

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Edited by
W. G. TURNER

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TO OUR READERS,

With this issue of *WORDS OF HELP* we render thanks to the LORD for thus enabling us to complete another year in this branch of His happy service.

Then many thanks to our readers at home and abroad for encouraging letters received, and assurances that the Magazine continues to live up to its title. Very gratefully also we make our acknowledgments to those who give valued help so regularly by their contributions to our pages. An AMERICAN EDITOR recently wrote: "We have enjoyed the articles appearing in your Magazine and have taken the liberty to use some of them in our own Magazine, and believe they are thus further enjoyed by *our* subscribers and readers."

Also, we are very conscious of our debt to our Printer and Publisher for their very practical assistance in the production and circulation of *WORDS OF HELP*.

The prayers of our Christian readers are still needed and valued by your friend

THE EDITOR.

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WORDS OF HELP

from the

SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

For the New Year

By THE EDITOR

A MID the turmoil of life we have the eternal securities of which the LIVING GOD is the source, CHRIST the centre, and simple faith the power of realization." With these words, one of our readers, a lady who has been for many years severely handicapped by physical disablement, recently concluded a very cheering letter.

We pass them on to all our friends for consideration and comfort at the opening of another year. Let us think on these things. In the midst of all the eruptive and disruptive forces that make for insecurity "the ETERNAL GOD is thy refuge; and underneath are the EVERLASTING ARMS." "Amid the turmoil of life," the harassing labour of life, the disturbances of life, the believing soul holds on its way having eternal securities and present access to them by the simple faith which believes that GOD means just what He says. He speaks by Him Who is the WORD, Whose voice is heard through the written word.

"None can pluck them out of My Father's hand" says the GOOD SHEPHERD of those who are the sheep of His pasture. "I give unto them eternal life." "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

There is the turmoil *without*, but with the peace of GOD, the LIVING GOD, keeping the heart and mind, there may well be quietness *within*.

"Simple faith," wrote the good sister, "is the power of realization," and the thought of her life-long disability, her straitened circumstances, and advancing age illuminated the phrase. It recalled Faber's lines:—

If our love were but more simple,
 We should take Him at His word ;
 And our lives would be all sunshine
 In the beauty of the LORD.

“Amid the turmoil of life we have the eternal securities of which the LIVING GOD is the source, CHRIST the centre, and simple faith the power of realization.” May we increasingly possess our possessions to the glory of GOD and the comfort of our own souls as we “occupy till He comes” for Whom we wait.

Some Experiences in Christian Work

(1) *Tackling Will Crooks' Three Hundred*

“WILL you come over and speak to our men in Poplar Casual Ward one Sunday evening?” enquired a young East End Mission worker of the writer.

“I can promise you a good congregation,” he continued, “a lot of old week-end regulars, some three hundred of them, who come in every Saturday night during the winter months,” adding with a smile, “we call them Will Crooks' Three Hundred.”

Upon the Sunday evening arranged the writer was met by the Leader of the Mission Band at the entrance to the Casual Ward, and soon introduced by him to the Three Hundred. Some of these were undoubtedly down and out ; the majority however looked neither down nor out, but of the true tramp genus, who having heard of the kindheartedness of the then Mayor of Poplar, Mr. Will Crooks, lost no opportunity of exploiting his good nature. That week-end the whole three hundred appeared to be in residence.

The service was held in a large oblong room, but so inconveniently seated, that the speaker never had more than half the congregation in his line of vision at any time. This was somewhat of a handicap, as was also the chair upon which he was poised precariously in the centre of

the room. The atmosphere of barely restrained boisterous hilarity likewise, was not conducive to a gospel service. The opening hymn was sung, shouted or roared with great gusto, each man apparently making as much noise as possible; and then followed a prayer and another hymn by the Mission Leader. During the singing of this the writer noticed a curious thing, as he espied a little old man, bent and withered, very busily engaged in pushing his way through the crowded rows of seats holding a half sheet of newspaper all bunched up like a small bundle. This he appeared to be offering to each man in turn, and they all smiled or nodded to him as they touched this queer paper parcel. The hymn, too, by constant repetition of verses, was somehow made to last out until the old man had been all round the room.

As the speaker announced his subject and the text, he was greeted with a more or less measure of rowdy applause. Then suddenly *it* happened. As though by a pre-concerted signal three hundred right hands were raised to three hundred noses, and three hundred sneezes broke upon the air to the accompaniment of roars of laughter.

Somewhat disconcerted by this the speaker quietly waited until the uproar ceased, and then remarked, "Now, gentlemen, it's my turn." This he afterwards learned, was his salvation, as it seems all fresh speakers were subjected to an ordeal of this kind or one similar in order to test his temper. If he said nothing or took it in good part the men voted him "a sport" or as some of them expressed it "a decent sort of bloke," and would then listen to him for as long as he liked to talk. If, on the other hand, he reprimanded them or lost his temper with them they would stamp their feet, sing songs and refuse him a hearing.

On this occasion after this incident they settled down, and for the next half hour that boisterous crowd listened like lambs to the old old story, told as simply as one knew how, of the love of GOD in sending His SON the LORD JESUS CHRIST into the world to be our SAVIOUR.

Only the Day of CHRIST will declare what the results were, but it was an unique experience in Christian work for the writer, and quite good discipline for a young preacher.

At the close, the rough congregation swarmed round the speaker endeavouring to get a handshake; and several seemingly impressed by the message, urged him to come again. But this was the first and only occasion upon which I met Will Crooks' Three Hundred. W.G.T.

(Next month (D.V.) "*Down Ratcliff Highway.*")

Some Awkward Personal Possessions

BY QUARTUS

I.—*My Character*

WHEN the Gadarene demoniac was asked by our LORD, "What is thy name?" his prompt reply was, "My name is Legion for we are many."

It is something analogous to this which makes the question of my true character so puzzling. The chameleon, famous for changing its colour, is nothing to the inconstancy that seems often to characterise my actions; my name is Legion—one person in the congregation but another in the counting-house. "A kirk saint and a hame Deil" is a Scots proverb describing the inconsistency of church members. One man at home but another at business. Herod, respecting the Baptist as a just and holy man, hearing him gladly, and being so moved by the sermon on occasion to do many things, yet on another occasion so overcome by passion, pride, and love of reputation as a man of his word, that he orders the execution of the preacher at the mere whim of an evil companion. "Verily, man at his best estate is altogether vanity." But I am not Herod, yet I possess both a reputation and a character, and alas! am often tempted to consider my reputation more than my character. My reputation is what other people think of me; their estimation of me; my character in public opinion; what my brethren think of me: my character is what I really am, what GOD, Who sees not as man sees, knows me to be.

Herod's true character was tersely summed up and expressed by our LORD's reference to him as "*That fox.*" He, Who knew what was in man, unmasked the cruel, cunning, crafty character of the one who "for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him" was willing to sacrifice "a just man and an holy" to the vindictive spite of a wicked woman.

When the Apostle Paul wrote, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out," the context shows he was referring to material possessions or worldly goods, but character is not a material possession, and happens to be just the one thing we do take with us when we depart hence. An Anglican Divine of a by-gone age used frequently to say to his congregation, "Remember, we are just what we are in GOD's sight, nothing more, nothing less."

How may one know his real character? The answer is, by what characterises him. Character is made up of characteristics.

It has been said :

You sow a Thought—you reap an Action.

You sow an Action—you reap a Habit.

You sow a Habit—you reap a Destiny.

That is to say that character is acquired and may become an awkward personal possession of which it is impossible to rid oneself here or hereafter. So in *the eternal state* the word runs : "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous let him be righteous still : and he that is holy let him be holy still." (Rev. xxii. 11.)

It is so easy, alas, to deceive oneself, for "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," but no one else. Said a professor of sinless perfection, "I've not sinned for months now."

"Well," retorted the other, "is that so? but I should like to hear your wife's opinion before I accept such a statement."

The Christian ambition is strikingly set out by the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. v. 9 : "Wherefore we are ambitious, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him.

(R.V.). If, therefore, this is my aim, and the judgment seat of CHRIST is kept in view as the place of manifestation of it, my character may be safely left to shape itself since "as he thinketh in his heart so is he."

(Next month (D.V.) "*My Fears.*")

On Discipline

PERHAPS some child of GOD passing under discipline will say : O GOD, the trials which fall upon me seem to be beyond my strength ! Contrary events come, one after another, to destroy completely all my well-established plans. Grievs arise in my life which make my heart sink in the depths of suffering. The rain of affliction falls on my soul in these evil days. Well, you are all wrong ! It is not a rain of evil which falls on you. It is a flood of blessings. For, if you want to believe the word of your FATHER, under the pelting rain there grow up spiritual flowers of a perfume and beauty such as you had never known without storm or discipline. Doubtless you feel the rain which falls upon you, but do you see the flowers ? You are suffering under the trials, but God sees the sweet flower of faith germinating in your life under the influence of the various trials. You recoil before the suffering, but GOD sees born in your soul that tender compassion for those who suffer. You see the disappointments which cause you to suffer, but GOD sees that sweet submission to His divine and perfect will gain ground in you. Your heart is cast down under cruel griefs, but God sees the depth and the growth in His grace which this sorrow has wrought in you. In reality, these are not afflictions which assail you, they are showers of tenderness, love, compassion, patience and a manifestation of a thousand other fruits of the Spirit which bring into your life a spiritual enrichment which could not have been brought about by all the great prosperity or ease which the world could ever give.

You will say : What an unproductive branch I must be when GOD must prune me like this ! Have you never read what kind of branches GOD purges ? Hear the word : *Every branch which beareth fruit, He purgeth it.*

(John xv. 7). Such is not a barren branch. The work of purging is not a proof that the branch is of no use, but rather the proof that it is bearing fruit because He purges only those branches which bear fruit. He takes away the others.

GOD does not expect that we will take pleasure in discipline, but that we shall endure it on account of what it will produce *later*. (Heb. xii. 11.)

Sometimes we reproach ourselves for not taking pleasure in affliction. We ought to be like Paul whom, we read, rejoiced in tribulation. Do you think that Paul rejoiced in the tribulation? Assuredly not. When he was scourged with iron nails, or with long leather lashes, do you think he had pleasure in it? Paul also knew the perils among false brethren (2 Cor. ii. 26) and have you not had the same experience? You had a dear friend on whom you leaned and in whom you confided what was in your heart, and you have been deceived, so that you have been filled with grief. Is this for you a matter of joy? Assuredly not. No more was it so for Paul or for any other man. What does he say? "We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh . . . patience, etc. (Rom v. 3). He does not rejoice in tribulation itself, but amidst tribulations he rejoices in the fruits they will produce. In the same way, GOD our FATHER does not expect that we shall rejoice in the discipline itself. He is not displeased when we weep and sigh and pray. He says expressly that chastisement is a subject of sorrow and He asks us only to endure it, not for itself, but for the glorious results which follow.

(From the French. Trans. J.S.)

(To be continued.)

"Therefore thank Him for thy helplessness, beloved,
 And if thou needs must long,
 Let it be but for the rest of utter weakness
 In the Arms for ever strong."

J. TAULER, 1361.

On the Vision of Faith

THE apostle Paul writing to the saints at Corinth (see 2 Cor. v. 7) says "we walk by faith not by sight." He who knew "fightings without and fears within" here lays down the rule of living. If "in times past we walked according to the course of this world . . . fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind," now our happy privilege is to experience a far superior manner of life, namely, that of an unwavering confidence in the purposes of GOD. Here is a message none the less for the saints to-day than for those nineteen hundred years ago—"we walk by faith not by appearance." This gives the real meaning of the verse. Because the weather forecast is discouraging, the farmer must not worry about his crops. Because John Smith's profession of conversion has proved to be shallow, this should not shake my confidence in the faithfulness of GOD. Because my neighbour appears to be wealthy, this is no reason why I should bemoan my poverty. We would do well to ask ourselves in the presence of the LORD "Do we look on things after the outward appearance?" (See 2 Cor. x. 7.)

Many followers of the LORD may have to answer "Yes." One will have to confess, "Yes, LORD, I saw the newspaper this morning and how dejected the news made me. I felt sure there would be no war until Thy return and now events have proved me wrong." Another will have to answer, "Yes, LORD, I saw the reports of the Free Church Council and the Modern Churchmen's Union meetings, and was overcome with depression at the tacit denial of the authority of Thy Word. I longed to see Thee flash forth and execute Thy judgments on such incipient infidelity." Far, far be it from us not to make these matters drive us to the LORD, only let us not be so despondent and overcome that we lose sight of His ultimate victory.

"We see not *yet* all things put under Him" (Heb. ii. 8)—on the contrary, a world of insubordination to GOD. We *look* at what appear to be the results of all the Gospel preaching and cry, "LORD, are there few that be saved?" We *look* at divisions among the people of GOD and exclaim,

"What a sad testimony! Have Thy purposes failed?" We *look* for evidences of the supremacy of GOD and, so often, seem to look in vain. All this is "walking by sight."

The meaning of the verb "see" in verse eight is "the impression which our eyes passively receive from objects around us." "But," continues the argument in verse nine, "we see JESUS *crowned with glory and honour.*" That Head which the world would still scar with its cruel thorns of disregard and hatred, we, by faith, see "crowned with glory." If, in this life, the sight of faith lifts our despondent hearts above the indifference and infidelity, and triumph displaces trembling and singing, sighing, what, what, if words can tell, will it mean in that Day to come to gaze with unclouded vision (see 1 Cor. xiii. 12) on our risen, ascended, glorified LORD?—for "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." GOD hath declared that "at the name of JESUS every knee should bow"—all enemies subdued and every knee bowing! This, "we see not *yet,*" but faith grasps the "Word of GOD which liveth and abideth" and revels in its revelations as accomplished facts.

If His shame was great, great also will be the manifestation of His glory. If He resisted not, so then not one will resist Him. If it was mockingly said, "Hail, King of the Jews," so then He will be owned as "King of Kings and LORD of lords." If He was trodden under foot, so He will "put all enemies under His feet." If He submitted to death, so "death the last enemy shall be itself destroyed."

Let these words echo in our hearts—"The things which are seen are temporal: the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) If we would live triumphant lives, we must remember that the source of our triumph is in CHRIST. (See 2 Cor. ii. 14.) "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS." (Heb. xii. 1, 2.)

LORD, we can see by faith in Thee,
A prospect bright, unfailling;
Where GOD shall shine in light divine,
In glory never fading.

A home above of peace and love,
 Close to Thy holy person ;
 Thy saints shall there see glory fair,
 And shine as Thy reflection.

No more as here, 'mid snares to fear
 A thought or wish unholy ;
 No more to pain the LAMB once slain,
 But live to love Thee wholly.

No more to view Thy chosen few,
 In selfish strife divided,
 But drink in peace the living grace,
 That gave them hearts united.

LORD, haste that day of cloudless ray,
 That prospect bright, unfailing,
 Where GOD shall shine in light divine,
 In glory never fading.

D.C.F.

The Book of Ezra

Notes of Bible Readings at Jumet, Belgium.

FIVE books of Scripture give us to know something of the state of GOD'S people when they returned after 70 years' captivity in Babylon. These books are those of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. These five books form a whole. They are filled with instructions for us who, in some respects, are in similar circumstances. We have the same privileges and are exposed to the same dangers since we returned from the modern Babylon. We have the privilege of having found our way to the place where the LORD has placed His NAME and of working to gather together the living stones which are part of the house of GOD ; we are also concerned, however, with enemies who are crafty and powerful and with numerous dangers attending us.

In their main characteristics, these five books each deal with one particular subject :

In *Ezra* the people go up from Babylon and set up *the altar* on its base.

Nehemiah deals principally with the rebuilding of *the wall*.

Haggai comes to speak to the *conscience* of the people who have taken things easy and have neglected the rebuilding of the house of *God*.

Zechariah, who prophesied nearly two months after Haggai, comes to encourage them in the work which they had begun as the result of the latter's exhortations.

Malachi lets us know of the miserable condition into which the returned remnant had fallen. Only a little faithful remnant still thought of *JEHOVAH*, the *LORD* ; and those that loved the *LORD* talked with one another. This remnant, precious to the heart of the *LORD*, we again find at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke.

The books of Kings and of Chronicles shew us the ruin of the royal house ; a ruin which has characterised for the most part all that has been committed to man. Certainly, David's descendants did not maintain the testimony of the *LORD*, nor yet His covenant, and they have not been seated on the throne of David for ever ; the Chaldeans have come and have taken the city where the *LORD* had placed His *NAME*, they have destroyed the sanctuary and have taken the people into captivity to Babylon amongst the nations in whose midst they found no rest. Streams of water flowed from the eyes of the prophet who depicts for us in the Lamentations the ruin of the daughter of his people.

Seventy years elapsed, during which the sanctuary lay waste and in ruins. During this time, the remnant by the waters of Babylon wept and mourned. They hanged their harps on the willows in the midst of her. "How shall we sing the *LORD*'s song in a strange land?" Alas ! they were made to feel bitterly the consequences of the disobedience of the kings and of the people. *GOD* is just in all His ways ; but He is also full of compassion. At the end of these 70 years He awakens the heart of Cyrus, the king of whom He had spoken more than a

century before by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah (xliv. 27 ; xlv. 1). He made a proclamation throughout his kingdom and published it also in writing, saying : "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD GOD of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth ; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people ? His God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD GOD of Israel (He is the GOD) which is in Jerusalem."

With this proclamation the book of Ezra begins. Its importance is such that GOD mentions it twice in His word, in Ezra and in 2 Chron. xxxv. 22, 23. The GOD Who turns the hearts of kings as the water-brooks thus awakened the heart of Cyrus so that as early as the first year of his reign he made this proclamation and in this way fulfilled the word of GOD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet in chap. xxv. 11, 12 of his book. The first chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel tells us that (in v. 21) Daniel was at the court of Babylon until the first year of Cyrus. It is clear that Cyrus is conscious that he had received a mission from the LORD and that GOD is using him to deliver the captives of Israel ; indeed, he causes all their groanings to cease. (Isa. xxi. 2). The capture of Babylon by the Medes and the Elamites (the Persians) was the signal for this deliverance.

What took place with Israel then, has taken place again to-day with the people of GOD. For centuries the saints have been captives in that Babylon which shall fall under judgment of God (Rev. xviii.). During the last century, grace was given to a few faithful ones to abandon all that man has organised and set up in Christendom, and to come in all simplicity into the place where the LORD has placed His NAME, so that they might render praise to Him in the one place where they find themselves in His presence.

In the fifth verse of our first chapter we see how necessary it was that GOD should awaken the hearts of those who returned, and in the same manner as He had awakened the heart of the King. All is due to divine mercy. GOD gave not only the grace to go up again to Jerusalem, but

He also heaped them up with riches and put it into the heart of the king to give them all the vessels of the sanctuary which Nebuchadnezzar had carried off to Babylon. Thus they had possession of all the treasures of the holy place. In the same way, a century and more ago, GOD brought to light all the precious truths which made up the riches of the disciples at the beginning. GOD has given to us again all the treasures of the sanctuary ; grace beyond measure !

All the vessels of the sanctuary were put into the hands of Zerubbabel, prince of Judah, the royal tribe, and were brought up to Jerusalem when those who returned from captivity were sent up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Chapter 2 gives us the names and number of those who thus returned from Babylon. The LORD also knows the names and number of those who have separated themselves from the abominations in Christendom in order to be in the place where He has placed His name. First to be named are eleven chiefs who returned to Jerusalem, then come the names of "the people," the "priests," the "Levites," the "singers," the "children of the porters," the "Nethinims" or lower servants and, lastly, the "children of Solomon's servants." At the close are mentioned a certain number of those who had returned but "they could not shew their father's house and their seed, whether they were of Israel." Were they part of the people of GOD ? He alone could tell but, until there stood up the high priest, they could not eat of the holy things. We may remark that those who are mentioned in verses 3 to 20 are given according to the names of their fathers ; from verse 21 to verse 35, according to the names of their towns or cities : this is less certain and less definite than genealogy. The first could value their rights as sons, the others as being of such and such city in Israel.

It is interesting to see the different classes of people who returned from the captivity. We again find the same classes in the assembly now with the various forms of service to which they are attached.

There is the great mass of the people which has no evident particular service but which has its place in the assembly. Then we have the priests, who were few in number in Israel, whilst now all are priests, wonderful privilege !

The Levites who were to assist the priests also made known the law to the people. (Neh. viii. 7.) The singers sang the praises of the Lord. It is equally remarkable to see the place which song occupies in the assembly and the number of brothers whose only service seems to be that of giving out hymns. The sons of the porters took care that nothing inconsistent with the holiness of the LORD should make its way into the holy place to profane it. The Nethinims were lower servants. A great number of brothers have services which appear to be of little importance but which are infinitely precious to the heart of GOD because all which is done in love to His SON is of great value to Him. Certain brothers raise the hymns ; others Break the Bread ; others again see to the affairs concerning the room, etc. ; while some house the visiting brethren and do many other services which cannot be forgotten by the LORD. In the last place, the servants of Solomon are mentioned. GOD takes knowledge, not only of the number of those who were returned from the captivity, but also of all that belongs to them, since all is consecrated to His service : their servants, their horses, their mules, their camels and their asses. Now, as then, all things can be used in His service.

It is precious to notice that in this remnant which returns to Jerusalem there is devotion to the house of GOD ; this the LORD never forgets. He remembers their voluntary gifts *according to their ability to give*. He would not ask more ; and this makes us think of what one woman who loved the LORD did for Him : "She hath done what she could" (Mark xiv. 8). These gifts amounted to 61,000 drams of gold, 5,000 pounds of silver and 100 priests' garments. In these times of weakness in which we are found, happy are we when we can discern amongst the saints similar devotion towards the things of GOD. At last all Israel are found in their cities. The little remnant which had returned into the land represented the nation in its entirety ; it is the expression of it in the land which the LORD had given as the heritage to His people.

Chapter 3. The seventh month was the month of the feast of trumpets. This feast was a figure of the restoration of Israel in the last days. In this month the people

gathered together *as one man*, thus realising the unity of the people of GOD in the place which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put His NAME there. Jeshua, the high priest, and his brethren, and Zerubbabel, the ruling prince of the house of David, with his brethren, set the altar *upon its bases*. Even although all was in ruins at Jerusalem and the temple was laid waste nothing kept them back from finding again the foundations of the altar of the GOD of Israel; it was there alone that they could offer the burnt offerings prescribed in the law of Moses, the man of GOD. It was there that they must come to worship. This is of great importance in connection with the things which concern us in the present day, for these things are written for our instruction on whom the ends of the world are come. We cannot content ourselves with a "very nearly." It is a question of knowing if we are come to worship in the same place where they did so at the first. The ruin in which the house of GOD is found, and the disorder which characterises Christendom now, cannot in any way be an excuse to justify a sect which is not in harmony with that which was at the beginning and with the instructions which are given us in the Scriptures. As a result of the setting up of the altar, there was fear upon them because of the people of those countries. Is not the world the bitter enemy of CHRIST, and of *every testimony which is faithfully rendered to Him*? What can this world, this enemy, do, however, against them when the GOD, Whom they thus came to worship, dwelt in the very place where they gathered themselves together? Was it not He Who was their mighty protector?

The altar being set up again, they offer the morning and evening sacrifices which thus spoke unceasingly of the excellence of the sacrifice of CHRIST before GOD; a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet smell to the LORD, which is the highest note of worship. They celebrated also the feast of tabernacles, thus anticipating the final blessing which shall be the lot of the people of GOD. They kept the feast according to that which was written. The word was the only rule of conduct for the people who were restored in their land.

Worship was therefore established but the house of

GOD had not yet been built again ; it was still only a ruin. What toil would be required in order to put the stones of the holy place each in position again ! What a picture of the house of GOD to-day ! In spite of the ruin which surrounded them, and of the feebleness in which they found themselves, the people set themselves to the work ; great tasks were to be accomplished. Each one put himself into the work, realising one-ness *in the labour* as also *in worship*. (vv. 1 and 9.) When the foundations of the temple are in position, the priests and the Levites praise the LORD together by course : "for the LORD is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." All the people shouted with a great shout. The shouts of some were shouts of joy, of others, shouts of sorrow, for they wept. All was according to their thoughts of GOD. There was indeed much to cause rejoicing at the sight of the goodness of the LORD to His people ; but could one not also shed bitter tears when thinking of the state of ruin in which the house of GOD was found ? A profound lesson for those who love the assembly to-day.

(*To be continued, D.V.*)

To Correspondents

A.H.P., Shepherd's Bush. There is no contradiction apparent or real as you suggest between Heb. xi. 39, 40 and xii. 22, 23. "Perfect" in both cases refers to being perfected in the likeness of CHRIST when our LORD comes. Then both the Old Testament saints, and Christians who now form "the assembly of the first-borns" will go to meet Him on high. The perfection of the latter, that is of all Christian believers, will be seen as the Bride, the LAMB'S wife ; but the Old Testament believers will equally manifest their perfection as being heavenly saints, the friends of the Bridegroom. They form no part of the Christian church ; indeed how could they, having lived, believed, and died before the church began on the Day of Pentecost ? But their perfection as part of the heavenly company is clearly taught in Scripture. "At present the spirits of just men are perfect, and in the heavenly Jerusalem. It seems that in the future Kingdom they shall stand in a special relation to the earthly Jerusalem and Israel ; that they shall be more immediately connected with the earthly inheritance which was promised them of old. The twelve Apostles also, though they belong to the Pentecostal Church, we are told, shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—*Saphir*.

On Going On

(A Timely Reprint)

IN passing along a busy thoroughfare it has been often noticed that the chief hindrance to progress comes from *those who are going in the same direction*. They linger and loiter, step aside so casually, stop so unexpectedly, and in these ways make the journey more difficult for others on the road. In spiritual things the same thing happens, the human element having always to be reckoned with not only, nor always, in the sense of "the flesh" as the old nature in the believer is termed. Peter and Paul, John Mark and Barnabas—better Christians probably there never were—differed occasionally on methods of service.

OUR LORD, He Who knew what was in man, took into account the fact of temperament in choosing His Apostles, each of the four temperaments—the sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholy—being fully represented in the apostolic band. And it is very largely this matter of temperament that makes unity and uniformity so difficult to reconcile among the disciples of CHRIST in our own day.

Then there is often a certain confusion in our minds between doctrine and practical expression, the one not by any means being inseparable from the other. "Generosity, consciousness of our ignorance and liability to prejudice, and honest tolerance, may keep things together for a time; but tolerance is apt to take the form of mere indifference or absence of convictions; consciousness of ignorance requires more knowledge than most people have; and generosity sometimes is merely making free with what other people value and you don't care for and what calls itself by that name is often a very questionable quality . . . People are so committed on all sides to hastily professed views and old parties, that there will be a great many false positions if the break-up comes, and the bitterness will be aggravated by people reproaching one another with inconsistency and unfaithfulness to their principles."

These words were penned by an Anglican divine at a time when the Establishment was passing through a critical period remarkably like that through which some others (gathered outside human systems of ecclesiasticism) are going to-day.

We may sometimes allow harmless, blameless inaccuracies in others to pass unnoticed, but never, of course, in ourselves. Yet we are so apt to reverse this and to accentuate minor disagreements until they assume major proportions in our sight. A little reflection should convince a godly man that life is too short, too full and too grave for one to take every chance of setting other people right. He has to give an account of himself, not in theory but in reality, and this as a very sobering thought to any truly pious soul.

In dealing with our brethren we must, if truly honest, make large allowances for the vast diversity of men's gifts and opportunities; for the inscrutable depths of personality; for the obviously unknown hindrances, difficulties, and discouragements that beset the path of each. There is a sense often of weariness in continuing struggles; of despondency in failure and disappointment; or even of self-complacency and delight in supposed faithfulness against which we all need to be on our guard. Lack of consideration for others, and hasty, impatient utterances, harsh judgments and latent ill-feeling all contribute to the causes of many defections and desertions from the ranks. A fearless facing of these causes of decline is imperative if recovery is to take place. It is a sad reflection that many believers to-day seem to be living below the spiritual poverty line; the general condition revealing either a lost or at least a lessened spirituality. Let us note some of the symptoms of this.

1. Some are finding it very difficult to sympathise with young enthusiasm, having themselves rather settled down into a kind of jog-trot condition of experience, and feeling that the old days were better than the present. Yet it is imperative, and consequently not impossible, that we *should* sympathise with the enthusiasm and energy of younger people. To say "zeal without knowledge" is often to do two bad things; first, to forget that once *we did not possess the knowledge* we fancy we now do and have lost the zeal; and, secondly, that in our LORD's estimation it is a capital offence to "stumble one of these little ones that believe in Me." Yet it is so easily done, so often done, and so thoughtlessly done.

"I realise," writes a brother of mature age and wide experience, "that the young have much to teach us if only by their struggles in difficulties when they are in a dilemma of spiritual

exercise." Now this good brother retains a youthful heart, and the assembly where he resides, therefore, has a quite unusual number of young people who are keenly interested in gospel work, church truth, and right associations. "Feed My lambs; Shepherd My sheep; Feed My sheep" is still the order.

2. Some modern spiritual Jehus on the other hand, whose good sense, however, may prevent them from actually giving his modest invitation of "Come and see my zeal for the LORD," manage somehow to create an impression that they, and apparently they only, are very jealous for the things of the LORD. At any rate they do succeed in doing immense harm to the younger folk, by a censorious criticism of others by whom the said younger ones have received help and encouragement, and in some cases were even brought to the LORD.

One has heard of a brother who on principle had declined a promising offer of Anglican orders, and also two invitations to Baptist Pastorates in the course of a few years, and though remaining steadily in the same fellowship for nearly fifty years being constantly referred to by one of these brethren as one "in whom one looks to find some measure of stability." This ignorant, churlish, censorious spirit is so patently one of the causes of the present decline, and yet is even regarded by some as *faithfulness*. With what scorn such leaders as J.N.D. and W.K., to mention but two, would have withered this ecclesiastical upas growth in the garden of the LORD's husbandry. How often, too, one has heard the question asked by some elder brethren with a touch of asperity, "Have I been wrong for forty years?" To which the real answer nearly always would be, "Not maybe in ecclesiastical position, yet possibly in spiritual condition and temper of mind; and certainly so now." "Let brotherly love continue" is the divine injunction, and it is the "love that thinketh no evil."

By the many apostolic injunctions and exhortations to this grace it is evident that in the early church there were similar dangers to those which confront us to-day, so the situation is not irremediable.

3. Then the neglect of adding to your faith "virtue," strength of mind, moral power, moral courage is a prime cause of present weakness among the saints. To hear one boast of his faithfulness in writing to a brother to reprove him for a real or imaginary fault adding, "*I put no name so that he did*

not know who sent it," was a sad experience recently. What is the remedy for the present weakness? How can desertions and defections be stayed? How may breaches in love be healed and confidence restored? These are the urgent matters. The position is startling enough to shatter any comfortable explanations; the call for recovery is imperative; and it must be both corporate and individual. And just here some words of William Kelly in a paper on "Gathering or Scattering," seems singularly apposite. Says he: —

"When the truth is known and professed and its importance recognised, there may be a sad and inexcusable deficiency of love to CHRIST and to those that are His, as well as of evangelistic zeal, so that the privilege attaching to the servant of gathering with CHRIST is grievously if not idly surrendered. True knowledge of revealed truth may degenerate into doctrinal pride and self-complacency nauseous to CHRIST (Rev. iii. 16), while zeal without knowledge will make the sinner's blessing the end and object of our service instead of CHRIST'S glory. No company of Christians, however gifted and intelligent, could rightly say "He that gathereth not with *us* scattereth," which was John's thought in Luke ix. 49, 50. But this word of the LORD JESUS *challenges every one of His servants to-day*, "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

It is of little use, however, to tinker with the circumference of things while the centre is neglected. Therefore the sovereign remedy will be found in "breaking up our fallow ground and sowing to ourselves in righteousness." Personal habits of prayer—real prayer—and self-judgment must be formed; quiet waiting upon the LORD must be practised; and for these true Bible study also must largely occupy the mind. The SPIRIT and the Word abide, but neither of these force themselves upon our attention. While the exceeding riches of GOD'S grace are always available, they only reach us along the right lines; and these call for honesty in dealing with GOD, with one another, and with ourselves. There is no short cut to the needed help. We can never bring GOD round to our way of thinking. His encouraging word to us is: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at My word." If we are sincere in lamenting the condition of things, a beginning of recovery is already being made with ourselves, therefore. If, instead of seeking to set others right, humbly and sincerely we seek grace and

use it to keep from hindering any by our conduct, character and conversation, we may surely count upon being made a blessing and help to all. The result, however, will not minister to spiritual complacency, pride of consistency, nor honour from man. It will, on the contrary, certainly secure His approval, and what else matters to those who love Him?

As to corporate recovery, we may confidently expect this to follow in the wake of genuine personal revival. The nearer individuals are drawn to the centre, our LORD Himself, in loyal, loving devotion, the closer will they be drawn to each other. Perfect love to Him, perfect confidence in Him, perfect obedience to Him, creates perfect communion with Him and with one another. Not pious phrases and unctuous professions of these, but the simple practice of the Presence of CHRIST each day would work a spiritual revolution in the whole company. "We are members one of another," and "by love we should serve one another," to the satisfaction of Him Who laid this commandment upon such as desire to be His disciples, "as I have loved you."

It is impossible, certainly, for us to set others right, but it is imperative and obligatory for each to hearken to the Voice of the One Who has a right to command our entire obedience as He says to us one by one, "Follow thou Me." May our response echo that of the late G. V. Wigram at a conversation at Oxford at which many brilliant men were present. One of these had remarked, "May the LORD give me a living in a beautiful country" (and he had more than his desire in a Scotch bishopric), and Mr. Wigram, then in early youth, immediately exclaimed, "May He give *me* to follow and serve Him at all cost!" He, too had his desire granted. So then, let us "occupy until He comes," giving up nothing that is Scriptural, taking up nothing that is unscriptural, but "above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." So shall the peace of God preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body." "The LORD keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as a hireling our day, till CHRIST shall come, and then shall every man have praise of God."

May this be our daily prayer which we not only *offer* but set ourselves to *answer*, as "with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love," we use "diligence to keep the unity of the SPIRIT in the uniting bond of peace."

W.G.T.

The Oracles of God

A DICTIONARY defines oracles as the revelations made to the prophets: the word of GOD. Peter, in his first epistle, addressed to the strangers scattered throughout (or the sojourners of the dispersion of) Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, refers to such as "elect according to the foreknowledge of GOD the FATHER, through sanctification of the SPIRIT unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of JESUS CHRIST." He writes as to fellow-believers, "begotten again unto a lively (or living) hope by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from (among) the dead," and "kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Peter enumerates all the blessings belonging to true believers, and gives very practical instructions as to behaviour under all circumstances, however difficult and trying they may be. Then, among these varied and exact admonitions he mentions speaking, and writes: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of GOD." (iv. 11.)

To be obedient to such an injunction, a man must be conversant with the Bible as a whole, and, in humble simplicity under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT by Whom he is privileged, as a believer, to be indwelt. This means subjection to the word of God *in every* respect, and, all that is of man is completely ruled out.

Even of the HOLY GHOST it is written, "He shall not speak of (or from) Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." (John xvi. 13.)

The Bible was not completed when these words were uttered, but everything spoken then had to be in strict accordance with what had already been revealed, in order to be divinely acceptable; and surely "*as the oracles of God*" implies a conscious knowledge of Divine Inspiration. How careful every speaker ought to be!

In 1 Cor. x. 15, the apostle Paul, under divine inspiration, says, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." Wise men in the sense here meant have a standard by which they can judge the words even of an inspired apostle, such as Paul, and everything said can be proved true by what has already been revealed, otherwise it must be rejected.

In Galatians i. 8, the same apostle writes "But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. These are strong words and their repetition in the next verse makes them all the more important, and they show how serious a matter it is to speak other than as *the oracles of God*.

In these enlightened days, we have the whole Bible complete, and GOD does not contradict Himself, or say anything that is inconsistent with what has already been revealed. Again, how careful every speaker ought to be, and how diligent in his search through what GOD has already communicated! The HOLY SPIRIT is here ready and willing to lead and guide as an indwelling SPIRIT all who are willing to be led and guided by Him, but let us remember that it is written that "To that man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." (Is. lxvi. 2.) The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy, says "I dwell in the high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Is. lvii. 15).

G. S. PURNELL.

Communion: Lost and Restored

(*St. John xxi. 1—27*)

THE lapse of communion of the disciples with their LORD, and His changeless and boundless love, and His unerring wisdom, in bringing about their restoration, are strikingly set before us in this portion of the Word.

It is both of importance and helpful to note that the first verse of the chapter draws attention to the scene of the incident: "JESUS manifested Himself *again* to His disciples *at the Sea of Tiberias*." This at once carries the mind back to the Lake of Galilee, where, some three years or more previously the LORD had abounded towards them in grace, given them that wonderful catch of fishes, and had so attached their hearts to Himself, that when He said, "Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men . . . when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him."

During the three following years they were with, and enjoying communion with Him. But now, clouds have dimmed their sight; they have lost touch with Him, have lost that sweet communion of heart; and they turn again to that from which He had detached them. "Simon Peter saith to them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee." Surely it was not by chance that this was to be in the very lake and at the place where their discipleship and communion had commenced?

It has often been remarked, by those who have ministered the Word, that when failure comes in, the failing have (as a rule) to be brought back to the starting point or place of departure, if full restoration is to be achieved. Abraham, when he failed, had to get back to the place where he first reared his altar before he really worshipped again; Jacob, after his weary wanderings, had to get back to Bethel, where the LORD first appeared to him; the Children of Israel, in the land, when they failed, had to retrace their steps to Gilgal; and in the addresses to the Assemblies, Ephesus, who has left her first love, is exhorted to "repent, and do the first works"—she is brought back to the place from which she had departed.

"And that night they caught nothing." But if clouds had dimmed the eyes of the disciples, and they had lost sight of the LORD, He had not lost sight of them. "When the morning was now come, JESUS stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was JESUS. Then JESUS saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No. And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

John's mind is immediately flashed back to the incident on that lake some three years before, and he says to Peter, "It is the LORD." . . . "And as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. JESUS saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught . . . Come and dine."

Is it not seen here with what wisdom the LORD was working? Had He allowed them to come to shore with an empty net, His bountiful provision would have met their need—the fire with the fish and bread were already there—but He had something sweeter for them than just satisfying their hunger:

His purpose was to give them the joy of restored communion with Himself. "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." He would sup with them and they with Him. What joy and comfort would fill their hearts!

But there is something more than the comforting of the heart: there is the searching of the heart (affections), and this is an individual matter, though, of course, it applies to all. "So when they had dined, JESUS says to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou Me more than these?"

This question put to Peter has often been linked with Peter's self-confident assertion that though all should forsake the LORD, yet he would not. Is it not rather a testing as to where or upon what, the affections were set? Were Peter's affections attached to earthly things (here his fishing) or the LORD? "Lovest thou ME more than (you love) these?"

Go back in thought again. Supposing the LORD had allowed Peter to return to shore with an empty net after a night's fishing, and, after meeting his need with the fish from the fire, and bread, then have asked him that question, Peter quite naturally, would have viewed the barrenness of his night's toil, and felt that there was not much there for his affections. But the test was, not in the light of an empty net, but in the light of a net full of great fishes. *There* was something that might hold his affections. Therefore, the LORD's question to Peter was a real test. "Lovest thou Me more than these?" Is your heart set on going back to that from which you were detached by my bounteous grace three years ago, or on Me? (This surely is a test for our own hearts, too.) The LORD's concluding words to Peter in this record were, "Follow thou Me." H. SAMBROOK.

NOTE.—Extract from J.N.D.'s "Notes and Comments," Vol. vii., p. 546: "If it be asked, What means '*touton*' (than these)? I say, Everything except CHRIST, the LORD JESUS CHRIST."

From that it is evident that J.N.D. did not interpret '*touton*' (than these) as to the measure of Peter's love in comparison with the love of his fellow-disciples.

Faith takes GOD's word and locks it up in the very innermost chamber of the heart and there it remains as hid treasure.

To Him That Overcometh

(Continued from page 16)

FROM the message "to the church at Ephesus" (ver. 1-7). we see that there had already been failure there—failure in its "first love." And, therefore, instead of being spoken to (as in Paul's epistle to the same church) of the high and holy things connected with the church at large, or of being addressed as occupying the place of witness and testimony to others, the eye has to be turned inwards to its own state, a clear proof how far it had declined.

When a church or an individual Christian is walking in the light, and not grieving the SPIRIT, there can then be entrance into the privileges belonging to the whole church of God; but when the SPIRIT is grieved, there can no longer be this revelation; each is shut up in its own particular state and judged.

The message is from Him "that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," (ver. 1) the LORD taking the place of examination and judgment.

The "overcoming" spoken of (ver. 7) and indeed throughout the chapter, is not so much the overcoming of the world and that which was without, as of all the evil discovered to be within. There had been a leaving of the "first love," and when there is diminution of this the LORD says "I have somewhat against thee," (ver. 4) though it be but in the smallest degree. He takes notice of the least failure. Whenever it has begun He speaks of excision, and inflicts it, too, unless there be repentance.

We always find that in judging God goes back to the original sin. When Stephen charges the Jews (Acts 7), although they had crucified the LORD JESUS, that which he goes back to is their first sin, of making the golden calf.

And thus with an individual Christian. *There is often failure when the first glow of Zeal is gone off.* At such a time we have not only to see where the failure is manifested, but when it was we first went away from the LORD, and we shall very generally find it to have been in getting out of communion, this leaving of the "first love." Well, this should not be and is not necessary, *but even when it is the case, the*

grace of God will still be found greater than all the evil that is discovered to be within.

We see peculiarity of blessing (ver. 7). It is to the eye and ear of faith that the LORD brings out the promise of "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." It is God's paradise: blessed security! There can be no declension there. It was man's paradise first; failure came in, and lest he should take of the tree of life and eat and live for ever, "God drove out the man," but now the promise to "him that overcometh" is to eat of the tree of life freely, and in security, in "the paradise of God."

Whilst we feed on the fruit of it "the leaves of the tree" will be "for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii. 2.) When the church is in glory it will not lose the character of grace. God gives us now to feed on the bread of life; our first delight must be in God, but then, secondarily, we have the joy of love in being made ministers of blessing unto others. Well, so also in glory our portion will be grace, but we shall be able likewise to minister in grace to others.

In the case of "the church of Smyrna" (ver. 8—11) they had begun the downward course; but the LORD had come in most graciously, and arrested the decay by tribulation. I say "most graciously," for one goes wonderfully quickly downhill unless a strong hand stops us.

The souls were in tribulation, poverty, and persecution, and how does the LORD reveal Himself? As the One Whom nothing can touch, not all the clouds and storms, the difficulties and trials affect, (like the sun, bright before the storm and bright after it) "the First and the Last." (ver. 8.)

Yes, it may be said, "this is true of Him; but then the storm rolls over us, and threatens to overwhelm; we have no power against it." But He reveals Himself not only as "the First and the Last"—the One, therefore, on Whom we may lean for eternal strength—but also as "He which was dead and is alive." He says, as it were, "I have gone through it all; I have entered into the weakness of man, and undergone all the power that could come against it, all the trials, even unto death—I have entered into everything, for I have died, and yet I am alive."

There is nothing that the LORD has not gone through: death is the last effort of Satan's power: it ends there for the

sinner as well as for the saint. The unconverted even are out of Satan's power when they die: if they die in their sins of course they come under the judgment of God, but Satan has no power in hell. He may have pre-eminence in misery, but no power there; (his reigning is some poet's dream; it is here he reigns, and that by means of the pride and vanity, the evil passions and idleness of men); he is "the ruler of the darkness of this world," not of the next.

But whatever may be the extent of power which he seeks now to exercise against the children of God, the LORD says "I have been under it—I have been dead." Therefore, it is impossible for us to be in any circumstances of difficulty or of trial through which JESUS has not been. He has met the power of Satan there; and yet He is alive. And now He is "alive for evermore," not only to sustain us while passing through the storm, but to feel for, to sympathise, as having experienced more than all the heaviness of the circumstances in which we are! He can pity with the utmost tenderness, for He came into the very centre of our misery. But the weakness of God is stronger than man, and though CHRIST was dead, yet He is alive.

"I know thy works" (ver. 9). The LORD recognises all that He can in us. We may say our works are not what we could desire them to be: and it is very true they are not, but then the LORD knows them. Though it is a right and useful thing for us to judge ourselves in order to detect the evil and correct it, yet it is very bad and unhealthy to be always occupied in considering whether our works will be approved of by God. The answer to all our thoughts and estimates about ourselves is "I know thy works. Your business is to know ME." He presents Himself as our object, not our own works.

"And thy poverty." Certainly riches never entered into the church of God without producing more trial and difficulty. You may see rich men giving their riches to relieve the poverty of others, and this is very blessed; but wherever the character of riches continues it enfeebles the energies of the church of God.

There were all sorts of opposition to the faithful in this church, but what does the LORD say to them? "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." (ver. 10.) It is the constant effort of Satan to produce in us fear and discouragement

when passing through trial, but the LORD says, "Fear none of these things." In like manner the Philippians are told to be "in nothing terrified by their adversaries." Again in Peter we read, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." Our wisdom is ever to rest confidently in Him Who is "the First and the Last," Who rises up in as great power in the end as at the beginning. The LORD does not say to this church, "I will save you from suffering," for suffering was needful in order to prevent it from stumbling headlong into decay, just as Israel was obliged, in consequence of its sin, to go a long way round the desert, and yet the LORD says as it were, to some among those who were faithful, "Do not be the least uneasy." So here is His word—"fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer."

In the beginning of the failure in "the churches" the promise to the "overcomer" in the midst of the decay was, that he should eat in security and peace of the "tree of life"; so again here, in a time of especial suffering and trial, there is held out as a stimulus (to the new man, of course) a recompense of reward. If they lost everything they should gain everything. The LORD's Own voice encourages—"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." He may be hurt of the first death but not of the second—the only real exclusion from the presence of God.

In the message to "the church in Pergamos" (ver. 12-17) the LORD is seen exercising a special form of judicial power, as "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges. (ver. 12.) We read (Heb. iv.) "The word of GOD is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," and the LORD is here presented as having this thoroughly piercing power which judges and discerns the secret workings of the heart and conscience.

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." (ver. 13.) That is where the church now found itself, where "Satan's throne is"—for he is the prince of it—in the world. And the faithful may find themselves there, too, if the church be there: (Caleb and Joshua had to go the

whole round of the wilderness with the rest, though not sharers in their unbelief) we have to separate ourselves from the evil around, though we may not be separate from its results. We may find ourselves to be in feebleness and weakness as the faithful in this church did, but our comfort, like theirs, is that the LORD says, "I know thy works and where thou dwellest."

God in His grace takes full knowledge of all that concerns us; not only of our conduct, our ways and condition, but also of the circumstances in which we are, saying, as it were, "I know that you are where Satan's seat is," and this, even when He may still have somewhat against us. There is great comfort in knowing this. We might be placed, by means over which we had no control in a very trying position but in one which might not be at all the mind of the LORD that we should quit, where Christian conduct would be very difficult, as, for instance, a converted child in an ungodly, worldly family, where there is nothing of the spirit of CHRIST. The LORD would not merely in such a case judge his child's conduct as to those things in which she might have failed. He would do that indeed, but He would also take the most thorough knowledge and notice of the circumstances in which she was, yes, of every little circumstance that rendered it trying. He just as well knew the power of Pharaoh and the detail of his tyranny as He did the crying and groans of the Israelites. "I know," he says, "that he will not let you go." There is indeed great comfort in thus seeing the LORD's perfect knowledge as to where we dwell, because it may not be always His will to take us out of the place, nor yet to change the circumstances in which we are. He may choose to have us glorify Him there, and learn through them what, perhaps, we could not learn elsewhere.

We are too apt to think we must do great works in the LORD's name in order to glorify Him: there may not always be opportunity for this (there does not appear to have been opportunity for great works in service without to this church). He takes notice if we do but hold fast His name amidst circumstances which make even that measure of faithfulness difficult—"Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith," etc. (ver. 13.)

The LORD gives His people all the encouragement, and yet

says, "I have a few things against thee." (ver. 14, 15). In the first place they were slipping back into the world, some of them having already fallen into the habits of it, "eating and drinking with the drunken." And secondarily, they were beginning to allow of evil in the church, through pretence of liberty. He therefore warns, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." (ver. 16.) Worldliness characterised the danger of this church, and it required the sword with two edges to cut between their evil and the circumstances in which they were; if this were not effected it is "I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

But at the same time that He thus warns, there is plenty of encouragement given—promises suited to counteract their temptations. (ver. 17.) Were they tempted "to eat of things sacrificed unto idols" with the world? the promise to "him that overcometh" is, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." If they had grace to separate themselves from the open evil, He would reward them with the unseen blessing of the heavenly places; there should be this feeding on "the hidden manna."

P. C. THURGOOD.

"Done—But Not Done With"

BY QUARTUS

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." (1 Tim. v., 24, 25).

IN one of the quadrangles in Oxford there is a sundial with this inscription in Latin: "*Done—but not done with.*" Whatever may have been in the mind of the one who framed this striking sentence it most aptly illustrates the above text. Indeed, one may say it covers all the activities of man, and indeed the work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST which was done—finished—upon the Cross—"Done—but not done with." It is true of the buried past of all our lives. Things done by us lie buried in the grave of forgetfulness, but often rise again to confront us further along the road of life, or inevitably at the end when the great account has to be rendered. Pontius

Pilate on the day of the Crucifixion of our LORD spoke more truly than he knew when, in an exasperated mood, he bluntly retorted to the Chief Priests, "What I have written, I have written." Our text speaks impartially of the good and evil done. Truly "*done—but not done with.*" When Mary of Bethany anointed the feet of CHRIST with the precious ointment, it was done, but by no means done with. For said our SAVIOUR, "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." "*Done—but not done with.*"

Ruskin tells of a sculptor in Venice who was engaged to carve some statuary high up in a lofty building. He had a dishonest streak in him and left the hidden side of the statues unfinished. Apparently he got away with it, as we say, at the time. The fraud was not then discovered. But afterwards, indeed some years later, he was arrested for forgery, convicted and sentenced to banishment. The dishonest streak in his character became his undoing. His sin found him out. The hidden things are brought to light; the buried past of our lives somehow goes with us, rising again to our discomfort, shame and confusion—"Done—but not done with." In some instances this is not too cheerful a consideration.

This fact of things being "*Done—but not done with*" lies at the bottom of several plain but most uncomfortable texts in Scripture. It is not easy to calmly appreciate say, "God shall judge the secrets of men by JESUS CHRIST"; nor that other rather disquieting reference to the time when the LORD will come, and both "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts"; although here it is accompanied by the heartening assurance to real believers: "then shall every man have praise of God."

Finally to sum up, "*Done—but not done with,*" for the encouragement and cheer of those who in secret and obscurity have for CHRIST's sake done the kindly action, or spoken the encouraging word of sympathy and helpfulness, what has been done is not done with. One day He Whose approval is alone of abiding value will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD"; or, "She hath done what she could and she did it to Me"—it was truly "*done—but not done with.*"

“Roll up the Catalogue”

TWO gentlemen went to see an exhibition of paintings. They were connoisseurs; and one of them held in his hand a catalogue of the various pictures on view. As they moved along the gallery, one of them touched his companion and said, “Look here! Did you ever see such a daub as that? What could have induced anyone to send a thing like that to an exhibition? What a wretched production! And yet, no doubt, he considers himself an artist! What a pity that some folk should be so blind to their own deficiencies!”

The friend who held the catalogue in his hand drew back a little, and rolling it up in the form of a telescope, looked through it at one special point in the picture; and, the more closely he examined it, the more he discerned the evidence of real genius. He said to his friend, handing him the rolled up catalogue, “Just you stand here, and look through this at that one spot.” He did so; and after a while exclaimed, “Well, that is beautiful; after all, he *is* an artist.”

Now, this little incident conveys a most valuable lesson to us all, and one much needed in our intercourse with the LORD’S people. It is a grand point, in looking at the character of anyone with whom we may have to do, to look out for some redeeming feature, some good point, and dwell upon that. Too often, alas! we do just the opposite. We take a hasty view of a person, or our eye rests upon some flaw, some defect in the temper, disposition, or conduct, and we keep perpetually dwelling and harping on that, and lose sight of some most excellent trait in the character.

This is a most serious mistake, and one into which some of us are sadly prone to fall. There are *few* of us who have not some weak point, some drawback, some little inconsistency, something or other which calls for patience and forbearance on the part of those with whom we come in contact in daily life. Let us all remember this, and so be on the look out, not for the *weak point*, but for some redeeming feature. Let us when looking at others, “*just roll up the catalogue,*” and concentrate our vision upon some Christian virtue, some good quality, some amiable feature. Let us dwell upon that, and speak of that, and nothing else; and we shall have to exclaim, “Well, after all, he is a Christian.” This will help us mar-

vellously to get on with people; and it will minister to our own happiness in a way we have little idea of.

For example, there is a person who seems to be naturally of a close miserly disposition. He likes to drive a hard bargain; he would dispute with a taxi man about a few pence; he can hardly ever make a purchase without trying to get a reduction in the price. This is very miserable indeed, very sad, very humiliating, greatly to be deplored. But, just let us "roll up the catalogue," and look closely at this person's character, and we shall find him most liberal in the LORD's cause, and in helping the poor. Perhaps on the very day on which he bargained with the taxi-cabman about sixpence, he gave a pound note to a poor family. Let us think and speak of his liberality, and draw the curtain of silence over his niggardliness.

This is Christlike. Shall we cultivate this lovely habit, for it is very terrible to allow ourselves the bad habit of dwelling upon the weak points of our brethren? It is really of Satan, and we must earnestly watch against it, and pray against it. Let us "lay aside *all* evil speaking." How deplorable to find ourselves indulging in the unworthy practice of exposing the foibles and infirmities of the LORD's people, or turning them into ridicule! May the LORD deliver us from all this! May we judge it in ourselves, and then we shall have moral power to discountenance it in others. Whenever we hear any one speaking disparagingly of another, let us gently suggest to him to "roll up the catalogue," and fix his eye on what is of CHRIST in the person, and lose sight of all beside. C.J.D.

The Spirits in Prison

PPETER, in his first letter, addressed to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappodocia, Asia and Bithynia, refers to "The spirits in prison," and he gives sufficient explanation as to who those spirits were for simple faith to understand.

The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared for the salvation of the eight souls who were sensible enough to take shelter in it. We learn from the Old Testament that the ark took 120 years to build, and all the time it was being built Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and it was the SPIRIT of CHRIST in Noah Who gave

power to his preaching. Unbelief carried the day, and the unbelievers' spirits are now in prison awaiting the resurrection to judgment mentioned by the LORD JESUS Himself, Who also gave utterance to a very solemn warning about the flood that God was obliged to bring upon the world of the ungodly. He said that it would be just the same in the days of the coming of the SON of MAN in judgment. The world would go on as if nothing had happened, eating and drinking, marrying wives and being given in marriage, right up to the outpouring of the judgment.

At the present day how little realisation there is even amongst the profession of faith that sentence of death has already been passed on the world. "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto Me, that is, everything will be in My hands" (John xii. 31, 32). This is the plain declaration of the Judge Himself, and it is only the same longsuffering of God that waited in the days of Noah that withholds the execution of the sentence then passed.

In contrast with this we read in Hebrews xii. 23, of the spirits of just men made perfect. These are those who are awaiting the resurrection of the just, those that have done good to the resurrection of life (John iv. 28, 29). There is no more hope for the spirits in prison than for the rich man in hell, who was permitted to see Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom. The answer of the faithful friend of God to the agonised appeal of the spirit then was: "Remember lost opportunities, and know that there is a great gulf fixed and impassable between us."

Those that have done good, (and, the only good that all who have sinned *can do* is to take GOD at His word and act in simple faith upon it), will be raised to the resurrection of life, while those that have done evil, (and the fatal evil is refusing to believe in the provision that God in mercy has made, and going on as if nothing had happened), will be raised at least a thousand years after the first resurrection to the resurrection of judgment (Rev. xx. 5, 6).

What nonsense the Word of GOD makes of the pride of man who glories in his so-called progress, and the wonders that his own might and power have wrought! Reader, do you realise that you can even now be sure whether your spirit is going to be with those of the just made perfect or with those in prison?

G. S. PURNELL.

Prayer and the Prayer-Meeting

THE Bible abounds in records of individuals praying to God, and also of faithful men *meeting together for prayer*. It may be well at once to mention that the verb "to pray" and the noun "prayer" are used, both in the Authorised Version and in ordinary practice, to cover all forms of addressing God, whether requests, thanksgiving, or praise. They will be used in this wide sense in this article unless the context shows otherwise.

Individual Prayer

Of individuals praying we find at one extreme the reference to momentary prayer for guidance in a time of need, as exemplified in Nehemiah ii. When challenged by the heathen king about the sadness of his face Nehemiah "prayed to the God of Heaven, and said unto the king . . ." Doubtless all through the ages men of faith have had occasion to pray in this way for immediate wisdom and guidance, which God in His sovereign grace has instantly granted. Children should be taught by Christian parents and Sunday School teachers to pray simply, in this way, at all times of difficulty or need. We who are older should cultivate and practise this *simplicity of prayer* at all times, and so should be saved much worry, and avoid many mistakes and pitfalls.

Over and over again we read in the Scriptures of individuals thus praying in time of need; but they also gave thanks for blessings received, and interceded on behalf of others. Beautiful examples of intercession are Abraham's prayers on behalf of the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah, (Gen. xviii. 23—33), and Moses' prayers for sinful Israel (Ex. xxxii. 30—35). There are also wonderful prayers of confession such as Nehemiah ix. and Daniel ix. Some of the Old Testament prayers look far into the future too, for example, the prayers of "David the son of Jesse," (see Psalm lxxii.). David takes hold of the promises of God concerning his seed, and bases his prayers on them, anticipating matters which will not come to fruition till CHRIST, the Son of David, reigns supreme in the millennium. Time spent in studying Old Testament prayers would bring home to us how limited and self-centred often our prayers tend to be.

Apart from spontaneous prayers called forth by special circumstances, there are also examples of *regular times of prayer*. This is markedly so in the case of Daniel of whom it is recorded that he prayed regularly three times a day.

At the other extreme the SPIRIT OF GOD has preserved for the unique and sublime prayer of the LORD JESUS, the SON OF GOD, in John xvii. Apart from many other aspects, we learn from it what His desire is for all His OWN—His FATHER'S gift to Him; and we can take comfort in the assurance that His prayer is being, and will be perfectly answered.

United Prayer

Of faithful men *uniting together in prayer* we also find illustrations in Scripture. Daniel, for instance, asked his three friends to pray that Nebuchadnezzar's dream might be revealed to him. (Dan. ii. 18.) It may indeed be taken for granted that petitions, intercessions, praise, and thanksgiving are strengthened when made unitedly. So amongst the Jews, whether in their own land or in heathen countries, we read of "the hour of prayer" (Acts iii. 1), and the place where prayer was "wont to be made" (Acts xvi. 13), showing that collective and regular prayer was customary among them even in the New Testament times of corrupt and adulterated Judaism. The LORD JESUS Himself gave sanction and encouragement to both individual prayer and to His disciples praying collectively.

Christian Privilege

It is necessary here, however, to draw attention to an important difference between the prayers of Old Testament saints and those of disciples of the LORD JESUS. He authorised a most amazing sanction to their prayers. The nearest equivalent in the Old Testament is found perhaps in certain prayers in which appeal to Jehovah is made for the sake of His great Name (compare Joshua vii. 9 and similar passages). The LORD JESUS authorised His disciples to address their prayers to the FATHER "in My Name" (John xiv. 13, etc.). How little the real weight of these words is often appreciated! It should not be a matter of attaching a pious phrase, merely, to our petitions, however reverently; still less are the words a magic "open sesame." Yet one fears they are often used thoughtlessly, and come glibly off the tongue. An illustration of this is that

praise (or even prayer) is sometimes addressed to the LORD JESUS *in His Own Name* which is not Scriptural, and hardly seems intelligent! The true import of the words is that the petition, praise, or thanksgiving, is presented to the FATHER with the sanction and authority (as it were) of JESUS the SON of GOD, our SAVIOUR and LORD. What exercise of heart there should be as to whether the subject matter of our prayers is such that the LORD JESUS Himself would endorse if He were bodily present!

A simple illustration of the underlying principle has often been given as follows: A little child enters the village shop and asks for certain goods. When told the price he says, "Put them down to Mother, please." The tradesman, knowing the child and the mother, readily does so. But suppose the child is tempted by the sight of some attractive toy, and tries to get it by the same magic phrase. The tradesman may look at him in doubt and say, "Are you sure your mother said you might have that?" or may even say, "Sorry, I can't let you have that unless your mother comes herself or sends the money." Failure apart (*and we all fail*), what is asked for "in the NAME of the LORD JESUS" should be that which He Himself would ask for us. How true it is that "we know not what to pray for as we ought" (Romans viii. 26). On the other hand there is One "Who maketh intercession for us according to the Will of God" (Romans viii. 27).

Let us then not refrain from prayer because of the responsibility involved in asking in His NAME, but let us also consider our requests lest we "*ask amiss*" (Jas. iv. 3). The same principles apply generally to praise, thanksgiving, and worship offered to the FATHER in the NAME of the LORD JESUS.

The "Assembly" Prayer-Meeting

There is, however, still another, and very important aspect of prayer which is much lost sight of to-day. It is what is commonly called a "prayer-meeting," but *the prayer-meeting in its fullest Scriptural character*, as the "assembly" or "church"—the company of the LORD'S Called-out freedmen—are gathered together for prayer. This differs in character and purpose from the praying of an individual, and even of two or more individuals agreeing together in prayer in the sense of the preceding paragraphs. "United prayer," as described

already, covers prayer-meetings for a particular purpose, such as those often taking place immediately before the gospel preaching. But the privileges and responsibilities at an "assembly" prayer-meeting have no counterpart in Old Testament times.

In the Acts we find examples of individual prayer (e.g., Peter—Acts x. 9); also of two or more praying together (e.g., Peter and John in Acts iii. 1). But we also read in Acts xii. 5 that "Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for Peter" when he was in prison.

The prayer-meeting which is truly of Church (or Assembly) character has certain characteristics according to Scripture which may be briefly referred to here. Those present have been made "free" by faith in the atoning death and resurrection of the LORD JESUS, and have been "called out" by Him from the world and all its entanglements. They come together *as representing locally* the whole Church of God (i.e., the whole world-wide company of the LORD'S called-out freedmen). They are gathered to the LORD'S NAME, and recognise He is in their midst. (See Matt. xviii. 20 in its connection.) The hearts and minds of all present are subject to the control of the HOLY SPIRIT in the general sense of I Co. xiv. Thus to the prayers expressed aloud all present who are in reality subject to the SPIRIT will be able to say "Amen" from their hearts. Such a company recognises, too, that all who truly believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST as their SAVIOUR and LORD are similarly free to come together in accordance with the teaching of Scripture.

Occasions of "assembly" prayer-meetings are *obviously not the time for individuals to pray aloud about their own personal circumstances*. Where there is true dependence upon the SPIRIT of GOD there will be prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, embracing the circumstances of the whole Church of GOD; with the realisation that everyone who believes in the LORD JESUS as his (her) SAVIOUR and LORD is a member of the body of which He is the Head, and that we (all such believers) *are members one of another*.

In these days when Christians are so divided into sects and parties, when worldliness, strange doctrines, and personal feelings have made such havoc of the testimony to the unity of the body of CHRIST, surely there is greater need than ever

before for prayer on behalf of the whole Church. These very circumstances also call for praise and thanksgiving to the LORD for all that He is as Head of the Church; for His patience and forbearance, and for the assurance that in spite of all our failure His purposes of grace and blessing will be fully accomplished. Alas! How often the themes expressed in prayer at the prayer-meeting are limited *to the local company present*, or perhaps extend no further than *to one or two other neighbouring companies*, or at most to others "*similarly gathered.*"

It is, of course, not only at the prayer-meeting that our hearts should be enlarged to include the whole church. The prayers of the Apostle Paul (e.g., in Eph. i. and iii.) emphatically have this character. But this should specially be true of prayers at the "assembly" prayer-meeting.

Lest there be any misunderstanding it is pointed out that the circumstances of a local "assembly," as a portion of the whole church, *are* an appropriate matter for prayer at such a prayer-meeting, especially as they are often typical of circumstances elsewhere. The gospel work (which is the means used by the LORD *to add* "to the Church daily such as should be saved"), the teachers whom the LORD raises up to instruct His people, the sick, the aged, and so on, are all rightly subjects for prayer, but especially on the broad lines of the church as a whole, without "parochial," geographical, or *sectarian* limits. In these remarks it is not intended to lay down rules of any kind, but to draw attention to the special privileges and responsibilities of gathering together for prayer in "assembly" (or "church") character. Any attempt at *laying down rules*, or carrying out *unwritten ones*; any introduction of organisation; set forms of prayer; a person in charge, etc., would be an infringement of the sovereign control of the HOLY SPIRIT in the local "church" or "assembly," which underlies so much of the instruction in 1 Co. xiv. From time to time there may also be failure, and consequent disorder; but the remedy is to submit ourselves humbly to the HOLY SPIRIT'S guidance, not to set up some form of organisation.

Some may object that, in these days of sects and divisions, no company of Christians can rightly claim to be "THE Assembly of God" in a place. *This is clearly true.* It is nevertheless also true that Christians *can still come together* in accordance with all the teaching in 1 Cor., and elsewhere.

If some do so, such a company is representative of the "Church of CHRIST," and of the whole Church of God, though in a feeble remnant way; and such can be assured of the presence of the LORD JESUS Himself in the midst, and of the control of the HOLY SPIRIT.

May it be our blessed portion to respond to these great privileges *in humbleness* of heart, until the LORD comes for His Own!

J. C. KELL.

True Christian Worship

THE two grand elements of Christian worship are the presence of the HOLY SPIRIT and the remembrance of the sacrifice of CHRIST, which is commemorated in the holy SUPPER.

But in this worship the affections which are connected with all our relationships with GOD are developed. GOD, in His *majesty*, is adored. The gifts of His *providence* are recognised. He who is a SPIRIT is worshipped in spirit and in truth. We present to GOD, as our FATHER (the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST) the expression of the holy affections which He has produced in us; for He sought us when we were afar off, and has brought us near to Himself, as His beloved children, giving us the spirit of adoption, and associating us with His well-beloved SON. We adore our SAVIOUR-GOD Who has purged us from our sins and placed us in His presence without spot. His holiness and His righteousness, which have been so marvellously displayed in our redemption, are to us a source of joy which passes not away; for, through the perfect work of CHRIST, we are in the light as He Himself is in the light. It is the HOLY SPIRIT Himself who reveals to us these heavenly things and the glory which is to come; and who works in us so as to produce affections suitable to such blessed relationships with GOD. He it is Who is the bond of union between the heart and these things. But in thus drawing out our souls He makes us feel that we are children of the same family and members of the same body, uniting us in this worship by means of mutual affections and feelings towards Him who is the object of our worship. The LORD Himself is present in

our midst, according to His assurance. Worship is also exercised in connection with the very sweetest recollection of His love, whether we regard His work upon the cross or whether we recall the thought of His ever fresh and tender affection for us. He desires our remembrance of Him.

Sweet and precious thought! Oh! how joyous to our souls, and yet, at the same time, how solemn ought such worship to be! What sort of life should we be careful to lead in order to render it! How watchful over our own spirits! How sensitive as to evil! With what earnestness should we seek the presence and guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT in order to render such worship suitably! Yet it should be very simple and truthful, for true affection is always simple, and at the same time devout, for the sense of such interests imparts devoutness. The majesty of Him Whom we adore, and the greatness of His love, give solemnity to every act in which we draw near to Him. With what deep affection and thankfulness should we at such times think of the SAVIOUR, when we recall all His love for us; abiding through Him in the presence of GOD, far removed from all evil, in the foretaste of our eternal blessing.

G. KNIGHT.

Real Conversion

(1 *Thessalonians* i. 9, 10)

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

IN putting forth the gospel of GOD’S grace it should ever be borne in mind that the LORD Himself must be the centre of testimony.

Here, in Thessalonica, these souls were brought out to serve “the living and true GOD.” The whole man turned to GOD; a totally new state from beginning to end; not merely getting relief to conscience, but GOD Himself in CHRIST become the object before the soul. This is the full import of conversion as we get it in 1 Thess. i. 9, 10; a man being turned round to GOD. There is “repentance toward GOD and faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

When you believe you get an entirely new life and you judge the past; you repent because you believe; it all comes together, like the prodigal when he turned to his father's house; there is a totally new life, state, and object. "They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit"; and "our conversation is in heaven," etc., is the doctrinal statement of this. You must get such a knowledge of self as to get rid of it. If you faithfully said, "I am dead," Satan could not tempt you. You may not always be able to do this, but it is yours to say, as one "born of water and of the SPIRIT." The water cleanses, but being born of the Spirit gives a new position and a new life.

We know we are born of GOD: that eternal life that was with the FATHER is my life, and that is CHRIST: He has become my life. The LORD breathing on the disciples was not the HOLY SPIRIT sent down from heaven. When CHRIST ascended to Heaven He received the HOLY SPIRIT afresh for us. He had it before, but He received it for us when He went up on high. It is through the Second Man, gone into glory after having put away our sins, that *we* get the SPIRIT. The SON of GOD comes down to us in our sins as Man, and as Man He goes up and receives the HOLY SPIRIT for us. Man in CHRIST takes a new place in resurrection. The work of CHRIST on the Cross clears the conscience; then CHRIST Himself becomes our life. This is a totally new state; a new creation.

The first thing needed is to have the question of sin settled, and to know that all our sins were borne by CHRIST, *and put away*. If you charge me with my sins, GOD declares that the Blood that cleansed me is always under His eye; He cannot impute my sins to me; their imputation was to CHRIST. It is what GOD sees that clears me; not that I have accepted CHRIST, but that GOD has. What gives peace is that the work of CHRIST has perfectly settled the question of sin.

Practically, if I sin, not only am I miserably failing, but I am doing the thing that caused CHRIST's agony; but if it did that it cannot be imputed to me. We have the teaching connected with our practical state in the type of the red heifer (Num. xix.). The ashes (type of sin consumed on the cross) with the running water, were sprinkled on the unclean person. The ashes are applied to the soul in testimony of the whole thing having been consumed; sin put away.

If I indulge even a foolish thought, the HOLY SPIRIT is

grieved and I am uncomfortable; but I cannot judge myself for sin, unless I am certain that it is not imputed. *The answer to everything is the work done on the Cross.* That work sets us in the presence of GOD, in the light without a stain, our sin having been laid on CHRIST according to GOD's knowledge of it.

Nothing tests the heart so much as realising that the worshipper "once purged has no more conscience of sins." There can be no real or right sanctification till a man is clear about sin. Until I know my perfect acceptance and am perfectly assured of salvation through all sin being gone, I am mingling up my *state* with my *standing*. The holy nature is there, but there can be no proper sanctification till I see that CHRIST has not borne my sins up to such a day, but that all my sins are gone, and besides that, I have a perfect acceptance in CHRIST.

There are three things: peace as to sins; present grace; and glory to come. Not merely no condemnation as in CHRIST JESUS, all sin having been cleared away, but a position (a new place in CHRIST Himself) is ours. All, as to the first Adam, was settled on the cross, and I have a new place in CHRIST, and I am called to walk now as CHRIST walked. I know I am to be conformed to GOD'S SON in glory, but here in this world I am to walk as CHRIST walked, not to be as CHRIST was. He was without sin in Him; we have sin in us, but sin in our walk is never to be allowed.

"We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Not only are my sins cleared away but I see a Man gone into glory, and now, not only I would not sin, but I want to be like that CHRIST in glory; "I press towards the mark."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

I see CHRIST in glory by faith now; I know I am to be like Him by-and-by, and I want to be as like Him as ever I can be, even now. It is like a light at the end of a tunnel; the nearer I get the brighter the light. I see the flesh in me never changes, only appears worse and worse; but, if my eye is fixed and my mind is occupied with CHRIST and full of Him, I shall get more like Him at every step: "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

There must be nothing in the heart or walk not like CHRIST; all must be given up to Him; and as to walk, I am to walk as CHRIST did.

The account we get of the flesh before the flood is lawlessness (corruption and violence); then, under law it makes a golden calf and worships it instead of GOD; then, when CHRIST came in grace it rejected and crucified Him; then, by the stoning of Stephen, it rejected the HOLY SPIRIT; and lastly, if a man goes into the third heaven, as soon as he comes down, the flesh must have a thorn to keep under its pride. The flesh cannot be changed, *but that is no reason why we should let it work*; and there is no present consciousness that the flesh is acting at all if the soul is full of CHRIST.

I am not thinking of it if I am thinking of CHRIST; I reckon the flesh dead. If a man is dead you cannot charge him with a wicked will and lusts. Not only CHRIST was crucified, but I have been crucified with Him. I have always that death of the cross to bring in, and I have CHRIST as my life.

"Now if we be dead with CHRIST, we believe that we shall also live with Him." I get the power of CHRIST acting in me with this new life. The sin I find in my flesh was put to death in CHRIST, and I have done with it!

But, another point. I get CHRIST as the object of my life. "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."

You find many who know their sins are forgiven, yet do not know what it is to have been crucified with CHRIST. You can never get rid of self till you know this. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans vi. 6.) In Romans vii. the soul is quickened but not delivered; it is under the first husband, renewed, because of knowing the spirituality of the law, but it is learning that it has no strength. It is harder to learn that you have no strength than that you are ungodly. The last stage is: "I thank GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." This is deliverance. The moment CHRIST comes in there is power, but I must learn my weakness. GOD in CHRIST having condemned my sin in the flesh, I am dead to it. If I am told of a fine concert or anything else, I say "I am dead to it." A gardener has no idea of pruning a crab-apple tree; he cuts it down and grafts with a new thing altogether.

People do not recognise the fact of their having died with CHRIST, as well as of CHRIST having died for them. Many a quickened soul does not know *the full value* of the work of CHRIST, and that "as He is so are we in this world." When the blood was on the lintels and doorposts the Israelites were safe, but when they came to the Red Sea and were told to stand still and "see the salvation of the LORD" there was positive deliverance: they were taken out of one place and put into another.

My standing is that I am not in the flesh but in the SPIRIT. When it says in Romans viii. 9, "If any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST he is none of His," it means that he is not in a right standing at all. "Ye in Me and I in you;" that is where I get my standing in CHRIST before GOD. I am quite perfect if I am in Him and He in me; and I have as to the body to reckon it dead.

The way the Thessalonians lived as to testimony was most blessed. One can never present it by *trying* to do it. If my heart be full of CHRIST I shall not merely be avoiding evil, but, as Pául prays in connection with the Philippians, desiring to be filled with the fruits of righteousness; and having got GOD'S mind, *I shall yield my body* as a living sacrifice to Him.

Paul did but one thing—he ran after CHRIST in glory. This is what conversion really is: CHRIST *everything* to the soul.

J. N. DARBY.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR.

My dear Brother,—

Might I call attention to the article "Communion: Lost and Restored" in the March-April issue of *WORDS OF HELP*, in which the writer advances the thought that when He (JESUS) challenged Peter with the words, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" He was referring to his attachment to earthly things (here his fishing); and he quotes J.N.D. in support of this view.

Now, I had always considered that this question was intended to refer to "Peter's self-confident assertion that though all should forsake the LORD, yet he would not" (to use

the writer's own words) and as J.N.D. was quoted, I referred to the Synopsis and there I read: "The LORD begins with the full restoration of Peter's soul. He does not reproach him with his fault, but judges the source of evil that produced it—self-confidence. Peter had declared that if all should deny, yet he at least would not deny Him. The LORD therefore asks him, "Lovest thou Me more than do these?" And Peter is reduced to acknowledge that it required the omniscience of God to know that he, who had boasted of having more love than all others for JESUS, had really any affection for Him at all."

This is apparently J.N.D.'s considered opinion of the Scripture; as to the remark from *Notes and Comments*, it is not for me to say why or in what circumstances it was made except to remark that these volumes were compiled from unpublished manuscripts of J.N.D. left behind after his departure to be with the LORD.

Further, W.K. in the *Bible Treasury* says in this connection: "He (JESUS) calls him by his natural name; for well He knew wherein lay the secret which gave a handle to the enemy; and He would awaken a true sense of it in the apostle's soul. Through assurance of his own superior affection he had not merely trusted in himself in comparison with others but slighted the word of the LORD. Had he laid his words to heart with prayer, he had not fallen when tried, but endured temptation and suffered. But it was not so. He was sure that he loved the LORD more than all the rest; and if they could not stand such a sifting, he would; and this confidence in his own surpassing love to CHRIST was precisely the cause, as the interrogation of the bystanders was the occasion, of his fall. And now the LORD lays the root bare to Peter who had already wept over the open fruit." (p. 343. vol. xiii 1880-1881.)

I need not say I write not for controversy but that we might have a right understanding of Scripture, and I am sure that the application of the heart, mind and conscience to this incident between the LORD and Peter will be found most profitable.

There is a paper, *Sifted as Wheat; or Simon Peter*, which also bears out the above quotations. (*Coll. Writings vol. xvi, p. 127.*)

With love in CHRIST JESUS our LORD,

T. WILSON.

TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Brother,—

In the March-April number of *WORDS OF HELP* is there not a mistaken interpretation on page 25, and an unfortunate reference to J.N.D. in connection with it? If one turns to J.N.D.'s *Synopsis*, either the original French version, or the English transcription, one finds the contrary. On page 569 of my English *Synopsis* one reads, "The LORD therefore asks him, 'Lovest thou Me more than do these?' and Peter is reduced to acknowledge that it required the omniscience of God to know that he, who had boasted of having more love than all others for JESUS, had really any affection for Him at all." What can show more plainly than this the mistake which the writer has made? Surely the author of this article does not wish to suggest that there is no connection between the thrice-repeated denial and the thrice-repeated question or between the "self-confident assertion" of Peter and the two distinct Greek words used for love in the incident under consideration.

One does not like to find fault, but it looks as if there is a want of care here that is likely to do considerable harm.

With love in our LORD JESUS CHRIST,

G. S. PURNELL.

Review

"WHEN YE COME TOGETHER," 48 pp., by J. C. Kell (C. A. Hammond, 11, Little Britain, London, E.C.1).

We have nothing but praise for this excellent little brochure which we commend heartily to all our readers. It consists of eight addresses given to young believers which might well be pondered by those of riper years for whom it forms an ideal refresher course. "They soon forgot," says the Psalmist when reviewing the history of his people, and what characterised them is equally characteristic of ourselves. So a booklet such as this of Mr. J. C. Kell is both timely and appropriate.

Difficulties of production, paper restrictions, etc., have prevented it from being presented in the style it deserves. This, however, may be recompensed for by a wide circulation, in which we cordially invite our readers at home and abroad to assist.

The Doctrine of Christ—(I)

BY THE EDITOR

THE "Doctrine of CHRIST" is a matter of supreme interest and importance not only for Christianity but for revealed religion. This may be seen from the apostolic pronouncement in (2 John, 9-11.) "Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the CHRIST has not GOD. He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the FATHER and the SON. If anyone come to you, and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes in the wicked works" (New Trans.).

In a matter of grave importance, going as it does to the very roots of communion with the FATHER, and the SON, by the SPIRIT, we find definite teaching as to it by our LORD Himself, for He is "the TEACHER come from GOD." It was on the night of the betrayal, when brought before the high priest, that our LORD, in answer to the challenge by Caiaphas, uttered the profound truth of the "doctrine of CHRIST" in the most simple yet forceful manner.

"Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the CHRIST, the SON of the BLESSED? And JESUS said, I AM: and ye shall see the SON of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 61, 62). Clearly, and emphatically, He avowed His personal dignity and destiny in these words, which, rightly understood, are found to be of the essence of the true "doctrine of CHRIST."

Some of the apostles, with other New Testament writers, were led later on by the HOLY SPIRIT to expound and apply the words of our LORD; but it is well to note that the *essential truth upon every subject afterwards dealt with in the Epistles was first stated by CHRIST Himself*. Not without deepest significance is it that His Name is the "WORD of GOD."

Standing before the high priest our LORD not only declared the true "doctrine of CHRIST" which is the subject of this paper, but incidentally illustrated the principle of Eccles. iii. 7: "There is a time to keep silence; and there is a time to speak"; and we may also very profitably consider this in passing.

When the false accusations were made against Him, and

personal abuse heaped upon Him, our LORD, to the apparent surprise of the council, made no reply. He was leaving us an example as to our action under similar circumstances. No sense of the untruthfulness, malice, or injustice of the charges made served to stir Him to self-defence or self-justification. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." As we think of Him standing in silence and meekness in the high priest's palace that night we are surely humbled by the amazing contrast between His attitude and ours, towards personal injustice and abuse.

To the high priest's enquiry: "Answereth Thou nothing?" He held His peace and answered nothing. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb so He opened not His mouth." May we have grace to learn from His silence that there is a "time to keep silence" to the glory of GOD. But there is also a "time to speak," and immediately that it is a question of bearing witness to the truth, our LORD's voice is heard speaking clearly, plainly, unmistakably, and emphatically.

"Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the CHRIST, the SON of the BLESSED? And JESUS said, I AM: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Thus is the "doctrine of CHRIST" stated unequivocally by CHRIST Himself; and we would reverently hear Him upon this most weighty matter of His Own personal dignity and destiny.

For a moment let us pause to learn of Him a very practical lesson from what, in comparison with the importance of the "doctrine of CHRIST", may appear but incidental to our LORD's declaration of it, namely the "time to speak" to the glory of GOD.

As His silence under false accusation and personal abuse is eloquent to such of His disciples as have "ears to hear," so His courageous avowal of an unwelcome and unpopular truth speaks to us of that moral courage which becomes "the sons of GOD in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

From practical experience we shall probably have to confess, that few things are more difficult for us than to hold our peace when personally vilified, and to witness boldly for

the truth in the presence of unsympathetic or hostile persons. Even to bow one's head in a crowded restaurant is sometimes felt to be somewhat of an ordeal, calling for a measure of moral courage in the open acknowledgement of the Giver of all good. May we have grace to learn from our Divine LORD's example how to act both in keeping silence and in speaking boldly.

To return to our main theme of the "doctrine of CHRIST" as enunciated by CHRIST Himself, we find presented:

- (1) The question of the high priest, who fully recognised the meaning of the terms he used in addressing our LORD, namely "CHRIST," "SON of the BLESSED."
- (2) The Person to Whom the question was put is He Who was known as JESUS of Nazareth—no question as to His identity arising in the minds of any of the council.
- (3) The explicitness of our LORD's answer.

With reference to the first of these, namely, the high priests question, this was so worded as to leave no possible loop-hole of escape or evasion: "Art Thou the CHRIST the SON of the BLESSED?"

An earlier council of the chief priests and elders held over thirty years previously had shown that, in the official mind there was no doubt as to who the CHRIST would be, and as to where He would be born. Familiar Scriptures (as Isaiah ix. 6, 7; and Micah v. 2, to cite no others,) confessedly admitted only of a Messianic interpretation and reference; we may infer therefore that when the striking question, and its more startling reply, fell upon the ears of the assembled council, nothing less than a special Divine *relationship* and a particular Divine *appointment* were implied and claimed by the terms "the CHRIST," "the SON of the BLESSED."

Then with reference to the One to whom the question was addressed, and by Whom it was answered without a moment's hesitation—He was known among them as a Man, JESUS of Nazareth by name and repute. Of this there can be no question for an earlier session of the same council, held but a short time previously, had slightly referred to Galilee as the place of the origin of this despised Prophet (John vii. 52).

So it is a real man, with a *human spirit* that can rejoice,

a *human soul* that can feel the emotions of sorrow, a *human body* that can be touched, seen, and heard, who without hesitation affirms Himself to be the CHRIST, the SON of the BLESSED, and the SON of man Who is to sit upon the throne of power, and come in the clouds of heaven.

Finally, note the explicitness of our LORD's answer. "Art Thou the CHRIST the SON of the BLESSED" And JESUS said "I AM: and ye shall see the SON of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." All that the high priest asked is answered, and this not in a *general sense* merely, but with *definite detail*, to make His meaning impossible to misunderstand. The sequel shows that Caiaphas, the chief priests, the elders, the whole council clearly understood the claim made, for, rending his clothes, and crying "blasphemy," he, and they all, adjudged JESUS of Nazareth to be guilty, and worthy of death.

What, then, is the "doctrine of CHRIST" as enunciated by CHRIST Himself? It is that the true CHRIST is the SON of the BLESSED, One subsisting in an unique relationship with GOD; also that He is the SON of man; One who, although "His goings forth are from of old from the days of eternity," yet appeared in time as the Babe of Bethlehem; dwelt here full of grace and truth; has now gone back to the right hand of power, the throne of the universe; and will come in power and great glory, and be seen of those before whom He stood in great humility in the days of His flesh. In so small a compass was so great a truth set out by the LORD JESUS; its exposition and application being left to the ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT by others.

The Person of the CHRIST, then, is He Who is at once the SON of the BLESSED as none other; yet with equal truth also the SON of man; GOD and MAN in one glorious, gracious Person. So our LORD, in stating this "doctrine of CHRIST," affirmed both the personal dignity and destiny of Him Whom men knew in the days of His flesh as JESUS of Nazareth the Son of Mary, but Whom His church now worships as the true CHRIST of GOD.

If the LORD will, in subsequent articles, we propose to consider the exposition and application of the "doctrine of CHRIST" as presented by the apostles and other New Testament writers, but in this paper we have simply sought to show what CHRIST Himself said upon this vitally important subject.

Prophecy

AMONG the gifts that the HOLY SPIRIT "divides to every man severally as He will," is that of prophecy (1 Cor. xii, 10); and "he that prophesies speaks to men to edification, exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3).

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul expresses an inspired wish that all to whom he was writing should prophesy rather than speak with tongues, because prophecy is the greater gift from the point of view of edification (v. 5). In verse 9 the necessity for uttering words easy to be understood is emphasised, and the zealous desire for spiritual gifts should be governed by a definite seeking for excellence in edifying (v. 12). The writer of the epistle goes so far as to say that he would rather speak five words with his understanding for the object of teaching others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

So prophecy is not the exclusive gift of one man or of a limited number of men, but it is available for all, and all are exhorted to "covert to prophesy." It is a remarkable thing that Moses should have expressed the wish that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them (Numbers xi. 29). Moses' servant Joshua, moved with a zeal for his master's honour wanted him to forbid the reported prophesying of Eldad and Medad, who were prophesying in the camp in Moses' absence, but Moses knew better than to do such a thing.

What a picture the Apostle Paul gives us of the result of a practical acknowledgement that "the manifestation of the SPIRIT is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. xii. 8)! An unbeliever or one unlearned comes into the assembly where all have the gift of prophecy, and are exercising it strictly according to divine instructions. The result is he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he worships God and reports that God is of a truth with that assembly (1. Cor. xiv. 24, 25).

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all be comforted; and the spirits

of prophets are subject to the prophets"(vv. 29—32)
 "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the LORD." What a test we have here! It is impossible for anyone who denies the inspiration of the Pauline epistles to be a true prophet at all! But covet to prophesy (v. 39).

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, and all things must be done decently and in order in His presence.

G. S. PURNELL.

Glorying in the Cross

(God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gal. vi. 14)

THE Cross is the centre of Christianity, its dynamic and its symbol. It is GOD's supreme method of dealing with sin, and procuring cause of our forgiveness.

The central meaning of Calvary is that CHRIST died as Sin-Bearer. He bore the Divine judgement upon sin, the appalling darkness and agony of that desertion by GOD which is the wages of sin.

Expiation by blood is an instinct of mankind. Heathen sacrifices express man's sense of sin, and the need for expiation; they are the world's cry for an atoning SAVIOUR; a distorted reflexion of Divine truth. And the elaborate system of Old Testament sacrifices showed the LORD's death till He came.

The basic ethical principle of all forgiveness is deliverance through another's vicarious suffering or loss. Forgiveness cancels injury at its own expense. The law of the harvest field, martyrs dying that the truth might live, and the sacrifices of human love, are all faint reflexions of the unique Sacrifice of our Divine REDEEMER, "in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

"Now is the Son of Man glorified." Calvary was the consummation of our LORD's life of devotion to the FATHER and service to man. He Who went about doing good, and Who came, not to be ministered to, but to minister, completed and crowned the devotion of a lifetime when He offered Himself to GOD, a spotless, perfect Sacrifice. To Him the Cross was the glory of perfect self sacrifice. And although its import is

inexhaustible and incomprehensible in its fuiness to our finite minds, we should glory in the Cross with a humble joy, a holy pride, and a triumphant confidence.

The Cross reveals the Divine attributes. It tells us what God is, always has been, and always will be. We see there Divine wisdom in causing the very act by which mankind consummated its guilt to become the means by which man's guilt is removed. We see there how much God cares for righteousness and how He hates sin. The Cross is also the supreme act of God's self-giving love; it tells us how much He cares for His world, how much He suffers for it, and what it cost Him to redeem us. In the Divine purpose Calvary antedates creation. The historic Cross is the expression and outworking in time, and on the soil of Palestine, of the Cross that was in the heart of God because of sin.

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

It is at Calvary that we behold, like the seven-coloured rainbow spanning the heavens with its arch of beauty, the glorious blending of the many-sided attributes of the ALMIGHTY.

The Cross solves the stupendous problem, "How can a just God forgive sin? God cannot be merciful at the expense of His justice. The infinitely Holy One cannot excuse sin. The penalty of His broken law must be paid. His justice required a penalty; His love provided the payment of that penalty. In the person of CHRIST GOD gathered up into Himself the guilt of mankind, and by His own sacrifice satisfied the demands of His own righteousness, thus providing a basis upon which He could justly pardon us sinners. "God was in CHRIST, reconciling the world to Himself." And so God is "just, and the Justifier of him who believes in JESUS," for "grace reigns through righteousness."

At the Cross the Master Worker achieved His masterpiece, the central work of redemption which He had planned and prepared from eternity. He "made peace through the blood of His Cross." CHRIST died on behalf of all, but *instead of His people.* At Calvary He rendered satisfaction to Divine justice in respect of human guilt generally. But the believer

can go beyond this and say, "He was wounded for *my* transgressions; *my* name was in His mind and on His heart; He bore *my* judgement."

The Cross means a victory won. There Satan and the powers of darkness brought all their forces to bear upon the LORD JESUS in the endeavour if possible to mar the Sacrifice. But our BLESSED SURETY'S power proved equal to His love, and "it is finished" was His shout of triumph. The glorious victory was *won at the Cross*; it was proclaimed by the Resurrection.

"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross." Our LORD'S joy was the joy of solving the problem, of achieving the work, of winning the victory essential to our salvation. This was followed by the joy of exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and the crowning joy of winning and possessing His Church, to be fully realised when "He shall see of the travail of His soul, *and shall be satisfied.*"

The Cross is the instrument of our eternal redemption, the mighty achievement of the CAPTAIN of our salvation. In the unseen world it is the symbol of power, of victory.

But the Cross of CHRIST is not only for our heartfelt confidence and grateful remembrance; in all its precious meanings it also has a vital bearing upon christian living.

The Cross assures us of God's love, in all its everlasting strength. It silences unbelief, and dispels dismay and bitterness in the face of life's puzzling, painful providences, and of the dark aspects of Divine Revelation. It assures us that there is Divine love at the heart of our mysterious, glorious, and tragic universe.

The Cross reveals the awful evil of sin. Sin is not merely a disease; centrally it is rebellion against the Author, Sustainer and Law maker of the universe. Only the expiatory sacrifice of the SON of GOD was adequate to deal with the appalling power of sin.

The Cross removes our guilty fears. A sense of guilt paralyses faith, and makes victory in the christian life impossible. As we gaze at our SAVIOUR'S atoning death our hearts are "sprinkled from an evil conscience," and we are enabled to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

The Cross puts us under the liberating rule of Christ. Through identification with Him in His death the believer

has been released from under the authority of dictator sin, and brought under the sway of the LORD CHRIST, Whose rule is liberty. This means the displacement of the old, evil self-centered life by the CHRIST-controlled life. Sin may tempt and annoy, but it no longer masters. This glorious truth is set out in (Romans vi,) symbolised by baptism, and made good in experience by the reckoning of faith.

The Cross means that we belong to God by right of purchase. We are His by right of creation, and now in virtue of Calvary we are eternally His by right of redemption. Tremendous thought! "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The Cross delivers from the world's religion of ritual and self-merit. It humbles our pride, but delivers us from bondage. It destroys all trust in outward privileges, ceremonies and self-righteousness for acceptance with God, and casts upon Divine grace for salvation. Paul boasted in that method of salvation of which the world was ashamed, and repudiated that method of salvation in which the world gloried.

The Cross separates from the world's principles of living. It spells "death" to the world's philosophy, pride, covetousness, envy and lust for power; that is, those very motives that impelled the Jewish leaders to hurry the Son of Man to Calvary. Can we allow in our lives that which involved the death of the LOVER of our souls?

The Cross unites Christians. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Me," said our LORD of His death as a ransom for all sorts and conditions of people. "He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition." The Cross reduces us all to the same level of guilt and helplessness before God, and then secures for all who believe, irrespective of race, nationality, social position or temperament, an entrance into the great society of the redeemed, the "one new man," the Church. It is as the meaning of the Cross rules the minds of believers that it allays racial, national and social antagonisms.

The Cross hallows pain. The fact that our LORD's supreme work was one of suffering conveys the suggestion that the best way to regard our trouble is in the light of a work, by which our salvation is helped forward. And the Cross assures

us of the never-failing sympathy of the CAPTAIN of our salvation Who was made "perfect through sufferings."

And *the Cross of Christ casts its shadow upon the Christian.* The Christian's cross is not the trouble and pain that are the common lot of mankind, but is peculiar to the followers of the CRUCIFIED. Of this cross every true believer knows something, however slight, and the apostle Paul knew so much, as he tells us in such passages as Colossians i. 24; 2 Corinthians iv. 10; and Philippians iii. 10.

The Cross for the Christian means the refusal of sin and self-will. It means living for the spiritual and eternal at the expense of the natural and temporal; for the kingdom of God at the expense of our own ambitions and interests, and sometimes our friendships and health, and it may even entail persecution. It is the spirit of sacrificial service. In short, the Christian's cross is the *cost* of doing God's will and serving men's highest interests.

"At Thy feet, O CHRIST, we lay
Thine own gift of this new day;
Doubt of what it holds in store
Makes us crave Thine aid the more;
Lest it prove a time of loss,
Mark it, SAVIOUR, with Thy Cross."

Saintly Rutherford could say, "CHRIST'S Cross is the sweetest burden I ever had; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, to carry me forward."

As we walk in the SPIRIT these ethical meanings of the Cross will be worked out spontaneously in our experience, in different degrees and with different emphases, according to the depth of our consecration, the purpose of God, and the nature of our gifts, training and service.

To the believer the Cross of JESUS is the awful yet blessed centre of all centres. All the fibres of his soul are wrapped around it, for it is the pivot of God's purposes, the instrument of eternal redemption, the procuring cause of forgiveness, and the ground of peace, holiness and everlasting joy.

"In the Cross of CHRIST I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

E. ADAMS.

Will there be Regrets in Heaven?

THE Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian believers that "We must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST, that everyone may receive for the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether they be good or bad (2 Cor. v. 10), and this verse refers to our manifestation in the presence of Him Who is our SAVIOUR now and for ever. Moreover, He has borne our sins in His Own body on the tree, so that there can be no question of our receiving punishment for them, but then we shall see in the light of GOD the full story of our lives here in this world.

It will not be a public review for all to know, but a disclosure between our souls and the LORD Who loves us, of "things done in the body." His perfect love has already cast out the fear that hath torment, so this manifestation need not distress or disturb our spirits now.

But at this judgment seat rewards are to be given according to our service and conduct here. No reward can be given for that which the discerning eye of CHRIST describes as "bad." The believer suffers "loss" for that.

How great we may well believe will be the recompense the Apostle Paul will receive for his devotion to CHRIST and His interests, and for his love and faithfulness towards believers on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as well as for unconverted people.

As individuals we also well know that all will not be on the credit side for us in the day of manifestation. The least faulty of Christians doubtless feels with sincere regret that his or her life comes very far short of what he knows and desires it should be. Will that feeling necessarily be absent for a while after our first introduction to the unspeakable bliss of the heavenly home? Certainly it will not mar the blessedness of our portion there; but, the review of our life spent in this world will serve to magnify the grace and goodness, kindness, love, and mercy which have abounded towards us all our journey through.

A Christian poet has expressed this truth in the following words:—

"When we rise to CHRIST in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, LORD, shall we fully know—
Not till then, how much we owe."

It is healthy for our souls to consider at the present time some of the things that will be recalled up there, and that may cause a measure of regret, things which could have been obviated had more care of our privileges and responsibilities been shown by us here.

A few which could be profitably faced so that our lives may be pleasing to the LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, may be mentioned.

“Do I partake of the LORD’s Supper on each ‘first day of the week’ when I am free to do so? And am I present at the appointed time?”

“Do I show fellowship with the preacher at the Gospel Meeting by listening attentively and prayerfully, while he seeks earnestly to tell the wondrous story of the SAVIOUR’s cross and shame?”

“Do I show an interest in Bible class or Sunday School work by my prayers, if not by my presence?”

“Have I submitted to being baptised in the Name of the FATHER and of the SON and of the HOLY GHOST?”

“Do I regard with a sense of urgency the importance of attending a prayer-meeting at least once a week, and if possible one for Bible-reading also?”

“Am I obedient to the LORD’s *commandment* to ‘love one another’?”

There are probably other challenges which it might be good for our souls to make to themselves as we draw nearer to the moment of the coming of the LORD.

Now surely is the time to adjust our behaviour and attitude in all things, so that we “may not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”

G. HARRISON.

A Place Prepared

WHEN the LORD GOD formed man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life He had a place prepared for him—the Garden of Eden; and had caused to grow there every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food. Then God said, “It is not good for man to be alone,” so He provided a helpmeet for him; and GOD blessed them, and said unto them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.” And GOD saw everything that He had made,

and behold it was very good (Gen. i. 28—31). For a short time Eden was a scene of wonderful happiness, the trees clapping their hands for joy while the birds of the air sang in the gladness of their hearts. God had prepared a place for Adam, and had brought him a bride to share his home with him—a lovely picture of the bride of CHRIST who shall share His home with Him.

Again, God had chosen Israel to be “His peculiar treasure.” Israel was in bondage in Egypt, under hard taskmasters, and sighed by reason of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God, and He heard their groaning. “And the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows, and am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and a large, into a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. iii. 7—8).

God was about to bear them as on eagles’ wings, and bring them unto Himself; they were about to leave the house of bondage and to come into the land which the LORD had given them for a possession.

“For the LORD thy GOD bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks and water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of oil, olive, and honey, a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass; when thou hast eaten and art full then thou shalt bless the LORD thy GOD for the good land which He hath given thee” (Deut. viii. 7—10).

A place prepared for them.

Again, to come on to the time of the end of our LORD’s sojourn on earth. His work of teaching, preaching and healing was nearing completion; the cross was just before Him. He knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the FATHER, and “having loved His Own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” So to the disciples round Him, in view of His departure to the FATHER’S House, He said,—

“Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My FATHER’S House are many mansions; if

it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and *prepare a place for you* I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also" (John xiv. 1—3).

Just as Adam in Eden received his bride in that prepared place, so our beloved LORD will have His bride in the *prepared place*, the FATHER'S House on high, where the marriage of the LAMB will take place. What a home!

'How blest a home—the FATHER'S house;

There love divine doth rest;

What else could satisfy the hearts

Of those in JESUS blest?

His home made ours; His FATHER'S love

Our hearts full portion given,

The portion of the Firstborn SON,

The full delight of heaven.

"Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter i. 3—4).

Babes

BY QUARTUS

(*Unskilful in the word of righteousness.* Heb. v. 13).

SOME who are adults physically, but spiritually babes, are here described in Scripture as being "unskilful in the word of righteousness." A more detailed description is given which accounts for their condition. They are dull of hearing, bad listeners; they need milk as a regular diet; they lack spiritual intelligence; consequently they are unskilful in the word of righteousness.

First, *what is the word of righteousness?* The answer is, "the gospel, for therein is the righteousness of GOD revealed." The gospel of GOD concerning His SON JESUS CHRIST, raised from the dead and glorified at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Who, "though He were a SON, yet learned He obedience by the things He suffered; and being made perfect,

He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him."

"Being made perfect," or being "perfected" means here, perfected by death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification. in short, the LORD JESUS as He is and where He is. The word of this "good news" and what it connotes is "the word of righteousness" in its fullest implication. "Of righteousness because I go to the FATHER," as to CHRIST Himself: His righteousness, "that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in JESUS"—word of righteousness in the gospel for all who believe on Him."

It is the full scope of both these aspects of the word of righteousness which, when truly apprehended, leads the soul on to perfection. "Perfection" is beholding the LORD JESUS by faith where He is, and as He is, as all our righteousness, strength, and life.

He is in the Heavenly Sanctuary, appearing now in the presence of GOD for us. The real apprehension of this leads to full growth; to being heavenly-minded; to being delivered from the present evil age, to keeping oneself unspotted from the world; and to going forth to Him outside the camp of worldly organised institutional systems of religion. Growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR; faith and love growing exceedingly; all naturally lead to a tender conscience, a prompt simplicity in obedience, and a faith expressed in fidelity. May we be more deeply exercised as to all this.

Correspondence

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

With reference to the correspondence on the article "Communion: lost and restored," *Words of Help* May-June 1948.

The exposition contended for by your correspondent is undoubted and well supported, not only by the eminent names referred to but also by J. G. Bellett and many others.

Nevertheless, it is due to notice that the words "than do these" are *not* strictly J.N.D.'s translation, nor indeed *any* translation, but are rather used to give certainty to an author's

understanding of what the text implies in relation to the context.

Bp. Wordsworth, in his Greek Testament with notes, gives "more than these do" or "more than these thy brethren;" and Dean Alford, in his Greek Testament, gives some helpful comments confirming the same view.

May we not, however, believe that the wider application is contained in the more personal, and does not the answer of J.N.D. confirm this,—“everything except CHRIST?”

I cannot regard that explanation as something less considered or immature though it may have been spoken earlier. I believe he would still adhere to it in suitable circumstances. “Everything except CHRIST.” It is so that many a dear soul has understood it.

We are not all fishermen, nor are the dangers to which we are exposed all alike. It was a saintly lady in very different circumstances who wrote for her children her simple exposition of it:

“In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still He calls in cares and pleasures,
Christian! love me more than these.”

Peter would be reminded not only of *his last sad fall*, but of his LORD's first call, and *how he had once reminded the Lord of it*. “Lo! We have left all and have followed Thee” (Mark x. 28). Here from that *same shore*, that *same occupation*, the *same things*, the gracious LORD repeats the *same call* and in the *same gracious words* as before. “Follow me” to be impressed by a yet more personal call, “Follow *thou* me,” in response to Peter's questioning.

John, a devoted listener to the conversation, followed also. And may not we so take those words to heart, both with the earlier or later call.

“In simple trust, like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian Sea
The gracious calling of the LORD,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.”

C. Moss.

(With this gracious exhortation this correspondence is closed.)

The Doctrine of Christ (2)

(The testimony of Peter the Apostle)

THE testimony of the apostle Peter to the "Doctrine of CHRIST" is specially interesting for two reasons:—

1. Because CHRIST specially commended him at Cæsarea Philippi for his confession: in the memorable words "*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My FATHER which is in heaven.*" Now this confession of JESUS by Peter was in almost identical terms with the words used in the challenge of Caiaphas to which we have already referred. Said Peter to our LORD, "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD"; essentially the same expression as "The CHRIST the SON of the BLESSED."

2. Peter is easily the most prominent of the early church leaders; one who passed throughout all quarters visiting the saints; the one, too, to whom the responsibility of opening the Kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles was committed; he is also a writer of inspired epistles to scattered strangers and suffering saints, his testimony therefore as to the "doctrine of CHRIST" is particularly valuable.

Whether Peter actually overheard our LORD's avowal of divine Sonship and Christhood in the high priest's palace or not, there is no doubt he witnessed the sequel to it before his own denial and the LORD's "look" caused him to go out and weep bitterly, as well he might.

What the true "doctrine of CHRIST" as understood by the apostles was in the earliest days, may be safely concluded from Peter's preachings and teachings of which we have the record.

On the day of Pentecost, in his great sermon, Peter makes emphatic reference to JESUS of Nazareth—a man—crucified, slain, raised again by GOD, made LORD and CHRIST, and actually then exalted to the right hand of power.

This "doctrine of CHRIST" was delivered in Jerusalem to a great crowd, within two months of our LORD's own affirmation of His personal dignity and destiny before Caiaphas. How the one occasion confirms the other so far as the actual doctrine is concerned!

A little later in the temple court, Peter again affirms: The

GOD of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the GOD of our fathers, hath glorified His SON JESUS; the HOLY ONE and the JUST ONE; the PRINCE of LIFE; and that "those things, which GOD before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that the CHRIST should suffer, He hath so fulfilled;" and concludes by the striking reference to the CHRIST as "His SERVANT JESUS", (New Trans.) the JESUS of Nazareth—crucified—raised by GOD—the head stone, though set at naught by the builders—and possessing the exclusive saving NAME.

Also, before the very council and high priest in whose presence our LORD had made His Own great affirmation on the night of the betrayal, Peter once more boldly states to most unwilling hearers: "The GOD of our fathers raised up JESUS Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath GOD exalted with His right hand to be a PRINCE and a SAVIOUR," This must have sounded very ominously in the ears of the assembled council!

The last public recorded sermon of Peter is that delivered by him at Cæsarea where he announces the Lordship of JESUS; the Saviourhood of CHRIST; and the fact that He is the ordained JUDGE of all mankind; a very comprehensive declaration of his doctrine of CHRIST.

With unwearied reiteration the Apostle Peter explains and applies what his MASTER had so emphatically affirmed before Caiaphas and the elders of the council, that He was "the CHRIST the SON of the BLESSED," and that "the right hand of power and the coming in the clouds of heaven" belonged to His personal destiny.

Turning now to Peter's written testimony, it is in his epistles that his "doctrine of CHRIST" is *expounded and applied* in fullest detail. These two epistles are full of clear teaching as to the Blood of CHRIST, telling of the MAN Who *died*; of the resurrection of CHRIST, speaking of the MAN Who *was raised again* in order that our faith and hope might be in GOD; also of the appearing of CHRIST as the MAN Who will come with glory and honour. The sufferings of CHRIST and the glories that should follow are linked in Peter's teaching with the precious Blood of One fore-ordained before the foundation of the world. This One is the suffering SAVIOUR, and the substitutionary Sacrifice. Prominent among the themes so

dear to this Apostle is the "eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS"; throughout all his teaching, oral or written, there is the same note consistently sounded of "the CHRIST the SON of the BLESSED," once crucified, but now glorified at the right hand of power, and coming again in glory and honour.

To sum up, the apostle Peter's "Doctrine of CHRIST", to use words of his own, is briefly comprehended as setting forth that "JESUS of Nazareth", a MAN, our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, is the SON of the living GOD, of Whom the FATHER bore witness on the holy mount, "This is My beloved SON in Whom I am well pleased." That He is SAVIOUR, JUDGE, the PRINCE of LIFE, the HOLY ONE and the JUST, for Whose coming and appearing in glory and honour His people still look. GOD and MAN, one PERSON, the CHRIST of GOD.

All the worship, walk and witness of the scattered strangers and suffering saints also centres round this Person, Whom not having seen they love, and in Whom believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. One practical lesson may be learned from the fact of His Lordship, namely, the duty of obeying Him and of yielding our hearts truly to His sway. The believer says Peter is "elect to the obedience of JESUS CHRIST." If we obey as He obeyed in the days of His flesh, then our "Doctrine of CHRIST" will be proclaimed by lip and life, and make the name of Christian neither a misnomer nor a merely nominal badge in our own case.

Our Stewardship

THE steward of Luke xvi was the manager of affairs not his own; his business was to administer his employer's property in his employer's interests.

It appears that the man in the story was guilty of a kind of embezzlement. He feathered his own nest, and was making a nice thing out of it. But one day the secret comes out, and the trusted steward is convicted of unfaithfulness. He has to give a detailed account of his stewardship and he is dismissed from his post.

What shall he do? He is not strong enough for work on the land, and he is too proud to beg his bread from door to door. Presently he hits upon a bold though dishonest device.

He will make friends of his employer's debtors by reducing the amounts of their debts, so that over the country there are a number of men who feel friendly disposed towards him, and who will at any time show him hospitality. "When I'm turned out," he says to himself, "there will be an open door for me among these good people, and I shall be sure of food and shelter until I can see my way."

All of us are stewards. We have been put in trust with our Owner's property, and we are to trade until He comes, when we shall give an account of the manner in which we have fulfilled our duties as His stewards.

Time is one of the things that have been entrusted to us. "Killing time" is a foolish and evil expression, for it suggests that time is an enemy, or at any rate a nuisance to be got rid of. The prayer for more time is often forced, in their dying moments, from men and women who, during their lifetime, had ignored GOD and the things of eternity. Wesley was always busy, but never in a feverish hurry. With a firm will, a cool brain, a peaceful conscience, a spirit in habitual touch with GOD, he filled his long life with prayer, study, preaching, writing, and good works.

Health is a treasure the value of which we do not always appreciate until we lose it; we should not squander it, but conserve and use it for home and business purposes, and, centrally, for the interests of the Giver.

Each of us has *talents*—some special aptitudes that enable us to do certain things well; and these too must be pressed into the service of our LORD during the brief period of His absence.

And what shall we say of *money*? The story of the unrighteous steward, and the lessons to be drawn from it, have primarily to do with the proper use of what our LORD calls the "unrighteous mammon." He is to control our use of it.

In the last part of verse 8 of Luke xvi we have an illuminating comment of our LORD upon the story. The wolf is keener than the sheep; the owl sees farther than the eagle—in the dark. And a suggestion is that the world is better served by its servants than GOD is by His.

Are we to imitate the shrewd but dishonest steward? Did our LORD commend or condemn him? He appears to have done both.

We should try to imitate certain "business" qualities which this man showed. When he found himself in a dilemma he did some clear, vigorous and purposeful thinking with a view to getting himself out of the difficulty. He used his imagination; he showed foresight and inventiveness. It has been said that Gordon Selfridge attributed his remarkable success in business very largely to the habit of "detailed, exact, supposing." And imagination can be harnessed to Gospel propaganda as well as to the chariot of big business. And so should such "business" qualities as accuracy and hard work.

On the other hand, we are to shun the dishonest steward's vices. He was unfaithful in the management of his employer's property, and therefore his career was a dismal failure, for "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." He was no doubt covetous. The "commercial instinct", in so far as it ignores Higher Things, is a mark of the most tragic kind of folly, for the "fool" of Luke xii, is the man all of whose plans end at death, and who makes no provision for the hereafter.

In verse 9 of Luke xvi we are told to make eternal friendships through the spiritually wise use of money—and our other possessions including time, opportunities, health and talents—while we remain in this world. We are to imitate the dishonest steward's wisdom, but on a higher plane and in a godly way. We are to turn our powers and possessions into a wise and spiritually profitable investment.

And if we are willing to be taught by the LORD, the question "How is this to be done?" will not remain long unanswered.

E. ADAMS.

Watch and Pray

THAT there is a growing tendency to looseness and laxity must be apparent to any who are taking account of things, and especially does this take the form of worldliness in *amusements, dress, furnishing of our homes, our affiliations and companionships.*

The cross, in which we once gloried, as crucified with CHRIST, seeing on the one side a dead world and on the other a dead self, we view as the transaction in which our sins were

put away, and there we pause, disinclined to accept it as the end of ourselves for the world and the end of the world for us (Gal. vi. 14). "God forbid that I should glory" has ceased to be our prayer. We do not want the world rendered an object of contempt and shame to us, nor do we want to be rendered this to the world; and yet, this is where the cross leaves us.

We have lost CHRIST, may be not as the object of faith, but as the object of affection. All declension begins here. With many of us it would seem to be enough to know Him as a SAVIOUR. We are quite willing to use His sorrows and sufferings to separate us from our sins, but we do not want these to separate us from ourselves and our surroundings. With the individual as with the Church, we are under the charge of "*Thou has left thy first love,*" and solemnly called to "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." There may be much in us that He can commend, but if He has lost His place in our hearts, if affections are alienated, we are "fallen." Searching and solemn indictment! And what is His word to us? "Repent!"

It is not enough to be *on the ground*, and to *have the truth*. We but repeat the sin of the Pharisees when we become content and complacent with externals. The truth must give us a state that comports and agrees with the place we are in. If this is effected, we will not "walk in the manners" of that world from which His cross has separated us.

Has the blessed SPIRIT been so grieved that He can no longer make good to us what is true of us in CHRIST? Have we lost the sense of His preciousness in our souls (1 Peter ii. 7)? What disposition or desire can be satisfied apart from CHRIST in Whom every beauty, every charm, and every glory meet? All must be disappointing, ephemeral, and empty. The joy you are looking for, you are leaving behind you in turning away from Him. Once its passions and pleasures, its gold and its glory, you counted but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS YOUR LORD. "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold.

But He is the same, and our failure has not diminished His fulness; it is for us still. However chilled in heart or wayward in walk, I hear Him saying, "I love thee still." Is there not a message from the cross, where love's sweetest story was so

fully told, where we became His at such an awful cost, where He bought us so dearly?

“I gave it all for thee;
What hast thou given for Me?”

How much you are missing by leaving Him out of your life! And how much He is missing! The next thing to being with Him there is to have Him with us here, and to have His conscious presence, and so have a part with Him. When everything was slipping, Paul wrote to Timothy, “THE LORD JESUS CHRIST be with thy spirit.” Do we catch this? It is the first movement toward being already in heaven. He was given for you, Glory to His name! But have you lost Him as the One Who gave Himself for you? Oh, what a loss, since “CHRIST is all.” He the exalted One, “far above all heavens,” and you, not only the object of His consideration, but of His love!

Do you begin to grasp that height to which He has been carried: “far above all heavens?” He has the pre-eminence in all things; and “I am His, and His desire is towards me.” What a secret to be in; a secret angels cannot know. Wait before Him until He fills you with His Own fulness. For one look at Him there, Paul “counted all things but loss.” No wonder he passed into an ecstasy, and was “beside himself.” Stephen, occupied with Him and His glory, wore an angel’s face. Look long and lingeringly in that Face that streams with the light of His glory, and it will cast a shade on all below. And are you passing it all by? It is your loss now and eternally. Once in the secret of what CHRIST is, earth’s joys will become stale, and as His Coming casts the light of the nearing glory across this “little while,” it will take the burden from your cross, and the sharpness from the thorns as you “haste to meet Him with a bridal hymn.”

F. C. BLOUNT.

Incidents by The Wayside

QUITE a number of incidents by the wayside during the journeys of the LORD JESUS are recorded in the Gospels. A few may here be briefly noticed.

In Luke vii. we read of JESUS going into a city called Nain,

and "when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." The LORD raised him, and "delivered him to his mother."

In Luke viii., we read of JESUS on His way to the home of Jairus, when He was intercepted by the woman who suffered from an issue of blood. He healed her.

In chapter xviii. of the same Gospel we have the recording of JESUS on His way to Jericho, and a certain blind man sitting by the wayside begging. In answer to his cry, "LORD, that I may receive my sight," "JESUS said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee."

In the following chapter we read, "And JESUS entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which . . . sought to see JESUS." He ran ahead and climbed up a tree by the wayside to do so. His desires were more than met.

Similar recordings are found in the other Gospels: e.g., the case of the blind man in John ix. But, possibly, there is no other recorded wayside incident more deeply interesting, or so markedly bringing out the dealings with a guilty needy sinner by the One Who was "full of grace and truth" than that found in John iv.

The circumstances connected with this incident may appear strange; to the woman involved they were perplexing; to the disciples such as to be marvelled at; but how wisely planned, and how perfectly carried through, the achievement of the desired end demonstrated.

Seemingly strange, to read of that great work going on in Judea, where JESUS and His disciples were baptizing, and all men coming to Him; and John Baptist also baptizing in Ænon near to Salem: and then to read, "When therefore the LORD knew how the Pharisees had heard that JESUS made and baptized more disciples than John, (though JESUS Himself baptized not, but His disciples), He left Judea, and departed into Galilee."

Not really strange. How like the LORD. Did He not say to some, on another occasion, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which

was lost, until he find it?" So He (parabolically) left the ninety and nine with John in the wilderness of Judea, whilst He Himself went into Samaria to find that lost one at Sychar's well.

(Parenthetically, reference may be made to a somewhat similar incident recorded in Acts viii., and, singularly, had connections with Samaria. Philip the Evangelist had been conducting a great mission there, and there were many converts; when, strange as it may seem, "the Angel of the LORD spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go towards the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." For what purpose? To unfold the Gospel to one solitary, thirsty soul).

Returning to John iv., we read, "And He must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar Now Jacob's well was there. JESUS therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water."

How wisely planned and timed by the One Who knew all things! He sits on the well by the wayside, waiting for the one He knew would come. His disciples were gone away unto the city, to buy meat. Probably, this was ordered that there should be no intruder during the meeting of the sinner with the SAVIOUR.

It would not be unreasonable to suppose that the woman was not a little surprised, as she approached the well, to see a man sitting there; nor that surprise was turned to annoyance when, drawing nearer, she observed that He was a Jew. Maybe, she thought that as she drew closer He would retire. Instead, not only did He remain there, but He saith unto her, "Give Me to drink." Now, surprise and annoyance are augmented by perplexity. "How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?"

That question of perplexity gave Him the opportunity of unfolding to her the very object of His "waiting at the well." "JESUS answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the Gift of GOD, and Who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

After listening to further unfoldings of the water that would be "a well of water springing up into everlasting life, the woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. JESUS saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither." He brings into the light all her past, letting her see that nothing was hid from the eyes of Him with Whom she had to do. She does not deny her guilt; admitting the truth of it by her words, "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet."

After further unfoldings—of true worship, and of the FATHER seeking worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth—a desire is created in her heart for the coming of Messias, the CHRIST, Who would tell them all things. Now, the heart is opened, and JESUS makes to her a declaration, that He Himself made only to a few, "I that speak to thee am He."

At this point the disciples returned, "and marvelled that He talked with the woman." She, not now either a surprised, annoyed, or perplexed woman, but with the yearnings created in her heart fully satisfied, "left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a Man Which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the CHRIST?"

There is no record that the woman gave JESUS a drink from Jacob's well; but we know from His Own words to His disciples, who had marvelled that He talked with the woman, that He had meat to eat (refreshment) that they knew not of: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

What a much-to-be-meditated-upon incident by the way-side!

H. SAMBROOK.

The Things of God and the Things of Men

IN Matthew xvi. 23, the LORD JESUS contrasts the things that be of God and those that be of men in a very significant word addressed to Satan, who was using Peter in a very subtle

way to endeavour to turn Him from the very purpose for which He came.

In John x. 17, 18, He says "Therefore doth My FATHER love Me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My FATHER." He had previously said (John viii. 29) "He that sent Me is with Me: the FATHER hath not left Me alone: for I do always those things that please Him; and in John vi. 38, He declared "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." He could say (John v. 19) the SON can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the FATHER do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the SON likewise, and in verse 23 is expressed the Divine intention that all should honour the SON even as they honour the FATHER which hath sent Him." When in John iv. 31, He was urged by His disciples to eat, He said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," and "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

Satan was ever against the SON, and the things "that be of men" were the most powerful weapons that he could use against Him. He knew that the LORD JESUS had told His disciples of His intention to go up to Jerusalem to suffer and die and be raised again the third day, and he counted on the dilemma that His disciples would be in during the interval of His absence from them, and he used their devotion to Him, and His to them, to appeal against such a thing. If only he could get Him off the line of implicit obedience as a man to the will of GOD, he would wreck the salvation that GOD, Who so loved the world as to give His only begotten SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, had planned. But the SON Who was one with the FATHER in every respect knew what He was up against and resisted him. What a mercy, Reader, that your salvation and mine did not rest on mere human responsibility! Everything that has rested in the smallest degree on human responsibility has been a catastrophic failure! Look what human responsibility has done with the outward profession of the oneness of the church in Satan's unclean hands. The

“things that be of men” were used to get the church off the line with the thought of what an advantage it would be to the world to be governed by its principles and motives. Thus the outward profession of what CHRIST loved and died for was lured into committing fornication with an unclean world.

What a significance this gives to the SPIRIT’S word to Ephesus (Rev. ii. 4); “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love,” and to Paul’s indictment in Phil. ii. 21, “All seek their own, not the things which are JESUS CHRIST’S.” Israel of old made GOD angry with them by desiring to be like the nations and have a king instead of being led and guided by a GOD invisible to mortal eyes, and the church has grieved the LORD by degenerating into a human organisation with a visible head instead of being absolutely under the conduct of the HOLY SPIRIT, unacceptable to the world, because unseen by it. What a blessed thing it is that there is still an opportunity to bear practical testimony to the truth, outside all human organisations and vain efforts after an improved new world. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. ii. 10).

G. S. PURNELL.

How God Works in Grace

“O happy day! that fixed my choice
 On Thee, my SAVIOUR and my GOD;
 Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
 And tell its raptures all abroad.
 Happy day, happy day,
 When JESUS washed my sins away!”

SHALL I ever forget the outburst of heart and voice as these words were sung on the night of my conversion? If there was joy in that room then over one sinner repenting, how much more even in heaven! It was the SAVIOUR Himself Who said, “I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD over one sinner that repenteth” (St. Luke xv. 10). Many influences had led up to that hour, which now in retrospect reveal the wonderful patience GOD takes with an individual soul. As a lad, the writer was deeply impressed at Sunday School by a visitor who frequently came to help

She had a way of teaching about the SAVIOUR, about sin and its power, and always very clearly told us that only faith in Him Who died for us on the Cross could save us from our sins. She certainly diligently sowed the good seed of the gospel in that class.

As a youth leaving home and starting out in the great world, when a loving mother carefully packed a Bible in the box of clothes, and begged her boy to read a chapter from it every day, the writer, like the late King George the Fifth, and many another boy, promised he would do so. At first, the sense of loneliness and remembrance of those Sunday School lessons helped him to keep this promise. Then as the days ran on, in the new surroundings and with new experiences of the ways of the world, any desire for the Bible became stifled and the book remained unread. Yet somehow he could not part with it and it stayed in the box with the clothes.

In his seventeenth year, the natural restlessness and love of change so often experienced in youth, led him to throw up his job and go away to sea, taking care not to let the people at home know of it. This part of the story is rather like that of the Prodigal Son, and showed no apparent sign of God's overruling hand. Yet it is just here that the chain of outward circumstances, in the providence of God led to the happy day of which mention has been made. It is blessedly true as the poet Cowper sings:—

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

The links in the chain of circumstances can now be seen to have been forged by an all-wise Hand. A Sunday School teacher faithful in her work; a loving mother putting the lamp and light of the Holy Scripture into her son's hand as he leaves the shelter of home; and now, when having broken links with parents who knew the LORD, a Russian seafarer comes into the picture.

He had shipped in a steamship after a visit home where the kindness and love of the chapel people and their prayers only irritated him. While he wanted to be like his Father, he dreaded having to do with God. He knew the way of salvation all right, “Repentance toward God and faith toward

our LORD JESUS CHRIST," but the knowledge made him unhappy, so he tried to forget it all by going back to his old worldly, sinful ways. After a time he shipped aboard the "Agenoria" a three-masted ship lying in the Horseferry Dock, and soon proceeded to Regents Canal dock to load and berthed alongside a vessel of similar rig and tonnage called the "Truthseeker".

Little did the writer realise that the SAVIOUR GOD had at last determined to stop him from going down to the pit, because He had found a ransom." All the old lonely feelings of the early days came back intensified. As the ships were loading he made acquaintance with a Russian Sailor in the "Truthseeker." He lost no time in letting us know as best he could in broken English that he knew the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He also told us a lot about the twelve Apostles, so we nicknamed him "John and his twelve Apostles". He it was who was a link in the chain of God's grace.

Now, to go to Chapel or Seamen's Mission was one thing, but to confess the SAVIOUR was quite another, and it would need some courage to do it.

We had meals in the Captain's cabin, and as he was friendly with the Captain on John's ship, and he had been aboard that morning, John had been careful enough to tell everybody he saw including our Captain. So during dinner the Captain let it out. There was an outburst of laughter, which just as quickly died away when the Captain said "Harder hearts than yours have been turned in this way, and it would be better if we were all like it. The Captain said that the owners had presented the ship with a Bible and we were at liberty to come to the after cabin to use it as often as we wished. It was not long before the first mate and the cook were both converted to the LORD, so we were able to have Bible readings on board at sea together.

It is wonderful how God had employed in His mission of grace, the Sunday School Teacher, the mother, these two ships, the "Agenoria" and the "Truthseeker", and the Russian Sailor to accomplish His purposes of love and for the salvation of a poor sinner. Blessed be His Holy Name.

J. COBB.

Simon the Cyrenian

BY QUARTUS

SIMON the Cyrenian is the first of a long line of cross-bearers after JESUS. His cross-bearing, however, was involuntary, unexpected and unwelcome. He came from a far-flung outpost of the Roman Empire in the province of Libya in North Africa, Tunis as we know it to-day. He had a wife and family of at least two sons who were to be well known in the Roman Church some twenty-five years later.

But what was the cross he actually bore? Not what Christians means when intelligently speaking of the cross of JESUS. He only bore the two pieces of wood of which the actual cross was made, and this, not voluntarily, it was pressed upon his unwilling shoulders. The LORD JESUS bore the load of the cross of which the wood was the mere instrument; it was the sin of the world He bore; the sins of all who believe on Him as SAVIOUR, and this was a voluntary bearing of the cross. "No man taketh My life from Me, I lay it down of Myself."

Christians now can neither bear the *wood* of the cross, nor its *load*. The wood of the cross which Simon of Cyrene bore, has, centuries ago crumbled into dust, in spite of the Popish legend of "the true Cross." And the *load* of the Cross cannot be borne by Christians—only One, our SAVIOUR—was competent for this.

"There was none other good enough
To pay the price of sin."

Since Christians can neither bear the *wood* of the Cross, nor the *load* of the Cross, in what sense can they be like Simon, bearing the Cross after JESUS? For Simon the Cyrenian is a kind of illustration of the Christian and the Church. Just as he carried the wood forced upon him so unexpectedly that morning, in the presence of a mocking, blasphemous, and (no doubt in many instances) a totally indifferent crowd, so the true believer is called to bear the cross in a world to-day strangely resembling the world of that day in many respects. Certainly there is much lip-service paid to our LORD in Christendom, but it is heart devotion that He values.

Cross-bearing to-day for Christians consists in voluntarily sharing the reproach of CHRIST, "the offence of the cross." When Simon left his lodgings that Friday morning the very last thing on earth he expected was to be called upon to bear such a humiliating load that day. Yet is it not often so in one's experience? What is placed upon us is often so unexpected and unwelcome, but rewarded in ways equally unexpected if humbly borne following His steps Who has trodden the same road before us. The one thing that makes real cross-bearing tolerable and even pleasant for a believer is the august Figure in following Whom we are called to be cross-bearers. "Looking unto JESUS, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The cross that is thrust upon us at first appears as unexpected as it is unwelcome, and must be borne. It may be a physical handicap of a bodily infirmity which can only be endured by the assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee," so that like the Apostle Paul the cross-bearer meekly says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me . . . for when I am weak then am I strong." Great grace is needed—and supplied.

There is a cross-bearing in quietly confessing His Name, and bearing silent testimony by a quiet ordered life in a noisy, disordered world. There is a cross-bearing in renunciation of rights, honours, and esteem; to the man or woman who has done with self-seeking for CHRIST's sake avenues of usefulness open up, bringing abundant recompense even now.

In the end of the last century a great man of GOD, whose ambition was to follow CHRIST wholeheartedly was, as a very old man, doing missionary work in Spain. He had been wealthy, having disbursed two fortunes in CHRIST's service; had deliberately refused comfort and position in the world; had sacrificed domestic happiness on the altar of devotion to CHRIST and His people. As he climbed the rickety stairs of a little inn in a Spanish village where he had obtained a temporary lodging, he was overheard to say very quietly,

"JESUS, I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow Thee."

Dare we venture to say this ourselves to our LORD?

The Doctrine of Christ—3.

BY THE EDITOR

ST. JOHN'S Christology, that is his personal belief and commissioned teaching as to the nature and person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is crystal clear. His gospel is written that "ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John xx. 31). The glory of the LORD'S person (which says he "we beheld") and the grace and truth which came by Him, are here simply but sufficiently declared by the Apostle. So important is his testimony that he declares, "He that is of GOD heareth *us*," and concludes his first epistle, "He is the true GOD and eternal life" (New Trans.).

Hence we have the CHRIST presented in John's writings as the WORD Who was with GOD in the beginning; Who was GOD; the Eternal Life; the WORD became flesh dwelling among men full of grace and truth; JESUS CHRIST the SON of GOD, the King of Israel, the LAMB of GOD Who takes away the sin of the world. He is clearly shown as being personally GOD yet distinct from the FATHER, the only begotten SON Who was ever in the bosom of the FATHER. He is *timeless* as to His person (John viii. 58), but also *historical* as coming into the world, and abiding eternally.

"His glory, not only GOD'S SON,
In manhood he took His full part."

This is what the Apostle John affirms of CHRIST in all his writings, and in his first epistle very definitely speaks of Him as One Whom he had seen and handled, yet Who was the WORD of Life; that Eternal Life which was with the FATHER and was manifested unto us." To the elect lady, the same One is presented as being, together with the FATHER, the Bestower of grace, mercy and peace, and as the LORD JESUS CHRIST the SON of the FATHER. Could language more clearly, plainly, and forcibly express what "the beloved disciple," and commissioned apostle of the LORD, meant by the "doctrine of CHRIST?"

The LORD JESUS CHRIST, at once GOD and MAN in the mystery of His Person, who acts *with* GOD and *for* GOD; lived *with* men and acted *for* men. The highest title, the "SON of the FATHER"; unshared by men, inherent, eternal; as well as the humblest designation, "the taker-away of the sin of the world"; both come from the pen of the apostle who leaned upon CHRIST's breast at the Last Supper, and was known as "the disciple whom JESUS loved."

The highest truths as to the Person of Him Who could be *wearied* with His journey (so truly human was He); could *weep* at the grave of His friend Lazarus (so true were his human sympathies); could *groan* in spirit and be troubled; could be *troubled in soul*; yet could unhesitatingly speak of Himself in terms that made instructed, but unbelieving, Jews complain that He, "*Jesus of Nazareth*," said that GOD was His Own FATHER, making Himself equal with GOD"—all these are part of St. John's "doctrine of CHRIST."

The very solemn words in which our LORD affirmed that the judgment of mankind had been exclusively committed to Him because He was the SON of Man; the claim that to the SON of GOD (Who was also the SON of man) must be paid the *same divine honours as to the Father Himself* (John v. 23); all appear in the same gospel which contains the account of *His human weariness, sympathy, and thirst*.

He is truly presented in John's doctrine of CHRIST, as another Evangelist states, as the SON Whom no man knows with real knowledge save the FATHER (Matt. xi. 27), "an incomparable expression of mutual intimacy, serene trust and perfect love."

Yet He is also "full of grace and truth," conversing with individuals of high and low degree; partaking of human hospitality and friendship; kindly and considerate, yet never weak or uncertain; a true Man yet conscious of ever being in the bosom of the FATHER, one with Him, speaking His words, and doing His works. Well might another say, "The Church can never say 'O come let us *explain* Him,' but always must cry:—

'O come let us adore Him!
CHRIST the LORD!'

The elect lady, and every other elect soul having believed on Him and received eternal life through His Name, would be in no doubt as to the apostle John's "doctrine of CHRIST."

That the "doctrine of CHRIST," as taught by the apostle John, is intended to exercise a very practical effect upon the personal life of the believer is clear from both his gospel and his epistles.

The eternal life which is the present possession of every believer on the LORD JESUS CHRIST has come by the knowledge of the only true GOD and JESUS CHRIST the Sent One. By abiding in Him and walking even as He walked, this life is manifested, and the possessor of it grows in wisdom and spiritual stature by keeping CHRIST's words. His spiritual exercise is found in constantly loving the children of GOD according to the new commandment (John xiii. 34; 1 John iii. 16, 23).

When this is the condition of the believer, his tastes are good; evil doctrine and bad company are refused and avoided; and he affirms with deep conviction: "We know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His SON JESUS CHRIST. This is the true GOD and Eternal Life."

Unknown by the world that knew Him not, the believer, happy in the present possession of eternal life, knows that when He shall appear, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure (1 John iii. 2, 3).

As Samuel Rutherford lay dying, he said: "I see Him as He is. I shall see Him reign, and all the fair company with Him, and I shall have my large share. Mine eyes shall see my REDEEMER, and no other form. This seems to be a wide word; but it's no fancy nor delusion; it's true, it's true."

"How shall I meet those eyes?
 Mine on Himself I cast;
 And own the SAVIOUR's prize,
 Mercy from first to last."

Creation

IN the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This verse stands by itself in all the simple grandeur of inspiration, to be believed by you and me. Then we read that the earth was without form and void (literally desolate and waste). Turning to the prophet Isaiah (xlv. 18), we find that God created it not in vain (literally void or waste). He formed it to be inhabited. One has pointed out that the gulf between these two verses is wide enough to comprehend all the geological ages that learned men can introduce between them.

Unbelief has been at work here quite recently, and the statement has been made that "few would think in these days that the world was created in six days," presumably on the same grounds as Nicodemus's query, "How can these things be?" when he was conversing by night with One Who could say, "We speak that We do know and testify that We have seen; and ye receive not Our witness." (John iii. 11).

In Psalm xc. 3, a thousand years is said to be but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night, in God's sight; and Peter in his second epistle, addressed to them that have obtained like precious faith with himself and his fellow-believers, states plainly that "one day is with the LORD as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" so that whether these are literal days as simple faith believes them to be, or thousand year days, does not alter the truth of creation, and God's hand in it.

Unbelief finds fault with God, if it really believes in Him, and complains that He does not explain things sufficiently clearly, but faith knows from experience that it can find an answer to all the questions that it can ask from what God has already revealed in connection with the plain purpose of revelation.

Jude 6, gives a hint of what might have caused the catastrophic change between verses one and two of Genesis i. Further statements on the subject would have been irrelevant and pandering to idle curiosity. When judgment, which is

GOD's strange work, is stated or implied in His Word, it is intended to be a warning to the disobedience of unbelief.

Natural philosophy is defined as treating of the laws of the material world and when its students endeavour to make the CREATOR subject to the laws of His own creation, what an insult to the GODHEAD!

What a lesson is set before us in Matthew viii. 7-10, where JESUS Himself marvelled at the centurion's faith when he said, "Speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." Do you and I know GOD sufficiently to believe that "He speaks and it is done, He commands and it stands fast," whatever it may be (Psalm xxxiii. 9)?

Is not the knowledge of GOD the supreme subject of His revealed Word. "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true GOD and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou has sent" (John xvii. 3)? This is the burden of inspiration, and have we sufficiently grasped the fact that a Holy and Righteous GOD really wants to be known by His lost fallen creatures, and that He has taken infinite pains to make this possible?

G. S. PURNELL.

Training for Godliness

WE are to train for the godly life. Discipleship means discipline. When we took the vow of personal allegiance to the LORD JESUS CHRIST we committed ourselves to the Great Adventure of a godly life. And as we are now laying a foundation for eternity we need to put our best thought and energy into it. The Christian race is not a spurt, but a long distance race, and we need to use our brains in order to win.

Paul was out to win, as he tells us in his Philippian letter, but, militant spirit though he was, we sometimes detect beneath his triumphant shouts an undertone that resembles a groan. Christian living is not always set to music. It is not only the "fed up" young man or woman of the world who

says sometimes, "What's the good of it all?" We are in danger of getting discouraged, of growing morally and spiritually weary, of ceasing to care very much about first things; and some, as they get older, suffer from fatty degeneration of the *conscience*.

It is not everyone that starts off well who continues or finishes well. We all have our handicaps; the race is long; the weather is not always fine; and we have our "bad times" after, as well as before we get our second wind.

The godly life costs. It means sacrificing time for eternity; the natural for the spiritual; our own interests and ambitions for the Gospel and God's plan.

The fact is that all life, as we know it, costs. The grass is sacrificed for the sheep, and the sheep for man. The tree is cut down and sacrificed to help make a ship, a house, a church; and the godly life is no exception in its demand for the sacrifice of the lower for the higher.

Godly freedom must be purchased by self-discipline. Through the painful struggles of the embryo butterfly, as it labours to emerge from its chrysalis shell, the perfect insect will be developed in the full enjoyment of the higher liberty of its superior life.

The young believer is not to expect to be wheeled about in a baby carriage under the caressing smiles of his mother-church. The New Testament does not contemplate coddled saints, young or old. We are not to be parasites, clingers and creepers, and spoon-fed Christians. When in the country you may have seen a notice-board within sight of the road, with the words: "Hardy Plants Nursery." It is well if the young Christian is hardy enough not to wilt under the cold winds of neglect and difficulty.

The man in pursuit of all-round godliness is compared to an athlete, and so must attend to diet and exercise, and must keep the rules. He is a soldier, and must be devoted to his Commander, and be as free as possible from other concerns. He is a workman, and so is to strive to put in honest, intelligent and efficient work. He is a farmer, and is to toil and expect fruit from his toil. How much do we know of all this?

Timothy is urged to seize hold of eternal life, to cultivate godly character and usefulness, so that his progress may be evident. We are in the LORD's training school and those who are trained by its discipline reap the fruit of it afterwards in the peace of a righteous life.

On a notice-board by the road crossing a flying field of the Royal Air Force I observed the words:

"Keep moving.
If you stop you are in danger,
and a danger to those flying."

Unless we make progress in our Christian life we are in danger of becoming slack, of going to sleep, of losing our joy and even our assurance. And we are liable to be easily side-tracked by the world, and to become a ready prey to the error-germs that abound in the mental atmosphere. We become a danger to others, too. For the example of the non-progressive Christian is discouraging, and as a mere camp-follower he is a source of weakness in the LORD's army.

Godly living embraces the whole of the life. Our circumstances in life are the field in which we train; and what matters most is how we train in our particular field.

E. ADAMS.



Caleb

(A Character Study)

BY QUARTUS

SIX times in Scripture Caleb is referred to as one "who wholly followed the LORD." He occupies therefore a distinguished and honourable position in the history of God's ancient people.

Character is disclosed by characteristics, that is, by what characterises a person. In the case of Caleb there are *five outstanding things* which reveal his general character, namely he is

1. A man of *real confidence* in GOD.—His presence, purpose, and power.

2. A man of *deep convictions* as to duty and responsibility.
3. A man of *rare courage* in the face of tremendous opposition.
4. A man of *steady consistency* of conduct—wholly follows the LORD.
5. A man of *joyous continuance*—strength renewed; young at eighty-four.

On the road of wholly following the LORD he takes *four great steps*.

1. He *set* the LORD always before him.
2. He *followed on* to know the LORD.
3. He *endured* as seeing Him Who is Invisible, yet always present.
4. He *cherished* a good hope through grace.

The three great trials on the way, which he would experience were from:—

1. *The company*—those going same way often hinder by their actions as they loiter, hesitate and turn aside suddenly.
2. *The length and monotony* of the journey,
3. *His own heart*.

It is in a day of great difficulty among the people of GOD in the wilderness that Caleb appears on the scene. Grave disaffection had arisen, and violent insurrection was threatened.

“Down with Moses; back to Egypt,” were the slogans then being passed from mouth to mouth. (Num. xiv. 3.) And when all seemed on the point of forsaking GOD and forgetting His purpose for His people; His power to accomplish that purpose; and His presence assured among His people; then it was that Caleb took a stand which gives him his distinguished and honourable position in Israelitish history. His character is given as one who “wholly followed the LORD.” This character reveals his characteristics, or what truly characterised him; and of these the first is evidently the fact that he was a man of true faith or confidence in GOD; a faith, or confidence which worked itself out in action, in other words, a certainty producing a whole-hearted following of the LORD.

So, the first mark of one who wholly follows the LORD is a real confidence in GOD—His presence, His purpose, and His power. The story of Caleb shows that he absolutely believed in GOD's *presence* with His people; and this based upon what they had already experienced of His interest in them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt—out of the house of bondage, and also in providing for all their needs day by day since the time of this great deliverance.

Furthermore, Caleb firmly believed in GOD's purpose to bring them into the good land of promise; and also in His power, His ability to do so. This real confidence was the bed-rock of all his hopes, and so he could confidently set himself to wholly follow the LORD.

For Christian believers now, confidence in GOD springs from the fact, as St. John says, that "*we have known and believed the love that GOD hath to us.*" Therefore faith girds up the loins of the mind, and leads us boldly to confess:

"His love in times past forbids us to think
He'll leave us at last in trouble to sink."

Caleb therefore wholly followed the LORD because he was a man of real confidence in GOD, and believed that He could and would keep His promise.

The second mark of this man who "wholly followed the LORD" is that he was a man of *deep convictions as to duty and responsibility*. For to wholly follow the LORD on the part of any of us means to take steps in the path of duty which entails a sense of responsibility. "I have set the LORD always before me," sang the Psalmist, and they who follow Him wholly may also say with J. N. Darby:—

"The LORD has Himself gone before;
He has marked out the path that I tread."

A deep conviction as to the duty and responsibility of walking in ways of righteousness and peace before GOD is one characteristic of those who wholly follow the LORD. Far more privileged than Caleb in his days, we in these days have a Model given us in the life of our LORD, and the responsible duty laid upon us for as an Apostle says, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked." Yet, alas, how often the only honest thing to do is to confess:

“Yet LORD, alas, what weakness
 Within myself I find,
 No infant’s changing pleasure
 Is like my wandering mind.”

Caleb wholly followed the LORD being a man of deep convictions as to both duty and responsibility. To us also comes the call which is an obligation, “Follow thou Me,” with the added assurance, “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

The story of Caleb reveals him as being a man of *rare courage*. He with Joshua presents the minority report on the survey of the land. This creates such a storm of opposition from 80 per cent. of the others, until a general riot betokens a murderous attack about to be made. Then, this man of confidence and conviction tries to stem the storm and calm the company by testimony to the goodness of the land, the greatness of God, His power to accomplish His purposes, and of His presence with them. It was a courageous attempt to encourage a panic-stricken crowd which had been worked upon by an evil report, and a majority report at that. But real confidence in God, deep conviction as to duty and responsibility breeds rare courage.

The Apostle Paul in Romans viii., speaks the language of one who wholly follows the LORD when he asks, “If GOD be for us who can be against us? He that spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?”

It was with a real confidence born of a deep conviction that he with a rare courage could on another occasion say, “In every city, bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy.” Rare courage on the part of one who wholly followed the LORD, which should stir our hearts up as we consider it.

Caleb also is seen to be a man of steady *consistency of conduct* as each of the six references to him emphasises the fact that *he wholly followed the LORD*. Forty years of subsequent wilderness life with all its weariness and testing does not alter the character of this man of real confidence, deep convictions,

and rare courage. Indeed, by waiting on the LORD he so obviously renews his youth that at the advanced age of eighty-five years he exclaims, "The LORD hath kept me alive as He said these forty-five years, and now, lo, I am fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in." He had *renewed his strength* like the eagle. Men who wholly follow the LORD, men of true confidence, always discover that as their day so is their strength, and are enabled to hold on their way.

This leads to the further consideration of Caleb's joyous *continuance* in the way of wholly following the LORD. As the Psalmist says in Psalm xcii. 14, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the LORD is upright." This is clearly seen in the story of Caleb when 85 years of age.

Born in Egypt of an obscure family, and a slave of Pharaoh, he is finally seen in Canaan, a man occupying a distinguished and honourable position. He has become one of the princes of the people. Slavery, redemption, liberty, wilderness experience, and Canaan are the great landmarks in the life of this man who "wholly followed the LORD." These also are the spiritual stages of the Christian life. The strongly-marked feature in Caleb's case is one we may all well covet, "He wholly followed the LORD."

Some steps are clearly to be seen in this course, as noted earlier:

1. He set the LORD before him.
2. He followed on to know the LORD, and for us it is CHRIST, not Christians we must follow.
3. He endured, or continued, as seeing Him Who is invisible, yet always present with His people.
4. He cherished a good hope through grace, the certainty of one day reaching the land of promise, and of coming into an inheritance in it according to God's gracious word.

This is the path of faith, the path of blessing, the path of life, the path of high, holy, joyous adventure. "Set the LORD

before us," *not some good brother or a favourite preacher*; follow on to *know* the LORD, not merely to know *about Him*, but to have a real firsthand acquaintance with Him, and enjoy that friendship to which he so lovingly invites us; then by the knowledge of GOD through the Scripture studied and turned into practice, growth which is effortless but real, will show itself: patient continuance in well-doing, and cherishing a good hope will simply follow from such a course.

Thus, "wholly following the LORD," loyal to *the Captain* of our salvation, loyal to *our comrades* who are on the same road, until the day is done and the journey ended, we may covet to hear the "well done" promised by the Author and Finisher of the life of faith.

"Then how will recompense His smile,
The sufferings of this little while!"

Salvation's Captain

SALVATION'S Captain, and the Guide
Of all that seek the rest above,
Beneath Thy shadow we abide,
The cloud of Thy protecting love;
Our strength Thy grace, our rule Thy word,
Our end the glory of our LORD.

LORD, by Thy word and SPIRIT led,
We shall not in the desert stray,
Or light for our direction need,
Or lose, if dark and dear, our way:
Preserved from danger and from fear,
Since Thine almighty love is near.