jehovah, tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria."—(II. Kings vii. 1). Our minds travel to the Cross of Calvary, and to all that followed that dark scene. As in Elisha's day, so it was then; when man's worst was fully told out, God brought forth His very best. Not judgment, but the gospel of the grace of God was the immediate result of the murder of the Lord Jesus. When Jehoram *was about to* slay Elisha, God declared His glad tidings concerning deliverance and plenty; when men *had actually slain* His beloved Son, God declared the glad tidings with which we are blessedly familiar in the Gospel. Moreover, the city in which the dreadful deed was committed was to have the message first of all—(Luke xxiv. 17)! Truly there is none so good and gracious as our God!

(To be continued.)

In Dan. ii. and vii., we have represented by metals (ii.), and beasts (vii.), the four universal Empires. The "gold" and "lion"—Babylon. The "silver" and "bear"—Persia. The "brass" and "leopard"—Greece. The "iron" and "the dreadful and terrible beast"—Rome.

* * *

Judgment and condemnation are not synonymous terms. Condemnation is future and final. Judgment precedes it (1 Cor. xi. 32.) John iii. 17, 18, 19; v. 24, read *judge* and *judgment* (R.V.) Neither the person nor sins of the believer shall ever come into judgment—much less condemnation

Notes on the War, &c.

The Battle of the Marne.

More and more as the story of the battles of Mons and of the Marne is unfolded does the supernatural element in both come to light. By "supernatural" we mean that a higher power intervened and decided the issue. There was, of course, the human side—the able generalship and the bravery of the troops—but without lessening the merits of these, and their effect, in the least—it is becoming increasingly palpable that the final issue of the war and the destiny of the principal nations of Europe was controlled and settled by Him—"Who doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." Whether angels *manifestly* interfered at Mons, perhaps, no one can decide absolutely, nor is the matter of "visibility" of much importance, though no one would dispute its interest. The supreme fact is that there is an accumulation of evidence pointing to an intervention of some kind. "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," may have been, and doubtless was, as true on the fields of Flanders as in the valleys of Caanan, long ago. The same God rules still, and He knows how to deliver. He can thwart all the best laid schemes; He can render the strongest efforts of the enemy futile. Angels are His ministers, and they are a flame of fire.

Historians recognise these facts. Speaking of the retreat on the Marne, one says:—

"At its root . . . there lay a curiously complete military blunder upon the part of the Prussians, without which so strange a sight as the turning back of a great and perfectly organised army by forces hopelessly inferior, would have been impossible. But this blunder in its turn is so difficult of explanation, its commission by men, who though stupid, are yet methodical, is so extraordinary, that in reading it the mind is insensibly haunted by the conception of a superior Will within whose action those of the opposing combatants were two parts of a whole."

There can be little doubt that the whole war was virtually decided at the Marne. It was the crucial hour. The Germans evidently expected a complete victory, and in a short time to

occupy Paris. On good authority it is stated that the Kaiser was present.

“He was distant from the nearest observers by more than the common range of a field piece; he was caught only by the careful scanning of glasses; but the figure and its surroundings were unmistakable. Grouped about him was the ‘brilliant staff’ of the newspapers and the stage; and the White Cuirassiers, which were to be the escort of his triumph, were massed to the left and behind. He had also put on for that day the white uniform of that corps and the silver helmet.”

But it was just then, when the Germans seemed strongest and the Allies weakest, that the will of man was frustrated. How easily it might have been otherwise, everyone at all acquainted with the facts must know. “None can stay His hand or say unto Him, what doest Thou.” Had He chosen to overthrow France and England it would have been done. But He had ordered otherwise; and so the hosts of the enemy fell away.

Presumption, the Cause of the Defeat.

One of the chief factors on the human side which contributed to the German defeat is said to be that of *presumption*. “The enemy advanced rapidly, even imprudently.” How often in the history of individuals and nations has failure resulted from this cause. What a warning against taking anything for granted, or expecting success to come to us of its own accord. For presumption is the result of pride which considers itself independent of means and ordinary safeguards, or superior to those opposed to us, or in competition with us. When one considers the ideas at the back of the minds of those who engineered the war, it is not surprising that they should have fallen a prey to presumption. At the same time, the sight of such mighty and overwhelming forces along with such vast and unequalled preparations all failing in their object because of it, affords an impressive lesson.

The Eastern Front.

Nor is evidence wanting that the failure elsewhere was due to the overruling providence of God. Things were allowed to happen which led to carefully laid plans proving abortive.

The following comment upon the recent change in the German General Staff is not without interest :—

“ We shall probably be right in regarding the Verdun enterprise as distinctively Falkenhayn's conception ; and its failure, now definite and irretrievable, has cost him his position. The alternative policy of a drive towards Petrograd has always been associated with Hindenburg. He pushed it with great vigour and ability in 1915, and it carried him from the banks of the Memel to those of the Dvina. There he was held up, in part by the excellent generalship of General Russky, but in part, as has commonly been reported, *because the General Staff (that is to say, General von Falkenhayn) withheld at the critical juncture the reinforcements which he needed to complete his plan, and diverted them to other theatres—especially to Serbia.* During the present year no offensive has been attempted by the Germans on Hindenburg's front, for the obvious reason that the whole of the German reserves in men, guns, and ammunition were ear-marked for Falkenhayn's French schemes ; and reports of disagreement between Hindenburg and the General Staff upon this ground have long been current.”

All this gave time for Russia to make her preparations. Thus in one way or another the German plans have been brought to nought. And although we wish the people themselves no harm, only good, we cannot but rejoice that their designs have been frustrated. Great should indeed be our gratitude to God for His unspeakable mercy ; and the more we discern His guiding and protecting hand, the more will our hearts rejoice. The military authorities alone know how real was the danger to which this country was exposed during the first months of the war.

The Condition of the Nation.

When we turn from all this unspeakable mercy of God to the nation and think of how it is being requited, we confess to feeling utterly disheartened. There seems to be no return to Him on the part of those at home. Nothing but apathy or proud confident boasting : self-seeking, and neglect of what is highest and best. God is forgotten. Take one incident, recorded in to-day's paper (Oct. 2)—“ 150,000 to hear the French band ” : “ Colossal Sunday crowd at the Horse Guards.” Here is an extract from a description of the scene.

“The fine weather yesterday morning tempted thousands to make their way early to St. James’s Park and the vicinity of the Horse Guards. Some of the earliest arrivals were there at 9 a.m., although the band was not due to play until 11.45 a.m., and by 11 o’clock it was impossible to get anywhere near enough to hear anything of the performance.”

All this was on a day devoted to the worship of God and to His service, and arranged, too, at the special time set apart for these high and holy engagements; and therefore brought into competition with them, and directly allowed to interfere. Who is responsible for these arrangements we do not know. They appear to us utterly alien to the accepted notions of a Christian community. That people in the midst of this terrible war, with thousands dying not far away, and tens of thousands subject to indescribable sufferings of body and mind, all around them, can find it in their hearts to attend to music on the Lord’s Day is certainly a condition of things we will not attempt to characterise. How it comes about that those in authority, arranged an entertainment at such a time, we cannot explain. We confess, however, to a feeling of deep regret that such a thing is possible.

Little more than a hundred yards away the Archbishop of Canterbury, almost at the same time, was preaching in Westminster Abbey, “the opening sermon of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope.” How utterly incongruous the two things seem!

Such is the nation! We trust, however, that *individuals* are coming through the crucible of war very much changed, if not actually converted. A cabman’s testimony, the other day, with regard to a certain type of young man was very striking. Before the war, he declared, if they wanted to go only to the end of the street a cab would be called. He had since been with these same young fellows in the trenches, and while before he had a very poor opinion of them, he now found they were ready to share all they had with their men and were amongst the bravest. Their character seemed entirely altered. In Scotland Yard, it has been said, there may be seen a list of some seventy names of criminals, well known to the police, all of whom have been commended for some act of bravery at the front. Many a “rotter” is finding his feet again and turning his face in a new

direction. Let us pray that they may feel their need of the blood of Christ to atone for their past offences, and that they may make friends with the Son of Man, and acknowledge Him as Lord of their life.

The question forces itself upon our attention again and again—What will be the fate of these men if ever they come back? Is the nation,—is even the Church,—in a condition to help them? We have considered the state of the nation, What is the state of the Church?

The National Mission.

Will this accomplish any great and permanent result? We must confess to a growing scepticism on this point. In the first place, what is its object? As far as we can understand, its object is not the *conversion* of men, as that term is ordinarily understood. The Primate, from whom the idea officially emanated, surely knows the end in view, and he thus states it. "*It was not to be a mission of good people to those who were not good, of the converted to the unconverted. Rather the nation itself was to awake, if only it might awake to its lamentable failures, and to the splendid opportunities, the illimitable trust which it had misused or missed, and then to gird its loins to a new and nobler endeavour.*"

But where is the Church in all this?—And we use the word Church in its widest sense. She seems to have lost herself, and, along with that, all sense of her own peculiar calling and mission, which in one sense never varies from generation to generation. And the words of the Primate awaken a more momentous question still. Where is Christ in it all? Can the Church attempt to awaken a nation to its responsibilities without raising the question of its attitude towards Him? This would be unfaithfulness on her part of the deepest dye, and would augur ill as to the success of any enterprise. And further, if the nation could be aroused, and could be awakened to a nobler existence, and more ample efforts for the benefits of mankind, would this cancel the past failures and sins of individuals composing the nation? Moreover, how can the nation be reached except through the individuals composing it? And is not the first question, How does each individual stand with God? The

mission, then, almost seems to confine itself to the work of seeking to elevate the nation, as such, and awaken it as to the concerns of this life, leaving largely out of view those wider and graver issues that relate to God and eternity, and each man's sin. It is not, says the Primate, a mission "of the converted to the unconverted."

In order that there may be no doubt as to the nature of the Mission, let us reproduce part of a large notice which confronted us the other day outside one of the principal churches in the City of London:—

Its aim: A new England and a nobler nation.

Its Ideal: A true Kingdom of God on earth.

Its Leader: The hero Christ.

Its Means: Prayer, study, worship, communion, service.

Its Programme: Reform in Church and State.

Its Text: "Behold, I make all things new."

Its Inspiration: The sacrifices of our soldiers and sailors.

Is not this akin to what the Primate says:—The aim of the Mission is a new England? Will the reader notice, there is not a word about sin or man needing a Saviour, in the whole of the above placard. The aim is not conversion or to bring men to God. Its leader is "the hero Christ," not the Saviour Christ. Its means, not preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, but "worship, communion, service." Its programme, not to make new disciples of Christ, but *reform*. And its inspiration, not the Holy Spirit, but something man has done!!

We would shrink from discouraging in the least the preaching of the Gospel, however inadequately and imperfectly it might be done, but if the above truly represents the meaning and aims of the Mission—and taken in conjunction with the Primate's words it is scarcely possible to doubt it,—then, it is more calculated to serve the purpose of the devil than any other end. For what is this announcement, but a direct appeal to the natural man—man in his fallen and sinful condition, and away from God. And what can it do but blind him more and more to his true condition and need of a Saviour. It hides the Cross. It hides the Saviour. It puts out of sight man's

lost condition. The false note is everywhere; but never more pronounced than when it talks of "the *hero* Christ." Truly, the *reproach* of the Cross has ceased. For there is not a vestige of it remaining in any part of this announcement. The fact is, those responsible for this Mission have deliberately given the Gospel the go-by. They are ashamed of God's glad tidings—the plain truths of Scripture. That is the unvarnished explanation of it all. And so a brand new twentieth century message has been manufactured which, it is supposed, will appeal to men. That it will fail to knock down the fortresses of evil and wipe out the trenches of Satan, goes without saying. It is all too indecisive and indefinite to accomplish anything deep and permanent. If only the Church would grasp unfalteringly its old and divinely given weapons, some good might be done. These new ones will go to pieces in its hand. But it is a striking sign of the times, and we do well to take heed.

Evening Hymn for Time of War.

Father of love in Jesus known,
 We humbly bow before Thy throne;
 And praise with one accord to-night
 For all Thy care since morning light.

Our pathway lies through storm and strife,
 Around us wrong and woes are rife;
 Yet Thou from harm hast kept us free,
 Our grateful thanks we bring to Thee.

Father, as night upon us falls,
 And duty's voice no longer calls,
 We lay us down in peace to rest,
 How favoured we, how richly blessed!

Soon, soon will come the glorious day,
 When we from earth shall haste away;
 Claimed by Thy Son, with Him to be
 Sons in one company to Thee.

W. W. FREDAY.

Reviews.

CHILDREN OF SOUTH AMERICA. By Kath. A. Hodge.

"The dark places of the earth are still full of the habitation of cruelty." If one needed to be reminded that this is still true, it would only be necessary to read Mrs Hodge's book. It is concerned mainly with the condition of the children, and reveals the cruelty and neglect meted out to these little ones. S. America is one of the most romantic quarters of the globe, and at the same time is one of the darkest, most degraded and sinful. Considering its size, it is perhaps less evangelised than any other part of the world. As a writer says, speaking of one particular tract of country, for "over three thousand miles we know of no missionary." The Roman Catholic religion prevails in the various republics. With what effect? "The hearts and lives that were dark before, without the knowledge of Christ, have been plunged into deeper gloom through the blighting influence of the Roman priesthood."

This is a deeply interesting book, and should have a wide circulation. Cloth, 1s 6d.

THE SOUL-WINNER AND SOUL-WINNING. By Joseph W. Kemp.

This book should be read and studied by every preacher and evangelist. The writer has been largely used in the work himself, and he knows what he is talking about. He draws a distinction between *winning* a soul and *saving* one—a difference which is not always kept in mind. Souls must be won with a view to being saved. He reminds us that "what wins one repels another, for no two souls are exactly alike." Again, "The Apostle Paul well understood the power of tact, and, therefore, adapted himself to the needs of those he would win to Christ. Souls are to be won by suitable instruments. How delicately some people go to work when the thing needed is not daintiness, but dynamite; and, on the other hand, some are violent when it is not force, but gentleness, that is needed."

Here is a quotation from another regarding ordinary conversation. "It is a great art to drop a sentence in the midst of a conversation and to pass on without waiting for a response, without demanding an answer, or starting a discussion, just simply trusting the seed."

No better book on the subject could be placed in the hands of a young preacher—or of an old one, for the matter of that. The whole book is concise and to the point. Cloth Boards, 1s net.

THE SOLDIER'S COMPANION. Khaki Cloth, 1s net.

A more suitable book could hardly be placed in the hands of any man. It contains selections from Scripture; some of the best known hymns; and extracts and articles from various well-known authors dealing with the Christian life; and all arranged in a most interesting fashion. If any of our readers are on the lookout for a book of this kind to give to a young man going to the front, here is the one.

All the above from Oliphants, Ltd., 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh.