

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Edited by
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VOLUME XXXVIII

London:
C. A. Hammond
11 Little Britain, E.C.1

1949

November—December, 1949

TO OUR READERS,

With this issue of *WORDS OF HELP* we gladly render thanks to the LORD for thus enabling us to complete another year in this branch of His happy service. "He that shall come will come and will not tarry" indefinitely, and it is ours to watch and wait and work.

To our many readers at home and abroad we send our grateful acknowledgment of letters of appreciation assuring us that our title is not a misnomer.

To the contributors to our pages, our Publisher and Printer, many thanks for valued help.

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

THE EDITOR.

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“To Old Age”

“**E**VEN to old age I am **HE**, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; yea, I will carry, and will deliver.”—Isaiah xlv. 4 (R.V.)

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”
—2 Corinthians iv. 16.

How difficult it is to feel
Our natural powers grow less—
To long to “do,” and yet to find
Our utter helplessness.
In days gone by we loved to serve
In many “active” ways,
And hoped to do so to the end
Of our declining days.

But now our portion is to stay
At home “beside the stuff,”
And hear the Voice of our dear **LORD**
Say—“Child, it is enough.”
He knows how hard it is to see
Another take our place,
And for this seeming “useless” life
HE gives the needed grace.

No child of **HIS**, though old or weak,
Is ever cast aside;
The “work” may change, but not **HIS** love,
Which always doth abide.
“E’en to hoar hairs” **HE** carries us
And bears us day by day—
Our inward man **HE** doth renew,
Though outward man decay.

M.E.A.

The Doctrine of Christ—5.

(The Testimony of Paul the Apostle—2)

BY THE EDITOR

IN the Epistles of the Apostle Paul the several aspects of the doctrine of CHRIST are presented, each in strict keeping with the special truth under immediate consideration. That to the *Romans* is in clearest connection with *the gospel of God*; and we accordingly find the true DEITY and the real HUMANITY of our LORD JESUS CHRIST duly set out in orderly sequence in what is the fundamental treatise of Christianity upon how a man can be just with God.

The introductory verses (chapter i. 1-4) present the holy Person of our divine LORD as JESUS CHRIST—GOD'S SON—DAVID'S SEED—JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD—SON OF GOD; while chapter (ii. 16) speaks of JESUS CHRIST the JUDGE of the secrets of men; and (chapter ix. 5) reminds us that CHRIST is "over all, GOD blessed for ever." In chapter x. 9 the very terms of salvation embody the definite confession of the SAVIOUR as JESUS the LORD.

Indeed, the whole of this *Roman* epistle is based upon, and so closely interwoven with, the same doctrine of CHRIST which we found in our LORD'S own words before the High Priest, in Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, and in the general teaching of the beloved disciple, that nothing short of a careful exposition of the Epistle could adequately suggest the fulness of its presentation here.

We may, however, at least find food for devout thought, and cause for adoring praise, in thinking upon the doctrine of CHRIST as taught in a few selected references, such as chapter i. 1-4; ii. 16; ix. 5; x. 9.

First, it is JESUS CHRIST of the seed of David, according to the flesh, One of Whose *ancestry* there is no doubt. This fact is more important than some hasty readers of the New Testament imagine, else why is it that the New Testament opens and practically closes with such pointed references to it? The first chapter of Matthew begins with it, and the last chapter of Revelation does not close until the remarkable words are recorded: "I JESUS . . . I am the root and offspring of David."

The apostle opens this *Roman* letter by direct reference to One Who is at least the SON and Heir of an historical king; One, too, to Whom holy writings have significantly directed the attention of such of mankind as have read them. Yet the language used to describe this One as "made of the seed of David" or "come of David's seed" (J.N.D.'s Trans.) may be literally rendered: "He came to be," or "He became," thus strongly implying that He Who ever eternally is, did by the doorway of "becoming," enter into time, as "David's son," while yet ever remaining as Psalm cx. puts it, "David's LORD." The human name of JESUS, and the official title of CHRIST are joined as the proper designation, according to the flesh, of One Who was "marked out SON of GOD in power according to the SPIRIT of holiness, by resurrection of the dead."

"Resurrection was the proof; but he who had eyes to see, saw that He Who came in the flesh was justified in the SPIRIT even when here, the same SPIRIT which was quickening power in resurrection" (J.N.D. note, New Trans. Romans i. 4).

In this epistle the *righteousness* of GOD, and the *glad tidings* of GOD, whether for the individual or for Israel, depend upon One Who is certainly an historical Person with a clearly-marked ancestry, and at the same time is designated SON of GOD by incontestable proofs. While this was seen in His Own resurrection power in the days of His flesh, yet the clearest affirmation of Who He was in His Own proper Person was demonstrated when GOD raised Him from the dead. "Crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of GOD." (2 Cor. xiii. 4).

The style and order of the introductory verses will well repay attention. One scholarly writer says: "Now lastly, in the Greek of the sentence, as if pausing for a solemn entrance, comes in the whole of the blessed NAME; even JESUS CHRIST our LORD . . . JESUS the human NAME; CHRIST the Messianic title, our LORD the term of royalty and loyalty which binds us to Him, and Him to us. Let those four words be ours for ever. If everything else in ruins fades from the memory, let this remain, 'the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.'" JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

In our second reference let us consider Him as the JUDGE of the secrets of men, for the apostle affirms that at the Day of Judgment the JUDGE will be this same JESUS CHRIST. Who

is able to judge the secrets of men save He to Whom all hearts are open, and all desires known? And to Whom does this power belong? "I JEHOVAH search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. xvii. 10).

To be the JUDGE of the secrets of men, then, JESUS CHRIST must be "the MAN that is My fellow, saith JEHOVAH of hosts," the One once smitten as the Good Shepherd (Zech. xiii. 7).

To such as read the "holy scriptures" referred to in chapters i. and ii. it will be apparent that both Deity and humanity are found in the Person of JESUS CHRIST of the seed of David according to the flesh, declared SON of GOD with power by resurrection of the dead; the appointed JUDGE of the secrets of men.

But the clearest and fullest statement as to the Person of CHRIST occurs in chapter ix. where the apostle, speaking of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, naming their undeniable privileges and advantages as a race, adds "of whom, according to the flesh, is the CHRIST, Who is over all, GOD blessed for ever" (verse 5).

Here is One spoken of as having natural descent through a specially marked line of ancestors and yet as being also GOD over all, as one scholarly translator renders it: "the CHRIST, He Who is over all things, GOD blessed to all eternity."

Several things arrest our attention here. First, it is JESUS Who is CHRIST: and to St. Paul, in Acts ix. 22; JESUS was very CHRIST." Secondly, we are arrested by this further statement: He, JESUS the CHRIST is over all. To the affirmation of His real Deity there has since the Incarnation been joined the confession of His true humanity, and thus He is GOD and man in one blessed person—the CHRIST.

Finally, He "is blessed for ever"; and the careful consideration of the term "blessed" will help the worshipping heart. Whenever a mere man is spoken of in Scripture as being "blessed" the word has always the significance of what we commonly mean by "happy" or "fortunate." In this epistle, to travel no further, chapter iv. gives the blessedness of the forgiven soul, of the one to whom the LORD will not impute sin (verse 8). The blessedness here predicted is the "happiness" and "the eternal good fortune" of such a man, and such a

condition. Wherever "blessedness" is ascribed to GOD, however, as "Blessed be the LORD" in the Old Testament, or "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER" in the New Testament, the meaning is invariably let Him "be praised and thanked." To "bless" the LORD is to praise Him because of *Who* He is, and to thank Him for *what* He has done, and does. Hence in the reference to CHRIST as over all, GOD blessed for ever, there is presented to our poor finite minds a glorious Person Who to all eternity is worthy to be praised for His *excellent greatness*, and thanked for His wonderful goodness. Being Who He is, and having done what He has, He is worthy of everlasting praise and thanksgiving—"over all, GOD blessed for evermore."

Our final reference, that in chapter x., shows that the very terms of our salvation are embodied in the confession of JESUS as LORD. "Believe in thine heart" and "confess with thy mouth" is the order; and the belief that is not accompanied by absolute surrender to the claims of CHRIST as LORD is valueless. He is the LORD of our life as well as the GOD of our salvation, if we are the true children of GOD by faith in Him. Our LORD Himself said that calling Him "LORD" is not the same thing as doing what He commands. Be it ours to love Him, not in word, but in deed and in truth, so that love and loyalty may express themselves in surrender and selfless service to Him and those who are His own. Thus shall it be manifest that the doctrine of CHRIST is no mere theory held by us, but the power of our worship, witness, and work as believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Great Joy—2

THE second time the expression "great joy" occurs in the Old Testament is in 1 Chronicles xxix. 9. In that chapter we read how David prepared with all his might the gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, precious stones and marble for the house of GOD. The chief of the fathers and other leaders of the people, and those with whom stones were found, offered willingly. Then the people rejoiced . . . and David the king also rejoiced with GREAT JOY.

This incident no doubt foreshadows the preparations for the building of the millennial temple which is described in Ezekiel xl.-xliii. It is a joy to the hearts of all who love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity that the day is coming when He will rejoice with great joy in the devotion of His restored earthly people (who once rejected Him) in the rebuilding of the temple of God in Jerusalem.

But there is surely an indirect application for us in these present days. A spiritual house is being built up, of living stones (1 Peter ii. 5) by the LORD Himself—once rejected but now gone up on high. All the building is built on the foundation of the apostles and (New Testament) prophets. JESUS CHRIST Himself is the chief corner stone, in Whom all are fitly framed together. This building is growing into a holy temple in the LORD (Ephesians ii. 19-22). Every one who truly believes in the LORD JESUS CHRIST as SAVIOUR is being built by Him into this temple. Can we not reverently say, as we think of 1 Chronicles xxix. 2, that the LORD is preparing this house with all His might? We know, too, that all the LORD does in this way is perfect and will last for eternity, unlike the house of God at Jerusalem for which David prepared. Our privileges and responsibilities as built into this spiritual house, this holy temple, are very important. They are however largely outside the scope of this present article.

The passage before us (1 Chronicles xxix.) does not only speak of David's activities but also of the willing offerings of the rulers and those with whom precious stones were found. Similarly in 1 Corinthians iii. believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST are considered as builders. The temple of God is in view in that passage and we are warned "let every man take heed how he buildeth" on the foundation, "which is JESUS CHRIST" (verses 10 and 11). "Building" in this sense seems to cover the presentation of the gospel to sinners, resulting in their salvation and incorporation in the edifice, and the instruction of those converted, by teaching and example, so that the living material built in may not prove to be wood, hay or stubble when tested, but gold, silver, and precious stones. In the building viewed in the preceding paragraph everything is perfect because the LORD is the builder, but when *our responsibility* is in question there is failure against which we are

warned. The warning is, in fact, directed first of all to ourselves individually that you and I in our conduct do not defile the temple of GOD. This warning demands the examination of oneself, and practical cleansing by the application of the Word of GOD to oneself. Do not let us slur this over but put it into practice. We are also reminded that building acceptable to GOD cannot be done in the wisdom of this world, but requires self-abasement that wisdom may be given of GOD. Bearing all this in mind let us offer *willingly with perfect heart* to the LORD (1 Chronicles xxix. 9). What zeal, what energy, what self-sacrifice, what persistence this should produce—"always abounding in the work of the LORD"! Then, just as the willingness of the people not only led to their rejoicing themselves, but also resulted in David the king rejoicing with GREAT JOY, so we may bring GREAT JOY to our beloved SAVIOUR and LORD. Is it not worth while?

There is a special application of the principles of the foregoing in connection with the LORD's words in Matthew xviii. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst." Such a company, small or large, has the character of a dwelling-place for the LORD. Do we offer ourselves, as it were, for it willingly, and do we exercise due care in regard to ourselves first, and then in regard to others, that the material is gold, silver, precious stones? Where this is so there is rejoicing in our hearts and may we not also conclude that our LORD JESUS—the great antitype of David—rejoices with GREAT JOY?

But closely associated with this we find the third occurrence in the Old Testament of the expression GREAT JOY, though here the translators have put "great gladness" (1 Chronicles xxix. 22). David having extolled God before all the congregation, took his place with his people as strangers and sojourners in humiliation before God, and prayed for Solomon (verses 10-19). He then called on all the people to bless the LORD and they all did so, and "bowed down their heads and worshipped the LORD and the King" (v. 20). Sacrifices followed, and they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with GREAT GLADNESS. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time and anointed him unto the LORD to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest (verses 21, 22).

Again we can see a foreshadowing of a millennial scene. This time Solomon is crowned in Jerusalem. It is not a preliminary acknowledgment of his sovereignty, as it was at Gihon (see the previous article), but the actual beginning of his reign, looking forward to the full establishment of CHRIST'S kingdom on earth, when He will have such "royal majesty as had not been on any king before Him," not only in Israel but in all the earth (see verse 25). What GREAT GLADNESS there will be in Israel in that day!

Let us now apply all this to the present day. The appropriate attitude of us all, if we are willing, rejoicing, builders, is praise and worship to GOD and to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and humble pilgrim-thoughts in regard to ourselves. We have not exactly to bring material offerings (though they are not excluded) but in Hebrews (xiii. 15) we are exhorted to offer, by JESUS, the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His Name; also to do good and to communicate (of our substance), for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased. Again, in Romans xii. 1, we are told to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD which is our reasonable (i.e., intelligent) service. (This theme of appropriate sacrifices can be amplified considerably.) What GREAT GLADNESS is thus produced in our hearts. We may have experienced it in some little measure, but does not the contemplation of these truths stimulate in us the desire to respond to them more fully?

It is when our walk and ways in our daily life are judged, and our consciences are clear before GOD, and we are gathered in the Name of the LORD JESUS, with Him in our midst, with GOD the HOLY SPIRIT controlling our thoughts and hearts, resulting in praise and worship being offered acceptably to GOD and to CHRIST, that we are filled with GREAT GLADNESS in communion with one another ("eating and drinking before the LORD," as it were), and enter in anticipation into the crowning and anointing of the One to Whom both royal diadem and crown (more correctly "priestly mitre") belong by right (see Ezekiel xxi., xxvi., xxvii.).

May GOD by the HOLY SPIRIT, help us to bring GREAT JOY to the LORD JESUS CHRIST by our willing offerings for His dwelling-place, and to have communion with one another before the LORD with GREAT GLADNESS. J. C. KELL.

The Women at the Sepulchre

IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre . . . And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, JESUS met them, saying, 'All hail.' And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him." (Matthew xxviii. 1 and 9.)

"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun . . . Now when JESUS was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils." (Mark xvi. 1, 2 and 9.)

"And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them . . . It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles." (Luke xxiii. 55, 56; xxiv. 1 and 10.)

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Peter, and to the other disciple, whom JESUS loved, and saith unto them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and *we* know not where they have laid Him . . .' Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping . . . JESUS saith unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, 'Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.' JESUS saith unto her, 'Mary.' She turned herself, and saith unto Him, 'Rabboni,' which is to say, Master. JESUS saith unto her, 'Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to

My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My FATHER, and your FATHER; and to My GOD, and your GOD.' " (John xx. 1, 2, 11, 15, 16, 17.)

The above excerpts show a slight variation in detail in the four Gospel records of the early witnesses to the resurrection of the LORD; but no discrepancy, no disagreement. A careful perusal of them will not only verify this assertion, but will also provide profitable meditation. This must be left to the reader.

The writers of the three synoptic Gospels name certain women as early eye-witnesses of the resurrection, each giving prominence to Mary Magdalene: John names her only. Not that John's record excludes others being there also; for he writes that when Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter and John the news, she said, "They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and *we* know not where they have laid Him."

It is not the purpose of this article to add one touch to John's exquisite account of Mary Magdalene's meeting with her LORD (or, His making Himself known to her), concluding with that one lovingly-uttered word, Mary, from His lips; and that one-word joyous exclamation from her lips, Rabboni. To do so would be like taking a house-decorator's brush to add a touch to Raphael.

One comment, however, might be allowable. To whom was committed that profound message, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My FATHER, and your FATHER; and to My GOD, and your GOD"? To Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils (Mark xvi. 9).

The gospel message was largely proclaimed by one who wrote of himself as the chief of sinners: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief . . . for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

The message of the risen LORD to His own, "My FATHER, and your FATHER; and My GOD and your GOD" was sent through one out of whom He had cast seven devils.

How perfect the enabling work; how great the grace; how wondrous the purpose!

When the servants of the defeated King of Syria, Ben-hadad, came to the king of Israel seeking mercy, they said, "Thy servant Ben-hadad said, 'I pray thee let me live.' And he (the king of Israel) said, "Is he yet alive? he is my brother.' Now the men did diligently observe whether anything would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad."

It has been recorded that on one occasion the Emperor Napoleon addressed a private as "Captain." The private thus addressed was not slow to catch it, and asked, "Of what regiment, Emperor?" "Of the Emperor's Own," came the reply.

Surely, believers ought not to be less diligent in laying hold of, for their own enjoyment and comfort, those precious words from the lips of their adorable SAVIOUR and LORD: "My FATHER, and your FATHER; and My GOD, and your GOD."

H. SAMBROOK.

Wrong Thoughts of God

A MAN sins and at once has hard thoughts against God. In so doing he only confirms what is said in the Scriptures: "The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the LORD." (Prov. xix. 3.)

How easy it is to have hard thoughts against God! See what the wicked and slothful servant says in Matt. xxv. 24. "LORD, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast now sown, and gathering where Thou has not strawed." And the language is similar in Luke xix. 21: "I feared Thee, because Thou art an austere man; Thou takest up that Thou layest not down, and reapest that Thou didst not sow." But what is the answer? "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant."

God is not hard; he is not austere, but if men give Him that character they will get an answer they do not like; an answer which condemns them on their own ground. The devil does his best to instil into men's minds harsh thoughts of God, and men are unfortunately ready to listen to him.

He did so with Eve. He made her think that GOD was keeping back from her and her husband something good. But he was telling her a lie, or rather, a lie with truth tacked on to it.

"Ye shall not surely die," was a lie. "Ye shall be as GOD knowing good and evil" was true, because GOD says it in Gen. iii. 22. "Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." It is Satan's way to mix truth with his lies. In that way he deceives men. The LORD JESUS said of him, "He is a liar, and the father of lies." So it is to-day. Satan, the enemy and adversary, is still deceiving men with his wiles and his lies, but especially by instilling into their minds wrong thoughts about GOD. GOD's purpose is to bless man. "GOD is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Hence "repentance and remission of sins" is preached in the Name of the LORD JESUS according to His Own word to His disciples after His resurrection.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved CHRIST to suffer and rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv. 45-47.)

In another aspect man is dead in sins and needs life. That is given in John's Gospel where the LORD JESUS, the SON of GOD, is seen to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No way apart from Him; no truth without Him; and no life except in Him. He is the way *to* the FATHER; the truth *about* the FATHER; and life *from* the FATHER.

"In Him was life and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). "He that hath the SON hath life; and he that hath not the SON OF GOD hath not life." (1 John v. 12.) G. KNIGHT.

"One Thing I Do"

(*Philippians iii.*)

THE life of CHRIST in the soul, and the presence of a rejected and glorified CHRIST *before* the soul are the elements by which GOD associates us with His Own objects, and sustains a testimony to these objects in the world.

All real testimony for CHRIST in a world that has rejected Him, and all true service for His Name—that is, the whole living power of Christianity in the world—has this simple ground for its spring.

This is enunciated, not as if it were a truth unknown and unacknowledged by those who are CHRIST's, but on account of the need there is, in the present day, for the mind to be recalled from man's complex thoughts to GOD's simple power of a living Christianity in the world.

"CHRIST in you, the hope of glory," expresses infinitely more than a doctrine or a dogma. It is the simple exponent of a living and a transforming power.

Nothing is more false in Christianity than the notion of "the imitation of CHRIST." A simple sentence from an Epistle teaches more as to this than whole volumes of a Kempis. CHRIST must "*live in me*" if I am to live CHRIST, or for CHRIST. All else is pitiful mimicry. It is worse. It is to caricature CHRIST to the world by an attempt to exhibit Him, while His real character and glory are unknown.

For what was CHRIST in His moral walk in this world? And what *is* CHRIST, as despised and rejected by the world, and about to be manifested in glory? I do not speak of His God-head, which all who are orthodox allow, as giving efficacy to His sacrifice, and validity to their hopes of heaven.

But CHRIST's Blessed Person and Glory have another aspect than this; and His cross has another power. "That I may know Him," indicates the one; and "by which I am crucified to the world" introduces to the other.

But what was the moral exhibition of the life of CHRIST here, if it was not a life whose every spring of action, and every motive and feeling and affection, was not so entirely from above—from heaven—as to be the utter reverse, and the rebuke, of all that has its spring from this base and corrupted and corrupting world? I do not speak of "the moral sublime" of CHRIST's character which has won the admiration of infidels, and the conception of which, to their own condemnation, they have pronounced to be divine, but of that detailed, delineated portraiture which the Gospels give of His everyday life, where, as the loved and owned of GOD, He is the despised and rejected of the world.

How can I be called to exhibit this; or how can I take my place with Him relatively to the world if I am not by His grace put relatively in His position towards heaven; and if all the springs of heaven's life, and purity, and heaven's fellowship, and heaven's abiding peace, and sustaining joy, are not made mine?

But this is the real power of Christianity. It is this which the full heart of CHRIST unfolds to His disciples when, rejected by the world, His love puts *them* in the place of continuing a witness for GOD in the world when He is gone.

"Power from on high" to witness for CHRIST is another thing from that which the 14th chapter of John and the connected chapters unfold. There, it is an absent CHRIST preparing for His disciples a home in heaven, but assuring them of His return; the certain knowledge of the FATHER from what they had seen in Him: unlimited power of request in His Name; and His Own pledged love for the fulfilment: the presence of "another Comforter," not so much the power of witness as the companion of their solitude, and to make them know the unutterable depths of the union of the FATHER and the SON, and their living union with Him; so that henceforth their lives were knit up with His. "Because I live, ye shall live also," and finally (though these are but the scanty streamlets from that gushing fountain), He tells them His place in the world is now to be theirs; but not to be theirs amidst its coldness, and hatred, and scorn, without "His peace"; and more—not without the visits of His love to cheer their obedient hearts, while they were sent into the world in the sad consciousness that the world was not their place, but heaven.

It is this that explains the brief epitome of a Christian's course in the world. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." May our hearts learn, in the only way in which it can be learned, its heavenly power! "The Kingdom of GOD is not in word, but in power."

Few, who have any heart for CHRIST, have ever gazed upon the picture of the Apostle's "imitation of CHRIST," presented in the third chapter of Philippians without a just admiration. But few indeed have penetrated the secret of that blessed exhibition so as to become followers of him as he was of CHRIST.

It has been observed that every man, perhaps, at some

period of his life, has been a hero in purpose; and in Christianity, alas! how prone are we to live for CHRIST in purpose rather than in act! It is a rare exhibition of the Gospel to see a man intent upon "doing one thing."

But let us look at the unfolding of those springs of action which formed the beauty of this moral exhibition of CHRIST in the Apostle. Too often the mind misses what it was the intention of the SPIRIT in the Apostle to disclose; which evidently here was not the result, but the hidden spring of a life of unlimited consecration to its object.

What he relinquished in his course is plain; what was his estimation of present things is equally marked; what was his future expectation is alike defined. He could say, "our conversation is in heaven," which was saying much if its force be understood. He could further add, "from whence also we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST," which stamped the sacred, unworldly character on his hope. But his sorrow was unmitigated when he thought of "the cross of CHRIST" being associated with a lower aim, in "minding earthly things."

But how did he reach this altitude? And what set in motion and kept in motion these unworldly sympathies? There is but one simple and unchanging element, whether it be looked at on the outset of his course, its continuance, or its close, and the issue and result is as simple as its spring. If CHRIST was the spring of his action, the end of his action was also CHRIST. It was the revelation of CHRIST in his soul that at first detached him from the world and from self, and from all that self holds dear. It was the same undimmed view of CHRIST that kept him with unquenched ardour of affection following in the path of his rejection, and spending himself in unwearied service for that which was dear to CHRIST in the midst of an unfeeling and hostile world. It was simply and alone the same blessed CHRIST in glory that brightened the future of his soul, and filled the horizon of his earnest and unfailing hope. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST," tells of the goal upon which his eye was fixed. "That I may know Him," in a single gush, reveals the first and last and only absorbing passion of his heart.

But is this the CHRIST we know? Is it the selfsame sun that warmed, and cheered, and brightened the day of Paul's earnest labour, which still shines for us? Or is it that, from length of time, his beams reach us but obliquely, which glowed in their zenith in the Apostle's day? Or is it that our hearts have, with the world, grown old, and with their feeble palsied motion say that the time is past for them to revive beneath his genial glow?

It is not thus. But we have left the mountain top, where still he pours his fervid beams, and have got down into the fogs, and vapours, and dampness of the marshy plains below.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Looking Up

THE happy position of every Christian is to be always looking up. For if he gets occupied with the things around, that which is going on in the world, or among God's people, then sorrow and weakness will be sure to follow, and he will be filled with despondency. God has given us His SON to be the joy of our souls, the object of our hearts, telling us that we shall soon see Him, and be with Him for ever. He is saying, "Behold My Servant Whom I uphold; Mine elect in Whom My soul delighteth." God would have us find our joy where He is finding His, even that precious One at His own right hand. God is saying, "Rejoice in the LORD always, and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. iv. 4).

May we know the power and blessedness of this joy at all times; so shall we glorify Him as we pass through this world. Happy ourselves, we shall help others to be happy. H.T.

His purpose is to have the world governed righteously. This cannot be according to God until His SON, the LORD JESUS, comes forth to make good the kingdom, the world-kingdom in power and glory.

* * *

We ought to walk as He walked.

A Word in Season

BRITAIN has been called a land of Bibles, a Christian land. It sends out untold numbers of Bibles and Missionaries to all parts of the world yearly. No doubt it is on account of this we as a country have had the hand of God providing for, and sheltering, this favoured land. Bibles are also still plentiful here; but what about the pressing need of the message it brings. Is it read by us to-day with care and interest?

A Psalmist could say, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). There is no other lamp or light for our guide to-day. Those who are getting on in years will remember how years ago our streets were thronged with people on Sunday mornings and evenings all making their way to church, chapel or meeting mostly carrying Bibles and books. It is not so to-day as any one can see. Se even in this country we have a great need of the truth of the Bible being brought home afresh to us. Let us just think for a moment, and take a few questions as to this need home to ourselves. Do I possess a Bible of my own? When did I last read it? How often do I turn to its pages and make it my counsellor? When I do read it, is it read carefully and prayerfully, or only as a matter of custom? Have I ever read it right through from Genesis to Revelation? Many other people have. If my Bible could speak itself what answers would it have to give to these simple but searching questions?

A timely message to-day for Britain and for us each is found in Jeremiah ii. 11-13. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, saith the LORD for My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water; they have hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

Let us then be exercised before God as to these things; return to Him the source of every blessing; listen attentively to His word, and still prove that, "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry with good things" (Ps. cvii. 9).

L. STEEL.

The Doctrine of Christ—6

(The Testimony of Paul the Apostle—3)

BY THE EDITOR

IN the Epistles to the *Corinthians* "the doctrine of CHRIST" is presented specially in connection with the Apostle's teaching as to Christian fellowship. To the *Romans*, as we saw in the last article, it was the "gospel of God concerning His SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." To the Corinthian saints it is "GOD is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the *fellowship* of His SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." (1 Cor. i. 9). In both cases the words "HIS SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD" recall our hearts to the holy Person of CHRIST, apart from Whom, and from what He has done, *there is neither gospel of God nor fellowship of saints*. We need firmly to lay hold upon the fact that it is CHRIST Who matters supremely alike for GOD in His grace, and for man in his need. We note, too, how carefully the SPIRIT of GOD, Who only is able to instruct us as to the truth of CHRIST'S Person, speaks through the Apostle in these two epistles: "His SON, JESUS CHRIST our LORD"; "the LORD of GLORY"; the CRUCIFIED; the One Who "though He was rich yet for your sakes became poor"; the equal Bestower with the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT of the Christian benediction of grace, love and communion (1 Cor. i. 9, 23; 2 Cor. viii. 9; xiii. 14).

He is the same One to Whom Peter bore witness both by his confession at Caesarea Philippi and his ministry oral and written; of Whom John and our Apostle here, as we have also seen likewise testified as to His true Deity and real Humanity; "His SON"—the SON of GOD in solitary, unique dignity as the Only Begotten of the FATHER—"His SON JESUS," JESUS—Who was crucified, Whom men had known as JESUS the Nazarene; the One Who as man had lived and died among men; He Whom men had seen, and heard, and touched; "His SON JESUS CHRIST," the Anointed of JEHOVAH in Whom all the promises of GOD are "Yea and Amen unto the glory of GOD" (2 Cor. i. 20): "His SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD"; "made both LORD and CHRIST"; "Our LORD"—the One Whose Person commands the loving loyalty of each believing heart that recognizes Him as being in His inherent right "the LORD of Glory": the One Who was rich, yet for our sakes descended to the abject poverty of the cross of shame and

suffering. Shall we not love Him Who has so loved us, with a love that withholds nothing of time, strength, money, or service? If He is not worthy of this, who is?

"Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment," said the LORD JESUS in the days of His flesh; "and the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (St. Mark xii. 30-31).

We do no violence to the thought of "love" here if for purposes of illustration we use the ordinary term "care for," for one cannot love a person one does not care for; whom one does not consider and think of constantly; and real love always expresses itself in service which goes even to the point of sacrifice. The affections, the understanding, the interests, all exercised in the fullest vigour, play their part in wholehearted love and devotion. It was thus He loved us, blessed be His NAME! And it is thus we are to show our love to Him by loving those who are His. The fellowship of "the Church of GOD at Corinth with all that in every place call upon the NAME of JESUS CHRIST our LORD" is spoken of under the figure of the human body; and so intimate is it in character that "one spirit" describes it. "For by one SPIRIT we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one SPIRIT (1 Cor. xii. 13). "He that is joined to the LORD is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). "Ye are the body of CHRIST" (1 Cor. xii. 27).

These references from the Corinthian epistles indicate the divine quality of true Christian fellowship; it is what GOD has wrought; no one baptizes himself, it has to be done for him; while drinking of course is so purely personal an activity that none can perform it for another. It is "the body of CHRIST" into which all believers have been baptised, it is "the SPIRIT of CHRIST," Who is the SPIRIT of GOD proceeding from the FATHER and the SON, of which all believers have been made, or given, to drink. Hence when concluding his epistle to the Corinthians (addressed, let us also remember to "*all that in every place call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*") the Apostle by the same SPIRIT writes, "The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

These epistles which open with the "*fellowship* of His SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD," close with "the communion, or *fellow-*

ship, of the HOLY SPIRIT"; the whole body of them being occupied with practical teaching as to the reality of Christian fellowship based upon the "doctrine of CHRIST" running throughout.

It is in the personal "grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST" that we learn the beauty of GOD's grace and the reality of GOD's love. "In this was manifested the love of GOD towards us, because GOD sent His only begotten SON into the world that we might live through Him. . . . And we have known and believed the love that GOD hath to us. GOD is love" (1 John iv. 9, 16). In the person and work of "His SON, JESUS CHRIST our LORD," we behold the beauty of the LORD; the light of His holy, gracious, and blessed character having been fully revealed thereby. "The love of GOD" as the source and fountain of all our blessing is seen, "for GOD commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners CHRIST died for us" (Rom. v. 8). What a thrill of awe and gratitude fills the believing soul when these familiar words are first apprehended by it; yet, alas, how quickly we get used to reading or hearing them without being stirred by them.

But blessed be GOD, since the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself is the sole *channel* of blessing, the only Mediator, and the exclusive way to the Father, from Themselves has proceeded the HOLY SPIRIT Who is the effectual *communicator* of the things of GOD to the hearts of men. He, LORD and also Giver of life, is the spring and support of fellowship in all the members of CHRIST's body. He it is Who makes real to our spirits what is eternally real. The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, both in every way transcending human thought are made blessedly real and effective in the believing heart, and in the believing company through the communion of the HOLY SPIRIT. The love of CHRIST, the love of the FATHER, the love of the SPIRIT is the love of GOD Himself, and "we have known and believed the love that GOD hath to us." Yet while we give thanks unto the FATHER, and worship by the SPIRIT, our hearts are always directed by the FATHER and the SPIRIT to the Person and work of the blessed LORD JESUS Himself. He is all GOD's delight, and all our salvation; and to our hearts the FATHER says: "This is My beloved SON in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 5); and the SPIRIT whispers in the deepest recesses

of our conscious being : "He is thy LORD ; and worship thou Him" (Psalm xlv. 11). So we sing and say :

Eternal WORD, eternal SON,
 The FATHER'S constant joy ;
 What Thou hast done and what Thou art
 Shall all our tongues employ ;
 Our life, our LORD, we Thee adore,
 Worthy art Thou for evermore.

Thy Church praises Thee, O LORD, for ever and ever ; her glorious LORD and HEAD.

Great Joy—3

(*Read 2 Chronicles xxix. and xxx.*)

SOME two and a half centuries passed after the event under consideration in the previous two articles on this subject. During these years ten tribes had definitely forsaken the centre of worship set up by the LORD on the earth and loyalty to the royal line in which the LORD purposed that the MESSIAH should be born in due time. Corruption and idolatry had characterised even the two tribes that remained outwardly true to Jerusalem. Yet the LORD remained faithful to His promises, and in His grace and mercy raised up Hezekiah to lead a remnant of His people back to Himself. *Great Joy* might yet be the portion of those who obeyed the Word of GOD.

What diligence we find recorded in 2 Chron. xxix. ! First the priests and Levites had to sanctify themselves, then they had to cleanse the house of the LORD (v. 15). As the story is long, let us translate it, as it were, into language applicable to Christian conditions as we proceed from step to step.

In these days each believer in the LORD JESUS can be viewed as having privileges and responsibilities corresponding in many ways to those of (a) a member of the congregation of Israel, and (b) a Levite, and (c) a priest. In our chapter we first find the priests and Levites had to sanctify themselves, that is to say that corruption had reached the point where neither the worship nor the service of the LORD'S people were acceptable to Him. Each worshipper,

each servant, needed purification from the defilements in which he had become involved. What a word this is for us in a day when Christians (and can we claim to be entirely exceptions?) are entangled in worldly amusements, ungodly organisations, etc. (not to mention more obvious sins) on the one hand, and on the other have allowed all sorts of forms and ceremonies invented by men to be combined in what is offered as worship or regarded as service to the LORD. The first step towards revival should be, as in Hezekiah's day, *to cleanse oneself from all such defilements.*

The next step is the cleansing of the house of the LORD. It has often been pointed out in this magazine that "two or three" believers in the LORD JESUS *who gather to His Name* have the promise of His presence (Matt. xviii. 20) and thus are His dwelling-place, in a sense, on this earth. By the SPIRIT of GOD the apostle told the saints at Ephesus they were "builded together for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT" (Eph. ii. 22). He also told the Corinthians "ye are the temple of God" (1 Cor. iii. 16) and warned them against defiling it. What did the priests and Levites find in the house of the LORD? Filthiness, and surely *everything* they found there which the Word of God, given through Moses and Solomon, had not authorized to be there was indeed filthiness. If we compare the conditions existing among companies of Christians today with the Scriptures what a sad state of affairs we find. The apostle wrote by the SPIRIT of GOD to the Corinthians about the *evil* ways of some among them and told them what to do (1 Cor. v.). What zeal in clearing themselves followed is clear from 2 Cor. vii. Let us show the same spirit in the fear of the LORD.

Then we find sin offerings follow, and it is significant that there are seven (the number that speaks of perfection in GOD's sight) of each of four (the number that typifies application to *all*) different animals; and "the priests made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar to make an atonement *for all Israel*" (verses 7, 24). In such a time of revival, though only a remnant actually participated in it (as we shall see later), faith contemplates *all the Lord's people.* There is a parallel comprehensiveness in the "one loaf" of 1 Cor. x. 17. No fresh sin offerings have to be brought by Christians—such is the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice once offered by CHRIST—but a fresh and fuller appreciation in our souls of that great work in its divine perfection and all-

sufficiency will follow the practical cleansing of ourselves and of the house of God.

Burnt offerings follow (v. 27) because meditation upon CHRIST'S death on the cross to make atonement for us leads our thoughts on to the satisfaction and delight ("savour of rest") which that work brought to God. "ALL THE CONGREGATION WORSHIPPED, AND THE SINGERS SANG, AND THE TRUMPETERS SOUNDED" (v. 28). What a picture! Does it not raise in our hearts the desire to participate in such an ideal of worship and praise, in appreciation of the much fuller knowledge God has given us through the consummation of all the Old Testament sacrificial types in the atoning work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, His beloved SON, on the cross? No wonder that "the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings" (v. 31). Yet neither king nor people took credit to themselves. "Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that GOD had prepared the people" (v. 36). Still, we have not yet reached GREAT JOY.

There remained the commemoration of a great event in a divinely appointed way (2 Chron. xxx.). The passover had not been kept for a "long time in such sort as it was written." Since the cross, the LORD'S SUPPER has been the divinely appointed way of commemorating the Person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the antitype of the passover lamb. But is it the general practice among professing Christians to keep it "as it was written"? Even in the outward form we must surely admit this is not so in the organised bodies of Christians. And if the outward form complies with the simplicity of the scriptural description of the institution of the LORD'S SUPPER (e.g., 1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.), there should also be the cleansing and other points mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. Let us not shrink from applying these terrible truths to ourselves, and the company of Christians with whom we meet.

Certain further instructive points may be mentioned. The revived truth concerning "the keeping of the passover as it was written" was proclaimed to all Israel inviting them to turn again to the LORD, to yield themselves to Him, to enter into His sanctuary, to serve Him. Many would not hear, and today many who are truly the LORD'S people are quite indifferent about the

points that have been referred to in the preceding paragraphs. Nevertheless individuals from Asher, Manasseh, Zebulun (v. 11), and Ephraim and Issachar (v. 18), did gather themselves at Jerusalem, forsaking all their false worship and idolatry, to keep the passover with the two tribes Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites of the tribe of Levi.

Many among the mixed company, although they had prepared their hearts to seek the LORD GOD of their fathers, had not cleansed themselves and ate the passover otherwise than it was written (v. 18). Evidently some form of judgment fell upon them, but Hezekiah prayed for their pardon and the LORD heard and healed them in His grace. From this we may learn surely that while the cleansing, etc., which precede this passage is according to the mind of the LORD yet He graciously forgives ignorance and failure. This does not justify wilful neglect.

The sincerity of heart, even of those who had failed to cleanse themselves before eating the passover, is evidenced in the keeping of the feast of unleavened bread for seven days with GREAT GLADNESS (v. 21). Leaven—a type of evil of every kind—had to be put out of all their houses (Ex. xii. 15), and in this there is a further lesson for us today. Purification from evil, as a practical thing, is a continuous process, and outward conformity with scripture, even to the extent of partaking of the LORD'S SUPPER, does not result in the GREAT GLADNESS which is the privileged portion of the Christian if practical, continuous purity in our private life and thoughts is neglected. Such was the godly zeal of this remnant in Hezekiah's time that they kept a second seven days of unleavened bread with gladness (v. 23). So there was GREAT JOY in Jerusalem (v. 26).

All the history in 2 Chron. xxix., xxx. is concerned with a revival of worship and service in the House of GOD, and gives us for our instruction the various steps that are taken, and principles that are followed, by a godly remnant when GOD has prepared them. May the consideration of these things have a very practical result in our hearts so that we too may know GREAT GLADNESS and GREAT JOY in worship and praise, the act of commemoration, and practical purity, in the place which the LORD has chosen to put His Name in, to His honour and praise!

J. C. KELL

Settling, or Sojourning ; Sighing, or Singing—Which ?

IN the reading of the Psalms it is helpful to notice how carefully they have been collated, or gathered together in books or groups.

Many of the Psalms are prophetic. Some set forth "the sufferings of CHRIST and the glory that should follow." Some, CHRIST in HIS associations with or for GOD's people. Others, the experiences through which GOD's people have passed, or will have to pass. In some are found, closely allied, "supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks." Others, again, are largely, if not altogether, the outflow of praise.

Among the latter, for the purpose of this article, Psalm cv. may be singled out. It is a call to thanksgiving and praise, produced by a meditation on all that JEHOVAH had done for His people.

"O give thanks unto the Lord ; call upon His name ; make known His name among the people. Sing unto Him, sing praise unto Him : talk ye of all His wondrous works."

From beginning to end the note of thanksgiving and praise is tuned to what the LORD has wrought for them, and His purpose in so doing. Well may it finish with, "Praise ye the LORD."

There is one verse in this harmonious psalm that would be spoken of in musical terms as a dominant-seventh : but what a beautiful chord it creates !

As the Apostle Paul writes his epistle to the saints at Rome, relating the wondrous works and purposes of GOD in grace, he strikes a similar dominant note as he meditates upon the governmental ways of GOD with His people Israel, for the bringing into blessing of the Gentiles, according to His eternal purposes.

What a beautiful, melodious chord that dominant-seventh note struck : "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD ! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

Verse 25 of Psalm cv. reads : "He turned their hearts to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants."

To the untrained ear that seems like a discordant note in that psalm of praise : the LORD (JEHOVAH) turning the heart of the Egyptians to hate His people and to deal subtilly with His

servants ! Could that be in harmony with the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD in the wondrous works He wrought for them ? Yes, indeed ; and as those wondrous works are reviewed that dominant note melodiously vibrates in the heart of the psalmist as on an instrument of ten strings.

The children of Israel had been brought into Egypt. The LORD had sent a man before them, Joseph, who had been exalted as ruler. They had been blessed through him, and were given the best of the land. They were allowed to remain there for years ; and the LORD "increased His people greatly ; and made them stronger than their enemies."

In the purposes of GOD they were only to sojourn "in the land of Ham." Under the above conditions of prosperity and power, how naturally had they settled down in their comfortable circumstances. They forgot that they were only sojourners in an alien land. Undisturbed, they probably never would have desired to leave Egypt ; forgetful of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of the almost last words of Joseph, concerning their proper portion, Canaan. But—

"He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants."

Whilst passing through that long period of cruel hatred, they were filled with groans and sighs ; but afterwards, they saw in those very circumstances something of the riches and knowledge of their GOD in His way of detaching their hearts from that into which otherwise they would have been content to settle ; and their sighs and groans were changed into singing and praise.

"The LORD's portion is His people" ; and He would not be content to have them settle, either in Egypt or in the "waste howling wilderness."

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taking them, beareth them on her wings ; so the LORD alone doth lead him" (Israel) (Deut. xxxii. 9-12).

These things "are written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages are come."

The LORD's people today—at any rate in this country—may not be subjected to the outward hatred of the enemy as shewn by persecution, although that hatred be there. Rather may they be lulled by his subtlety into settling down in this world of which he is god and prince.

Were the affection truly set on things above (on CHRIST), and not on things below, there would be little need for a stirring-up of the nest. There is, alas, much need; therefore, if not much outward persecution, much that may perplex or perturb the LORD'S people. If, however, they could view these things as of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD, intended to detach their hearts from settling down as citizens of this world below, and giving them to realize that they were sojourners only, the perplexities and perturbations would be turned into pæans of praise.

H. SAMBROOK

The Mission of Tracts

TRACTS can go everywhere. They can go to many places you cannot go. Tracts know no fear, never tire, can be multiplied without end by the press, can travel at little expense, need no public room to tell their story. They can tell it in the kitchen, parlour, shop, factory, store, aeroplane, automobile or railway car, on the broad highway or in the footpath through field or forest.

One or two of the smallest copper coins will take several of them to some of the most distant countries, from enlightened Christian communities to the darkest heathen lands in the uttermost parts of the earth. The smallest child may give them to its elders who are grey with age, the most illiterate may give or send them to the wisest and most intellectual and scholarly, or the poorest to the richest (or vice versa), by air, by land, or by sea.

They take no note of scoffs, jeers, or taunts. No one can betray them into hasty expression. They never quarrel, never lose their temper, never answer back. They stick to their story, and can tell it over and over again, to one as well as to a multitude, and to a multitude as well as to one.

The noiseless tracts, "tiny points of light," or beams, or rays, can go into homes where men and women sit in darkness and the shadow of death. To many they are their *only* chance to hear and live. Tracts, silent messengers, work 24 hours a day, and may continue their ministry long after we shall have passed off this scene.

ANON.

Sparkling Gems

Look up, for the Cross and the tomb are vacant now and the risen CHRIST is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

* * *

Faith must be kept up, bright and simple and exercised, the eyes of the heart ever on the things unseen and eternal.

* * *

It is sin not to have confidence in the LORD, not to be quite sure that He will help us, whatever the need may be, when we are walking in His ways.

* * *

Satan can never make us his slaves again, but we may be beaten and wounded by him.

* * *

Enemies were as nothing when Israel had the power of GOD with them.

* * *

We are to be kept, moment by moment, in a state of dependence, yet reckoning on the constant grace and help of GOD.

* * *

What unbelief does is to compare ourselves and our own strength with circumstances. What faith does is to compare GOD with circumstances.

* * *

We must all, converted or unconverted, give up the world. The veriest votary of the world must sooner or later give up its vanities and its pleasures, its hopes and its interests; he must give them up. The only difference is this, that the Christian gives them up for GOD; the worldling gives them up because he cannot keep them.

* * *

Man is just spending his energies to make the world pleasant without GOD, and himself comfortable and rich in it, to die out of it.

* * *

Man has failed in everything. But that does not disarm grace. It is the occasion of grace. Now, GOD says, I must act for myself, I must manifest what I am.

* * *

We should get near enough to CHRIST to enjoy Him and to know Him truly.

(Selected by C. A. HAMMOND)

“One Thing I Do”—2

(Continued from page 35)

JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever,” is a truth that can stay the heart when all around is putting on the tokens of decay, and that which bears the name of **CHRIST** is verging fast towards Laodicean lukewarmness and rejection. But **CHRIST** must have a witness in the world till He comes again, and the truth that “Elijah was a man subject to like passions we as are,” may well turn the lonely drooping heart in confidence to Elijah’s **GOD**, despite Israel’s apostasy, and Ahab’s wickedness, and Jezebel’s corruption.

But the moral picture of our chapter (Phil. iii.) is before our gaze. “No confidence in the flesh” is a leading feature in it, and one, if our souls would copy, we must not forget. It is the obverse of the medal, with its other inscription, “Our conversation is in heaven.”

It is the first expression, the essential condition of being so owned by **GOD** as to have “His **SON** revealed in us.” “**CHRIST** in you, the hope of glory,” taught one who was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles, that he was “Nothing.” And when it pleased **GOD** to reveal His **SON** in him, immediately he “conferred not with flesh and blood,” so that the expression, “We are the circumcision,” or those who are acknowledged of **GOD** as in connection with Himself, is necessarily followed by “who *serve* **GOD** in the **SPIRIT**, and rejoice in **CHRIST JESUS**, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

It is a negative object, it is true, but as such it is essential to the possession and the display of **GOD**’s grace and **CHRIST**’s power.

Nothing but the bright revelation of a crucified, dying, living, glorious **CHRIST**—a **CHRIST** Whose love brought Him from heaven’s glory to “the dust of death” for us; a **CHRIST** Whom the world has rejected, and Who now beckons us onward to His glory from the throne of our **GOD**, can ever produce this effect in us of “no confidence in the flesh”; but this revelation, when true and bright to the soul, does and can. It alike displaces the claims and pretensions of a righteous or of a sinful self. It can and must do so, because “It is not I that live, but **CHRIST** liveth in me.”

It is not the world, whether in its riches, its ease, its reputation, or its esteem, that is in prominence here. That is a thing so

alien from the thoughts of the apostle, and has so utterly lost any hold it might have had in his affections, that he has only tears when he mentions those who imagined it could for a moment be associated with the cross. He dismisses such a thought with the stern declaration that "those who mind earthly things are the enemies of the cross of CHRIST."

That blight of Christianity which has so thickly settled down upon all who bear the name of CHRIST now, was seen only by the Apostle in absolute and deadly antagonism to the cross; and his emphatic condemnation of it is heard in the brief expression, "I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me."

But in this "no confidence in the flesh" we see the cross and the glory turning all that could be a ground of confidence, in natural descent—in the participation of divine ordinance—in the exactitude of religious observances, and the perfection of moral values—into "loss for CHRIST," and "the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS his LORD" turning everything he had lost for Him, in comparison, into a heap of "dung."

"The righteousness which is of GOD by faith," "the righteousness which is through the faith of CHRIST," puts utterly outside the righteousness of self, or that which is by the law; and that through being "found in Him," while the power of CHRIST's resurrection draws him on through a life of suffering, as the legitimate road to "the resurrection of the dead"; and if he seeks to be made conformable to CHRIST's death here, it is because he sees in it the moral pathway to the glory, along which his soul is bounding, like a courser, to his goal.

His detailed life, amidst such burning desires, such a contempt of the world, such unearthly motives, was still in one sense commonplace enough: it had only this of pre-eminence in it, that in the ratio in which heaven and glory, CHRIST, possessed his soul, the world heaped upon him its neglect, and contempt, and scorn. "Even unto this present hour" (he says), "we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

But did he sigh that he was thus cut off by the world? No! He had neither time nor heart to think of it, except when some laggard soul, still lingering in the world, needed to be reminded

that He Who possesses heaven's glory travelled to it through the world's scorn; and that our GOD has called us to the same inheritance, "by glory and by virtue."

One point was in his eye; one object, and one alone bounded his view—"Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST," and though every step was bringing him nearer to it, nothing did he think he had attained while this was still before.

His own and the Church's relationship to CHRIST he had fully learned; the ultimate object for which CHRIST had laid hold of him was kept steadily before his mind, and neither successes nor disasters could stop him from reaching onwards, until he himself had laid hold on this, "not as though I had already attained . . . this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS."

But is he content to be *lonely* in this ardent race? No! See how he stretches a friendly hand to those who, through faintness, are dropping in the rear, and says, in effect, "Come on! Come on! Brethren, be followers together of me." And see him, too, casting a lingering look towards those who have stopped in their course, through "minding earthly things." He weeps at their condition, and sorrowfully vents the words of warning, "They are enemies of the cross of CHRIST . . . their glory is their shame." But he cannot stop. He dashes away the tears which, when looking downwards, dimmed with sorrow his eyes; and again looking upward and onward, his face beaming with the brightness of eternal hope, he exclaims, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for our SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

Beloved brethren in the LORD, is this the simple character of the Christianity *we* profess? Is CHRIST so simple, so singly the object of our souls, as to be in power of the displacement of all that we have clung to in the past; all that would entangle us, and make us turn our backs on the cross in the present, and all the schemes and expectations, the fears or anticipations of the future?

To his heart, whose aspirations have for a while arrested the current of our thoughts, CHRIST was all this. And, oh, may the

precious grace of that GOD Who separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by His grace, and was pleased to reveal His SON in him, that he might preach Him among the heathen, make it the one object of our souls that CHRIST may be thus revealed, restored, to our hearts! Too often the measure of practical godliness which may mark us—the reading of the Word, our prayers, our self-denial, look not beyond ourselves, or at least not beyond the limit of that service on which the heart may be set for CHRIST. These things are necessary to maintain a tone of piety, and to keep the heart from being driven backward by the world's adverse current. But this is not "conversation in heaven." This is not CHRIST filling from the centre to the circumference, our affections and our hearts. This is not "CHRIST dwelling in our hearts by faith." This is not, with the Apostle, to do "one thing."

There is a Hand that can remove every film from our darkened vision, and make us "with unveiled face to behold as in a glass the glory of the LORD, and be thus changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD." Then, and then only, shall we be able to say, "*This one thing I do!*"

Three Sister Virtues

SCRIPTURE is full of the fragrance of the three sister virtues, *faith, hope, and love*. They appear in a variety of connections, but everywhere diffusing the same sweetness and beauty. "And now abideth, faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. xiii. 13).

The purpose of GOD's salvation is not merely to save us from the consequences of our sins, but to create and maintain within the hearts of His redeemed creatures these basic virtues. The immediate result of Satan's intrusion in Gen. iii. was the loss of faith. This was quickly followed by the disappearance of love (Gen. iv.) and with these gone hope departed; for when GOD looked down He saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth (Gen. vi.).

GOD desires these three to be restored. The Gospel's revelation of His love gives the lie to Satanic insinuations and restores faith, because GOD loved us even when we were dead in sins, and sent His SON to be our SAVIOUR. The SPIRIT's work (Rom. v.)

within the heart which will continue till the day of CHRIST creates love in us, whilst the promise, "If I go away, I will come again," renews hope. Thus our faith looks back to the Cross, hope soars on to the crown, whilst love bows at His feet Who endured the Cross, and is now crowned with glory and honour.

No one will cross the ocean unless they have the prospect of a safe journey and the hope of something good at the other side. Asked why she was so happy when going a long journey, a little child replied, "Daddy is the pilot; his plane is the best in the world; and there's such a happy land where we are going." The Gospel tells us of a Pilot Who is to be loved, Whose Way of Salvation can be relied upon, and of a heavenly *El Dorado* at the end. We love this LORD, we trust His Word, and await His advent to fulfil His gracious promise.

Christian profession without these virtues is vain. Healthy plants must have potash, phosphates and nitrates in correct proportions. If believers are to develop as they ought they also must grow in an atmosphere where faith, hope and love abound, "in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST." A modicum of each is not sufficient. We may as well have a plant without flower or fruit as a Christian without these three sister virtues. Upon them everything hinges. They are inseparable.

Faith is the basic virtue. By it we enter into all GOD's blessings. It gives stability and strength (Jas. i.), but not the stolid strength of a stoic, for it is tempered by love and inspired by hope.

Faith receives from hope and love its unique qualities, and so too does Christian love receive from faith and hope its superlative character. Love is a bird. Faith and hope the wings which bear it aloft. Human love abounds everywhere but cannot be compared to that poured into the heart by the SPIRIT of GOD. Faith and hope enable it to rise above all the world has to show, for "we love because He first loved us."

Hope too receives its character and excellence from faith and love. It endures the blasts of persecution because it is as a plant which thrives in an atmosphere of Divine love, and has its roots of faith firmly fixed in the crevices of the Rock of Ages, which stands by streams of living water. It cannot be uprooted nor does it wilt. It flourishes beneath the benign rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

Christian faith is self-abnegation. The believer, conscious of his own impotency and GOD'S grace, renounces sin and self in shame and trusts the Living GOD, and has no confidence in the flesh.

Love is self-denial. We are to love as He loves. As has been said we are to keep the feast, not only on the morning of the first day of the week with the actual symbols as He desired, but also in another sense. We ought to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren says an Apostle, "because He laid down His life for us" (1 John iii. 16).

To sum up, faith trusts, love adores, hope waits. Faith gives strength, hope joy, and love fragrance. The Colossian faith never fails for it was "in Christ" (i. 4), their hope never fades for it is "in heaven" (i. 5), and their love never fails for it is "in the SPIRIT" (i. 8). Faith receives His Word, love spreads it, and hope awaits its promise. "Even so, come, LORD JESUS."

J. GUY

Our Enemies and Strength

THE Christian has three great enemies, namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world attracts and ensnares; the devil seems to ensnare, and if foiled, opposes; as to the flesh, the Christian, though not in it, has it in him. Now inasmuch as it is worse for a fortress to have a traitor at liberty *within* than strong enemies *without* (especially when the fortress is provided with everything to make it thoroughly impregnable against all attacks, however subtle or formidable they may be), so the Christian should be especially upon his guard against the least acting of the flesh. If the traitor, being bound, has no opportunity of acting, the fortress (notwithstanding the traitor remains inside) is in no danger of being taken, and the enemies without are powerless (1 John v. 18).

Paul learnt that "in him, that is, in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing," and from Romans vii. 25 we learn that, even *after* deliverance, "with the flesh we serve the law of sin," i.e., that the flesh is ever the same, utterly bad, and that whenever it acts, we serve sin; we become, in fact, slaves to the very enemies in whom the traitor delights.

(To be concluded)

The Doctrine of Christ—7

(The Testimony of Paul the Apostle—4)

By THE EDITOR

THE "doctrine of CHRIST" as held and taught by the Apostle Paul is again very strikingly set out in the introductory verses of his epistle to the *Galatians*. "Paul, apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by JESUS CHRIST and GOD the FATHER Who raised Him out from the dead Grace to you and peace from GOD the FATHER and our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that gave Himself for our sins." It has been pertinently remarked: "Had not the Apostle regarded JESUS CHRIST as one with the FATHER in the GODHEAD, he could never have written this." So in the forefront of his teaching in this epistle we find the Deity of JESUS CHRIST our LORD not exactly stated, but so strongly implied as to leave no doubt as to what the Apostle held and taught as to this. Then the significant phrase used of his conversion, "when it pleased GOD . . . to reveal his SON in me," is surely best understood from his own words (in 2 Cor. iv. 6): "For GOD . . . hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST." After the blaze of heavenly glory which shone on the Damascus road he learned that he, Saul of Tarsus, the Jew, saved by that crucified CHRIST Whom he had been persecuting, was to be sent as His herald of mercy to those furthest away from GOD among the nations. This at least one would gather to be the plain meaning of Galatians i. 16. As we consider the way in which the Blessed Lord is presented to us in this epistle we shall find ourselves again led on in adoring contemplation of the One Who, as JESUS of NAZARETH, in the days of His flesh affirmed Himself to be the CHRIST the SON of the BLESSED, and He to Whom all the affairs of mankind for salvation or judgment were committed. Let us notice the same simple orderly sequence here as in the other epistles.

1. The same historical facts stated here as elsewhere in the New Testament as lying at the basis of Christianity, and of any true "doctrine of CHRIST," are JESUS CHRIST—*crucified—raised* by GOD the FATHER;

2. JESUS CHRIST crucified is "the SON of GOD Who loved me and gave Himself for me. (ch. ii. 20). Thrice, too, in this short letter the words "His SON" occur; and, apart from anything connected with our LORD's voluntary humiliation, or any glories conferred upon Him as Son of man, He is carefully presented everywhere in the New Testament scriptures as what He was, is, and ever remains, "the SON of GOD," "His SON." In a country church one was interested to see inscribed on a wall:—

"He is What He was and ever will be,
Became what He was *not*, for you and for me."

3. JESUS CHRIST, crucified, risen, His SON, is our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

4. JESUS CHRIST, crucified, yet risen again, His SON, our LORD, is the "REDEEMER," for "CHRIST has redeemed us" (ch. iii. 13).

It cannot be wearisome to the Christian reader thus to reiterate the titles of the LORD JESUS. Indeed the SPIRIT of GOD by the pen of inspiration seems (if we may reverently say so) to use divine ingenuity in setting out the varied beauties and glories attaching to our LORD's Person and work, so that we may both "grow in *grace* and in the *knowledge* of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." Hence we read here of the *grace* of CHRIST, the *gospel* of CHRIST, the servant of CHRIST, the revelation of JESUS CHRIST, justification through faith of CHRIST, the liberty wherewith CHRIST has made us free, the law of CHRIST, and the *cross* of CHRIST, in order that the supremacy of His Person, and the sufficiency of His work, may be vividly presented to our adoring souls. But the distinctive message of the epistle to the *Galatians* in connection with the "doctrine of CHRIST" is the freedom obtained for believers by CHRIST at so awful a cost to Himself: "The liberty wherewith CHRIST has made us free" (ch. v. 1).

The same emphasis which in *Romans* we noted was laid upon "the *gospel of God*" in connection with the "doctrine of CHRIST," and in *Corinthians* upon "the fellowship of His SON" to which we are called as believers, is here markedly upon *the liberty* of the believer, the freedom which CHRIST has purchased and bestowed for His people from Jewish rites and the ceremonial law.

A verse (from Acts xv. 1) with another from the fifth

chapter of our epistle set the sharply defined issues at stake before the reader, showing how the apostolic "doctrine of CHRIST" as stated here bears upon them. "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, CHRIST shall profit you nothing."

With startling abruptness, but with crystal clearness, the CHRIST of the apostolic doctrine here, is declared to be *everything or nothing* in the momentous matter of salvation.

Our Divine LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST is thus shown to be "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth"; and the Apostle's "doctrine of CHRIST" constantly, consistently, and emphatically asserts the supremacy of His Person and the sufficiency of His work. He has no peers, and no competitors; but stands alone and supreme as the only begotten of the FATHER, and the sole SAVIOUR of mankind.

In this, Peter the Apostle of the Circumcision, in his writings fully and unreservedly confirms his "beloved brother Paul" to whom was committed the Apostolate of the Uncircumcision.

He writes: "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious Blood of CHRIST" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19); and again of the Person of CHRIST he says, "We were eye-witnesses of His Majesty, for He received from GOD *the* FATHER honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased" (2 Pet. i. 16, 17).

In the great matter of the "doctrine of CHRIST" the apostolic testimony is unanimous as to the dignity and worth of His Person and work. It may be of interest to mention what a modern Jewish scholar with the veil of unbelief still upon his heart has written: "Jewish writers" (he says), "distinguish between the teaching of JESUS and Christianity. The latter is regarded as the work of Paul . . . the Jew is drawn to the conclusion that the divorce between the two religions could not have been consummated without the abrogation of the ceremonial law which was the work of Paul" (Judaism,—Ephraim Levine, p. 31).

It was the work of CHRIST, not the work of Paul, which made

men free from the irksome bondage of ceremonial rites and observances. "CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree' that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through JESUS CHRIST; that we might receive the promise of the SPIRIT through faith." (Gal. iii. 13, 14). This blessing is ours; all praise to Him by Whose shameful death it was won. Our true glory is in that cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST which brings our old life to a close, and separates us for ever from the world. Crucified with Him, yet living by faith of Him, may our hearts ever overflow with love to Him, the SON of GOD Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

It was forgetfulness of this, or an entire lack of appreciation of it, which led to what has been termed by another "the Galatian Lapse."

Great Joy—4

THE last two mentions of GREAT JOY in the Old Testament occur in the book of Nehemiah. Some 270 years had passed since the Passover which was the occasion of great joy in Hezekiah's reign. In the interval even the tribe of Levi and the two tribes Judah and Benjamin had become more and more corrupt, so that it was recorded that "all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen and polluted the house of the Lord" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 14). Consequently the LORD, in governmental judgment, gave them all into the hand of the king of the Chaldees who carried them into Babylon as captives for 70 years. The house of God was burnt and the wall of Jerusalem was broken down. Could there be recovery from such wickedness and its righteous consequences that *great joy* might again be the portion of the people? What sovereign grace we see in the answer that this should be true not only once but abundantly.

Even in Hezekiah's time, 190 years before it happened, it had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah that Cyrus should perform all the LORD's pleasure, "saying to Jerusalem Thou

shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid' (Isaiah xlv. 28). Cyrus king of Persia duly issued his decree, and nearly 50,000 from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin came back to Jerusalem to build the house of God. They made a good start, setting up the altar, and laying the foundation of the temple, but tired in the work and began to make themselves comfortable. Their efforts were discouraged by enemies from without and corruption within.

Before continuing the history further it is well to consider whether the story of "Christendom" has not been similar. That which began so well as recorded in the Acts, and could be described in 1 Tim. iii. 15, as "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," first became corrupt, and then became completely absorbed by the "world" in all the professedly "Christian" countries. While it is ever true that "the LORD knows them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19), as regards practical testimony on the earth for many generations what characterised professing Christians when they gathered together was not the Presence of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in their midst (Matt. xviii. 20; 1 Cor. iii. 16; etc.) but all sorts of human inventions and ideas which pleased and gratified the senses and exalted individuals into prominence, such as fine buildings, fine music, gaudy vestments, elaborate ceremonies and pomp, and episcopal systems. In fact Christians were captives in Babylon, for *such is Babylon*, which started with the attempt of man to reach heaven by his own works and efforts (Gen. xi.), and will culminate, after CHRIST has come for all who are truly His (1 Thess. iv. 16), in the foul thing whose terrible epitaph is given in Rev. xviii. In the meantime the LORD in His sovereign grace called out from this corrupt confusion some of His own, and they learnt anew the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary (rebuilt the altar, as it were). Alas, it is also true that enemies from without, and corruption within, speedily brought fresh confusion among them.

Resuming the history in Ezra, it is recorded that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were sent with warnings and stimulating messages so that the house of God was duly built (Ezra vi. 15). Thus the centre of worship according to the word of God was again available for His people. There

followed a time of sacrifice, of keeping the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, and of joy. Conscience then began to be awakened about the extent to which the people were still entangled with idolaters in their *personal and private lives*. This matter had to be dealt with.

So from time to time the LORD raised up teachers among those whom He called out from the corruption of worldly Christendom, to warn and stimulate them; and He also awakened the consciences of Christians to *the ever present danger of drifting* into defiling associations in their private lives.

This brings the Old Testament history up to Nehemiah and the building of the wall of Jerusalem. The wall was rebuilt in spite of mockery and opposition from enemies "for the people had a mind to work" (Neh. iv. 6). The degrees of zeal with which individuals participated in the work were noted by the LORD and have been eternally recorded in the Scriptures (Neh. iii.). The enemies outside were very perturbed at this work, and tried by direct and by subtle means to frustrate it. The wall was an evident witness to the separation between those who were honouring the Name of the LORD in the place which He had chosen and those who were not His people.

One of the lessons to be learnt from this wall is that not only *are* those who belong to the LORD through faith in Him distinct *in His sight* from all unbelievers, but that there should also be a *practical witness* to this in the separation of those who honour His Name from those who reject Him. The wall, in fact, is *not* to be regarded figuratively as a barrier between one Christian and another, but as practical proof in daily life of separation between the Christian and the unbeliever. While having to mix with unbelievers day by day (otherwise "ye must needs go out of the world"—see 1 Cor. v. 10) we are not to put ourselves under their power (1 Cor. vii. 23), nor to be unequally yoked with them (2 Cor. vi. 14), and this does not only apply to marriage but to *all* associations in life where we are free to choose. We are exhorted not to be conformed to this world (Rom. xii. 2). There will inevitably be opposition from without.

The completion of the wall led to the verification of the

genealogy of the people. A wall that embraced both the LORD's people and those who were not His would not be according to His mind, though this is the kind of enclosure that the sects of Christendom have formed. What watchfulness and self-examination is appropriate among those who profess to be in the place which the LORD had chosen to put His Name in! Let us all be sure that our *genealogy* is that of being "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Then we may be sure our names are enregistered in heaven.

A week of earnest reading of the Scriptures followed, and all the congregation of those that were come again out of the captivity learnt something that had been overlooked by the LORD's people for 1000 years. They kept the feast of Tabernacles, dwelling in booths, a reminder of the nation's transit through the wilderness as strangers and pilgrims under the protecting hand of the LORD (Lev. xxiii. 43). It is at this point that it is recorded "THERE WAS VERY GREAT GLADNESS (JOY)" (Neh. viii. 17).

It is remarkable that the immediate consequence was deep conviction of their sins and failure, leading to a recapitulation of their history—the LORD's grace and goodness on the one hand, and the nation's repeated disobedience and rebellion on the other. They justified the LORD and abased themselves (Neh. ix). Such a review of their history took them back to the law of GOD given through Moses with the commandments, judgments and statutes. GOD notes, as it were, in His eternal record the names of those who returned to His word in this way (Neh. x. 1-27).

Can we not again apply all this to ourselves? There should be collective reading of the Scriptures relying on the HOLY SPIRIT (not on our natural minds) to give the sense, and cause us to understand the reading (Neh. viii. 8; 1 Cor. ii. 10-16). There will then be a real sense that we are a heavenly people by calling, and therefore strangers and pilgrims in this world, and there will be a deep sense of the past failure of Christians (*including ourselves*) to walk worthy of our calling notwithstanding all the grace and patience the LORD has shewn to us. If there has been reality in all this there will follow whole-hearted return (not to the law of Moses as in Nehemiah's time)

but to the New Testament teaching as to the church of God, its heavenly calling, how believers should meet together and for what purposes, their relation and responsibility to the risen CHRIST, the true character of acceptable worship to God, and all such truths. The LORD will take note, as it were, of those who respond.

One last point—the wall had been built but it had to be dedicated, and then the singers sang *loud*, “they offered *great* sacrifices and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with GREAT JOY: the wives also and the children rejoiced; so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.” So with Christians, the separation in itself may be merely a legal thing, bringing pride but no joy, but if it is dedicated to the LORD, as it should be, praise, worship and GREAT JOY will result.

May the HOLY SPIRIT help readers and writer to weigh up all the points in this story, some of which have been but very briefly reviewed therein, and to learn how the lessons should be applied to ourselves in this present time, that the LORD may be honoured and we His people may indeed have GREAT JOY! The books of Ezra and Nehemiah have much to say to us in these days. Are you, dear reader, still in “Babylon”? The word to you is “Come out from among them” (2 Cor. vi. 17; compare Isaiah lii. 11, and Rev. xviii. 4). That is the first step towards this Great Joy, but the other steps are also necessary. As they are taken joy will be augmented until it can truly be described as GREAT JOY. J. C. KELL.

Our Enemies and Strength

IT is great gain when in an enemy's country we know whom we can and whom we cannot trust. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” It is well to have faith in God. “I can do all things through CHRIST Who strengthens me.” So to follow CHRIST is well. The SPIRIT lusts against the flesh so that we may not do the evil things that otherwise we would do (see Gal. v. 17, new translation). So not to grieve the SPIRIT is well. Other and more blessings undoubtedly are ours when God is for us, than simply being secured through the combat;

but it is not the writer's object to enter into these. We must, however, always remember that there is no real fighting against the enemies apart from the Word. Deut. viii. 3; 1 John ii. 14; Joshua i. 2-9; Psalm cxix. 98-105; 2 Tim. iii. 16-17, and numerous other passages shew this.

The enemy we have most to fear is the flesh (the traitor within); therefore it is most important to discern the least action of this enemy, whether in ourselves or in others. The flesh, or sin in it, is not discerned but in GOD'S presence. No eye, nor good will, can ever find anything in the dark. Now GOD is light, and when in His presence sin (even what we know to be sin), appears quite another thing than when parleying with or giving any quarter to this traitor, the flesh.

When walking according to the light we are spiritual, and "the spiritual man discerneth all things." Hence the path becomes plain. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." At the same time there is need for the Christian to walk with all lowliness and meekness, otherwise he fails to discern, and the traitor at once deceives and betrays. Nevertheless (although a loss to the Christian), GOD oftentimes brings blessing to others out of the failure, as the subtlety, craft, and hatred of these enemies become more apparent, and their unchangeable nature more manifestly declared, and he who has been ensnared may be the better able to warn others. The LORD give to those amongst His people who are in an evil, difficult day like the present, earnestly desiring to fight the good fight, to be aware of this.

G. KNIGHT

The Trial and Triumph of Faith

(Gen. xxi. 22; xxii. 1-19)

BY QUARTUS.

CIRCUMSTANCES had probably never seemed so favourable in Abraham's life as at the time just before the great trial of his faith recorded in Gen. xxii. The bondwoman and her son had left, and domestic troubles seemed over for good. Isaac was growing strong, intelligent, and full of promise. Abimelech and Phichol, his powerful neighbours, had just con-

gratulated him on God's special providence being so manifestly over his life. He himself as a further witness of faith and devotion now calls upon GOD as the ETERNAL GOD, an advance in knowledge of GOD beyond all he had known before. "And it came to pass after these things that God did prove Abraham." Like a bolt from the blue a veritable tempest of trial bursts over him. Suddenly, unexpectedly, mysteriously there came the trial of his faith. So unexpected, so unusual, so unsettling that it appears as though the hopes and plans of a life of earnest deep-seated piety are in danger of collapse, leaving the present and future strewn with their wreckage.

A testing time had suddenly arrived for the man of faith, the man whose circumstances have attracted the attention of others, compelling them to believe that GOD is evidently with him. "God is with thee in all thou doest." A favoured man, a protected man, a man whose faith is known and openly vindicated too by GOD Himself.

"Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee to the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Here is the supreme test of faith and devotion. Will his faith rise to it, or is the sacrifice too great? It means the extinguishing of all his hopes, this utter surrender to the inscrutable will of GOD!

So unexpectedly coming just then, when prospects were fairer and brighter than ever in his whole life! Isaac a growing lad, able now to share many of his father's thoughts and purposes in a great measure; one who had so signally been born in the old age of his parents, the child of promise; how unlikely that it should be the will of GOD to take him away so young. It was indeed a trial of faith from its very unlikeliness and unexpectedness. Yet there it was; the command was definite, and to a true faith, decisive.

Again, how entirely unusual was such a command. In all his long life and pilgrimage of faith such a thing had never once presented itself to him. And, was it really a command from GOD? Would GOD Who had so marvellously called him, guided him, blessed and protected him all his life long, would GOD really ask such a sacrifice of one who like Abraham had sought to serve Him so faithfully and obediently? Had

he perhaps imagined the call? for it was certainly as unusual as it was unexpected.

How terribly unsettling it all was. What a sad break in life it would entail. Nothing could ever be the same again, with Isaac his son whom he loved, gone from the home. Like many thousands since such questions must have arisen in the father's mind; why, oh why, should it have been allowed to happen to them?

What will the man of faith do and say? We are left in no doubt, sore as the trial was, and sad at heart as he felt. Actions speak louder than words always, and we therefore read: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for a burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him."

Without any delay, making full preparation for sacrificing all his human hopes and affections too, he wends his way to the place where the great surrender is to be made. So far we note the obedience of faith in action. But words of faith, simple but magnificently sublime, follow, expressing confidence still in God. Bidding the servants stay with the ass, he tells them "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." How did he know this? He could not say, but trusted God in the dark, knowing that somehow He would fulfil gracious promises made years before concerning his seed.

Then an even deeper note is sounded as Isaac innocently remarks upon the absence of a lamb for the sacrifice. With deep, yet restrained feelings, the patriarch replies in words prophetic indeed in a twofold sense, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." So they went both of them together to the place of sacrifice.

The echo of that great word of faith lingered on through century after century until the last and the greatest of the prophets standing on the banks of the river Jordan, by divine illumination exclaimed with reverential awe, "*Behold! the Lamb of God.*"

But Abraham, as the man of faith, has still some more steps to take before his faith, already expressed by act and word, was to be openly vindicated. The trial was severe, but the

triumph of his faith was near. For the inward surrender to the will of GOD being then complete, faith is vindicated as the voice is heard by him, "Now I know" that is, it is openly proved, "that thou fearest GOD, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me."

The trial of faith has turned into the triumph of faith; but this is not the end of the story. For the vindication and victory of faith are followed by the vision of faith. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad," said our LORD.

When did this occur? Does not the blessing at once pronounced on Abraham in the great words immediately following the account of his faith's trial and triumph suggest this? At the end of the blessing is added, "And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed," which says the Holy Spirit through the Apostle—"is Christ."

II

As we ponder the story, Abraham, his trial of faith, its exercises and its final triumph all suggest the greater story of the Author and Completer of the life of faith. Mount Moriah fades from sight as the light shines on Calvary. Here again a FATHER and the SON of His love can be seen going to the place of utter surrender and complete sacrifice. As in the other story, so here, "They went both of them together." The absolute inward surrender of the SON is heard in close and intimate communion, *O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not My will but Thine be done.* And from that place of complete inward acquiescence in the FATHER'S Will, the SON proceeds to the sacrifice as the Lamb Whom GOD has provided.

But here the story of Calvary differs from that earlier one of Moriah for *there* a substitute was found, but *here* there is none. Indeed the SON is here Himself the Substitute. "Sacrifice and burnt offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared for Me. I come to do Thy will, O GOD," is the language of this SON of the FATHER. "So they went both of them together."

Taunting voices are heard mockingly saying, "He trusted in GOD, let Him deliver Him *now*, for he said, I am the SON of

GOD." The darkness deepens as the lights all go out; and the cry of desolation pierces the sky, "My GOD, My GOD, Why hast Thou forsaken me?" No answer comes out of the silence; no voice is heard to comfort the lonely Sufferer. At last the one complete Sacrifice has been made; the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all; and the triumphant word of victory is heard, "*It is finished.*" The Author and Finisher of the life of faith has endured the Cross, despising the shame, and the tree of shame is to be now exchanged for the throne of glory.

"It is finished, blessed JESUS,
Thou hast breathed Thy latest sigh;
Teaching us, the sons of Adam,
How the SON of GOD can die.

"GOD had one SON without sin, but none without suffering."

The Author and Finisher of faith, is also the File Leader of the many sons being brought to glory, the CAPTAIN of their salvation. They, too, are called to tread the path of faith; and like Abraham their faith is tried in order that it may triumph. And, as in the case, often when circumstances seem most settled and satisfactory the clouds gather and the storm breaks. But they, we, are greatly advantaged in that we have the encouragement of Abraham's triumph, and of our LORD's sympathy and intercession to sustain us. "Ye have seen the end of the LORD," says the Apostle James, "that the LORD is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." And a brother Apostle confirms this by saying, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as it common to man: but GOD is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." These assurances are in the same line as the triumphant exclamation of the father of the faithful in his great hour of trial, "In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen," for "the LORD will provide." On the lowest level of our bodily need; on the higher level of our mental perplexities; and on the highest level of our spiritual needs both here and hereafter, "the LORD will provide." The trial of faith, most precious in His sight, is intended always to lead to its triumph, vindication, victory and vision.

Sparkling Gems

Keep your eye fixed on the hand of GOD in all the affairs of men.

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We are called to be strong and of a good courage.

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Alas! we find ourselves in a state and day when but few members of CHRIST believe in their own blessings.

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Who would put value on the love that could be turned away by failure?

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Assuredly true love labours and loves in spite of faults and seeks to get its object free.

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We are passing through a strange land, but our home is with CHRIST.

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Where He is honoured, it is all safe and blessed.

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May we cherish faith in His Word, looking to please Him!

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Let me beseech you to remember, that the presence of the HOLY GHOST in the assemblies of the saints is itself *a fact*. It is simple faith in this we need. We are prone to forget this.

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If we did but come together to meet GOD ; if we did but believe when we are assembled that He is really present, what an effect this must have on our souls!

(Selected by C. A. HAMMOND)

Remember—Hold Fast—Repent

FAILURE always comes from unfaithfulness, to light received, which is often accompanied by a complacent state of spiritual lethargy in which, while the theory may still be tenaciously adhered to, the practice of the truth received becomes partially or wholly discarded. "*The legs of the lame*

are not equal,' says the Proverb; precept *and* practice must keep pace, or a limping spiritual gait results.

The angel of the church in Sardis is sternly called to "*Remember* therefore how thou hast received and heard, and *hold fast*, and *repent*," because "thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead." In the historical prophetic interpretation of the seven churches in Revelation ii., iii., "*the things which are*,' Sardis, by common consent represents the Reformation period in church history when Christendom was awakening from the slumber of the "dark ages." Wycliffe, the "morning star of the Reformation," Huss, and Luther the exponent of "Justification before God by faith alone," had all in turn laid hold afresh upon truths which had long been little more than a dead letter in Christendom, although plainly revealed in Scripture.

In England these truths found general embodiment in the Thirty-nine Articles, and would clearly answer to "*what thou has received and heard*" in the epistle to Sardis. The light then and thus displayed in "the church of England" was very bright; had faithfulness been manifested doubtless further truth would have been disinterred from the mass of debris with which medievalism had overlaid it. But, alas, it was not so; and the English church in particular became an institution where state-craft and priest-craft again flourished, until, when the "canons" were fixed and the Prayer Book established at the Savoy Conference, many compromises were made between truth and error. Comprehensiveness thenceforth stamped the National body. High, Low, and Broad churchmen, holding contradictory and mutually exclusive views of truth had an equal standing within her borders. To Dr. Parker's declaration that "the Prayer Book is as full of Popery as an egg is full of meat," a prominent Anglo-catholic responded that "it undoubtedly was so," and justified his extreme ritualism thereby. The tender consciences of the Evangelicals were hurt by the doctrines of Baptismal Regeneration and Priestly Absolution taken over from Rome and incorporated in the services; while the Anglo-catholics satirically referred to the Thirty-nine Articles as "forty stripes save one" laid upon the backs of faithful catholics. The Broad, Liberal, Modernist sections regarded both with superior, intellectual,

scornful indifference. What had been "received and heard" at the Reformation had been forgotten, and the English church missed the opportunity of *what was later granted to faithful individuals in her communion* who, receiving liberating truth, left the spiritual bondage of the Establishment.

The Wycliffe awakening was a return to "God and the word of His Grace," to which St. Paul committed the Ephesian elders in view of "wolves" coming into the fold (cf. Acts xx. 32). But even though there was a bright light of testimony kindled by this movement, much of the darkness of medievalism still lingered, and so far as England was concerned, almost completely obscured ere some forty years had elapsed. Indeed, after 1417 very little of Wycliffe's spiritual opinions was heard of here. He himself at the time of the paralytic seizure which caused his death was hearing Mass in his own church at Lutterworth, like any other Roman priest of those days.

(To be continued.)

Apropos of a poem, THE WORLD'S BIBLE, which appeared in our March/April issue, a correspondent wishes the following to be inserted.

All Power

IN these days of luke-warmness, and self-importance; we should do well to remember our LORD's words, recorded in Matt. xxviii. 18, "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.*" If anyone would doubt His words, let him read of the conversion of Saul; the release of Peter; the loosing of the prisoners at Philippi (Acts ix; xii. 6; xvi. 26).

Whereas we know that our LORD will graciously use us in His service if we are clean vessels; (the offering of our body as a living sacrifice being our reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1)) let us beware lest in stressing this point our words do not encroach on *the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*, or present Him as dependent upon us.

W. STRONG.

Our Award-Seat

"We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ"

(2 Cor. v. 10).

THIS Tribunal is only for believers, and for all believers. At the Award-Seat the whole life will be passed under review: the inner and outer life, our character, conduct and service; reward will be received or loss sustained according to what has been the degree of our loyalty to the LORD and His word.

The motives and the facts now hidden will then be disclosed. Each Christian will have to answer for himself to God, and will receive the appropriate harvest. The Christian worker's service will be tested, and what is of no value will be burnt up.

All human judgment is ignorant and fallible, and some of it may be dictated by prejudice and ill-will. The verdict of the Judge will be final because infallible.

At the Tribunal it may be declared who was in the right, and who had the greater measure of the Divine approval, in matters of dispute and of controversy among Christians.

The thought of the Award-Seat should have a steadying and stimulating influence. In its light false colours fade out. It is a tonic to the persecuted, the obscure, the discouraged, and a warning to the idle, the worldly, and the backslidden.

E. ADAMS.

Service—and the Conscience of Others

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" . . . "It is good neither to eat flesh . . . nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak." (ROM. xiv. 4, 21).

HOW beautifully balanced Scripture is! Here, as in so many other instances, the same circumstances are presented from two opposite points of view. Both passages refer in the first place to a question actively troubling Christians when the epistle was written, namely whether it was permissible for them to eat flesh or only vegetables, probably because the former was customarily dedicated to idols (see 1 Cor. viii). But the principles involved are generally regarded as of much wider application, as borne out by the words "any thing" in the second verse quoted above. On the one hand, the critic is rebuked for judging the servant of the LORD. On the other hand, the servant of the LORD is solemnly warned against stumbling his brother.

The first passage is often quoted as if it were the justification of a Christian doing anything in the course of his service for the LORD which his conscience permits him to do, but in the writer's judgment it is no such thing. The passage is not addressed to the servant as such but to the servant's *critic*. The lesson to be learnt is very clear. We who are not called to a particular line of service are very prone to criticise one who is, in regard to his methods and the liberty he has before God in the circumstances connected with his service. *These matters are not our responsibility but his.* Our part is to give the servant credit in our thoughts that what he does he does to the LORD, giving GOD thanks (v. 6), with the knowledge that *he* will stand before the judgment seat of God (v. 10 New Trans.) and will have to give an account of himself to God. Our part is also to examine ourselves to ensure that the practices we are following are governed by these same principles—"unto the LORD," with the judgment seat before us.

While considering this aspect of the matter it is important to remember the concluding verses of the chapter. The fact

that a servant of God, however prominent and blessed in service he may be, does certain things or goes to certain places, is not in itself justification for another Christian to do the same. It must be a matter of individual conscious responsibility to the LORD. It is evil to do anything without a clear conscience, or in doubt that the action is approved by the LORD. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (v. 23). Neglect of this important point by many young Christians has resulted in their going astray. For instance many have become entangled in organizations where the liberty of the HOLY SPIRIT is restricted in one way or another, *because they have seen a servant of the Lord take advantage of an "open door"* to preach the truth where he feels it is not usually proclaimed.

The second passage takes up the opposite aspect. Although a servant of the LORD may have liberty of conscience to do certain things (or to go to certain places) in the course of his service, he is to consider whether in doing so his example will stumble or offend or weaken his brother (v. 21). Will his action make for peace (v. 19); *will it tend to building up or to disintegration?* If he has any doubt on the matter his abstention is clearly taught. Liberty is not necessarily to be exploited in the LORD's service. Although this applies directly to eating flesh or abstaining from it, may we not apply the principle to all details of our daily life and associations, such as what we read, how we employ our "spare" time, the friends we make, where we go, etc? In all these matters we must be either *helping or hindering* other Christians, our brethren in the faith. The passage clearly also applies in particular to the methods and circumstances connected with any form of service for the LORD in which we are engaged. The writer would specially call the attention of young Christian readers to this matter. Zeal for service, and lack of patience in waiting for the LORD to answer the prayer, "What wouldst Thou have me to do?" have often led young Christian men and women into association with things that are not according to Scripture.

A special, but common, case is that of an enthusiastic servant of the LORD who asks, "Ought I not to take advantage of every open door?" "Open doors" have not necessarily been opened by the LORD. *The devil will open them if*

thereby he can "offend" some of the Lord's people or cause dissension. "Open doors" may also be the result of "wishful thinking" (to use a common expression in these days). In the writer's view it is not, in fact, a bad test whether the door has been opened by the LORD to consider honestly first whether the opportunity involves anything of which the LORD's servant is not assured that the LORD would approve; and, secondly, whether entering that door will *stumble*, *offend*, or *weaken* one's brethren. If it does not pass these tests the door should not be entered. The LORD will provide another outlet for the servant's gift. If larger audiences are desired than those usually gathered at a Gospel address indoors, there is always the open-air and the street corner.

Even in considering this second passage are we not conscious of a tendency in our heart to apply it critically to someone else, bringing ourselves under the very rebuke of the first passage? How much we need the balanced Word of God! May the LORD help us to refrain from judging others in their service for the LORD but to consider our own ways lest we stumble, offend, or weaken our brethren. "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Heb. xii. 13).

J. C. KELL

"Other Little Ships"

RECENTLY, in a home, the portion for the family evening reading was the latter part of the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark. When verse 36 was read, one of the family remarked, "I wonder why were recorded those words, 'And there were also with HIM other little ships.'"

A like enquiring mind on our part may not be unprofitable.

As presented by Mark, the circle of "the gospel of the kingdom of God" is, if it may so be expressed, an expanding one.

The first chapter opens with the words, "The beginning of the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the SON OF GOD." It began in Galilee. "JESUS came into Galilee, preaching the gospel

of the kingdom of God." The last chapter, verse 15, reads, "And HE said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The first three chapters record JESUS once and anon presenting His ministry among His own people; but is rejected. "The Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against HIM, how they might destroy HIM."

Their rejection did not result in the restriction of His ministry; but led to a wider sphere. "JESUS withdrew HIMSELF and His disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee (and many other places) followed HIM."

Chapter four opens out the expanding theme. "And HE began again to teach by the sea-side: and there was gathered unto HIM a great multitude . . . and HE taught them many things by parables."

The first was that of the Sower. The seed was sown. Some "fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and *increased*; and brought forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred." Note the expanding order of the yield record.

Parable 2: "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?" There must be no restriction of the light, for personal profit or ease, but it must shine out in testimony to, or help of, those around.

The teaching that followed as to hearing, etc., continued the same theme of increase: "For he that hath, to him shall be given."

Further: "And HE said, So is the kingdom of GOD, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. . . . But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Lastly. "And HE said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of GOD? or with what comparison shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

With this Mark concludes his recording of the parables, as seems fitting to his theme. Matthew gives further parables spoken on this occasion. Mark does not ignore these, for he records, "And with many such parables spake HE the word unto them, as they were able to bear it."

Mark's summary of the parables in chapter iv., verses 3 to 34, presents the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God, with its expanding results, during the whole period between the rejection by Israel of the CHRIST, until the resumption of God's dealings with and for them.

That resumption seems to be pre-figured in verses 35 to the end of the chapter. Israel, represented in the "disciple-remnant," is seen passing through the great storm; and JESUS asleep on a pillow. He is awakened by their cry of anguish; rebukes the wind, and commands the sea to be still. HE brings them into a great calm: the calm of millennium blessedness.

The Prophets, especially Isaiah, foretell of all this; but also foretell that many among the nations also share at least some of the blessedness of that millennium epoch. How apposite, then, to find in Mark's record of the great storm and the great calm, that little sentence, "And there were also with HIM other little ships."

The little grain of mustard seed, sown, growing, increasing, and shooting out great branches; so that the fowls of the air, otherwise exposed to great danger, and homeless, *may* lodge, or take shelter, under the shadow of it; presents an illustration, in conjunction with the allied parables, of the outflowing and results of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God during this present epoch; spreading out its branches so that any and all *may* find shelter from judgment and the lodgement of calm.

In the millennium period, not only will the tree of life bare twelve manner of fruit, and yield her fruit every month, for the full blessing of Israel; but the leaves of the tree will be for the healing of the nations: those "other little ships."

Salutary practical lessons may also be learned from a consideration of the "other little ships," although not strictly the doctrinal thoughts implied.

Notwithstanding our desires for true devotedness, our zeal for faithfulness, our diligence in service, our jealousy for our

LORD's honour, and the knowledge of His presence with us, we are prone—yea, even with these very virtues—to be more or less self-interested: narrow, restricted, circumscribed, in our consideration of others.

The little pronouns "I," "me," "us," and "we" will persist in pushing themselves to the front, to the exclusion of "others."

Take one example each of those first-named pronouns.

The zeal and faithfulness of Elijah were very outstanding; but it was in those very traits that the pronoun "I" came into view. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts . . . I, even I only am left."

He was rowing against those troublous waves, as he thought, alone; and was quite unmindful that there were 7,000 "other little ships" passing through the storm, though some little distance away.

Then, there is the example of Martha. She was very diligent in her service; but that very diligence produced a self-interest. "LORD, dost THOU not care that my sister hath left *me* to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help *me*."

So obsessed was she with her own activities (right and proper in their place) that she failed to realize that "other little ship" Mary, who was giving so much pleasure to the LORD, as she sat at His feet and heard His word: a service which was to be seen in worship very shortly afterwards.

In the ninth chapter of this Gospel by Mark we read of one bringing his son, who was possessed of a dumb spirit, to the disciples, "that they should cast him (the dumb spirit) out; and they could not." (We must not overlook here that the LORD, with Peter, James, and John, were at that particular time absent.) But in that same chapter we read of John saying to the LORD, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in THY name. and *he followeth not us*, and we forbad him, *because he followeth not us*."

Is there not here a very searching and solemn lesson? It is possible to be in a correct ecclesiastical position (and this should be sought and maintained), but to be altogether lacking in the spiritual power manifested by "others" with less intelligence as to "place."

Our fourth example may be taken from the record of the storm as unfolded in the fourth chapter of this Gospel.

"There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full."

In verity, the disciples were in perilous circumstances. Their appeal to the ONE who was with them in the ship was in itself evidence that they had at least some consciousness that HE had control over the circumstances; but it was also evidence of self-interestedness. "MASTER, carest THOU not that *we* perish?" Their appeal does not betoken any enquiry as to why the storm had been allowed; nor any concern for those "other little ships" that were passing through the same perilous storm.

Surely, here is a lesson profitable to be learned. Let our thoughts, affections, and desires embrace "others."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others."

H. SAMBROOK

Remember—Hold Fast—Repent

(Continued from page 68)

MARTIN LUTHER, the typical Reformer, by his insistence upon the Pauline doctrine of Justification before GOD by faith alone (cf. Gal. iii. 2) travelled much further along the stream of rediscovered truth, and again fresh light was unquestionably granted upon what, though revealed through the Apostles, had become overlaid by the traditions of men. At about the same time, others saw the truth that the LORD'S SUPPER was intended to be observed in the way in which it had been instituted, at any rate, so far as partaking both of the "bread" and of "the cup," the latter of which had long been denied to the faithful. This also was an immense accession of light granted through the study of the then open Bible.

Again, however, it was clear that only a measure of light was enjoyed, as Luther retained the crucifix and the altar in the services, and also the authority of the state in religion, Lutheranism therefore soon degenerated into an established form of *national religion*, and ere long commenced persecuting some who professed the same faith but differed on the question of infant baptism, just as the Romanists of the same period were doing. The only Lutheran prince who refused

to permit the infliction of the death penalty upon the Baptists, who were meeting in private houses for worship and Bible reading, was the good Prince Philip of Hesse. Thus far had decline set in, for no mere possession of the lamp of testimony to GOD'S truth is a safeguard against this. *We only truly believe what we diligently practise, and this should be pondered.*

After a century or so of moribund religious profession, in England at any rate, once again GOD graciously caused a "moving of the waters" and John Wesley and George Whitefield came with the bright lamp of testimony to the necessity of a "new birth," of "conversion," and of the "assurance of salvation." Through their indefatigable labours, and those of others who *received* and *acted upon* these truths then re-discovered and so powerfully proclaimed, a great spiritual movement was felt throughout the land bringing untold blessing to thousands of souls. What unprejudiced mind would question that Wesley and Whitefield, and their associates at the end of the eighteenth century, held the lamp of testimony for the time being? How grievously things have declined among those who profess to be their descendants must be apparent to all who look at their history during the last fifty or sixty years. Have they "held fast" that which they received? Modernism and incipient ritualism, the present bane of Protestantism, have taken their toll; the lack of conversions and of the old-time Methodist joy are bewailed by many pious souls who yet cling to the old associations.

But the failure of man to maintain a clear testimony to truth and light received, only serves to bring out the Divine patience and resourcefulness. For as the decay of what had been received and heard through the Evangelical revival settled down rapidly at the commencement of the nineteenth century, a fresh discovery of truth which had long been forgotten and overlaid was graciously granted in the providence of GOD. Not a fresh revelation, for such there is none, the canon of Holy Scripture being closed in Apostolic times; but a fresh recall of the attention to forgotten truth.

This time it was truth as to the unity of the body of CHRIST; of the assured presence of the LORD in the midst of even "two or three" gathered in His Name; the presence and liberty of the HOLY SPIRIT to guide and enable those thus gathered to

worship the FATHER according to his revealed mind (John iv. 19-24); the coming of the LORD for His people as the proper hope set before the believer, without waiting for intervening sign or presuming to fix dates; the priesthood of all believers with the liberty of preaching and teaching by any brother so gifted, without tarrying for, or accepting, human authorisation or ordination; in short, the LORDSHIP OF CHRIST over His people in service, since all gift, ability and opportunity is bestowed, conferred, and granted by Himself, without human assumption, permission, or interference. While all these truths are part of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), church history itself is a witness that truth quickly loses its power upon the heart and life of the recipient unless held fast and acted upon. It is unmistakable that these and cognate truths were discerned afresh and held fast, when a century and more ago one by one believers found among the divisions and denominations of English Christendom began to learn "the nature and unity of the church of GOD." At great personal sacrifices of worldly prospects and earthly comforts many of these began to seek to carry out the whole word of CHRIST; naming the Name of the LORD they departed from the religious iniquity of the sects and systems of humanly arranged religious associations (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 21), and to "follow righteousness, faith, love and peace with them that call on the LORD out of a pure heart."

The continuance of such a testimony committed to us depends entirely upon our faithfulness; hence the solemn warning, more applicable to-day than at any time in the church's history: "*Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" For history has in a sense repeated itself, and the failure of "brethren" (so-called) to maintain the lamp of the testimony once entrusted to them is plain to any godly, self-judging believer of their company.

There is, however, still a remnant who "fear the LORD and think upon His Name, and speak often one to another," and there *will* be until He comes. Let all who desire to be of such beware of the untrimmed lamp, and the flickering light, which betoken slackening interest in "the things which are JESUS CHRIST'S." (Phil. ii. 21). Nothing so becomes us, therefore, as self-judgment, confession of the failure, and amendment of life; or so ensures "holding fast until He comes." W.G.T.

Love's Urge

(*Canticles ii.*)

THOU, thou all fair and pleasant art,
 Beloved, intimate and dear,
 Our verdant resting-place apart
 Displays what sacred tastes revere.
 Here in the footsteps of the sheep
 Both in true confidence can keep.

One blossom, exquisite, elect;
 One lily that in valleys grows;
 All others have but thorn's effect,
 Love's torment and affection's foes.
 An apple among fruitless trees,
 Whose shade and sweetness can but please!

To His abode He me has brought,
 To wave love's banner over me;
 Support and comfort for me wrought,
 Love-sickness, charmed away, will flee.
 His left hand now supports my head,
 His right is round my being spread.

Jerusalem's brave daughters, I
 Adjure you by what nature sees,
 Stir not yourselves, nor by your sigh
 Awaken love until it please!
 The roes and hinds that roam the fields
 Know what desire awakened yields!

Hark, hark! I hear my BRIDEGROOM's voice,
 Resounding over mount and hill,
 'Tis One Who has made me His choice,
 Desiring to be with me still.
 Behind our wall, outside our pale,
 He looks to find me without fail!

He spoke to me, and to me said:
 "Rise up, my beautiful and come; ,
 The winter and the rain have fled,
 How can we at this time be dumb?
 The flowers bloom, the turtle-dove
 Sends forth his mellow note of love.

The fig tree shows its winter fruit,
 The flowering vines their fragrance yield,
 Rise up my love, and let it suit
 Your will to come, as I've appealed!
 My dove in hiding, let me greet
 Your pleasant form and voice so sweet!"

G. S. PURNELL

The Song of Deborah and Barak

(Judges v.)

IT is a happy thing to realise that all the Old Testament scriptures have been written for our learning. And whichever way we look at this song, it celebrates God's intervention on behalf of His people; but it can be viewed in four different aspects.

First, the actual historical event which gave rise to it. Having been oppressed during twenty years by a revived Canaanitish confederacy under the headship of Hazor, the children of Israel were delivered by means of Deborah the prophetess and judge, with Barak and ten thousand men of Zebulun and Naphtali, augmented by a sprinkling from other tribes, but the central fact is that God fought for His people. For as Barak marched his relatively unarmed band down from Tabor and fell upon the unwary (perhaps sleeping) hosts of Sisera, and as these fled down the valley of the Kishon towards Harosheth, the very heavens turned the rout into a massacre: a terrific storm caused these redoubtable iron chariots to be bogged down, crushed, swept away by the raging torrent; and the General perished as had been prophesied, by the hand of a woman.

So we have this song, full of primitive energy and the most magnificent poetry, rich with Oriental local colour, expressing the feelings of a woman and a man under the dispensation of law and in the low state of Israel at that time, and celebrating a present, *temporal, national deliverance*.

But secondly, it has a very strong prophetic bearing. For this deliverance wrought by God on behalf of His earthly people, by the overthrow of their confederated enemies, strikingly foreshadows the glorious, terrible climax of His

ways with them and with the nations, when the King of kings and Lord of lords will appear with the armies of heaven, to the joy and salvation of His poor, persecuted Jewish remnant and the shame and destruction of the Beast and the kings of the earth. How vividly Ps. cxviii, Rev. xix, and many other passages look on to this dénouement! How the preserved remnant will sing, with hearts cleansed from guile, Israel's "national anthem," so to speak—both in its personal experience: "My strength and song is JAH, and He is become my salvation" and exhorting one another to praise: "O give thanks to JEHOVAH; for He is good, for his loving-kindness endureth for ever!"

The very name given to this scene in Rev. xvi. 16, refers to Judges v. ("mount of Megiddo"), even though the prophets may not clearly indicate whether the historic plain of Esdraelon (Jizreel), so often trodden by the blessed Son of Man during His life and ministry among men, is to play a great part in the final drama, when we know Zion and the mount of Olives will be the centre of God's ways in the earth. Weakness will characterise His covenant people, as in Deborah's day, yet they will have their part in the overthrow of some of their enemies. Jael, it may be, represents the saved multitude from among the nations: not only "His servants" (converted Israel) are called to praise God, but also "ye that fear Him" (converted Gentiles).

Thirdly, what a picture we have here of the judgment-seat of Christ! For then the past will be reviewed; everything will be judged at its true value; the counsels of hearts will be made manifest; and each shall have his praise from God. And how will each redeemed one praise His grace and His righteousness, His wisdom and His power! How immensely the work of the cross will be magnified! What a victory, when untold millions of those who were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest, will be found conformed to the image of the Holy One upon His throne, standing before Him without fear, though not, alas, without shame in many instances; when, in spite of all those sad tales of failure, the LORD will finally be glorified in His saints, and wondered at in all that have believed, and the universe will own that only divine grace and power could bring such to glory.

Lastly, the state of things in Deborah's day finds a close

parallel at the present time: not only the general condition of failure and apostasy, but the prominence given to the "weaker vessel." This is indeed characteristic of the whole book of Judges (where we find five women mentioned whose influence was for good, and five in connection with evil); particularly so of this portion. It was outside God's order, but allowed of Him as a rebuke to the generally feeble and ineffectual character of the men. (Apart from that, it is remarkable that where the gospel first entered Europe, in such a quiet and unassuming way (Acts xvi.), the work began among women.) But the extent to which woman has come forward, in the social and religious sphere, is one of the most salient facts of the last hundred years, and the result of man not maintaining his rightful place. Not only have many of the latter-day cults been founded by women, but even in truly evangelical missions, how often they are active outside their own sphere (maybe pleading the Samaritan woman as a precedent), and God grants blessing according to the measure of light and devotedness possessed.

Another point of similarity is *the tiny company of singers*. If we go back a century or more, to that first great song of deliverance on the banks of the Red Sea, when the Israelites saw their enemies dead on the seashore, we listen to more than six hundred thousand men and at least an equal number of women, besides the children. And now numbers have dwindled down to two! But was it any less acceptable to JEHOVAH? Nay, perhaps in a sense it was more so: the first song soon gave place to the murmurings of the wilderness, and with the unbelieving ones God was not well pleased, though He recalls the song centuries later (Hosea ii. 15; Jer. ii. 2); but with Deborah and Barak there was deep reality in ascribing the victory to JEHOVAH, albeit it was less miraculous and more providential.

And how the LORD's words in Matt. xviii. 20 should encourage us, if we look at His assembly in early days, when there were "many myriads of the Jews who had believed" and great numbers brought in from among the nations through the preaching of Paul, Epaphras and others; or even think of the large companies gathered to the LORD's name a century ago; and how often we now find the testimony reduced to two! But they celebrate the same glorious victory

over Satan, sin, and death; the Victor is still in their midst; and they experience His delivering power amid all the difficulties of these last days in proportion as they look to Him.

The song begins by praising God for working *in* and *for* His people:

“For that leaders led in Israel,
For that the people willingly offered themselves,
Bless JEHOVAH!” (and so on to verse 5).

Not all have the gift of leadership, but those who take the place of followers are to submit themselves gladly to their leaders. God is praised that both acted according to their position, however timidly in Barak's case.

Great ones are called upon to consider God's intervention. Even Sinai is mentioned—the starting-point of His covenant relationship with His people.

Then (vv. 6-8) the dark days before the deliverance are recalled, and the sad reason why God had to allow the oppression, in His government. And could the present state of Christendom be expressed more tersely and forcibly than in verse 8? Why is there such an uneasy peace, and broken by such terrible wars? Why are the nations so fearful of one another? Is it not because *men have chosen new gods*, whether they be modernism, ritualism, nationalism, pleasure, or whatever else is suited to the natural man? And as the inevitable result, they find themselves morally without resources. In vv. 9-11 God is praised that great ones offered themselves willingly; and judges are to take account of the testimony concerning His righteous acts—He was just, as well as merciful, in saving His people when they had judged themselves.

Deborah (vv. 12-18), though required by Barak's weak faith to accompany him (and how typical he is of so many of God's people, in leaning on the faith of another!) yet in a sense does not go out of her place: she encourages, exhorts, conveys God's message, but does not take part in the actual fighting.

Next, various tribes are mentioned: first those who sent volunteers, and then some who, alas, did not. The Reubenites may have pleaded distance as an excuse; they did not lack good intentions, but what ultimately kept them from help-

ing their brethren was the same reason that had in former days led them to ask for the land east of Jordan, namely, preoccupation with their own material interests. With Gad it was the same story, though its territory was nearer to the scene of battle; neither would Dan, or even Asher, pause in the pursuit of business to further the work of GOD. But there were two tribes who did not love their lives unto death.

And the fight is described (vv. 19-22), with all expectations of GOD's enemies dashed to the ground by the display of His power put forth on behalf of His people.

Then a curse (v. 23) and a blessing (vv. 24-27) are pronounced. How tragic that the only mention in scripture of this town or village of Meroz should be in connection with a curse—and what a curse! The "ANGEL-JEHOVAH" speaks it: the One Who had communed with Abraham at Mamre, wrestled with Jacob at Peniel, dwelt in the bush and led Israel in the cloud, appeared to Joshua, to Gideon, to Manoah; and in the fulness of time was to become flesh and dwell among men! And this curse came upon Meroz, not because of what its people had done, *but of what they had failed to do*: the place was only a few miles from Tabor, and doubtless Barak had called its men to his aid, but met with no response.

In striking contrast we find a Gentile woman, whose family was not at war with Jabin, and who might have helped Sisera to escape, ranging herself entirely on the side of GOD's people. (Incidentally her action, as several have pointed out, was fully in accordance with the moral code of the settled Arabs.)

Such scriptures as these make us feel in some measure what an immense difference the coming of the SON of GOD has made even to this world. The true light already shines. The work of GOD is no longer a matter of slaying men—our enemies are spiritual and unseen; knowing the terror of the LORD, we persuade men; thank GOD we have not come to Sinai and all that it entails, but to Zion with its wonderful system of grace and glory. Yet we, too, can look forward to the time when the ardent desire expressed in the beautiful close of this song will be fulfilled, not in a 40 years' respite, but in a millennium of blessing under the sway of the King of kings, and then in new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Sparkling Gems

Faith degenerates into superstition the more rapidly as spirituality declines, love decays, knowledge becomes more self-complacent and forms displace reality.

* * *

If your joy is not full it is because you have allowed yourself to become taken up with your circumstances instead of with the LORD. True joy is found only in CHRIST.

* * *

We cannot separate ourselves in thought from the rest of God's flock; their poverty and their hurt are ours. Let us seek their good.

* * *

The LORD has never forgotten a single promise to a single believer.

* * *

The Christian has reason to thank God that things have not been accommodated to his wishes. When the mist of tears was in his eyes, he looked into the word of God and saw magnificent things.

* * *

He loved us first to do us good; and hereof it comes that we have grace to love Him, next to do Him service.

* * *

"Ascribe ye strength unto God." When even His voice rends the rocks and uproots the cedars, what cannot His hand do? His finger shakes the earth; who can conceive the power of His arm? Let us never by our doubts or our daring defiances appear to deny power unto God; on the contrary by yielding to Him and trusting in Him, let our hearts acknowledge His might. When we are reconciled to God, His omnipotence is an attribute of which we sing with delight.

* * *

He is strong and makes strong: blessed are they who draw from His resources, they shall renew their strength. While the self-sufficient faint, the All-sufficient shall sustain the feeblest believer!

(Selected by C. A. HAMMOND)

The Doctrine of Christ—8

By THE EDITOR

THE Captivity Epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, present the doctrine of CHRIST in a threefold manner.

In *Ephesians* it is CHRIST's present position that is emphasised, "set at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come," all things being put under His feet, and He made Head over all things to the Church. His resurrection, exaltation, and glorification, with their incalculable results and reactions form the theme of the epistle. It is the epistle of grace, godliness, and glory. CHRIST is here presented to us as the Beloved, the Head of all things, the Inheritor of all things, and as He Who fills all things by His divine and redeeming glory.

As another has well said, "Here we have the counsels and purposes of GOD's glory by CHRIST JESUS; the immensity of His grace in CHRIST JESUS; and the enjoyment of His kindness to us *through* CHRIST JESUS." Here it is that we learn of the unsearchable riches of CHRIST—"fathomless wealth," as another renders it; and of the love of CHRIST which surpasses knowledge. "O love divine, Thou vast abyss" sang one two hundred years ago. "The love of JESUS what it is" sang another seven centuries earlier; "The love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge," wrote the blessed Apostle. It is this which captures our hearts; it is this which woos and wins us; it is the knowledge of the love of CHRIST which possesses a transforming power, until "we love because He first loved us." But the Ephesian doctrine of Christ finally reaches its highest point in the great ascription "Unto Him be glory in the Church by CHRIST JESUS, world without end, Amen." For the Church of GOD never loses her distinctive place as the Bride of CHRIST.

In *Philippians*, at the heart of the epistle, the exquisite section (ch. ii. 5—11) presents the doctrine of Christ as "the mystery of godliness. (cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16) from glory to glory in brief but pregnant form.

Colossians, the third of these Captivity Epistles, gives

CHRIST's personal glory, indeed the greatness and glory of CHRIST. Looking now at the two latter in more detail we find ourselves among the heights and depths of the Pauline "Doctrine of CHRIST."

The highest revelation as to the Person, Passion, and Position of our LORD JESUS CHRIST is here set out in a few words by the pen of inspiration. "Being in the form of God," the One Supreme, Self-existing, Self-sufficient Being, He took upon Him the form of a man, of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. At one end of the statement is the majestic glory and unsullied light of Deity; at the other is seen the form of a man, shrouded in darkness, crucified in weakness, His visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, dying in shame and ignominy.

Between these extremes we find the Self-emptying mind of our LORD JESUS CHRIST Who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii, 9).

On the same night in which He was betrayed the LORD JESUS showed by a significant action the place He had taken when coming into the world. "*Jesus, knowing that He was come from God and went to God, He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself.*" (John xiii. 3, 4). So, at His most holy Incarnation had our Divine LORD laid aside the garments, the habit, of His eternal glory, and girded Himself with the servant's form; in all lowliness and humility becoming the Servant of all, from the FATHER upon the Throne to the lowest sinner upon earth; even going down to the death of the cross, to die for the ungodly.

Then, taking His garments again, our Lord sat down amongst His disciples, still to comfort, cheer, and serve them to the very end with words of everlasting kindness and assurance (John xiii. 16).

In like manner having Himself now overcome the power of death, He has ascended to where He was before, and resumed "the glory"—that is—the state which befits the ETERNAL SON, as a Man now glorified at the right hand of GOD. He still serves His Own, though after another fashion, not by His death but by His life, for "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews vii. 25).

In Philippians ii, 9—11, the exaltation of our LORD JESUS is stated in words which make the believer's heart overflow with holy joy, while he gladly confesses:—

“Father, Thy holy Name we bless,
 And gladly hail Thy just decree
 That every tongue should soon confess
 JESUS the LORD of all to be:
 But, oh, Thy grace has taught us now
 Before that LORD the knee to bow.”

It is in this epistle too, that we have the most comprehensive title of our LORD, “The SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST” (iii. 20). It is as *Saviour* we first have to do with Him as poor lost sinners; it is as *Saviour* we have to do with Him daily all through our earthly pilgrimage, for we are saved by His life, (Rom. v. 10) and because He lives we live also, (John xiv. 19); it is as *Saviour* we look for Him to come and save us, not from the penalty of our sins, for this he died on the cross, but from the power and presence of sin, when He comes and changes the bodies of our low estate, and fashions them like unto His glorious body. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans xiii. 11).

Turning now, in conclusion, to the epistle to the *Colossians* we find statements definitely calculated to overthrow the spurious teaching that would lead to abnormal developments in doctrine and practice among “the saints and faithful brethren” to whom this epistle is addressed.

What is now known as the “Colossian heresy” was, so to speak, in the air with its subtle suggestion that a select few have the higher gift of “wisdom,” while simple “faith” is good enough for the rest. Superior claims to a knowledge of God, with higher pretensions to personal sanctity were made by its teachers. The new ideas expressed, the fresh light claimed, the attractiveness and natural appeal of the teaching impressed those whose devotion exceeded their knowledge. To some of these it appeared invested with all the singular charm of a select, esoteric, secret society of superior persons with more light than ordinary believers need. This is refuted by the Apostle, “warning every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS,” as also by his warning against not holding fast the Head.

Since everything is to be “in the LORD,” “to the LORD,” “for

the LORD," it was of all moment to hold fast the Head—the source of loving interest, wisdom, direct union, and direction for all the members. Everything is to be tested by Him of all things in every sphere of being; Head of the Church; the beginning; the Firstborn from the dead; Pre-eminent in all things; the Reconciler; all the fulness of the GODHEAD dwelling in Him bodily; the Victor; the Head; the LORD JESUS; the LORD CHRIST.

Indeed, the resources of human language as a means of conveying concrete ideas intelligently seem to be exhausted in the effort to show how great an One the LORD JESUS CHRIST is. The phrases and terms employed are simple and suggestive, but the subject-matter is sublime; and once again the SPIRIT leads from man's attempted explanation to our profound adoration. The words of a great Christian scholar may be used to sum up the apostolic "Doctrine of CHRIST" in these epistles. He says, "Against the philosophy of successive evolutions from the Divine nature, angelic mediators forming the successive links in the chain which binds the finite to the Infinite, he sets the doctrine of the one ETERNAL SON, the WORD of GOD begotten before the worlds . . . Correspondingly the Apostle Paul represents the mediatorial function of CHRIST as twofold. In both these spheres His initiative is absolute; His control is universal; His action is compeltc. By His agency the worlds were created and sustained. He is at once the beginning and the end of the material universe: 'All things have been created by Him and for Him.' Nor is His office in the spiritual world less complete. In the church, as in the universe, He is sole, absolute, supreme; the primary source from which all life proceeds, and the ultimate arbiter in Whom all feuds are reconciled.

"On the one hand, in relation to Deity, He is the visible image of the invisible God. He is not only the chief manifestation of the Divine nature; *He is the Godhead manifested*. In Him resides the totality of the Divine power and attributes . . . The entire light is concentrated in Him. He asserts the eternal being and absolute sovereignty of CHRIST . . . When again he speaks of the true gospel first taught to the Colossians as the doctrine of CHRIST, even JESUS the LORD, his language might seem to be directed against the tendency to separate the heavenly CHRIST from 'the earthly JESUS, as though the connection were only transient. When lastly he

dwells on the work of reconciliation, as wrought through the blood of CHRIST'S cross, 'in the body of His flesh through death,' we may perhaps infer that he already discerned a disposition to put aside CHRIST'S passion as a stumbling-block in the way of philosophical religion: Thus regarded, the apostle's language gains force and point."

This witness is true, and the need for a careful consideration of the apostolic doctrine of Christ is as pressing as ever, for in our own day men have arisen teaching doctrines as spurious and subtly attractive as those which occasioned the writing of these three epistles. Who He is, what He has done, and where He now is, affords matter for constant meditation, thanksgiving, and worship. Thus, and only thus, shall we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, to Whom be glory for ever. Indeed, it is in Colossians that the personal greatness and glory of Christ are presented in all fulness, even the Holy Spirit being only once mentioned and that in a passing reference at the beginning.

Simon Peter

Peter the Confident:

"JESUS says to them, All ye shall be offended, for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad."

"Peter said to HIM, Even if all should be offended, yet not I."

"And JESUS says to him, Verily I say to thee, that thou to-day, in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny ME."

But Peter is so self-confident in his loyalty that "he said so much exceedingly the more, If I should have to die with THEE, I will in no wise deny THEE."

Peter the Courageous:

That Peter was sincere in his confident avowal of his loyalty may be adduced from his action shortly afterwards in the garden. When the enemies of JESUS gathered around to take HIM, it was Simon Peter, "having a sword, drew it, and smote the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear."

Peter's confidence may have been a little strengthened by

what he had just witnessed. When Judas and his band and officers came with lanterns and torches and weapons, JESUS said to them, "Whom seek ye? They answered HIM, JESUS the Nazarean, JESUS says to them, I am HE . . . They went backward and fell to the ground."

Peter the Coward:

But the circumstances for Peter change. "JESUS therefore said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it? The band therefore, and the captains, and the officers of the Jews took JESUS and bound HIM: and they led HIM away."

Peter was now left alone with his self-confidence; and, like an abject coward, thrice denies his LORD, with added oaths and curses.

Peter the Contrite:

Happily, the incident does not end there. If poor Peter had so denied his LORD, the LORD had not given up Peter. "The LORD turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the LORD, how HE had said unto him, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny ME thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

What rapid changes: Peter the confident; Peter the courageous; Peter the coward; Peter the contrite.

Peter the Converted (restored):

On the morning of the resurrection, the "young man sitting on the right side" of the sepulchre said to the women, after announcing that JESUS was risen, "Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that HE goeth before you into Galilee."

Later the same day, a company of disciples was gathered at Jerusalem, and were saying, "The LORD is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

What took place at that private meeting of the LORD and Simon must be left private; but it should not be considered intrusion to believe that Peter's denials were humbly confessed and freely forgiven, ere the LORD appeared in the midst of the gathered company (Peter with them).

Peter the Commissioned:

The incidents recorded in St. John xxi. were subsequent to the above, and also provide food for much happy meditation.

Love's Urge, No. 3

(*Canticles iii.*)

CATCH, catch the little foxes who
 Despoil our vines in flower now,
 Mine, mine is my BELOVED true,
 And I am His, as all allow;
 He feeds among the lilies free;
 The day will dawn, the shadows flee!

Upon my bed in those long nights,
 I sought for Him Who loves my soul,
 I sought in vain for His delights:
 I found Him, not Who makes me whole.
 I will arise and tour the town,
 The streets and places of renown!

For Him Who loves my soul I'll look;
 I sought Him, but again in vain;
 The watchmen keen who undertook
 To guard the city saw my pain:
 "Have you seen Him Who loves my soul,
 Can you from me my burden roll?"

Soon after passing from these men,
 The One Who loves my soul I found;
 I seized Him, clung to Him, and then
 I brought Him where right thoughts abound:
 My mother's house: into the room
 Where I was born I brought my Groom!

Who comes from out the wilderness,
 Like smoke in perfumed columns, filled
 With myrrh and frankincense, ah yes;
 And powders that the merchants milled!
 His bed, 'tis Solomon's, behold,
 With its entourage strong and bold!

The strength of Israel in men,
 Trained fighters with their swords enshrined,
 The terrors of the night have fled,
 The palanquin with love is lined;
 Bright silver pillars based on gold,
 Its purple resting-place, behold!

Go, Zion's daughters forth and see
 The Royal One Who has been crowned
 By His own mother, who but she
 The day of His espousals found?
 Of gladness of His heart that day
 Now celebrated by this lay!

G. S. PURNELL.

Notes of an Address

(1 Cor. xii. 7—27)

I DESIRE to bring before you the blessed and important truth of the Church as the Body of CHRIST, the privileged vessel of testimony for GOD in this our day, in which the manifestations of the SPIRIT of GOD are given. (verse 7). I do not now touch upon the former verses of the chapter, and assume that everyone listening to me has owned JESUS CHRIST as LORD. Without this there is no life of the SPIRIT, and certainly no manifestation of the SPIRIT in the way spoken of in this chapter. I assume we are all Christians in this sense, even if it be but feebly understood.

But first of all we must understand from Scripture what the "Church" of GOD is. In Matt. xvi. 18, the LORD JESUS, on the confession of His Divine Person, as the SON of the living GOD, said, "On this rock I will build My church." Clearly at that time, then, the Church, in the sense in which the LORD spoke, did not exist. In Acts ii. 47, we read that the LORD "added to the Church daily such as should be saved." At some time between these two words the Church of GOD was formed, and I think it is well known to most here that that moment was that related to us in the opening of Acts ii., the day of Pentecost, when the SPIRIT of GOD "filled the house" where they were gathered, "sat upon" each one of the disciples, and "filled" them with a new power, "baptising" them, as promised by the LORD Himself in Acts i. 5. The Apostle alludes to this in our chapter, as we shall hear. It will be seen from this that the people of GOD in the Old Testament were not the Church, nor were even the disciples constituted the Church in the days of the LORD on earth. It awaited the LORD's death, His resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of GOD for the SPIRIT to be given in this way, as explained

by Peter in Acts ii. From the day of Pentecost to the coming of the LORD for His saints as given in John xiv. and 1 Thess. iv., the Church of GOD is privileged to be GOD's testimony on the earth, as the habitation of GOD by the SPIRIT.

It may be well to look again at verse 7, because in many minds there is confusion as to it. It is read as though GOD said: "The SPIRIT is given to every man to profit withal." Some of us know that this is strongly urged by those who seek to teach from it that every man in his natural state, as born into this world, has the SPIRIT. This is a grave error, for we are positively told that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD," (1 Cor. ii. 14) and it is beautifully shewn in type in the Old Testament, where we find the oil (figure of the HOLY SPIRIT) is always placed on the blood, (Lev. xiv. 17, etc.). It is the *manifestation* of the SPIRIT which is for every man's profit through the members of the Body of CHRIST, as in chap. xiv.

In the following verses (8-10) we see how this power is manifested by GOD giving, according to His Own wisdom, to each member of the Body, as He will. We may rest assured, then, that the division of these practical gifts to the Assembly is perfect, though feebly seen in a day of confusion like to-day. For we must remember that the Body of CHRIST is spoken of in two ways—as in Eph. i. 22—23, and in verse 13 of our chapter, i.e. *all the Christians on the earth at one time*, and, as in verse 27 of our chapter, *the local Assembly is a miniature of the whole*. Let us remember, then, that, as brought to own the gathering power of the SPIRIT to CHRIST, and knowing His presence in the midst of even "two or three" (Matt. xviii. 20) the SPIRIT of GOD has given each of us some gift for the common help and comfort of the saints.

Then in verses 12-13 He tells us in what relation to each other these manifestations are given, which He likens to the perfect organic unity of the human body. So that, when we believe the gospel of salvation, and are sealed by the Spirit (Eph. i. 13) we become by that divine action united to CHRIST as Head, and to every other member of the Body on the earth: so much so that, if every member of this Body were working together in the same spiritual unity, that the human body presents in nature, there would be practically realised what Scripture calls "the unity of the SPIRIT," (Eph. iv. 3), and all Christians would be manifestly one before the world. And,

in spite of the Church's failure to do this, GOD insists that the unity of the Body still exists for Him, though only His eyes can see it. (Eph. iv. 4). God expects us to walk as though all the other members were walking in the SPIRIT, and so "keep (not make) the unity of the SPIRIT." GOD has made it, and He maintains it for faith.

In verse 13 we must notice the expression "are we all baptised." Now the Corinthians were Gentiles, and in the action of the SPIRIT in Acts, only Jews were present. But the subsequent work of the SPIRIT in souls recognises the great fact of the unity of the Body being accomplished at that time. When they are sealed they are brought into this unity. The baptism of the SPIRIT is not repeated. Further, we have been all made to drink into one SPIRIT. Allusion may be to the LORD's teaching in John iv. 14 and John vii. 38, 39, but the sense in which the Apostle uses the term "one SPIRIT" here is evidently to emphasise the unity which is produced when the members are under the SPIRIT's control. The disunion of Christendom into any number of sects and parties is a proof that this has not been the case in the Church's history; and our wisdom, in the first place, is not to seek to put the other members right but ourselves to get right with the HEAD. Then proper relations with the other members of the Body will follow. Are we "holding the HEAD"? (Col. ii. 19). We cannot be said to be doing this if in our relations individually or collectively we are allowing that which will not bear the test of the Word. May the LORD enable us not only to own His Lordship individually, but collectively also, as members of His Body, as well as members one of another—and we can never properly understand the latter till we have owned the former.

F. LAVINGTON.

(To be continued, D.V.)



We are passing through a strange land, but our home is with CHRIST; and meanwhile, till He calls us there, we are not only drinking of a rock outside, we have a well within: yea, rivers of water flow out of us. It is the joy of JESUS reproducing itself here below; the power of the SPIRIT of GOD giving our hearts *now* their present delight in Him above.

Sparkling Gems

A fresh view of the excellency, preciousness, and beauty of CHRIST is the only thing to lift the soul up out of a low condition.

* * *

As the tremulous compass needle, however easily affected by foreign influences, never ceases to vibrate till it finds its rest in the centre of attraction, so the sensitive soul of the Christian, oft too easily disturbed by external forces, finds no rest but in GOD.

* * *

How bright and blessed a thing it is in such a world as this to see a soul that so values CHRIST and his place before GOD in Him, as to yearn after nothing but His will and glory!

* * *

What is the secret of all the dishonour done to Him by His people? I will tell you, one thing—they are not in the place of real occupation with Himself.

* * *

Whenever we get into trial, we may feel confident that, with the trial, there is an issue, and all we need is a broken will and a single eye to see it.

* * *

The joy into which He has entered is the joy that awaits us, how bright! how near! nearer and brighter each day that passes.

* * *

We are bent upon doing something which GOD does not want us to do at all; upon going somewhere where GOD does not want us to go. We pray about it and get no answer. We pray again and again and get no answer. How is this? Why, the simple fact is that GOD wants us to be quiet, to stand still, to remain just where we are. Wherefore, instead of racking our brain and harassing our souls about what we ought to do, let us do nothing but simply wait on GOD.

* * *

It is the heart GOD wants. He has done all that love could do in the cross of CHRIST to lead the heart of a poor sinner to Himself.

(Selected by C. A. HAMMOND)

The Mind of Christ

WE *have* the mind of CHRIST. The possession of this mind has a very great bearing upon conduct, character and conversation.

First, it enables us to see light in God's light and thus to preserve the true proportion in handling the word of God which guards alike from overstatement and misapplication.

Secondly, the mind of CHRIST operative in us, purifies our preferences and purges out our prejudices in the things of God. As to the former, it gives a single eye. If on account of some personal preference, I plead, "I can't see," then the mind of CHRIST reminds me that "if the eye were single the whole body would be full of light," and thus I should be able to see. It was the mind of CHRIST expressed in speech when He said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." As to our human prejudices, those things which tend so to warp sound spiritual judgment and to magnify trifles into matters of weighty importance in our sight, the mind of CHRIST has much to say. The streamlet of personal prejudice quickly becomes, if unchecked, the rushing torrent of envy, strife, self-seeking and censorious judgments which threaten to sweep away all the holy barriers of brotherly love, kindly consideration, lowliness and gentleness by which the Christian character is fenced from that of the worldling.

The mind of CHRIST which we are to allow as the intelligence from whence our activities spring is revealed as a mind of unselfish love and lowly service to God and man.

Would that it more frequently and fully characterised us in our work too; for we wonder at His lowly mind chiefly on account of our petty thoughts of what we imagine to be due somehow to ourselves, from those we seek to serve.

Finally, the mind of CHRIST when operating in us, leads to a clear course of simple straightforwardness of conduct. This promotes at the same time a good conscience towards God and before man.

W.G.T.