

“ To every man his
Work.”



A Magazine for mutual comfort and encouragement
in service for the Lord.



“ (He) gave authority to His servants and
to every man his work.”

Mark xiii, 34.



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“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” *Mark xiii, 34.*

Jonathan, Ittai and Mephibosheth.

Faith in a victorious Christ. 1 Sam. xviii, 1—4.
Love for a rejected Christ. 2 Sam. xv, 19—22.
Hope in a returning Christ. 2 Sam. xix, 24—30.

There are three men in the above passages of Scripture whose histories stand out with more or less prominence, during the early days, the reign and the restoration of David, King of Israel. We may look at them in the light of an illustration of Faith, Love and Hope.

Jonathan presents as thus viewed—Faith that strips itself for a victorious Christ; Ittai—Love that follows a rejected Christ; and Mephibosheth—Hope that waits for a returning Christ.

All three may, and will, be found practically in the actions and heart of the devoted Christian. Indeed, we find this, in the New Testament, fully and strikingly presented to us in the devoted Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul. In him we find the living picture of all that these three illustrate combined in himself, in the Epistle to the Philippians. Not only have we the “Faith that strips itself for a victorious Christ” (chap. iii, 7—9), and the “Love that follows a rejected Christ” (chap. i, 20), but we also find the “Hope that waits for a returning Christ,” characterising him as a heavenly citizen, who waited for his Lord; all then that remained of his condition here below would drop off, and he be changed by the mighty hand of this returning Saviour from the glory (Chap. iii, 20, 21).

Let us examine them shortly. The solemn day of Israel’s trial had come. Goliath of Gath—Satan’s man—was there, terrifying the trembling hosts of Israel.

Man's man—Saul—was there too, and with the people he was dismayed and greatly afraid. God's man, too, despised by his brethren, and but a stripling, was "feeding his father's sheep at Bethlehem." In his retirement he had learned to slay the lion and the bear with the strength of God. If with the Lord they were but things of nought, so were they to the lovely faith of this blessed type of the true David himself. What or who, then, was this Philistine, before whom the armies of the living God were, alas, trembling?

Israel, like captive sinners, were in the power of the strong man armed, but a stronger than he had come, and took from him the armour in which he trusted and divided the spoils! With a sling and a stone David "prevailed" over the Philistine. Mark the lovely word "prevailed." How it reminds us of that other scene when the elder told John "Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath *prevailed* to open the book." How sweet the word. It was not by power but by apparent defeat.

"By weakness and defeat,
He won the mead and crown;
Trode all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down."

Satan was vanquished in his last stronghold Jesus entered into that prison house, but only to burst its bars asunder, and annul its power for ever! He went down that "He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Thus He prevailed. "But there was no sword in the hand of David." And "he ran and stood on the Philistine and took his sword . . . and *slew* him and cut off his head therewith." Then he returned with the spoils of his victory, the strong man's armour in which he trusted, the sword of the enemy, and his head in his hand.

At this moment, as David returned, we learn how it went with Jonathan. He beholds him with the tokens of his victory in his hand, and his soul was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. The victor, not the victory absorbed his heart! But another action characterised Jonathan. His heart was ravished with David as he stood before him. His faith saw in him the future King of Israel. And Jonathan stripped himself of his robe, his garments his sword and his girdle—all were surrendered with a willing heart to David. This was faith.

Is my reader prepared for this? How many there are who find, for the soul's everlasting joy and salvation the victorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ? Then comes the first bright moment of the soul's history and Jesus is truly precious. He stands before their souls as the peerless One. But when they find that Jesus looks for their hearts to be entirely His, He Who was *fully* for them in self-surrendering love on the cross, looks for them to be *fully* for Him, and that this involves the surrender of that which makes them of repute in the world, then alas! their admiration wanes. But what did Jonathan at this lovely moment? *All* was surrendered, and the heart was glad to do it to show its love.

How sad when we think of Jonathan's fate after this precious moment! How bright to think of Paul's, and after his long and chequered career in his Master's service. The long and trying years of service for his Master had not cooled this first love of his devoted heart; and the same faith that filled him in his early days of discipleship for his victorious Lord was fresh and bright to the end, when in the prison at Rome, he writes those words "I *have suffered* the loss of all things, and *do count* them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him."

If this faith be thine, dear reader, it will go on (as Jonathan's at the moment of which we speak) to strip

itself, and lay itself—its all, at the feet of the Conqueror, thenceforth to be the bondsman of such a Master and Lord. Reader, have you the “Faith that strips itself for a victorious Saviour?”

But we turn now to another picture. David, at the revolt of Absalom his son, is passing forth from Jerusalem, a rejected king. A sorrowful scene, yet full of the tenderest associations presents itself to us in ii Sam. 15. David is passing forth from Jerusalem, leaving the throne in possession of his rebel son. His counsellor, Ahithophel, had sold him by his treachery. David might then in spirit, say, “Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” (Psa. xli. 9).

How much more deeply, yea, in their depths, might Jesus say those words, and feel them in all their intensity, when about to pass through Jerusalem on His way across the brook Kidron (John xviii. 1 and 2 Sam. xv. 23) to His passion, His cross, His grave!

At this moment Ittai the Gittite appears (2 Sam. xv. 19). He was but a stranger and an exile; he had come but yesterday. And David owns this, and gives him the opportunity to return. He would not *command* the affection of others, and involve them in his own rejection. He would value and accept it when it came in all its freshness from the heart of one who was devoted to him. And Jesus looks not for the forced services and discipleship of any whom He has served and saved. He, too, would test the hearts of those who follow Him in the day of His rejection.

It was a critical moment for Ittai. He “might have had opportunity to have returned.” He might have lived on in ease and quietness at Jerusalem, having shown his willingness to go with the king. But this did not meet what his heart desired. David was rejected—and would he not share this rejection with him whom he loved? Mark his reply. “And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth,

and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be?" No other place would suit his devoted heart. How refuse such devotedness? No, David would not. "And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over." It was enough. Too many words would but spoil the scene. It illustrates in the most lovely way, the "Love that follows a rejected Christ."

How like the response of heart to His own words when He speaks of His rejection and death (John xii, 26). "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

Look now at Paul, the prisoner of Jesus, in his prison house at Rome. There he sat—the sufficiency of Christ filling his heart, and his appearance before Nero fast approaching, of which death seemed the issue, for his rejected Master. He writes, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Has my reader the "Love that follows a rejected Christ?"

"The Hope that waits for a returning Christ" we find touchingly illustrated in Mephibosheth. The days of the king's exile had passed by. No doubt they were slow and full of mourning to him who waited for his return to his throne. At last the day of reckoning had come. The king would now render to each their due. Amongst the others came Mephibosheth to meet the king. While he was absent, Mephibosheth was like a man who waited for his lord. He had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed, until he came again in peace. His heart went with David, though his feet were lame and he could not walk.

The test was applied to Ittai's love when David wished him well and told him to return ; and he refused. David, and David's path of rejection was Ittai's, and he would have no other. Now comes the testing of Mephibosheth's hope. Did he await David's return that he might gain thereby? Was the land his object, or the blessing he would then receive? "And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land." And Mephibosheth's heart withstood the test. He wanted only the king, and his grateful heart found object enough in his lord. "And Mephibosheth said, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." David and David's rights were all his thought. It was not the advantage he would most surely have when the king returned to his own, which he sought. David had returned and that was enough ; till then he felt that Jerusalem was not his home.

And so Paul could say "For our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the 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." Phil. iii. 20—21.

Reader, have you the "Hope that waits for an absent but returning Christ?"

Love's Estimate.

Precious to the heart of Jesus,
 Love that keeps the word He spake,
 Knowing somewhat of the sweetness
 Of rejection for His sake ;
 Yet so little of the glory
 Of His scorn, and cross, and shame,
 That His love can witness only
 "Thou hast not denied My name."

Hints for Young Preachers.

Personal Acceptance. (Psa. lxvi. 16). We must be in the sense of what grace has done for us, to be duly qualified to speak of that grace to others. As a fixed principle we should never speak of anything beyond that which our faith has grasped, in measure at least. (2 Cor. iv. 13). Forgiveness of sins, deliverance from sin, our being in Christ as to our standing, and in the Spirit as to our new character as Christians before God; in these we ought to be thoroughly versed; depend upon it our converts will never be clear if *we* are not clear ourselves.

Personal Growth. (Jos. i. 8.) It would be a very solemn thing to work merely for others, while neglecting our own souls. Whilst we should be simple in our ministry, as far as possible, we should ever be apprehending more of God's mind for ourselves. We cannot neglect any part of it without damage, and especially should we know His mind for the present dispensation, and for the *far end* of it too! To be in the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16) is the normal condition of the believer, as indwelt by the Spirit of God. Practically this involves being led of the Spirit; in the heart being engaged with the Lord Himself where He is, in that personal communion from whence alone all true service, as all walk for, and with Him, has its spring. May we be much in His presence, for the soul's joy, and for the true learning His mind as expressed in the inspired Word.

The following suggestions of a practical character may be helpful.

- 1. Keep your heart open.** Cultivate love for souls. Dwell much on God's love, which gave up everything for sinners to be saved and blessed according to His purpose. You will soon learn to give up leisure time, and *your* best, to be in line with His heart. Think of the Lord Jesus and His sufferings to save them, and

you will learn to suffer hardships and fatigue to win souls for Him. Think of their past history, their present need, and the awful future of the unbelieving. These things should move us more, *as well as* the fact of God's *love* and *grace*. Think how the Lord Jesus, knowing though He did all God's purposes, yet wept unfeignedly when sinners rejected His testimony. And if you think of them, you will pray for them; and we learn to love those for whom we pray.

2. Keep your eyes open. Do not be afraid to illustrate your addresses from Nature, or Nature's objects, nor hesitate to use in moderation instances of conversion, which you are prepared to substantiate. Despite the objection of some, we cannot improve on the Master's way of doing service, and who can read the gospels without remarking that He illustrated His addresses from the common objects of every-day life? He employed facts from natural history, episodes in domestic life, transactions between masters and servants, and even occurrences in the political world (kings and subjects) along with providential circumstance, such as accidents, etc., to give point to His words. Even the very *weather* served Him again and again.

3. Keep your note-book open. Some spend more time than others in this matter. In your private readings or meditations you will often pick up useful material. Use a note-book for yourself, as well as for your work. Often a train of thought will occur to you in a chapter of a book of the Bible; *jot it down* and pass on. Sometimes an illustration of a truth will flash into your mind—*jot it down*. Now and then a point or two for a gospel address will take shape as you watch and pray—*jot it down*. Or you may hear a pithy remark, or a stirring subject, from the lips of some other saint seeking to serve the Lord—*jot it down*. Do not scruple to make a note of it, nor, if led of the Lord, to preach from it yourself with your own words and

your own illustrations. As your note-books multiply, copy any worthy items into your study Bible. It is exceedingly refreshing sometimes to go over these old memoranda, recalling what God has shown us in bygone times.

4. Keep your purse open. It is wonderful what an interest we take in the Lord's work, and that part of it He has set us in, when it costs us something. The rich man may pay £5 a night for a big hall to preach in. You can perhaps only afford a shilling a week for a cottage for your work. *He* may send books to all parts of the world in the Master's service. It is as much as some can do to scrape together a few pence now and then for tracts. *He* may give his houses rent free to the needy, and clothe with warm covering the naked, and frequently feed the hungry; with others it is a severe push to give half-a-crown in the Master's name to some deserving soul. But whether the more or the less, there is great sweetness and profit in doing that which costs us something, and God loves a cheerful giver. What grace it is that makes us givers in a world like this.

We may have stiff work; but the ploughshare furrows well, and our service is to put the seed in. Perhaps *we*, perhaps *others*, may reap; it makes little difference *which*, as all the wheat is to go into the Master's garner.

Fragment.

The question of speaking to souls is a question of personal love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not say you have no gift for it. Do you love Christ? If so, you will never lose an opportunity of speaking a word for Him.

“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.” John xii. 26.

Things Concerning Himself.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are aware in how many different ways our fellow-disciples try and tempt us, as, no doubt, we do them. We see, or we fancy we see, some bad quality in them and we find it hard to go on in further company with them. And yet in all this, or in much of it, the fault may be with ourselves, mistaking a want of conformity of taste or judgment with ourselves, for something to be condemned in them.

But the Lord could not be thus mistaken; and yet He was never “overcome of evil,” but was ever overcoming evil with good—the evil that was in them with the good that was in Himself. Vanity, ill temper, indifference about others, and carefulness about themselves, ignorance after painstaking to instruct, were of the things in them which He had to suffer continually. His walk with them, in its way and measure, was a day of provocation, as the forty years in the wilderness had been. Israel again tempted the Lord, I may say, but again proved Him. Blessed to tell it; they *provoked* Him, but by this they *proved* Him. He suffered, but He took it patiently. He never gave them up. He warned and taught, rebuked and condemned them, *but never gave them up*. Nay; at the end of their walk together, He is nearer to them than ever.

Perfect and excellent this is, and comforting to us. The Lord’s dealing with the conscience never touches His heart. We lose nothing by His rebukes. And He Who does not withdraw His heart from us when He is dealing with our conscience, is quick to restore our souls, that the conscience, so to express it, may be enabled soon to leave His school, and the heart find its happy freedom in His presence again. As sings that hymn, which some of us know—

“ Still sweet ’tis to discover,
 If clouds have dimm’d my sight;
 When pass’d, Eternal Lover,
 Towards me, as e’er Thou’rt bright.”

Time made no change in the Lord. Kindred instances of grace and character in Him, before and after His resurrection, give us possession of this truth, which is of such importance to us. We know what He is this moment, and what He will be for ever, from what He has been already—in character as in nature—in relationship to us as in Himself—“the Same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” The very mention of this is blessed. Sometimes we may be grieved at changes; sometimes we may desire them. In different ways we all prove the fickle, uncertain nature of that which constitutes human life. But Jesus was the same after His resurrection as He had been before, though late events had put Him and His disciples at a greater distance than companions had ever known, or could ever know. *They* had betrayed their unfaithful hearts, forsaking Him and fleeing in the hour of His weakness and need; while *He*, for their sakes, had gone through death—such a death as never could have been borne by another, as would have crushed the creature itself. They were still but poor, feeble Galileans—He was glorified with all power in heaven and on earth.

But these things worked no change; “nor height nor depth, nor any other creature,” as the apostle speaks, could do that. Love defies them all, and He returns to them the Jesus Whom they had known before. He is their companion in labour after His resurrection, nay, after His ascension, as He had been in the days of His ministry and sojourn with them. And after He had risen, He takes the honeycomb and the fish, and eats before them, that they might know that it was He Himself.

Perfect Master! the same to us yesterday, to-day and for ever; the same in gracious, perfect skill of love going on with the work He had already begun, resuming, as the risen Lord, the service which He had left when He was taken away from them, and resuming it at the very point, knitting the past to the present service in the fullest grace and skill!

God in Everything.

Nothing so helps the Christian to endure the trials of his path, as the habit of seeing *God in everything*. There is no circumstance, be it ever so trivial or ever so common-place, which may not be regarded as a messenger from God, if only the ear be circumcised to hear, and the mind spiritual to understand the message. If we lose sight of this valuable truth, life, in many instances at least, will be but a dull monotony, presenting nothing beyond the most ordinary circumstances. On the other hand, if we could but remember, as we start each day on our course, that the hand of our Father can be traced in every scene—if we could see in the smallest, as well as in the most weighty circumstances, traces of the Divine presence, how full of deep interest would each day's history be found!

The book of Jonah illustrates this truth in a very marked way. There we learn, what we need so much to remember, that *there is nothing ordinary to the Christian*; everything is extraordinary. The most commonplace things, the simplest circumstances, exhibit, in the history of Jonah, the evidences of special interference. To see this instructive feature, it is not needful to enter upon the detailed exposition of the book of Jonah, we only require to notice one expression, which occurs in it again and again: viz., "THE LORD PREPARED."

In chapter 1. the Lord sends out a great wind into the sea, and this wind had in it a solemn voice for the prophet's ear, had he been wakeful to hear it. Jonah was the one who needed to be taught: for him the messenger was sent forth. The poor pagan mariners, no doubt, had often encountered a storm; to them it was nothing new, nothing special, nothing but what fell to the common lot of seamen; yet, it was special and extraordinary for one individual on board, though that one was asleep in the sides of the ship. In vain did the sailors seek to counteract the storm; nothing

would avail until the Lord's message had reached the ears of him to whom it was sent.

Following Jonah a little farther, we perceive another instance of what we may term, GOD IN EVERYTHING. He is brought into new circumstances, yet he is not beyond the reach of the messengers of God. The Christian can never find himself in a position in which his Father's voice cannot reach his ear, or his Father's hand meet his view; for His voice can be heard, His hand seen in everything. Thus, when Jonah had been cast forth into the sea, "*The Lord had prepared a great fish.*" Here, too, we see that there is nothing ordinary to the child of God. A great fish was nothing uncommon; there are many such in the sea; yet did the Lord *prepare* one for Jonah, in order that it might be the messenger of God to his soul.

Again, in chapter iv. we find the prophet sitting on the east side of the city Nineveh, in sullenness and impatience, grieved because the city had not been overthrown, and entreating the Lord to take away his life. He would seem to have forgotten the lesson learnt during his three days' sojourn in the deep, and he therefore needed a fresh message from God: "*And the Lord God prepared a gourd.*" This is very instructive. There was surely nothing uncommon in the mere circumstances of a gourd; other men might see a thousand gourds, and, moreover, might sit beneath their shade, and yet see nothing extraordinary in them. But Jonah's gourd exhibited traces of the hand of God, and forms a link, an important link, in the chain of circumstances through which according to the design of God, the prophet was passing. The gourd now, like the great fish before, though very different in its kind, was the messenger of God to his soul. "So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." He had before longed to depart, but his longing was more the result of impatience and chagrin, than of holy desire to

depart and be at rest for ever. It was the painfulness of the present, rather than the happiness of the future, that made him wish to be gone.

This is often the case. We are frequently anxious to get away from present pressure; but if the pressure were removed, the longing would cease. If we longed for the coming of Jesus, and the glory of His blessed presence, circumstances would make no difference; we should then long as ardently to get away from circumstances of ease and sunshine, as from those of pressure and sorrow. Jonah, while he sat beneath the shadow of the gourd, thought not of departing, and the very fact of his being "exceeding glad of the gourd" proved how much he needed that special messenger from the Lord; it served to manifest the true condition of his soul, when he uttered the words, "Take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." The Lord can make even a gourd the instrument for developing the secrets of the human heart. Truly the Christian can say, *God is in everything*. The tempest roars, and the voice of God is heard; a gourd springs up in silence, and the hand of God is seen. Yet the gourd was but a link in the chain; for "*God prepared a worm,*" and this worm, trifling as it was when viewed in the light of an instrument, was, nevertheless, as much the Divine agent as was the "great wind," or the "great fish." A worm, when used by God, can do wonders; it withered Jonah's gourd, and taught him, as it teaches us, a solemn lesson. True, it was only an insignificant agent, the efficacy of which depended upon its conjunction with others; but this only illustrates the more strikingly the greatness of our Father's mind. He can prepare a worm, and He can prepare a vehement east wind, and make them both, though so unlike, conducive to His great designs.

In a word, the spiritual mind sees *God in everything*. The worm, the whale, and the tempest, all are instruments in His hand. The most insignificant, as

well as the most splendid agents, further His ends. The east wind would not have proved effectual, though it had been ever so vehement, had not the worm first done its appointed work. How striking is all this! Who would have thought that a worm and an east wind would be joint agents in doing a work of God? Yet so it was. Great and small are only terms in use amongst men, and cannot apply to Him "who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are on earth." They are all alike to Him who "sitteth upon the circle of the earth." Jehovah can tell the number of the stars, and while He does so He can take knowledge of a falling sparrow; He can make the whirlwind His chariot, and a broken heart His dwelling-place. Nothing is great or small with God.

The believer, therefore, must not look upon anything as ordinary, for God is in everything. True, he may have to pass through the same circumstances—to meet the same trials—to encounter the same reverses as other men; but he must not meet them on the same principle; nor do they convey the same report to his ear. He should hear the voice of God, and heed His message in the most trifling as well as in the most momentous occurrence of the day. The disobedience of a child, or the loss of an estate, the obliquity of a servant, or the death of a friend, should all be regarded as Divine messengers to his soul.

So also, when we look around us in the world, God is in everything. The overturning of thrones, the crashing of empires, the famine, the pestilence, and every event that occurs amongst the nations, exhibit traces of the hand of God, and utter a voice for the ear of man. The devil will seek to rob the Christian of the real sweetness of this thought; he will tempt him to think that, at least, the common-place circumstances of every-day life exhibit nothing extraordinary, but only such as happen to other men. But we may not yield to him in this. We must start on our course every morning, with this truth vividly impressed on

our mind, *God is in everything*. The sun that rolls along the heavens in splendid brilliancy, and the worm that crawls along the path, have both alike been prepared of God, and, moreover, could both alike co-operate in the development of His unsearchable designs.

I would observe, in conclusion, that the only one who walked in the abiding remembrance of the above precious and important truth was our blessed Master. He saw the Father's hand, and heard the Father's voice, in everything. This appears pre-eminently in the season of the deepest sorrow. He came forth from the garden of Gethsemane with those memorable words, "The cup which My Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" thus recognising in the fullest manner, that **GOD IS IN EVERYTHING**.



"Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?"

These few words keep running through my mind, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" They were said to the Apostles in Acts. i, 11. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." In Luke xxiv we read, "While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven," so no wonder that they stood gazing up into heaven, rivetted to the spot; for the One they loved, the One Who loved them far more than they loved Him, had been carried up into heaven. Their eyes and hearts followed *Him*; their gaze was fixed on *Him*.

The Lord Jesus, before He left them, had told them that He would come again, come Himself, the

same Jesus, and receive them unto Himself. Here in Acts the word is confirmed to them, and as surely as He fulfilled His first promise, and asked of the Father and He sent another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, so we may rest assured He will be faithful to His own word and come and fetch us to be with *Him* in the Father's house.

We need not fear He will forget us, as the butler forgot Joseph in Genesis xl. The chief butler was re-instated into his former position as Joseph had interpreted his dream, yet he did not think of Joseph who was still in prison, though Joseph had said, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee." No, we read, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Our precious Saviour, although He is back again in the Father's house, His toils and sufferings over, will not forget His promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He will faithfully fulfil it. With what joy will He descend from heaven with a shout, a shout of victory, of triumph, a shout that will assemble all His own, and too, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

It seems as if all heaven will rejoice; for if angels celebrated His birth by praising God, so will they at His second coming join in the universal delight, when Jesus comes, *not* now as Saviour on account of our sins, but as Saviour of our bodies, as those who are made fit through His precious blood to be His companions in glory. The dead in Christ shall rise first, "raised in glory," then we which are alive and remain—our bodies changed like unto His glorious body—shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

What a meeting it will be! What a meeting! The Saviour and the saved ones meeting! He *gave* Himself for us, and He *comes* Himself for us. Yes, the Bridegroom comes to fetch His bride. How different to His first coming. He came then in humiliation.

But we shall not see Him as He was ; we shall see Him as He is. *Then* His face was so marred more than any, *now* it is radiant with the glory of God. *Then* His head was crowned with thorns, *now* He is crowned with glory and honour, for crowns become the Victor's brow.

What joy for Him ! and what joy for us to meet Him in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“Forgotten then in glad surprise
Shall be our years of weeping.”

God Himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for these things shall have passed away, because *sin* the cause of all, has been taken away through the blood of the Lamb. (John i, 29). The “little while” that remains will soon be past, may we be found “till He come” gazing up into heaven.

I remember, many years ago, standing at the window gazing at a glorious sunset. It was very red, a lovely sight. When I looked again into the room, everything was red. I thought then, if we only looked oftener and longer on Jesus, where He is in the glory, things down here would lose their colour, their brightness, their value. “Earthly things” would be the same, but gazing on Jesus they would cease to attract, to allure. They would be eclipsed because of the beauty, the glory, the brightness in Jesus.

“How oft we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys ;
Lord, make our spirits rise and go,
To reach eternal joys.”

In Colossians iii, we are told to set our mind on things above, where Christ is at the right hand of God. There is, I am sure, enough in Him to attract us. May He draw us after Him. Let us gaze on Him where He is.

The Importance of early Scripture Knowledge.

The following from the pen of the late W.T.P.W. will be of encouragement to Sunday School Teachers.

It is absolutely impossible to over-estimate the importance of reaching the human soul while in tender years. The Jesuit says, and says wisely, "Give me your child for the first seven years of its life, and I will give it to you for all the rest thereof." The infant mind is in that receptive and fertile condition, that what is then implanted is rarely, if ever, got rid of, or completely destroyed. If error be then diligently and effectively instilled, the blightful fruit thereof will be manifest in the whole life. On the other hand, if the truth of God be deposited in the child, then there is material which the Spirit of God in later years can, and very frequently does, utilise and bring to fruition.

Hence my sympathies go most heartily with Sunday School work, and all efforts to reach the young, carried on after a godly sort. Personally, I owe everything to early tuition and instruction in the Scriptures. As soon as I knew my letters, my dear mother taught me to read the Scriptures, particularly the historical parts thereof, and as a child of seven I could frequently have been found, cross-legged under the dining-room table, reading in the big family Bible, in which my father had been reading at prayer-time. Although then untouched by the Spirit of God, and quite unconverted, the Scripture history, and stories, and Gospel narratives which I was encouraged to peruse, got into my mind, and have never got out; and when brought to the Lord at twenty, I found myself the possessor of a vast mass of Scriptural information which, as a servant of God, has been of immense use to me in seeking to help and teach others.

It may be argued that this was the result of home-life teaching. Granted; but if you are aware that there

be children whose parents do not afford them this boon, happy is your privilege if you can get hold of such, and teach them the Word of God. This demands prayer, perseverance, and self-denial, but it is sure to be rewarded of the Lord; and of one thing you may be perfectly certain, and I also, that there will be no reward by-and-by for our laziness—laziness which is the outcome oft-times of disinclination to put ourselves about, though we may sometimes flatter our indolent souls with the thought that Sunday School work, and such like, is “not in our line.” If we got to the bottom we should more probably find out that we were not sufficiently interested in the little children, whom Jesus bade to be brought to Him, to give up our comfortable home-rest for the hard bench, the noise, and general toil connected with Sunday School work.

I could cite many instances of the blessing of God through this work. More than twenty-five years ago, when I was Superintendent of a large school, I well remember a restless, curlyheaded little fellow in one of the classes, who, after two or three years' instruction, disappeared. After a quarter of a century I met him again, preaching the Gospel, and blessed of the Lord to souls. He told me he had never forgotten the lessons which he learned in that Sunday School, and now always thanked God for what he heard then.

To all my young brethren and sisters I would say—devote yourselves to the Lord, it may be in this special line of work. Remember you have but one life—live it and use it for Christ.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor. xv. 58.

“The night cometh, when no man can work.”
John ix. 4.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” *Mark xiii., 34.*

“Toiling in Rowing.”

Notes of an Address given in London on Mark vi. 31—52.

This scripture brings before us a most touching incident, and one that has a special voice to us to-night, which I want you distinctly to take in, through grace.

There was a large multitude of hungry people around the Lord, and the time was far passed; circumstances were pressing, and the disciples come to Him and say, “Send them away.” Now I am afraid the disciples were very like some of us in these days. “Send them away,” they say; “we do not want to be burdened with this hungry multitude, we do not want to be troubled with their wants.”

Observe how their wants are not questioned, their need is not denied, there is no doubt but that hunger and distress were fully represented. “Let them go,” say the disciples, “into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: there is nothing here; send them away;” which meant, send them away from Jesus.

O beloved friends, do we say that now? Well, I am afraid sometimes we do. “Give ye them to eat,” says the Lord. May God make our ears hear that to-night. My beloved friends, do you ever think of giving other people to eat, or do you think only of eating yourselves? Have you ever thought that there are

spiritually hungry men and women in multitudes at our doors, that there are people all round you starving for the bread of life? And have you not heard the Master's words, "Give ye them to eat?" These blessed, gracious words of His might well be an everlasting reproach upon the saints of God; words which might well ring in our ears for ever, "Give ye them to eat."

They were thinking only of their miserable provision, and they say, How can we poverty-stricken people give to them? Then we find what is so blessed, and gives us the contrast between Him and all else beside. Harken to His blessed words, "I have compassion." I love those words; O the sweetness and tenderness of those words to the heart, "I have compassion on the multitude."

O that our blessed Master would give us more of His compassions? O to think of this great city, with its millions of immortal souls; here we are surrounded by a multitude of perishing ones; we are positively living in a kind of modern heathendom. Alas! that is what Christianity, so called, is; thickly populated places, cities and towns teeming with multitudes of immortal souls perishing for the bread of life. And think of our unconcern; I marvel at our little thought about it. I ask you affectionately to-night, do the walls of your room bear witness to your pleadings with God about it? I think I hear you say, "Oh! I am not sent." Ah! what a very convenient way to escape from your responsibility; numbers of people think they get out of it like that. "I am not sent." Shall I tell you what strikes me? It is this, whether you would go if you were called! Bear with me in the plainness of the words, but the one who says "I am not sent," be assured of it, that person would not go if he were sent. I see this very same unwillingness manifesting itself in the excuse. But what I do press upon you is this, while I fully grant we are not all sent to do the same kind of work, and are not all sent to preach, what I maintain

is, that if the love of Christ were in our hearts as the grand constraining power, no need, or misery, or distress, however great or pressing, would hinder us from seeking in every way to give the gospel of Jesus Christ, Who is the true bread of life, to every hungry soul with which we come in contact. I confess I do not understand what Christianity and the religion of Jesus Christ is, nor what the ways of Jesus Christ were, if one of His own true, beloved people in this world, let them be ever so simple, let them be ever so feeble, refused to follow in His ways—assuredly they could by grace tell of what had satisfied their hunger and of what had met their thirst ; assuredly they could say, “ I know what met the cravings of my soul, and I can tell you it will meet yours.” Who do you think knows the value of bread ? The chemist ? Not he ; but the starving man that has eaten it. I have eaten that bread, he says. There is too much mere head-work, I fear, about us ; hence our reasonings and our speculations and so forth, in reality a poverty-stricken state of soul. “ Give ye them to eat,” rings in our ears to-night. The Lord in His grace give us to hear it, and to heed it as well.

That is what introduces His departure in figure here ; He sends His disciples, and He goes on high, as it were—that is what is represented by His going up into the mountain—and the disciples cross the water in a boat, and you have their vicissitudes. O how blessed it is to think what it says here, “ He saw them.” Now I want my brothers in the Lord to share with me the comfort that passage brings ; “ He saw them toiling in rowing.”

Ah ! brother, you are labouring, it may be in some sphere of service or work, and it is very uphill, very hard, and it takes a great deal out of you, and you are very often depressed. Now think of this, “ He saw them toiling in rowing.” Not the shades of night, nor the earnest vigil, which He kept in prayer on the mountain-top, nor the storm-lashed lake that they were crossing,

none of these things had hidden His poor servants from the Master's eyes : " He saw them." O what a comfort that is ! What a comfort for us all, whatever may be the character of the " rowing," whatever may be the character of the labour or danger as we sail over the sea of life, " He saw them."

O what words are these ! Those blessed eyes looked down in a tenderness which was all His own ! And now mark this, in the darkest part of the night Jesus came to them. That is always the time Jesus comes. The fourth watch is just upon day dawn, and the dawn of day is, as we know, preceded by the darkest part of the night. Have you never watched by the bedside of some beloved one, and have you not witnessed the struggle between darkness and dawn ? There is a sort of struggle between night and day at the very moment just preceding day dawn. That is the time Jesus comes. And observe how beautiful it is ; He came walking on the water. Let us delight in contemplating the majesty of His love ! It is not only that I see His divine power as He steps the waves, but I see the majesty of His mighty love. They could not be upon the stormy sea without His walking those waves too ; they could not be, as it were, in difficulty and in danger without His drawing near to them ; they could not be surrounded by the fury and hurricane of the tempest that came down from the mountain side and threatened to destroy their little barque, without His going near to them, too. He came to them walking on the water.

There is a little touch here of great beauty ; have you ever thought of it ? " He made as though He would have passed by them." Do you think it was a mere accident that this is recorded for us here ? Do you think it is a mere little trifling circumstance in the history that the Spirit of God brings out ? I believe it is exactly the same thing that you find in Luke xxiv., when He joined those two poor, heart-broken, weary ones upon the morning of His resurrection, as they walked and

were sad, and had given up all hope in this world. It says, "He made as though He would have gone farther." It is the same kind of action here; He "would have passed by them." Why? To call out from them the faintest cry of want and need of Him; that is what it is. It is not that He was indifferent, that He did not feel; oh, assuredly it was not that!

He was never insensible to the distresses of His poor servants in their vicissitudes; but He delights to draw out confidence. Oh! if there is the feeblest confiding of trust in any of your poor hearts, if everything has fled but this one hope in Him, small though it be, be assured He wants that. That is the meaning of His action here; He would have passed them by; but only that He might awake up, and draw out, as it were, and minister to the dying embers of that faith which was in the heart. Then they "cried out." How grateful to His heart that cry! Was not He attentive? Did He not delight in that confidence so expressed?

Mark what He says; there are three words here, "Be of good cheer," "Be not afraid;" but note especially the words between them. Our beautiful old translation has it, "It is I;" but that in reality means "I am," the same as in John viii. Mark the connection, "Be of good cheer;" "I am;" "be not afraid." Oh, beloved friends, what a trinity of blessedness there is in these three expressions! "Be of good cheer:" might not that well wipe away every tear from the eye? "I am:" the mighty God in the glory and dignity and majesty of His own person walking the waves and waters. "Be not afraid:" the very words He is saying to us to-night.

Now, brother or sister (thank God we can all of us be engaged in work in different ways), you are "toiling in rowing:" may God in His infinite grace give us that blessed confidence in Christ's care and love, that amid every wind and storm, and our toiling through them,

we may ever hear Him say, "Be of good cheer"—"I am"—"Be not afraid."

Oh, the luxury of being the means of blessing to some poor heart! The one who is so used knows its sweetness; but it must be tasted to be known and thus enjoyed. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

But remember, in all the vicissitudes of service, and in all the ups and downs so-called of life, whether it be at home or in the service of God, in the world or in the church, whether it be in the counting house or at the counter, wherever you are, remember this, there will be "toiling in rowing" while Jesus is absent; but in the darkest part of your night He is near, so we can sing,

"In darkest shades, if He appear
My morning is begun."

And "He talked with them." How blessed the rest of that intercourse! the divine familiarity; oh, how precious the intimacy expressed in those words, "He talked with them." Oh to hear those beautiful words, those wonderful words! The Lord in His grace use His own precious tidings to-night to encourage our hearts, beloved friends, that we may all go forth with a little more of the fire of Christ's love in our souls, and that we may have the comfort, whatever position we are in, as we toil through this world where He is not, of knowing for ourselves the solace and cheer of Himself, for His name's sake.

Fragment.

As surely as you planets that roll and shine above us, draw radiance from the sun round which they move, so surely shall they shine who spend and are spent in Jesus' service. They shall share His honours and shine in His lustre.

Four Precious Lines.

It was a lovely Lord's Day afternoon when two brothers set off in a boat to cross the river with the object of preaching the Gospel on the other side. They had tasted the Lord's grace, and with hearts aglow with His love were glad to be able to tell others of the Saviour of sinners. Oh ! what a reality it is to know Jesus ! About half way across one opened his Bible and showed the other some lines which were written in it ; they were these :—

“ When thou hast failed, look up,
 When failing not still gaze :
 When empty, raise thine empty cup ;
 When full, return Him praise.”

He read them, and re-read them, and then made a copy so that they should not be forgotten, for the precious truth they contained went home to his soul. What a blessed resource we have, ever to be able to look up, and know a heart there in glory, ready to meet us, ready to hear us, and ready to fill us if we but turn to Him. How is it with you, dear fellow labourer ? Has failure come in ? Have you lost the sunshine of His face ? Oh ! if so, look up ! There is One there in glory Who has ever had His eye upon you, and is now at this very moment waiting for you to look up to Him. He can restore, oh, tell out to Him all, hide nothing from Him and keep nothing back, and you will find the preciousness of our first line.

“ When thou hast failed, look up ! ”

The result, surely you know, will be the same as it was with Peter, who proved the unfailing restoring grace of His blessed Master, Who prayed for him, looked upon him, and restored him, then used him.

“ When failing not still gaze.”

Thank God ! the pathway is not all failure, and then how precious to be occupied with the Person of Jesus, following the example of Stephen whose gaze was fixed upon Jesus. He looked up steadfastly into heaven

and saw the glory of God and *Jesus*—oh ! dear fellow labourers, do not we need to be more occupied with Him, to bask more in the sunshine of His love, if we are to be here for Him, and if our lives are to show forth His praise.

The last two lines contain two precious thoughts :—

“ When empty, raise thine empty cup,
When full, return Him praise.”

No need to be empty ! He can ever fill. “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.” If we want to have full hearts, we must turn to Him to fill them. He who ever fills the heart of the Father with perfect delight, is surely enough for us. Oh ! to be in that attitude of soul that He may fill us with Himself, then it will be that our cup will run over, and He will get the praise.

Not long after reading those lines, and the happy conversation that followed, they arrived at the place they were to speak, and then all around and up on the hill side were people ready to hear the good tidings of God's grace. It was out of full hearts they spoke, and the Lord blessed the Word, and as they finished they spoke to one and another. One young lad was especially touched and very readily listened to the one who now pressed upon him his need of salvation, and there and then that very day he took Christ as his Saviour. About two years after, this young fellow stood with the one who had spoken to him that day, and testified in the open air to the saving grace and power of the Lord Jesus.

Many years have passed since then, but the message of those four lines has often been passed on, and used in encouragement to many. May they now speak to each reader for His Name's sake.

“ When thou hast failed, look up ;
When failing not, still gaze :
When empty, raise thine empty cup ;
When full, return Him praise.”

Yearning after Souls.

Lord, I am happy when I look above ;
 There's not a cloud between my soul and Thee :
 I rest contented in Thy perfect love,
 From all my guilt and condemnation free.
 Within the veil, before the throne of grace,
 Boldly I enter—by Thy precious blood ;
 I see God's glory in Thy unveiled face,
 And drink of life the pure and crystal flood.

Lord, I would lift my feeble voice on high,
 And bid the giddy multitudes attend ;
 Warn them the hour of judgment draweth nigh,
 And show the gulf to which their footsteps tend :
 Fain would I tell them there's no arm to save
 But Thine, O Lord, the Lamb once slain for sin ;
 Point to Thy birth and death, Thy cross and grace ;
 Thy love's self-sacrifice their hearts to win.

Lord, I would tell them Thou art seated now
 At God's right hand, victorious over all ;
 Honour and glory crown Thy sacred brow,
 While at Thy feet exulting myriads fall :
 Highly exalted,—but a Saviour's name,
 The name of JESUS, is Thy highest boast ;
 That name Thou bid'st us through the earth proclaim,
 Thy greatest glory is to save the lost.

Oh, let Thy Spirit all my powers inspire
 To preach salvation, present, full and free :
 Open my lips—bestow a tongue of fire,
 A heart of love, in fellowship with Thee.
 Give me to see with faith's clear, eagle eye,
 The unseen worlds, with all their weal and woe :
With Thee—eternity of bliss on high ;
Without Thee—night, eternal night, below.

I want to learn the value of *one* soul :
 One soul that's saved,—one soul for ever lost,
 By pondering well its everlasting goal,
 And more than all, what Thee its ransom cost.
 Oh, let Thy Cross be e'er before my sight ;
 Teach me its endless wonders more to know :
 Sin's righteous wage, Love's all-surpassing might,
 That I may far and wide Thy praises show.

Things Concerning Himself.

Where is it that we get daily strength, but in tracing the love and the glory that can be only seen in the Father's righteous Servant, whose service was both to the Father and to us? Every step so traced will unravel the depths of that grace which has given the heart its peace, and assured it of everlasting glory. And it is this that the Holy Ghost does engrave day by day, deeper and deeper, on the willing heart of the believer, showing him his Lord—Him Who was in the beginning with God, and was God, and Who became flesh, and dwelt among us—marking the circumstances of evil which surrounded Him from His birth onwards, and so the untiring love which could not be overcome by those circumstances, but which shone the brighter, and showed its depths the more, as it was scorned and trampled on, while pressing on in its might through them all to finish that work which alone could meet the necessities of the sinner. It is not the cross only, but the character of the evil, which in its power overwhelmed the Lamb of God, and the unconquered compassion which ever shone forth from Him on the darkness which surrounded and would have quenched it—the every day's pitying endurance of the "contradiction of sinners against Himself," even to the moment when the readiness of His heart to bless was seen in the prompt reply of forgiveness to him who had reviled Him during His bitterest agony on the cross. (Compare Matt. xxvii. 44 with Luke xxiii. 43.) It is this that shows the depth of God's love, a love that existed ever, a love that ordained the victim, that gave the victim (and that victim His only Son) to and for those who hated and disregarded both the giver and gift.

He who delights to trace the steps of Jesus in this grief-stricken world, will see in every step the holiness, the moral glory, and the love of the unseen God, made manifest to him in a form that he can apprehend.

Oh yes, it is knowing God in Jesus, in all the exquisite detail of His most dignified yet condescending love—a love that could, and that did, descend to the depths of degradation and shame, to minister its sweet consolation to the wretchedness of its object ; that came into a world of sin and sorrow, not to be ministered unto, but to minister ; to be the lowest and the poorest ; to be associated with the most needy and despised of men—the leper, the publican, and the Samaritan—giving His back to the smiters, His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ; learning “ obedience by the things which He suffered ; ” taking part in our sufferings that, when perfected in His lesson of love, He might be a sympathising Intercessor for those whose companion in sorrow He had become. It is this, the weakness of Jesus, the poverty of Jesus, the depths of poverty both of spirit and circumstance, that shows us how far His love can reach, and what that love would do to bless its object—that shows us God.

Upon the ground of the soul's present and perfected salvation by the blood of Jesus, the believer stands to meet the practical question of following Him, as made even now by His gratuitous grace, free and ready to serve Him in love, as having but *one* object, that of showing forth His praises in the world that rejected and still rejects Him. There will be no singularity in the confession of the name of Jesus in heaven ; none will be ashamed of Him or His words there ; He will be fully glorified and admired there. But it is here in “ this present evil world,” in the midst of a crooked and perverse people, that the sinner, separated by the blood of the Lamb to all blessing, is called on to stand forth and declare how Jesus “ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Soul-Winning.

What we want to see in all God's children is that earnest love for souls, that keenness for soul-winning, that intense love which makes them do anything rather than miss a single soul ; that earnestness which makes you say, " I do not care one atom for my reputation so long as I can get down and grasp that soul." But you know, *souls refuse to be grasped by unloving and untender hands*. This is where the love of the Spirit is so important in all God's workers. People must not be looked down upon from a pedestal. No : we must get right down to their level, and not only understand their difficulties so far as we can, but get lower than they are, and see if we cannot grasp them with a loving, tender hand. No one cares to go to an untender physician. We would prefer to go to a physician who will be gentle and loving and kind towards our defect, and who will tell us how he can put it right. Oh, that among Christians there should be that lack of tenderness ! Those are the Christians whom God has often to crush. God puts His hand upon them, not in order that He may cause them to despair, but that His love may break into them, and that thereby they may be made vessels really meet for His use.

" Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall : but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. xl., 28-31.

Deeper Acquaintance with Christ.

How little are any of us able to say “ I *know* Whom I have believed.” All Christians believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, in His work and person, but how few ever seek to *know* Him, how few hearts are really set on learning Him.

Many are seeking to serve Him, and even spending their substance for Him, who forget that “ to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” People will give up money and time to “ *serve* the Lord ” who have never given up a thought, or restrained a word to *please* Him ; and why is this ? Because they do not know Him ! The one who knows Him, whose heart is set on knowing Him, thinks of His feelings, His desires, and tries to suit himself to them with a greater carefulness and a brighter devotion than the most showy services ever evince ; because such an one is thinking everything of Christ, and nothing of himself.

Our acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ is what forms us as Christians, for we are not born again, to a religion, or to a doctrine, but unto eternal life, and this is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent. This life is in God’s Son ; and its expression in us is according to our knowledge of Him Who is its source and supply. If I know Him simply as One Who has saved me from eternal judgment, my walk will express only that. If I know Him as the One Who has redeemed me from this present evil world unto Himself, I must walk as one not of the world, not my own but His ; and further, if I know Him as One Who has *died out of this scene, and passed into another*, there may be weakness (and the higher we go, the more we shall discover it), but I must walk as a heavenly man, and consequently as a stranger here, as one who has likewise died out of this scene, and lives in another.

If this be true, how deeply important that we should seek to know the Lord Jesus Christ. To set out from day to day with the simple aim "that I may know Him." Not to do great things, or to feel great things, but to know the greatest thing of all, even Him in Whom all fulness dwells. It is the highest aim for the youngest babe, or for the oldest saint, and the little one who *starts* with it, will find a pathway through this world that angels delight to look on, and where the Father and the Son find their abode.

As the disciples walked with Jesus through the scene of His rejection, amid confusion, discord, and disease, was not every occasion a new opportunity for them to learn Him? If they met death they might learn Him there. Suffering, bereavement, famine, storm, the occasion might be small or great, but Jesus was there for them to see and learn Him, though their hearts were dull and careless as ours often are.

But now we know that it is the great end of our blessed Lord's own ministry to us by His Spirit, even as it is His chief desire for us, that we might be "conformed to Him;" and it is only by knowing Him that we can ever be, "when we see Him we shall be like Him," and if we want to know Him, let us go to the Gospels and linger over His ways and words, and actings there, get into company with Him in His weary passage to and fro among sinful men, as the Son of the Father, and the Servant of His God; and then remember that it is the *same One* Who says, "Behold I am with you always." He is with us to be learned and recognised, and known in every step of our poor little hidden, secret paths through this great world which is against us, just as it was against Him—to be known in every occasion, to endear Himself at every turn.

Do we look for Him? Are we seeking to know Him in order to be conformed to Him? Is this the work He

will find us about when He comes? Many do great works in His name, but it is only the one who knows Him truly who can possibly set its true value on the surpassing privilege and blessedness of being counted worthy to serve our blessed Lord and Saviour in this present evil world.

“Jonah !”

She was only a poor Chinese country woman ; just a cook. She had been sick, and was not strong enough to go on with her work, and it was suggested that as she knew the Lord, and His love, she might visit about amongst her neighbours, and tell some of them the good news. One scholarly old brother rather intimated that she was not capable of such work as this, and she quite fell in with his view of the matter : and absolutely refused to seek to go about with the Gospel at all.

That night while she was asleep she suddenly heard a voice say to her, “Jonah !” Only one word. The call waked her up, and she instantly thought of all the story of Jonah, and how he was called to go and give a message ; and the way he refused also to go. Then she thought of what happened to him, and her thoughts were not very happy as she realised how much alike she and Jonah were.

Next morning she cheerfully set out to visit a poor old woman up the street, to try and tell her about the Lord.

Do you think the Lord might ever say to you or me, “Jonah ?”

A Word to Sunday School Teachers.

“Love suffereth long and is kind.”

There are very few Sunday School teachers who have not had their faith sorely tested, and have felt discouraged and on the point of giving up. And then, in many cases, the very fact of this has cast them more in dependence on the Lord, so that they have been helped and sustained: It is in connection with this testing that I have written the verse at the top of this article.

“Love suffereth long, and is kind.” In these few words I believe we shall find much that is needed for our work. We shall need to be long suffering. The boys and girls try our patience, they test our faith, and at times we are at a loss what to do. Besides this, the souls we long to see saved, often remain careless and indifferent; those we are praying for are not always saved as soon as we would desire it. “Love suffereth long.” We by nature could not do this; naturally we lose our tempers, we get impatient, but the love which is spoken of in 1 Cor. xiii. suffereth long, and is in reality the outflow of the new nature that God has given us. It is blessed to read these qualities of divine love, all of which have been so blessedly told out in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In connection with this it is well to remember that long suffering is that which has characterised all God's dealings with mankind. Surely we each realise this for ourselves if we but think a little. When the Name of the Lord was proclaimed to Moses in Exodus xxxiv. we read, “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, *long suffering*, and abundant in goodness and truth.” When the Apostle Paul speaks of his own conversion, he testifies to this long suffering, saying in 1 Tim. i. 16, “that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all *long suffering*, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” Then again we read of the *long suffering* of God waiting

in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. We would remember, too, that the answer to those who would think the Lord slack concerning His promise, is given in those blessed words, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . but is *long suffering* to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Oh! dear fellow Sunday School teacher, may we be led to adore the One Who in long suffering waited for us to be brought to Himself.

Let us now apply this for ourselves. We find that the Apostle Paul in writing in 2 Cor. vi. could mention long suffering as one of the characteristics of his service. And turning to Galatians v. we find that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *long suffering*." Love in all its various characteristics must be that which will enable us to go on in spite of difficulties and discouragements by the way, ever turning the heart to the source of all for strength and help to carry on, as we read, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, *long suffering*, and plenteous in mercy and truth."

Again, it is well to remember what turned us to repentance, was it not the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long suffering? For He Who endures with much long suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, has done the same to us, but through grace that goodness and long suffering have bowed our hearts before Him. We have seen ourselves as He sees us, guilty and lost, and have been glad to return as the prodigal, and to know and enjoy that love we so long slighted.

Oh, may the Lord just melt our hearts before Him, and give us all that needed patience and grace and long suffering, and so enable us to win hearts for Him. Nothing but love broke down our hearts, and it is only this that will break the hard and stubborn hearts we sometimes meet. Oh to be more in the school of Christ to learn of Him, and so be more fitted to lead others to Him!

Nearness to Christ the Secret of Power.

“And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.”

Mark iii. 14, 15.

We often look at the apostles as vessels of power, taken up by the Lord, and qualified by Him for the accomplishment of His gracious and mighty work on earth. And we are right, for they were ordained by Him to preach, to heal, to cast out devils, and thus to illustrate the infinite power of the blessed Redeemer. That He should have possessed such power, that He should have entered the domain of Satan and spoiled his house, is no wonder when we remember who He was. But it is marvellous to think of the apostles—men—wielding a similar power ! They received it from Him in dependence upon Him. They carried His authority, and lived on His account.

But, whilst all this is true, we are prone to overlook the first great privilege, and that from which all the others flow, *viz.*, that “*they should be with Him.*” They were ordained to this as fully as to the others. The principle thus asserted is, that communion precedes service : and this company of the Lord is that which alone fits for testimony.

Now this is exceedingly happy. The blessed Master, in order to make His service a pleasure, calls us first into His presence, and creates us His friends. This is Christianity and the atmosphere of love. “Henceforth,” He says, “I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth ; but I have called you friends.” The idea of slavery is thus precluded, and the service, though intensely real, is perfect freedom. It is the service of love, and a pure, holy, happy service therefore. Hence the first consideration on the Lord’s part was, that “*they should be with Him.*” How can you send a servant to do your bidding if he be not within call ? It is necessary that he should be at your constant command. You must have him near

yourself. Again, how can you familiarise your messenger with your mind and ways if he should habitually live apart from you? Proximity creates acquaintance, and companionship produces similarity, and this is indispensable when accurate witness is to be borne. The ambassador must be in the secret of his government and the servant of Christ in the sweet enjoyment of His presence.

Moreover; as to power or authority, where else can such a one find this? If the Lord authorise for service He also grants the needed power, but only on this ground, that it is held as in Him alone, and by us as in full dependence on Him. The excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. Mark this, it is "*not of us.*" We are in no sense depositaries of power. Nay, but we may be its channel: yet only then as being in company with the Lord. "That they should be with Him . . . and to have power" (authority). Being with Him (in spirit now) and having power go together. He has most power who abides most in his Lord's blest company. The nature of the power is not the question. Mighty signs and wonders may not be seen, but he is always a man of spiritual power who walks with the Lord; for with such communion is the first thing, and service results from that. Such service is, like Mary's ointment, precious to Him, and it fills all the house as well.

He Satisfies.

I've found in Thee Lord Jesus
 The satisfying part,
 That quiets every longing
 And stills my troubled heart;
 And resting in Thy finished work
 I find such perfect peace
 That every care is ended
 And all my sorrows cease.

The Boundlessness of Christ's Love.

An Extract from Rutherford.

Surely running-over love—that vast, large, boundless love of Christ—is the only thing that I most fain would be in bonds with. He knoweth that I have but little but the love of that love; and thus I shall be happy, suppose I never get another heaven, but only an eternal feasting of that love. But suppose my wishes were poor: He is not poor: Christ, all the seasons of the year, is dropping sweetness. If I had vessels, I might fill them, but my old, riven, and running-out dish, even when I am at the well, can bring little away. Nothing but glory will make tight and fast our leaking and rifty vessels. Alas! I have spilled more of Christ's love, grace, faith, humility, and godly sorrow than I have brought with me. How little of a sea can a child carry in his hand! As little am I able to take away of my great sea—my boundless and running-over Christ Jesus.

Thoughts for Meditation.

I thank God that one's littleness in no wise turns God aside from us; but contrariwise, if we simply do what He gives us to do, He perfects His strength in our weakness.

The Word of our Lord, and the attentive ear of the true servant, are all we need to carry us safely and happily onward.

What a precious thought we find in Deut. viii., 3. "He *suffered* thee to hunger and fed thee with manna." The Lord does not always prevent the trials and sorrows of His people in the wilderness way, but He makes them the occasion of supplying the need or giving them something better.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” *Mark xiii.*, 34.

“Come ye after Me.”

“Now as He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea : for they were fishers.

“And Jesus said unto them, ‘Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.’

“And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him.” *Mark i.*, 16--18.

The Lord here associates others with Him in His work. Now that ought to have a charm for every servant of Christ ; it has, I may say, an unbounded charm for my heart. He is pleased to associate others with Him, and I want to call your attention to the way in which He does it, and to see the difference between it and all that prevails in the world, and almost amongst ourselves.

It is not a personal call here ; that is elsewhere ; here it is the call to service. I beseech you earnestly to take note of that. It is not the call of persons to find their part in Christ and to find Christ everything. You find the personal call in John i., and the call to service is here in Mark. And notice what it says—a beautiful word. Is it, “Go out and preach ye” ? Not a word of it. “Go out into the streets and lanes” ? Not a word as to that yet. “Come ye after Me.” O the sweetness of that ! Ah ! beloved fellow servants of Christ, that must be before all service to men. It must be first to Him in our own souls, “Come ye after Me”—this is

the school, this is the college, this is the training-house, this is where everything is adjusted, "Come ye after Me." Is it not the case that that element is sadly wanting oftentimes in our ministry? Do not we very often leave the impression upon the hearts of those that hear us that we have not been very much with the Master? "Come ye after Me," He says—that is first. Oh, the loveliness of that is beyond all expression. And mark what follows, "And I will make you to become fishers of men"—how instructive that is to us!—that is to say, I will train you. There is only One that knows the art, and that is Jesus. There is but one blessed Master of the art of catching men, and that is Jesus. Thank God that He trains others in His grace, "I will make you to become." But it is "after Me" where all that tuition is gone into; it is "after Me" where all that is picked up, where all that is learnt; He educates, He is the One that initiates, "I will make you to become fishers of men."

I do not dwell upon the figure, but I am sure you know the pains, and the care, and the patience, and all that is necessary to make a man a really good, skilful angler. And do you not know what a difficult thing it is to win persons? Is it not too often that we try to *drive* people? God knows it is not very difficult to repel people, though sometimes it would seem from the very earnestness with which people set themselves to do it, that they think it is a hard thing to do. It is very easy to wound, to repel, to knock down; but to win, and, may I say, to warm, and to catch—these are the words here in the gospel, "I will make you to become fishers of men."

And observe this one word of the Saviour here, "come." That is a word you constantly find, "come." Oh the power that there was in that word! And I will say more—oh the charm there was in that word! How that word must have fallen on their ears! Some of us, I fear, prefer the word, "claim"; but as for me I love

that word "charm." But I think I hear you say, Does not the Lord claim you? Ah! but does He not charm you? They were charmed, and that is exactly what we find. And "immediately," they left property, ship, father, nets, everything. Now take particular note of this. Do not think for a moment that those men were idle, men that had nothing to do. All these men were busy men, every one of them was occupied; it was not that they were do-nothings; for my part, I cannot see where the virtue is in people that are do-nothings. Not one of those men were of that character; they were all engaged with their nets, or their fishing, or with their father, either drawing the nets, or mending the nets; they were all engaged in some way or another with their occupation. But oh! there was a heavenly charm in that "come" from those precious lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, "out of heaven," and so all was left—the father, the nets, the fishing, everything.

Again once more, remember they were not called to great office, to a high position, nothing of the kind. Assuredly, catching fish was a great deal more lucrative than catching men, as far as that goes, far more would be made out of fish-catching; but that was not the point. There was no consideration with regard to the lucrative-ness of it, or with regard to their position. As a matter of fact, the position was a far lower one than the one they were leaving, for they were to be the off-scouring of all things—despised, rejected, hated, like their Master, to receive the portion He got in this world. But that only enhances this to my heart, for though they were called out into a position which would expose them to all the hatred that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had, and to all the thanklessness of this world, sad though it be to say it, even of those who profess to belong to Him, still to come after Him was the highest glory. In that, without a question, they were recompensed, to come after Him, and learn His skilful love and grace, and catch men for Him—that was all. Oh may He give

our hearts that are in any poor way allowed to be in His service to do likewise. I hold it a sacred responsibility to say to you, I do not believe in my soul that there is a child of God that He would not privilege to be a servant with Him *in some way*, if only the heart be true to Him. Thank God He has His servants here in this poor world, and earnest servants too; but the heart longs to see more of them, to see the number increased. I believe there is not one that is not privileged through His grace, to be in some sense a servant of Christ, under Christ, assuredly not in the same way, that could not be, but all servants in some way having something to do for Him. And oh! who can express the sweetness of it!

You say, What can I do? Listen to me—there is a hovel away down in one of those miserable streets, and in a back room in it, there is a poor thing lying upon a pallet of straw; go and win her heart for Jesus Christ. Will you do that? I feel we need a little melting and thawing of the heart as to this. And when I think of the service here of the great Master and the great Servant, and when I think of His work amongst men, and how He was distinctly the Servant of God, I do feel how the Lord would touch the hearts of His people, first of all and most of all by “Come ye after Me.” I believe *there* is the lack. If you would go after Him, He would give you something to do. Only keep His company, only follow Him, and you would learn the skill of love from Him; and your heart will never rest until it is in some way expressing the grace and kindness of His heart among men. I do not say “*for men*,” because I think that is a caricature of service, and a gross caricature as well, which, whatever else it does, leaves all of Christ out and only thinks of men, and I would desire for myself and for you to be kept as far from that as possible. But let us hear Him say, “Come ye after Me,” and then it is after Him, and for Him, and to Him.



“Fishers of Men.”

THE shores of Galilee first heard the message ;
 'Twas spoken by Thy lips, most gracious Lord,
 “Come after Me, and I will make you fishers
 Of men to be.” Such was Thy wondrous word.

Thy word is still the same, to-day, Lord Jesus ;
 To me Thou speak'st as to Thine own of yore.
 They heard and followed. They obeyed the message.
 Their boats and nets they left upon the shore.

“Fishers of men to be.” Such was Thy promise.
 Can this be true, e'en now for such as me ?
 Wilt Thou teach even me the blessed secret
 Of winning precious souls to trust in Thee ?

Blest Saviour, well Thou knowest all my longings
 To serve Thee here, Who gav'st Thyself for me,
 And often hast Thou heard my heart's petition
 That in my net, e'en *one* fish caught might be.

Lord Jesus, teach me how to follow after,
 To walk the pathway that Thou once didst tread.
 No selfish ease was Thine, no downy pillow,
 Thou hadst not here a place to lay Thy head.

Jehovah's perfect Servant ! Toiling ever
 Thou hadst no leisure so much as to eat,
 The night oft found Thee praying to Thy Father,
 The time the giddy world was hushed in sleep.

Lord Jesus ! May I study Thee more closely,
 See more Thy meekness and Thy grace divine,
 Be more and more with Thee in close communion
 That many fish from *my* net may be Thine.

“Loose him, and let him go.”

We all know the story so well of the sorrowing sisters at Bethany, and hundreds of hearts have found comfort from these two little words, “Jesus wept,” realising how He can enter into our sorrows and sympathise as no human friend can. But I think the Lord has a precious lesson to teach us from the words He spoke after He had called Lazarus from the grave.

We read in John xi. 43, 44, “He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” What grace! None but He could speak the life-giving word which brought Lazarus from the tomb in which he had lain for four days, but instead of taking off the grave clothes Himself He gives that privilege to others. Does not this remind us of that word in 2 Cor. vi. 1, “Workers together with Him”? How wonderful that we, who were once dead in trespasses and sins, should be allowed to share in His work, to work *with* Him.

As we seek in any little measure to be made a blessing to the souls around us, we find many who have responded to the loving invitation “Come unto Me,” but who are as yet bound hand and foot with grave-clothes. They know the Lord Jesus is the only Saviour and have trusted themselves to Him, but have not the full assurance of salvation, never having realised that every claim which God had over them as sinners has been met by the Lord Jesus. They are trusting Him, but do not know the value of His finished work. How much they lose by not enjoying the blessings which are theirs! If we can find out these souls and by pointing them to God’s precious Word, help them to see something of the value of the work of His Son, shall we not be answering to our Saviour’s command “Loose him, and let him go?”

A young lady was once asked to visit a woman who had undergone a serious operation, and although much benefited by it she was seldom able to go out, so found the time hang rather heavily. She went, and during the conversation quoted the well-known passage in John x. 27-30. She then asked the woman if she knew the blessedness of being held in the hand of the good Shepherd. "I hope so," was the reply. The visitor then referred to verse 9, "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." "Now," she said, pointing to the door of the room they were sitting in, "if you were outside that door and wanted to come in, you would never get inside by hoping you were there. And if you really were inside you would not think of saying 'I hope I am inside this room.' We have just been noticing how the Lord Jesus said, 'I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.' Now tell me, where are you, inside or outside?" The woman waited a moment before replying and then looked up and said, "Inside." Further conversation showed that she was trusting the Lord Jesus, but had realised little of the value of His work in dying for her, so gave the oft repeated answer "I hope so," to the most important of all questions.

Not long after this the poor woman grew rapidly worse, and those around could see that she would not be here long. The young lady continued her visits, and it gladdened her heart one day when speaking of the Lord Jesus to the dying woman, to hear her say with much feeling, "He died for *me*; I long to be with Him." Not many days passed before her desire was realised, and she is now with the One Who loved her and gave Himself for her.

May this little incident encourage any who have a desire to speak a word for the Lord Jesus, to ask Him to bring them in touch with some who are "bound hand and foot with grave clothes," so that they may obey the Master's command "Loose him, and let him go."

How do you Worship ?

Read John xii., 1—11.

She came not to hear a sermon, although the first of Teachers was there : but to sit at His feet and hear His Word (Luke x. 39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place.

She came not to make her requests known to Him. Time was, when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet, saying, " Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died " (John xi. 32) ; but to pour out her supplications to Him as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table.

She came not to meet saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, " Jesus loved Martha . . . and Lazarus." (John xi. 5.) Fellowship with them was blessed likewise, and, doubtless, of frequent occurrence ; but fellowship was not her object now.

She came not after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world to be refreshed from Him ; though surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness, and none more than she, probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him.

But she came, and that, too, at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred to Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (v. 7), that which was most valuable to her, all she had upon earth, upon the person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections.

She thought not of Simon the leper ; she passed the disciples by ; her brother and her sister in the flesh and in the Lord engaged not her attention then ; " Jesus only " filled her soul ; her eye was on *Him* ; her heart beat true to *Him* ; her hands and her feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart, and she " anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair."

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing, was her one thought ; and that in honour of the One who was

“ all in all ” to her ; and surely *such* worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (v. 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and showed how He could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent to it. A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is by the One who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this your mode of worship, or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days' toil? Oh ! if every eye were on the Lord alone ; if every heart were true to Him ; if we were each determined to see “ no man, save Jesus only,” what full praise there would be ! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Ghost, a stream of thanksgiving, of worship of the highest character, would ascend in honour of the blessed One that now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth.

Be it ours thus to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Amen !

BE much with God, so that your service may be toned and matured by the secret intercourse of your soul with Him. I think this is where we most lamentably fail.

The evangelists of a century ago had to face intense opposition wherever they went, and were often entirely without human support, or the fellowship of saints. But their very circumstances of isolation cast them upon God. They had power first with God, and as a consequence with the people. They learnt the value of souls, and estimated the real worth of the world in the secret of the Sanctuary, and when they came forth to preach they awed their listeners as they spoke out in burning words and with loving hearts the message of God. The divine truths they knew were tremendous realities to them and they spoke of them as such to sinners.

Things concerning Himself.

“Let not your heart be troubled.”

It is a very special sorrow to which the Lord addresses Himself here for the comfort of His own. It is no ordinary sorrow such as abounds for every child of God in his path through this evil world, but the special sorrow of any who *know* Jesus *well enough to miss Him* in a scene out of which He has been cast by the unanimous consent of man. Beloved, let us put it to our hearts, do we miss *Him*? We have known His work for salvation, but have we gone on to know *Himself* for love? Do your hearts know enough of Jesus to be desolate in a place where He is not? Ah then, we know the disciples' sorrow and to us as well as them belongs the comfort of the words of Jesus.

See how He counts on the disciples' love and consequent sorrow: for He has no sooner broken it to them in gentle words, that only “yet a little while” He can be with them, than He adds “let not your heart be troubled.” Precious fruit of His own love that, wherever it is known, detaches hearts from the world without Him, by attaching them to Himself. Yes, He whom they had known and loved, and followed on earth in such precious intimacy was about to return to the Father, and they would now no longer know Him after the flesh; yet He was only going to take the same place as the unseen God, where He would be still known by faith and in all the deeper revelations of the glory of His person that would result from that place.

But will He enter alone into His joy and *leave* us in our wilderness desolation? No, He only goes to prepare a place for us there too, and to wait for the moment when He can come and fetch us into it. Beloved, He speaks to us of *home*. “Go to my brethren,” says He, from the mouth of His open and empty grave, “and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to

My God and your God." Henceforth, His Father is our Father—His God, our God—His home, our home. And if there are in it "many mansions," His love has already set apart the place for each individual object of it. None but *the one* for whom such place is prepared by Jesus can *fill* it for *His* heart. How precious to be still and ever the objects of such love! Now, in His absence we need the *assurance* of it and He gives it to us.

But there is more ; and more there must be to meet the necessities of those to whom, by these very revelations, Jesus is becoming more precious every day. Is this separation to last for ever? No. He could not bear it any more than we. So He gives us what hearts that truly love Him could not do without—the promise, "I will come again and receive you unto *Myself*." Precious hope for us, beloved, till hope shall be lost in the consummation of it, and we shall see Him face to face. Is the coming of the Lord more than a doctrine to us? Is it a deep spring of joy even in hope? Is it a living power in our souls? But the promise goes on "that where I am, there ye may be also," and this tells us that the necessity of our hearts is His own ; that, not for our joy only, but for His, we must be where He is. And, beloved, that is the heaven of the Christian's hope. Scripture has but little about heaven, for all desire, all joy, all hope is summed up for any who know *Jesus* ever so feebly, in that "where *I* am" of His. *His presence* is the very heaven of heavens to us.

May we be more occupied with Himself where He is now, and sharing His own hope of being with Him for ever, in the Father's house, where He Himself has prepared a place for us.

" He and I in that bright glory
 One deep joy shall share :
 Mine to be for ever with Him,
 His that I am there."

The Regions Beyond.

We read in Mark i. that at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, when "all the city was gathered together at the door," He rose "a great while before day," and "went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Simon sought to bring Him again to the multitude, saying, when he found Him, "All men seek for Thee." But the Lord's reply was, "*Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.*" Following this we read, in Matt. ix. 35, that Jesus went about all cities and villages, teaching, preaching and healing.

Our Lord's personal mission was to Israel alone; the Church's mission is to all the world; and His to Israel must be the model of ours to the world.

No measure of acceptance in any place kept our Lord long there. His motto was, "Let us go to the *next* towns." Paul made it a point of honour to follow in the footsteps of his Master (Rom. xv. 20, 21). To the local assembly of God's people, the command is to go to the towns and villages lying next them; and to the Church at large the command is to go to "the regions beyond."

Far and wide comes the Macedonian cry from those sitting in darkness. As it falls here or there upon the obedient ear, it meets with a response, as it did from the apostle and his fellow-labourers, and in due time those who serve now will be enabled to take up the words of the evangelist, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts xvi. 10).

There will be circumstances in the life of a willing soul which will guide—something very trivial; as man would say; but to us nothing is small which has in it a voice from God.

The field is the world; the harvest has to be gathered in. God calls and waits for responsive hearts. To

some who respond He may say, "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart" (1 Kings viii. 18); but He may bid them, with a loving word, to tarry here. To others He says, "Go, and I will be with thee." If the thought of unfitness comes up, as it ever will in the hearts of the really sent of God, and the trembling believer says, "Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak: I am a child"; He will answer to His appointed messenger, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee" (Jer. i. 6-8).

"As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world," said the Lord Jesus as He was about to return to the Father: and He would have our hearts filled with His compassions as we see the multitudes faint and weary with sin and suffering, like sheep scattered abroad and harassed by the lion and the wolf. He has revealed to us the mystery of the world's misery. It is Satan and sin. And He sends us fully armed for the battle, so that we have not to go at our own charges.

The Lord's word to us is, "*Pray ye*"; and by prayer He would draw out our sympathy with the work of God and the interests of "His harvest;" and till heart-sympathy, as expressed in believing prayer, is stirred up, there can be no real working for God.

In this let us ponder our Lord's example, as we have it given in Luke vi. 12, 13: "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and *continued all night in prayer to God*. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles," and these He sends forth.

The early Church followed the steps of her Lord, and when in Antioch with fasting and prayer they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Ghost responded to their cry, and said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul

for the work whereunto I have called them.” Then we read : “ And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away ” (Acts. xiii. 2; 3).

May the Church at large and saints individually be brought to fasting and prayer in this matter, and then, as they are in sympathy with God, He will respond.

A Fragment.

(1 John iii., 1—3.)

I am going to be like Christ in glory ; then I must be as like Him now as ever I can be. Of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts full of it.

Remember this, that the place you are in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for this, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question of our sins with God : now He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. “ In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” If I know He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved me with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him ; my *business* is to glorify Him in everything I do. “ Bought with a price ”—that is settled : if bought, I am *His*. But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which cleaves *to Him*, especially in these last evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh ! if Christians were more thoroughly *Christians* the world would understand what it was all about.

The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ, that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ ; and for those who do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us, and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.

Testimony in Life and Speech.

A Word for Sunday School Teachers.

“Let your light *so shine* before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Matt. v., 16.

“And it came to pass in Iconium that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and *so spake*, that a great multitude of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.”

Acts xiv., 1.

In these verses we have two thoughts which I believe have a message to us as Sunday School teachers. They are the words “*so shine*” and “*so spake*,” and clearly refer to our life and speech. May they come home to our hearts. Are we shining before our Sunday School scholars so that they see our good works? Do they see we are what we profess to be, happy followers of the Lord Jesus Christ? “Actions speak louder than words.” Our words will have weight in accordance with the life that is the background, and often children read more in our lives than by our words to them.

Oh! how this little word “*so shine*” should echo in our hearts. Once we were darkness, but now we are light in the Lord, and so the Lord says to us “Walk as children of light.” May the fruit of the light be seen in us as the blessed traits of our Lord and Saviour are produced in us by the power of the Spirit.

We trace His blessed actions towards the children in the Gospels; how He lifts the little ones up in His arms and blesses them; how He takes the girl of twelve by the hand and speaks the life-giving word; how He uses the loaves of the lad for the feeding of the multitude; every action speaking forth the love of His heart and the tender grace of His ways! Oh! may we too be marked by love and tenderness towards those that we long to win for Him. May they *see* as well as hear that God loves them.

How often we have prayed that we might “so *speak*” that some would believe in Him. It is interesting to notice in the chapter referred to we read in verse 3, “*Long time* therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace.” Their labours were marked by continuance, and so must ours be in the Sunday School. It is ever well for us to remember “We shall reap if we faint not.” The rendering of Acts xiv. 3, by Mr. Kelly is helpful I think—“A considerable time therefore they stayed, speaking boldly *in reliance on the Lord*, that gave witness unto the word of His grace.” Here is a thought we ever need to have before us if we desire to so speak that souls may be blessed. It must be in reliance upon the Lord. Dependence is that which should mark us, and in this connection it is precious to think of the perfect Servant of Jehovah here in this world, of whom even His enemies had to confess “Never man spake like this Man,” literally “Never man *so spake* as this Man.” Oh, how true this was, and yet His words were rejected! Solemn thought for our hearts. But the weary found rest in Him, for He knew how to speak a word in season to such, and in Isaiah I. we are told the way of this dependent One. “The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned (learner or disciple as ch. viii. 16), that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned (learner).” It is wonderful to think of the dependence of the Lord Jesus as Man here in this world. He spent whole nights in prayer to God. What an example He gives us! May we know more of what this dependence is. May we be found feeding upon His Word morning by morning that we may know *how to speak*. It is only as in the Lord’s presence with His Word before us that He will teach us. And then in reliance upon the Lord, not in our own strength or wisdom let us go forth and speak boldly, and we may expect the Lord to give witness unto the word of His grace.

An Extract.

I think there is an increasing conviction everywhere that the Lord's return is very near. What joy to have such a hope ! And He declares the *blessedness* of those who are watching for Him, whether He comes in their lifetime or not (Luke xii. 38)—if He shall come in the second watch or in the *third* ; so that none have been disappointed that have had the hope, and are fallen asleep. They have their special blessing. The Lord does not forget those who had heart thus to go out in longing and looking for Himself.

I believe that it is the greatest help He gives as to sitting loose to everything here. May the truth as to all that He has now given to us, detach us in heart and spirit from all that He comes to take us actually out of at any moment !

Now is the time for surrendering all, as Mary in spirit in John xii., for the One who was passing out of the whole scene by death as rejected by this world, and as Paul in Phil. iii., who knew Him in all that He is in glory.

But the thought often presses on me, " Me ye have not always." How incalculable would have been Mary's loss, if she had failed to seize that last opportunity for yielding to Him that precious service recorded in John xii. She never could have recalled it in eternity. Not that I doubt that love will find new ways of expressing itself to Him then. But it will not be in what He looks for from us now. There will be no self to be denied, no cross to be borne, no world to be surrendered, no reproach to be encountered then, no more anything to test us. Now everything is just a test as to what place Christ Himself has in our hearts. May we answer to the test like Mary, learning how to suit ourselves to Him as she did !

A Breakdown.

Faith has its mountings up, but it has often its breakings down. Human experiences teach us a little ; but few can tell the whole tale. God's biographies teach us much ; or He can tell the whole.

Asa's history is one of those records written by the finger of God that cannot fail to instruct. (Read 2 Chron. xiv., xv., xvi.) How brightly his reign begins ; and ten years of peace and quiet are connected with an activity of faithful service which shows that Asa was walking before God. Altars were taken away, and Judah was taught to seek the Lord.

He rested not, however, in his security ; he said not, " My mountain stands strong." God gave him rest, but he prepared himself for war ; he built fenced cities, and he had an army of mighty men.

Now comes the test of faith. Zerah appears on the scene, and Asa goes out to Mareshah to meet him ; but he leans (relies or " rests," v. 11) on God. There are few more beautiful prayers in trouble than the firm, confident cry of Asa, " Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power : help us, O Lord our God ; for we lean on Thee, and in Thy Name we go against this multitude. O Lord Thou art our God ; let not frail man prevail against Thee."

God answered the prayer, and smote the Ethiopians before Asa ; and the people " carried away very much spoil." Chapter xv. tells the result of this glorious victory ; but even in victory God sends a note of warning by Obed, " The Lord is with you *while* ye be with Him."

Twenty-six years pass over Asa, and now chapter xvi. opens with another scene. Baasha comes against Asa, and he who met Zerah in the name of the Lord goes to meet Baasha in the name of Benhadad, King of Syria, and he robs God's house and his own house to

bribe the world's power to help him against his enemy. What a breakdown have we here ! He who was strong as a lion against the Ethiopian with his thousand thousand men and three hundred chariots, quails before the ungodly king of Israel.

Why this change? God was the same ; circumstances were less critical ; but *Asa had changed*. He had taken another staff to lean on, and therefore God had left him to his own devices ; and, after the shame and dishonour have been reaped, He sends Hanani the seer, who says, " Because thou hast leaned (or relied, the same word as in chapter xiv., 11) on the king of Syria, and hast not leaned on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand," and winds up with the following precious word of promise, " The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."

Alas, that thirty-six years should so end ! But these things are written for our admonition, and are profitable for teaching, for conviction, for setting straight what has gone crooked, and for discipline in righteousness. (2 Tim. iii. 16.)

The backsliding soul is slow to hear the voice that reproves, and Hanani is put in prison. Has Asa fallen so low, and his conscience become so seared? Yes, it is so !

For three years God's forbearance waits, and then again His hand is on the wayward child, and he is smitten with disease in his feet. But, unhumbled still, he seeks not to the Lord in his extremity, but to the physicians. After two years of suffering he dies, and his sun sets amidst clouds of gloom.

Man may bury with all honours, and may make a great burning of sweet odours and spices, but Asa's old age was not borne witness to by God ; and we may con-

clude, as we are not told to the contrary, that he died leaving God's servant, His faithful seer, in prison. Deeply sad is all this. He who ran so well and so long, broke down at the end, and passed away as one saved by fire.

We are only safe as we enter into Paul's experience and say, "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect; but I press after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." As if to give emphasis to these words the Apostle adds, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Herein lies our only safeguard against those most terrible breakdowns which we see in Solomon, in Asa, in Demas, and in others who once ran well, but were hindered by the world, the flesh, and the devil. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Thoughts for Meditation.

There is no position a saint can be in but that he may go to God for help.

Anxiety which anticipates evil is not the faith which faces the difficulties through which God sees well to make us pass.

The sternest things that have ever been said as regards sin's penalty in the future, first passed the tenderest lips that ever proclaimed God's love to man.

There is nothing too great for God to give—nothing too small to be beneath His care.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” *Mar iii., 34.*

The Lord's Servants.

I have been greatly struck with the way in which the Lord sought to educate, and then sent out His servants when He was here. “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest, And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth.” (John iv., 34-37.) Oh, what an evangelist He was. Come from the Father's heart, and laden with all its love, He travelled all through that burning desert to reach, and fill one empty, sinful heart. Son of God, we adore Thee! He went to death for you and me. Beloved brethren, what are we going to do for Him? Are not souls perishing on every hand? What are we doing? Are we carrying the light, the blessed gospel of God's grace, to them? Mark, it is a responsibility laid on us. Here the Lord says LOOK, the fields are white already to harvest. May He press these words upon your hearts and mine.

If we go elsewhere we find it written:—“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; *pray ye therefore* the Lord of the

harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." (Matt. ix., 36-38.) "PRAY YE." Oh, how beautiful! In the fourth of John it was, *Look ye*; here it is, *Pray ye*. He, so to speak, says, I will take you into fellowship with Me in the work. I do not know that they did pray, but anyway He sent out twelve: "And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease These twelve Jesus sent forth." (Matt. x., 1, 5). Oh, beloved, the labourers are indeed few. Do we pray after this sort?

In the sixteenth chapter of Mark, we find Him risen from the dead, and there He says in the fifteenth verse, "Go YE into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." That is it. People sometimes say to me, "Where shall we preach?" He tells you, "Go ye into *all the world*." I quite admit, if you contend for it, that it was a special injunction to the twelve. But would you limit it to them? "Go ye into all the world" is an imperative command. Have we hearts to obey? Are our hearts so sweetly in tune with Him as to be ready to go?

This answers the question—*Where* to preach? If I look at the apostle Paul, I find him preaching in all sorts of places. Hill-tops, river-sides, market-places, prisons, palaces, and synagogues, and his own hired house, all heard his voice. The point is that the servant is to be at the command of the Lord to carry out the testimony. His only exercise was as to how the Lord's word was to be addressed to those to whom his Master had sent him. Nor was it a question of fellowship with the assembly, though his oft-repeated request for their prayers showed how he valued their fellowship. If their hearts are right, they will be praying to the Lord for blessing.

The servant gets his commission from his Master. He wants no other authorisation or commendation.

“ For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.” (Mark xiii., 34.) He has authority from the Lord : that is enough. What will be the result ? There will be a reward for all service rendered to Him by-and-by. The thirty-second chapter of Isaiah gives us a good illustration of the query, Where shall we preach ? “ Blessed are ye that *sow beside all waters*, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass ” (verse 20). Sow beside all waters. What is the meaning of that ? Diligent toil.

But there is not only the question of where to preach, but *when* to preach ? Solomon furnishes a good answer ; “ Cast thy bread upon the waters : for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight ; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth : and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child : even so thou knowest not the works of God Who maketh all. *In the morning* sow thy seed, and *in the evening* withhold not thine hand : for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” (Eccles. xi., 1-6.) In the East they sow the seed upon the waters, the water subsides, and the seed drops into a soft fertile bed. This is not preaching. It is you and I just keen to drop the blessed seed of the Word of God in the soul, wherever God carries us. You are to be a person going about with the heavenly seed-basket on your arm, dropping the seed wherever you go. It may be to a saint. It may be to a sinner. The fact is, far too much is left to the preachers. Verse 4 teaches us

not to be governed by circumstances. I think God often gives us a fair wind. It took Paul only a day and a half to come to Philippi from Troas with the gospel. (Acts xvi., 11, 12.) But it took him five days to get back to Troas again. (Acts xx., 6.) Do you think God has told us that for nothing? God did not put that in His book without purpose.

Go on with your work. Let nothing hinder you. That is the great thing for a saint to-day. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." That is when to preach. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." (2 Tim. iv., 2.) Where to preach? All the world your parish. When to do it? Morning and evening, always at it.

How to preach is also of importance, and Scripture tells us how to do it. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm cxxvi., 5, 6.) They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. I think that is *HOW*. There is a moral state. There is exercise of soul. And therefore you sow in tears, and reap in joy. That is a beautiful answer to the *How*, both in the way you go out, and in the way you present the truth.

Again we get an illustration of this in Paul's history. "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." (Acts xiv., 1.) Connect that with "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And Paul and Barnabas so spake that a multitude believed. It is said of George Whitefield that he so felt the love of God, on the one hand, and the need of souls on the other, that he often wept over them when preaching. Little wonder that they wept under him. The Lord help you and me to preach like that.

Communion and Service.

“ He ordained twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.” *Mark iii., 14*

Chosen by their Lord and Saviour,
 Ever with Himself to be ;
 Listening to His gracious accents,
 All His works of love to see.

But He would not only have them
 With Him, learning at His feet ;
 He would have them telling others
 Something of His lessons sweet.

They had seen Him ; they had heard Him ;
 Thus His heart of love they knew ;
 “ Go, tell others ” was His message,
 “ What the Lord has done for you.”

Down the ages comes the message,
 From our risen Lord to me :
 “ I have chosen you, beloved,
 Ever with Myself to be.”

“ Then to others would I send you,
 There to tell what thus you’ve learned ;
 How your eyes have been delighted,
 And your heart with rapture burned.”

“ Saviour, I am Thine for ever,
 Thou hast bought me with Thy blood ;
 Gladly would I live to serve Thee,
 Gladly tell of Christ my Lord.”

“ Only in Thine own blest presence,
 Can I strength and grace obtain ;
 Keep me then in close communion,
 Saviour, till Thou com’st again.”

Friends of God.

The Lord Jesus speaks of this privilege as belonging, through divine riches of grace, to His saints, when He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." (John xv. 15.)

This friendship, this communication of secrets, gives a wondrous sense of gracious and confiding intimacy. When we pray we feel that we *need* something: when we serve, or when we worship, we judge that we *owe* something; at least that *He* is worthy; but when we are receiving communications (not commands as from a master, but communications as from a friend) we listen, without any necessary reflection upon our own condition, freed of all sense of either need or obligation. Our proper attitude then is neither standing, like Martha, as to serve, nor kneeling, like Mary to worship: but like Lazarus, sitting. (John xii. 2.)

The inspirations of a prophet are not equal to the divine communications which a friend receives. They do not intimate the same nearness or dignity. A prophet receives an inspiration as a vessel or oracle, and he may understand it or not: a friend *learns* secrets on the ground of *personal confidence*.

All the elect are, I grant, according to the grace and calling of God, endowed with this privilege: but among them, I believe, *Abraham, Moses, David, and John* had it very conspicuously. They illustrate it.

Abraham was told what the Lord was about to do with Sodom. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" says the Lord: and then tells him of the business which was then taking Him down to Sodom. (Gen. xviii.)

What a moment it was! The Lord had come to Abraham's tent at Mamre, and there sat at his table and his feast. The *Judge* of Sodom was communicating with the *conqueror* of Sodom; the divine Judge of that

vile, reprobate place, conversing with him who had already through faith and the victory of faith, refused all its offers.

Again I say, What a moment ! And in the confidence which all this inspired Abraham drew near, and stood before the Lord, while the attendant angels withdrew and went on their way. Full of blessing indeed this is.

And so Moses in his day : for we read, " And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exod. xxxiii. 11.)

Wonderful ! The Lord dealt with Moses as a man will deal with his friend. He talked with him. (v. 9.) We are not told what He said, because it is the business of the passage rather to exhibit this grace of intimacy, or divine friendship, than to convey information to us. But we do learn the use which Moses makes of this gracious friendship, the very same use which Abraham of old had made of it. He speaks to the Lord about others, just as Abraham had done. He pleads for Israel, as the patriarch had pleaded for Sodom. The Lord had approached Moses as His friend : He was not receiving him as His suitor or His debtor : it was fitting, therefore, that Moses should occupy the place and the moment in a manner which showed freedom from himself.

And never, I may say, was Moses nearer to the Lord, not even when on Pisgah He was showing the land to him in its length and breadth. Indeed the two places were of like elevation, for the Lord was communicating to Moses in each of them. Here He " talked " with him, there He " showed " him. In spirit they were the same place, and that the highest : such as he and Elijah afterwards filled on the holy mount : for there, as we again read, they " talked with Jesus." (Luke ix. 30.)

And so David, as we see in 1 Chron. xvii. David was a *penitent*, wearing sackcloth in the day of the plague, and going up Mount Olivet with dust on his head in the day of Absalom. He was a *worshipper*, too, singing and dancing, as he bore the ark of the Lord to Zion. But

David was a *friend*, as Abraham and Moses had been. He received communications from the Lord through Nathan : and then, as one whom the Lord, in the ways of His grace, had thus endowed and privileged, “ he went in,” as we read, and “ sat before the Lord.”

Beautiful and wonderful, but withal right. To have stood or to have knelt then would not have been obedient or holy : for holiness is consistency with God : and if He “ mourn ” we are to “ lament ” : if He “ pipe ” we are to “ dance ” : if He convict and reprove us, we may be in sackcloth before Him : but if He deal with us face to face, as a man speaketh to a friend, we may and should sit before Him.

But again, John was the nearest to Jesus at the last supper. He lay on His bosom. And thus it was he who reached the secrets of that bosom. Peter in the distance *used* John’s nearness, and the Lord *admitted its title*, and gave him the privilege of it. John pressed that bosom afresh, in the confidence of an Abraham or of a Moses, that the secret which was there would make itself his. (John xiii. 25.)

Surely all this tells us of the peculiar grace of this wondrous thing, this state and relationship of “ friends ” into which the Lord has called His saints. And we see the glorified saints in the full use and joy of this privilege : for on the holy hill (to which I have already, in a passing way, alluded) Moses and Elias “ talked ” with Jesus. Sharing the glory they knew the *privileges* of it, while Peter beholding it, felt the *power* of it, saying “ Lord, it is good for us to be here.” (Matt. xvii. 3, 4.)

It is not to present something strange or striking that I notice all this, but rather to aid the soul in assuring itself of that love wherewith the elect are loved : a love which gives us a place where, forgetting both our need and our obligation, neither kneeling to supplicate nor standing to serve, we may sit to listen, and receive communications, as a man is talked with by his friend. And when we see this to be a way of His grace, we may be still conscious of slowness of heart in ourselves : but

we cannot but know that we are in possession of a love on God's part which passes knowledge.

How to get them to stand.

If you were an eye-witness of the operations of farm-servants on the barn-floor, you would there get an illustration of the way to get believers to stand.

I have seen them filling sacks with chaff, and I invariably observed that one person had to hold the sack all the time of its being filled ; and, even when full, it could not stand alone, but had to be made to lean against the wall to get it to stand. But I noticed that if they took precisely the same sort of sack, and poured into it the well bolted corn, it stood by the weight of what it was receiving during the process of filling ; and also, after it was full it stood upright of itself in the middle of the floor, just because it had been made strong to stand by the weight and solidity of the heavy grain which it contained.

And so the Christian who is filled with the good seed of the Word of God, and thereby filled with Christ, stands in the power of what he *receives* ; whereas the hearer who is filled with the chaff of men's thoughts and opinions on God's truth, however quickly he may be filled to the dimensions of the other, will never be able to stand alone. There must be the solidity of the truth in Christ to insure stability.

If the preaching we are hearing does not so fill us with the heavy grain of God's Word, that we stand by the weight of it without a lean, we had better take heed *what* we hear and also *how* we hear.

“ Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. **But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**”

“ To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

Things concerning Himself.

The All-conquering Love of Christ.

On bended knees the Apostle prays for those who are accepted in the Beloved—who have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Eph. i. 6, 7), “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

“To know the love of Christ.” Surely their hearts were glad and their voices often rising in praise and thanksgiving to Him Who had gone into death for them. He had borne all the awful judgment which was their due, and now seated at the right hand of God, He was their representative there, they made nigh to God in Him. (Eph. ii. 13.) They knew where they had been brought from, but it was needful for them as for the believer to-day, to distinguish between what they had been brought from, and what they were brought to.

The believer is sure that Christ loves him, because His love was proved in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us. Blessedly true this is, yet it is quite another thing to rest on the *proof* of love, than to rest on the *love itself*. We may gladly acknowledge what His love has done for us, while there may be a lack of perfect confidence that His love is absolutely to be relied upon, for every step, every trial, every sorrow that may be in our pilgrim path.

This is the secret of failure so often manifested in saints when trials come, when days seem dark and the path is rough. They are so readily cast down in trouble, bowed down, as though they had no resource—the present grace of Christ not known. Surely this is not honouring to the One, to Whom honour, love and confidence are due.

We are brought from darkness into light—to God Himself Who is both light and love. So in Eph. v. 2, the

exhortation is to “ walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself *for us* an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a sweet-smelling savour.” We are brought nigh, in all the fragrance and perfection of Christ’s person and work. We are brought nigh in Him Who has glorified God in His perfect obedience unto the death of the cross, and now we are in Him in the presence of God. Eternal life is now ours, and we are brought into the circle of divine fellowship—with the Father and with the Son. We are the trophies of His grace, objects of His special care and love, and we shall be His great joy when gathered home to be for ever with Himself. Destined in the purpose of His love, we are to be co-heirs with Him in all the vast inheritance of bliss, to be His peculiar treasure when all the toil is past, sharing with Himself the eternal joy of the Father’s house. What a challenge we have in Romans viii. What can “ separate us from the love of God, which *is in Christ Jesus* ? ”

The Apostle turns to the Lord, on behalf of the Thessalonian saints, who well knew and rejoiced in the love of God and Christ, in view of the trials and enemies in their path—“ The Lord direct your hearts *into* the love of God, and the patience of Christ ” (1 Thess. iii. 5), that is into the blessed enjoyment of infinite, eternal love, into the atmosphere wherein the soul can live and breathe, the sweet foretaste of heaven’s bliss.

Again, in Eph. iii., he says “ To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God ; ” Christ dwelling in the heart by faith—the love of Christ known—satisfied ! “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? ” Here we have enemies sevenfold. “ Nay, in (any or) all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

Think you, will that love let one of His own go, or any thing, any enemy, ever be able to hinder its outflow to its objects ? In the assurance of such love, the love of our mighty Deliverer and unchangeable Friend, we may

echo the apostle's cry.

Yea, not only shall we arise victorious from the trials of the way, or the opposition of the enemy, but we shall come forth with great and glorious spoils of victory. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Our faith will be strengthened, and we shall have a deeper knowledge of the love and power of our Lord and Saviour—thus fitted all the more for the trials of the journey. We shall bear sweet fruits of the Spirit, to ripen in the sunshine of that wondrous, precious, all-conquering love of Christ.

Do you know that love?

"The Cry of the Four Winds."

"How long is it," asked an old Mohammedan woman in Bengal, "since Jesus died for sinful people? Look at me! I am old; I have prayed, I have given alms, I have gone to the holy shrines, I am become as dust with fasting; and all this is useless. *Where have you been all this time?*"

That cry was echoed from the icy shores of the farthest North-West Territory.

"You have been many moons in this land," said an old Eskimo to the Bishop of Selkirk, "did you know this good news then? Since you were a boy? and your fathers knew? then why did *you* not come sooner?"

It was heard in the snowy heights of the Andes.

"How is it," asked a Peruvian, "that during all the years of my life I never before heard that Jesus Christ spoke those precious words?"

It was repeated in the white streets of Casablanca.

"Why," cried a Moor to a Bible-seller, "have you not run everywhere with this Book? Why do so many of my people not know the Jesus whom it proclaims? Shame on you!"

It is the cry from the four winds. How shall we answer it?

“Hast thou any here besides?”

Before the flood came and swept the unbelieving away, God said to Noah, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” Ere Jericho’s guilty inhabitants—man, woman, young and old—were “utterly destroyed,” “Rahab, her father, mother, brethren, and *all that she had* were taken to a place of safety” (Josh. vi.), for Rahab asked for the lives of her father, mother, brethren, sisters, and ALL THAT THEY HAD! (Josh. ii.), and under the shelter of the scarlet line, they were all safe in that day of judgment.

It was to Lot that the word, “Hast thou any here besides?” was spoken. The angels announce to him that the hour of Sodom’s destruction is at hand—“Hast thou any here beside?” say they, “son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and *whatsoever thou hast* in this city, bring them out of this place, for we will destroy this place” (Gen. xix.). What could have been more comprehensive than these words—“*whatsoever thou hast!*” Ah, Lot! think over those whom thou hast in Sodom with thee—thy wife, whom thou didst marry *in* Sodom, thy children begotten in Sodom, thy sons-in-law married to thy daughters *in* Sodom—go to them, plead with them, cry to them that this is their last opportunity: if they refuse thy voice to-night, they will to-morrow be destroyed. But Lot is as one that mocks unto his sons-in-law—his life had been worldly, and so he had no *power* to testify to others of the coming judgment, for was he not as one of them, a citizen of their city? He himself is saved so as by fire, the Lord being merciful to him. He leaves the city with his wife and daughters; his wife looks behind her, and becomes a monument to all generations, that to walk towards heaven with the *heart* and *eyes* towards the world is utterly vain—that nothing short of a *heart* turned to God is salvation. When the clear day broke, all were destroyed, burnt up by the fiery tempest.

May we learn the Lord’s lesson from these examples!

Jesus is coming—the world will soon be destroyed—for as it was in the days of Lot, so shall the day of the Son of man be. Surely we who believe the Word of God—that we may be called at any moment to meet our Saviour in the air—have need of the angels' question being put to our own hearts, "Hast thou any here besides?"

The Faith of Four Men,

"And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was."

Mark ii. 4.

In this portion of the Word of God there is a very lovely picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Jehovah's perfect Servant. Unwearied and untiring in His love and devotion He is here seen preaching the word to those who were gathered together in the house. Doubtless many had been drawn there, attracted by the wonderful words that He spoke; and others were there to criticise and to find fault. But what we wish to notice more particularly is the four men who came unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy. They teach us all, as servants of Christ, a most impressive lesson. "Jesus saw their faith." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). This we see exemplified in this narrative. The gathered multitude saw nothing in this, nothing to excite their interest and approval. If only these four men could bring the sick one to Jesus, it mattered little or nothing to them what the multitude might say or think.

I. *They were United.* Very little would have been done had this not been in their "work of faith and labour of love." O, that we realised this more in our service! We cannot think of one servant of Christ working independently of another (1 Cor. i. 10); "Ye

also helping together by prayer for us ” (2 Cor. i. 11) ; “ Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ” (Rom. xv. 30). By this it will be seen how much the beloved Apostle Paul valued prayer and fellowship in service. I believe this is what will keep God’s people united in all their efforts to reach the unsaved, to bring them to Jesus.

2. *They were Unselfish.* It is beautiful to observe how this is brought out in this incident, when apparently everything was against them. O that we thought less and less of ourselves, especially in the light of so many scriptures that bring before us the entire self-forgetfulness of the Lord Jesus ! “ We then *that* are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself ” (Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3). Nothing less than this is to be our pattern. “ That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again ” (2 Cor. v. 15).

Of Him it has been written, “ Pleased not Himself,” “ Humbled Himself,” “ Gave Himself.” What a precious thought to think of Him thus stooping to the lowest depths, and making Himself of “ no reputation ! ” (Phil. ii.).

3. *They were Urgent.* No time was to be lost ; every moment was precious. It may be here said they redeemed the time, “ Buying up the opportunity.” That is what the true servant of Christ has to do : he cannot afford to let one opportunity slip without testifying of Christ. May God give us grace to “ preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season,” and in view of the judgment seat of Christ, when all our work will be made manifest of what sort it is, to be filling up each moment with loving devoted service to Him.

“ Precious Saviour, may I live,
 Only for Thee ;
 Spend the powers Thou dost give,
 Only for Thee.”

4. *They were Undaunted.* It was their faith that overcame all the obstacles that stood in the way. They might have reasoned as to how their purpose was to be fulfilled ; as to what the Pharisees might think of them. But no, they put aside all that, and *unwavering* in their faith they step out with the sick of the palsy. They had the assurance that Jesus would heal if only they could come nigh unto Him. We can only preach the Gospel in so far as we know its power for ourselves. " We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen " (John iii. 11). " I believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak " (2 Cor. iv. 13). May God give us grace to realise the importance of personal dealing with the unsaved, when preaching His blessed Gospel ! Thus shall our labours be rewarded, as was that of these four men. " Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord " (1 Cor. xv. 58).

The Sunday School Teacher's Pen.

I read a letter this evening received last year from a young girl who was asked if she knew the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour, to which she replied, " I can answer that with a big Yes." She then went on to tell how the Lord spoke to her through a letter received from her Sunday School teacher. She had just started out to work, and the loving appeal met with a blessed result, and then and there she took the Lord Jesus as her Saviour and wrote to tell her teacher so. I have known of quite a few cases of definite conversion resulting from letters written in dependence on the Lord, and I feel I must just commend this to the prayerful consideration of the many Sunday School teachers who read this magazine.

The children in our Sunday Schools only receive letters on very rare occasions, and they are delighted to

have one all to themselves. This gives such a blessed opportunity of a very definite, personal appeal. It may be asked, When should I write? This must be a matter between yourself and the Lord, but the one who has the souls of the young ones upon his or her heart, will find that occasions do arise. The absence of a child through sickness or other reasons gives a good opportunity for a letter. Then I know of one teacher who finds out the date of the children's birthdays and writes them a loving letter of greeting to be received on that day, not forgetting the importance of starting another year with Christ as their Saviour and Lord. This teacher has been definitely encouraged in this service and the Lord has used the letters to more than one child.

There is another feature about a letter which is not always the case with the spoken word. The latter is often forgotten and not appropriated, but the written message is definitely personal and there is no doubt for whom the appeal is meant. The letter is frequently kept and valued and may deliver its message at a future day. An interesting incident in connection with this is told by Mr. Last in his book, "Hand Gathered Fruit." A young lady, when asked for an account of her conversion, said that one day she was clearing out a box containing the accumulation of many years. She was destroying many old letters, and as she glanced at them before tearing them up, she noticed a letter, the handwriting of which was strange to her. Opening it, she discovered it was one from her Sunday School teacher, written many years before, when she had left home to go to a situation. In the letter her teacher spoke of the love of Jesus, and urged her to accept Him as her Saviour. The letter had doubtless been read when received and not destroyed, but laid aside and after a time altogether forgotten. Now, as she read it again, after years had rolled by, the loving appeal of her teacher came with wondrous power to her heart, and kneeling there by the pile of torn letters to be burnt, with tears running down

her cheeks, she yielded to the Lord. Very probably the teacher never knew the result of that letter, but the day of glory will reveal it to her, and also surprises for many of us, who have not seen the results at the time of service done to the Lord with the desire for blessing to souls.

May the Lord stir up our hearts to use every opportunity that He puts before us for His glory.

The Lord Jesus Himself.

May the Lord Himself be more personally with and before us ! a *nearer* and *more real* object than ever !

Truth that gives *thoughts* is not fully the right thing ; but truth that gives *Himself*—that is the thing.

Jesus once here—now in the heavens—again to be here and with us for ever—the *same* Jesus throughout—known for eternity as He was known in His track through the cities and villages of Israel—this is the mystery that gives us *Himself*. And it is the business of *faith* to reach *Himself*. The centurion pierced the cloud, the *thick* cloud, of His humiliation, and got at the *divine glories*, which lay on the other side of it, or under it. The poor sinner of the city pierced the cloud, the *dark* cloud, of her own sin and misery, and got at the *divine love* that could heal it all. Faith may thus find various excellencies in Him, but it is *Himself* it reaches.

Faith sits and sings—

“ All human beauties, all divine,
In my Beloved meet and shine.”

Let not this evangelic age give you the *work* of Christ alone. It tends that way. Without His work, I know, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work turn you from personal acquaintance with Himself.

An Inspiration, a Fellowship, a Sacrifice.

Bishop Hill's last words in London, before going out to the Niger, where he laid down his life in the service of Christ.

I have three words to leave with you, an *inspiration*, a *fellowship*, a *sacrifice*. I knew one most powerful preacher, one who has been much used of God in the salvation of souls; and whenever you heard that man preach you would often discover that just as he looked down at what you would think to be notes, he seemed to get some fresh inspiration, and if you were to go and look at those notes, you would see just one word—*Jesus*.

I want you, beloved gleaners, to get a fresh inspiration to-night from that loving One, Jesus. Look upon Him, that you may get a fresh inspiration for the year's service. And then a *fellowship*. I do not know if you have ever read the remarkable passage in the life of Henry Martyn, in which he gives an account of how he spent a night in agonising sorrow, which was the result of a thought coming to his mind of the value of a soul to God. He began to think of the various outcasts in India as being quite as dear to God as the kings of Britain; and that night he spent in prayer, in tears, in sorrow over souls. Beloved gleaners, I pray God that this year you may know something of the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ in His sorrow for souls.

And now that other word, *sacrifice*. A noble youth of Rome, who discovered the riches of God's grace in Christ, and became a follower of the Lord, went to Hermas with a desire. "What," said he, "can I do in return for such love as this?" Hermas took out the noble young fellow and showed him something of the sin of Rome, and as he pointed out here and there something of the need of its souls, he said, "Here you will find an altar, and there become the sacrifice." Look upon the fields white unto harvest. Look upon the millions that are without Christ in the world to-night, in their awful sin, and you will find an altar; and may God help you, beloved gleaners, to be a sacrifice.

God's Thought for His Children.

Is it not happy at times to cast the eye back to a period before this world was founded and to find that it was no sudden hasty thought with God to make us His children, but, ages ago, in the calm serenity of His own being, when He alone existed, before ever the morning stars sang together—*then we* were in His thoughts—yea, more—then He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son—and as with worshipping and adoring hearts we wonder and adore such grace, let us remember that this surely was the highest thing for which He could predestine us.

We *are* to be conformed to the image of His Son, the firstborn ; as He is holy and without blame before Him in love, so are we to be. This then is *God's purpose*, which we shall soon see accomplished and oh ! what endless joy then ! And now as we wait for that blessed moment, shall we not seek that even down here in our measure, *that will* may be carried into effect.

As we journey onwards, ever with Christ as the object before us, pressing forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus let us keep the eye of faith on the coming Saviour, the moment when He shall descend, and we ascend to meet in heavenly glory, and so for ever be with Him. Then shall be fulfilled that word, when we see Him as He is, we shall be *like Him*. This truly will be the full and eternal consummation of all our joy. No possibility then of grieving the One we love, no wandering then from that side which was riven for us. Then all our energy shall be concentrated in praising as we should Him Who loves us and died for us.

Then indeed the end for which God in the past predestinated us, and the present longing of the true-hearted soul, will both be perfectly accomplished when we see Him as He is, for then we shall be *like Him*.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” *Mark xiii.*, 34.

The Man of God.

1 Kings xvi. 29—xvii. 1.

In the times of Israel that word “man of God” comes repeatedly up in connection with Elijah and Elisha. The title, while actually found as the character itself is prominently brought out, is still really applicable to all the Lord’s people, as what they all are, I may say, positionally, and as purchased by the blood of Christ. They are surely God’s men; but the “man of God” is the title here of one who is practically that—one whose practical character answers to his position.

That character of course becomes only the more distinct as the times are trying. The apostle tells us also, even in his time: “All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” *Phil. ii. 21.* Just in proportion as that is so, it makes more striking the reality of one who is a man of God; it makes him shine out in the darkness, as it is said of John the Baptist, who as you know took up Elijah’s mission, “He was a burning and a shining light.” The darkness is used of God to make His lights more apparent. God’s lights as such, are made for the darkness, which does not hide or put them out, but manifests them. Such a light, in the very darkest days in Israel, was Elijah the Tishbite.

If you look back and consider, you will see how largely God’s people have lived in such times as these; how from the very beginning of all dispensations that which was entrusted to man’s care, he failed in. A time of general departure calls on those who would be overcomers to walk alone with God. If the stream be adverse, we need more spiritual energy.

The time in Israel was not such as we should look for such a light as Elijah the Tishbite in ; it was exactly God's time. God delights in showing in the very midst of it all that He is quite as sufficient for the darkest times as for the brightest. Elijah's name shows where his strength lay. " My God is Jehovah " or " Jehovah is my mighty One," and it is the power of God we see in him ; a power as available for you and me, as for Elijah. " Tishbite " is said by some to mean " The Converter," the one in whom there was God's power to turn men from the way in which they were unto Himself ; and who sought to bring a nation back to God. In his own lifetime there might seem to be little apparent success in that ; even so there is the lesson for us. For while God never allows His word to fall fruitless to the ground, and we may surely trust Him for that, on that very account we may leave that success to Him, not indifferent, but still not troubled, if it do not much appear ; and anxious, first of all that the seed and sowing should be to His mind, rather than to see results which perhaps the day of manifestation will alone disclose.

That is what God would have before us ; success is in His own hands, and God is content sometimes to work in a way to us inscrutable. If we make success our object, it will become a snare to us. We shall get our eyes on the results, and by this test our work untruly. For if that is the test, what about His Who said, " I have laboured in vain ; I have spent My strength for naught ! " " Yet surely," was His appeal, " My judgment is with the Lord and My work with My God." God, on the other hand, would have us look, in the most careful way possible, at walk and work and life, and as to what comes of it, the issue of it all, leave that to be made manifest in the Day fast approaching, which shall make everything manifest. Are you content to leave it to that ? Care for souls and love to them is of course another thing. God forbid that I should say one word which should make that a matter of little moment ; but beware

of what on every side people are doing ; and beware of thinking that quantity, with God, will atone for quality.

I want you to look at Elijah in the attitude which is expressed here in a few words. "Elijah the Tishbite who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." He stood before the living God ; God was for him that—the living God. That is the first thing, "as the Lord God of Israel liveth" he says. He can find no way of expressing assurance equal to that. It was the surest thing he knew, the most vividly realised, that the God of Israel lived. And that is just the thing we want to realise down here. The living God is what we want in the midst of scenes like this, in the midst of all so full of life and activity, the life around and about brushing us on every side, how we do want to realise the living God !

Now this standing before the Lord God of Israel, what does it mean ? As you see at once, it is the attitude of service. He is waiting, ready at His bidding to go. Not merely walking before Him, not running about surely with the restless hurry of many, too busy with His service to listen to His word. "Standing" is waiting to have His will expressed. We stand before the Lord God when we are waiting for Him to direct us, and do not move without His guidance. There may be much more standing than moving even, no doubt. If you take Elijah's life, how much more of standing or waiting, or being alone with God, than there was of acting for Him ; but the acting for Him in consequence came just at the right time. So should we be ready to serve, not merely occupied with the service, much less hurrying about, as if to be doing was the whole matter, but to be in His path, to be doing *His* will, conscious that all else is worse than idleness.

Now notice how God identifies Himself with the men who stand before Him in this way. "As the Lord

God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." What a bold thing to say ! It was not that the Lord was going to accomplish Elijah's will, but that Elijah was accomplishing the Lord's. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." He had got into the secret of God's mind, and was honoured by being made the announcer of it. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." (Amos. iii. 7.) The prophet and the man of God are nearly identical. Would He keep back anything from those who stood before Him, seeking to be servants of His will, and towards the people of His choice ? What a wonderful place that is to be in ! For God to identify Himself so with one, not to be ashamed of him, as it is said in Heb. xi. of those old worthies ; not ashamed to identify Himself with, and uphold before the face of the world, the word of a poor, untitled man, but to whom His word and will were all. That is what Elijah was, and so he became linked with the fulfilment of the purposes of One to Whom the universe is but the scene of the display of a glory which transcends it still.

Now that is the character of the man of God. I have very feebly traced out what is there, but still that is what the man of God is. I want to know, not whether we are that in full, but still how far that represents us, or has meaning to us, at all ? Do we know what standing before the Lord God is, and before the Lord God of His people ? Do we know what it is to have the living God before our eyes in this kind of way ? Do we know what it is to be able to see, not only His actings in our lives, but what He is doing in the world, and toward His people, because we are with Him, and therefore have His mind ? Do we know what it is, as sons of God, to be His servants, working with the zeal and intelligence of those who both know the Father's will, and know the Father ?

Our service from first to last, is to have His word to

justify it. God has one path for us to walk in, one work at any moment for us to be about. While the Word guides, it must be a living guidance—guided by His eye.

The Lord grant it, for His Name's sake.

Wasting Half Hours.

A young Christian was in trouble. Only recently brought to know the Lord, she had rejoiced in her Saviour. But this evening her face was clouded. The preacher wondered why and ventured to ask what was wrong. "Why, if what you've been saying to-night is true, I want something more. I need to be saved from wasting half-hours. I want power to put aside a book which does me no good and won't make me fitter to do good to others, instead of wasting a half-hour over it."

As I read this, it set me thinking. "Brethren, the time is short." Are we making the most of it? The Lord has saved us for Himself and has left us here for His glory. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord of hosts." Are we fulfilling His desire for us? "Know ye not . . . that ye are not your own?" says the inspired apostle; "for ye are bought with a price." Just think of that! "Not your own." Then surely our time is not our own either. We cannot just spend it as we like. No, it too is the Lord's—every moment of it. Are we spending it for Him?

What about those idle moments spent over the newspaper or a story book? Does that make us fitter for our Lord's service or give us a desire to read His Word? What about that extra half hour in bed this morning when you knew how little time you would have to read your daily chapter? Think too of those minutes you frittered away doing nothing when you knew there were so many little odd jobs waiting to be done. Is that not wasting the Lord's time? I'm sure it is.

Ah, we must all confess how many wasted half-hours we spend and yet we hear the Lord's words ringing in our ears, "Behold I come quickly ; and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." In view of His coming, surely it becomes us to be in earnest. Souls are perishing on every hand ; the Lord's dear people are in trial and difficulty, needing a word of cheer, a friendly hand. Shall we selfishly refuse to help while we fritter away the precious moments, amusing ourselves, dressing ourselves, indulging ourselves? God forbid. "The love of Christ constraineth us." Ah ! that must be the impelling motive. The love of Christ—the love that passeth knowledge, the love that waters could not quench, nor floods drown, the love that led the Son of God to give Himself for me ! No wonder it constrains me as I let my soul dwell on it. As I think of the portion that was the Son's in a past eternity, of His place in the Father's bosom, of the wonder of the incarnation and the most stupendous wonder of the cross, surely my heart bows low in adoration, as I whisper—

" Oh what love, Lord, all transcending
Led Thee there to die for me ! "

And we are led to sing with reality—

" Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

In the face of such love, may we indeed consecrate ourselves fully to Him, seeking to spend and be spent in His blessed service till that day when we may hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Put Thou my Tears into Thy Bottle.

There are many lessons which we may learn from the life of Joseph ; but for the present let us see what we can learn by the Holy Spirit's leading from the tears of that one, whose life stands out so especially as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ—

Paul says that he was "mindful" of Timothy's tears ; and there were many tears in the eyes of Joseph which we might well be mindful of. David and Jonathan were weepers, as well as Paul and Timothy. But were I careful to do so, I might claim it for Joseph, that he exceeded them all. The occasions of his tears were more various. And indeed it is an earnest, real, and hearty flow of affections that we have to covet in the midst of the more cultivated and orderly attainments of this day. Tears are oftentimes precious things, and sometimes sacred too.

At the beginning, when Joseph saw conviction awakening in the conscience of his brethren, he wept. These were tears both of sorrow and of joy. He felt for them passing through the agony : but he must have rejoiced to see the needed arrow reaching its mark, and the bleeding of the wounds that followed.

He wept again, when he saw Benjamin. The son of his own mother, her only child besides himself, whose birth too had been her death, and the only one in the midst of his father's children (who were all then before him) who had not been guilty of his blood, such an one as this, was at that moment seen by him in Benjamin. These tears, therefore, nature could account for.

He wept again, as he saw the work of repentance going on in his brethren. In his way, he greatly longed after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ ; till at the last, Judah's words were too much for him ; conviction of conscience had then ended in restoration of heart. "The old man" and "the lad" again and again on the lips of Judah had eloquence which prevailed, and Joseph

could no longer refrain himself. He sobbed aloud, and the whole house of Pharaoh heard him. But these were more than the tears of nature. This was the bowels of Christ, or the tears of the Father upon the neck of the prodigal.

Each of these weepings was beautiful in its season—but we have more still.

He fell on his father's face and wept as his father had just yielded up the ghost. This was as the grave of Lazarus to Joseph ; and there he and his Lord can weep together.

And again he wept, when, after his father's death, his brethren began to suspect his love. He was disappointed. An unworthy return to the ways of a constant, patient, serving love, made him weep—in the spirit of Him, I may say, who wept over Jerusalem. For years had he been doing all he could, to win their confidence. He had nourished them and their little ones. Years had now passed, and not one rebuke of them do we find either in his life or in his ways. Grief over their departed father had just freshly given them to know what common affections they had to bind them together. He had supplied them with every reason to trust him. And yet, after all, they were fearing him. This is a terrible shock to such a heart as Joseph's. But he did not resent it, save with his tears, and renewed assurances of his diligent, faithful love. And have not such tears as these, I ask, as fine a character as tears can have? They were as the pulses of the aggrieved Spirit of the Lord. “How long shall I be with you?” “Why are ye fearful?” “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?” These were kindred pulses of an aggrieved heart in Jesus. Jesus has *sanctified* tears, and made them, like everything else that went up from Him to God, a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour ; Joseph and David and Paul, yea, Jonathan and Timothy too, have made them *precious*, and put them among the treasures of the Spirit in the bosom of the church.

“ For Me ! ”

1. Lord Jesus, Thou hast died for *me*,
Did'st bear *my* sins on Calv'ry's tree ;
For *me* Thou liv'st in Heav'n above :
Oh, how unsearchable Thy love !
2. [For *me*, the vilest, Thou hast died ;
Mine were the sins that pierced Thy side ;
For *me*, Lord, Thou wast sore distressed :
In *Thee my* heart has found its rest.
3. For *me* was shed Thy precious blood,
Which brought a sinner home to God ;
For *me* thou layest in the grave—
I was the lost Thou cam'st to save.
4. And when, Lord, Thou shalt come for me,
And when Thy glorious face I see,
Then shall I know, with Thee above,
The depth and fulness of Thy love !

Vessels of Mercy.

What is a vessel? Suppose you placed one on the table at your side, have you not two thoughts in your mind as to its use? You place it there to *hold* what you put in it; this is one thought. Then the other is, that it may be held by the hand of another. Had it a will or a motion, these uses would be hindered. And so with God's vessels of mercy; they must be will-less, and motionless too; they are to be filled with that which He puts in them, and to be held and used by His hand. It is only in the measure that our wills, our motions, our thoughts, are set aside, that we are really vessels; and, as such, fitted and meet for the Master's use.

Things Concerning Himself.

Knowing the Time.

I was on my way once in a country part to visit a family some distance from where I was staying. As a farmer brother was taking some young cattle to a distant pasture for the summer, and was going somewhat in the same direction, we went along part of the way together, enjoying a little fellowship one with another. All of a sudden we heard a long distant shout which was repeated once or twice. We looked round but could see no one, nor could we see any house in the direction from which the voice came. On one of us looking at his watch, we quickly understood what it meant, for it was just about twelve o'clock noon. No doubt *the shout* was the call home to some one ploughing in the field, from some farm house hidden behind the bush. This led to a conversation about *another shout*, that is mentioned in the Scriptures, and how we who believe in, and know as our Saviour, that blessed Person at God's right hand, may at *any moment now* be called Home by the Lord Himself descending from heaven *with a shout*. 1 Thess. iv. 16. This dear farmer brother then told me that many a time when he had been working away in the field ploughing, and he thought it was *near the time*, he had stopped at the end of a furrow and listened to hear *the shout* that was to call him home to his mid-day meal and a short rest for himself and his horses. We both agreed that we Christians should now be just in the same state of expectancy with regard to our blessed Lord's coming again; who descending from heaven *with a shout* will call us home, not to a short rest, and then turn out again; but to "go no more out" to enjoy "the rest that remaineth for the people of God" for ever. If Paul in his day could speak of "*knowing the time*," and say then "the night is far spent and the day is at hand," referring to the return of the Lord Jesus, how very, very much more spent must it be now that eighteen hundred years

and more have rolled away? Yes, dear fellow-believer, dear brother or sister in Christ, *the night is very far spent*. Our Lord is soon coming (perhaps before I finish writing, or you finish reading this) to take His blood-bought Church, His own, that are in the world, HOME.

He is coming to take us *Home* to the Father's house in glory, for He loves us as He loves Christ. He is coming to take us *Home* to the joy and rest of being for ever with and like the blessed Lord Himself. Then we shall see the face of the One who has loved us, cared for us, and so faithfully kept and sustained and borne with us here. Then He will have *His exceeding joy* in having us round Himself and with Himself up there. We shall have fulness of joy, in being there with Him for ever, and with one another, unhindered by anything within ourselves or around us. No wonder that it is called "that blessed hope" in Titus ii. 13.

To look within and see no stain,
 Abroad no curse to trace,
 To shed no tears, to feel no pain,
 But see Him face to face.
 To find each hope of glory gained,
 Fulfilled each precious word,
 And fully all to have attained
 The image of our Lord.

Reader, how is it with you and with me? Are we pausing at the end of the furrow, so to speak, and listening, yes, even as we go along our daily course, listening, expecting to hear *that shout*, "knowing the time?"

The general Laodicean spirit, that luke-warm state as to what is due to the blessed Lord Himself is the last state described in Revelation iii., before the Church is seen as in the next two chapters up in heaven, under the figure of twenty-four elders, etc. It is that which characterises the professing Church now. It all tells us that we may "know the time," that we are in the very last of the last days, soon to be caught up to meet our Lord in the air. He will "descend from heaven *with a*

shout " for us. *He* wants us to be looking out for Him, for He said, " Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediately. . . . Blessed are those servants. . . ." Luke xii. May it be thus with you and me dear reader. May we not cherish other hopes and plans for ourselves *here* that would put off *the hope* of His coming for us till after *our* plans have been carried out.

It is all right to attend to daily duties if abiding in the calling wherein we were called "*with God.*"

It is all *right* according to our gift and the ability God has given us, to be *out in the field* for Christ, labouring among souls, ploughing, sowing, reaping or watering, as the case may be, as God gives us opportunities. But let it be with us as it was with our dear farmer brother when he was in the field, and when *he knew* (as we ought to know) *the time* was near for *the shout* to be heard to call him home. If we have any other hope set before us down here, it matters not what it is, that takes the place of the hope set before us *up there*, we shall not, we cannot be found watching for Him when He comes, but sleeping. . . .

Fragment.

If ever there was a day when it is important for every true follower of Christ to stand fast and to be true to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel, and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thorough-going, heavenly-minded, and divinely-taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned, and poor, and despised ; but like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its fragrance abroad, and both God and man take

notice of it. Works, if only hypocritical doings, go for nothing ; for works that are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ, are of the same value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value ; but the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within, and record the lapse of time. " We are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them " (Ephes. ii. 10). Now is the time for works, and for overcoming, to him that has an ear to hear.

Personal Intimacy with Christ.

It is a great thing when the soul gets beyond the fact of its deliverance, wonderful and blessed as that is, and lays hold by faith upon the person of the Deliverer ; for it is in being occupied with Him, in the having to do with Himself personally, and addressing Him in happy, assured confidence of heart as one now known and delighted in, that positive and increased blessing of an inexhaustible character consciously accrues to the believer. And the more I value the immensity of the blessing I now possess, the more surely should I desire to make the direct acquaintance of the One who has conferred so wonderful a boon upon me at the incalculable cost of the sacrifice of Himself. How much, dear reader, do you and I know of personal intimacy with Him of Jacob's well at Sychar, and of Martha's cottage at Bethany, now the Man enthroned in glory ? How much do we know of that individual intercourse with Himself, without which each recurring day should be to us a cold and cheerless blank. Alas ! how many habitually grieve Him by accepting the benefit bestowed, while exhibiting pronounced indolence or indifference as

to the Benefactor, depriving themselves thus of that peculiar joy which fills the heart for the first time in that thrilling moment when we are conscious of what has never dawned upon us before—that we are personally known to Christ and He to us ! Nor can we doubt that it is equally a time of exceptional joy *to Him* when a soul in the bloom and beauty of its new-born spiritual life is brought thus fully and blessedly into conscious acquaintance with Himself, to enter upon an intercourse as intimate as the relations of the Father to the Son and as lasting as God's eternity. It is the occasion on which the believer can say, and say it unequivocally, " Well, now I know Him, my Saviour ! Not merely do I know the One who has left the scene, the Man now in glory, but have been so brought into the secret of His own presence to have immediate contact with Himself, that, indeed, I know Him more intimately than I know any earthly relative, and am known of Him infinitely better than by any such ! "

We are fully persuaded that hundreds of believers who are well assured of the blessing they have received go on in coldness and leanness, withered and stunted in soul, because of the absence of this. What they need is to have their hearts stimulated to seek this direct knowledge in cultivated and constant intercourse with the person of Christ. The Spirit of God loves to conduct the *soul* of the believer to Christ now, as also He will his *body* by-and-by, when morning breaks and glory dawns. For us nothing could be more profitable or more blessed ; for Him no tribute so acceptable !

It is as somewhat illustrating this point that we put the following little narrative before the reader.

A few years ago a poor woman, one of a number who earn a scanty living by washing at the river-side near Glasgow, and whose only possession was the tub in which her daily task was performed, had the misfortune to fall into the Clyde, and as the river was deep and the current strong, her danger was imminent, no help being

apparently at hand. Suddenly a man who was a renowned swimmer and had saved many lives, plunged into the stream : but only by extreme exertion, and well-nigh the cost of his own life, did he succeed in rescuing the object of his solicitude. The old woman herself had been so long submerged that animation was suspended, and no little effort was requisite before consciousness returned. And now, dear reader, what do you think were the first words which issuing from her lips, manifested to those around that she had really come back, as it were, from death to life ? Some expression of anxiety as to her home, her family, her friends ? Some disclosure of her feelings while in the jaws of death, or on her discovery that she had been rescued ? No, nothing of this ! But words that should be a touching lesson for us, who have been further gone than she towards a far more terrible fatality, and who have been rescued, not at the almost, but at the actual cost of Another's life. Her words were " Oh, how I want to see the man that saved me ! " Beautiful exclamation in the mouth of one who had nearly perished, but whose unselfish gratitude led her to concern herself about him whose self-sacrificing work had brought her back from death. The man came at her word. Again she spoke, " Oh, sir," she said, " you've saved me, and I've naught in the world save yon tub ; but oh ! if you'll take it you're welcome, *with all my heart !* " The man, no less astonished than gratified, made no reply, but doffing his hat went round collecting from the assembled crowd, and speedily coming back poured *all he had received* into her lap, enriching her as she had never in her life either experienced or expected.

Is it not thus, though in an infinitely higher and more blessed way, that God, having given us eternal life in Christ, with Him also freely gives us all things ? Have we, like the poor woman, experienced deep longings of heart to see the One who has saved us, and when we have made His acquaintance laid all we possess *with all*

our heart at His feet? If so, surely we shall have found that, inasmuch as it is more blessed to give than to receive, He will be no man's debtor; but taking to Himself the higher blessedness which is His due, He will pour into our lap *all that He has received*, to share with us the spoils of His own victory, the guerdon of His own work! And thus to us shall belong the double and lasting indebtedness which our narrative illustrates. May we who have been so wondrously blessed, and who sometimes sing of Him, "And gave us all that love could give," be led of the Holy Ghost into personal acquaintance with the Man in glory whom grace has made our satisfying portion for ever. And may the taste we thus acquire for what we more and more find only in Himself intensify, as it surely will, the longing desire of our hearts to see Him face to face, when the day dawns and the shadows flee away!

Prayer.

A Christian cannot always hear, or always read, or always communicate, but he may pray continually. No place, no company, can deprive him of this privilege. If he be on the top of a house with Peter, he may pray; if he be at the bottom of the ocean with Jonah, he may pray; if he be walking in the field with Isaac, he may pray, when no eye seeth him; if he be waiting at the table with Nehemiah, he may pray, when no ear heareth him; if he be on the mountain with our Saviour, he may pray; if he be in the prison with Paul, he may pray. Wherever he is, prayer will not be out of place, or wherever prayer is out of place, there *he* ought not to be. Every saint is God's temple, "and he that carrieth his temple about him (as Augustine has said) may go to prayer when he pleaseth." Indeed, to a Christian, every house is a house of prayer, every closet a chamber of presence, and every place he cometh to, an altar whereon he may offer the sacrifice of prayer.

A Word to Sunday School Workers.

“As regards hope, rejoicing : as regards tribulation, enduring ; as regards prayer, persevering.”

Rom. xii. 12. (N.T.)

The opening words of this chapter are addressed to everyone who has been bought by the precious blood of Christ, beseeching us to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. We are bought with a price and are no longer our own, and now the love of Christ constrains us no longer to live to ourselves but to Him Who died for us and rose again.

I write specially for those who labour in the Sunday School. Surely it is a blessed service for the Saviour to seek to win hearts for Him. But how easily we grow weary and discouraged, and feel like giving up. How then does the Lord stir us up by the verse at the head of this paper. What our attitude should be seems to me to be well expressed in these words, “As regards hope, rejoicing.” How beautiful to see that hope comes first. If we were to go by what we see in the children, we should despair, but we can look on with hope—yes, rejoicing ! We have the Lord’s word that “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,” so that as we look at the young ones committed to our care we rejoice in sure hope of a bountiful harvest from the seed sown in their hearts week by week. Do we grow discouraged? Well, the word to us is “As regards hope, rejoicing.”

Then “As regards tribulation, enduring.” Ah yes, we have tribulation. Many of us know much trial and sorrow in our work. The children are careless, inattentive and perhaps irreverent. Some resist all attempts to win them ; some almost break our hearts with their waywardness. Well, the word is “enduring.” Do not give up. Do not get weary. We are called to endurance. “Moses endured as seeing Him Who is invisible,” and that is also our path. Our eyes are turned to that perfect One, our Lord Jesus Christ Who endured all to the very end. “Looking off unto Jesus Who for

the joy that was set before Him endured the cross." He is our great Example. Let us fix our eyes upon Him and we shall get strength to be "as regards tribulation, enduring," and we shall have the comfort of the promise, "He that goeth forth and *weepeth*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again *with rejoicing*, bringing his sheaves with him."

Lastly, "As regards prayer, persevering." How important this is. How ready we are to grow slack in prayer. But that won't do. The Lord wants us to be in earnest, and so often reminds us to persevere in prayer. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Our God loves the diligent seeker. He loves to bless those who wait only upon Him. Surely we can each testify to the blessing it has been to our own souls to be brought into the Lord's presence continually as we bring once and again before Him those children He has given us to teach for Him. Truly, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." As we are thus more in His own presence, our faith is strengthened and we can lay hold on His faithful promises—"If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Surely it is well worth being "as regards prayer, persevering."

May we each go on, for His dear Name's sake, rejoicing, enduring, persevering, till He Himself comes to fetch us home to be "for ever with the Lord."

Then let our gladsome praise resound
 And let us in His work abound
 Whose blessèd Name is Love;
 We're sure our labour's not in vain,
 For we with Him ere long shall reign—
 With Jesus dwell above.

A Thought from laying a Fire.

“ I do not see that I can do anything for the Lord. What with seeing to the children and the house, my time is fully occupied.” Perhaps such is the thought of some busy mother as she snatches a moment’s rest from her work to look at this little book. It is true that many of us have little time to spare from our daily tasks but it is helpful to remember the word, “ Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord,” and “ Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” We may all do this, may we not ?

My thought is especially for the mothers who have their work at home among their little ones. What a special responsibility and privilege is theirs to lead those little feet early in the paths of peace, and to teach those affectionate little hearts to confide in a Saviour’s love.

We all know how trustful children are, and how they receive undoubtingly everything that Mother tells them. Here is the opportunity for every Christian mother, and also for the infant teachers in our Sunday Schools. From earliest childhood she can tell the little ones of Jesus. She can teach them out of God’s own Word those stories which children love to hear, and even baby lips can learn from her to repeat simple texts and verses. She can show too in her own life and ways, what it is to belong to Jesus. Above all, she can pray ! Oh, how earnestly will she pray for her children, that God will give them living faith in the Lord Jesus by His Spirit !

Oh, dear mothers, and you who work among the little ones, do you find it hard work ? Perhaps the children grow up careless and seem to forget what you taught them. Pray on ! You have sown the good seed of the Word and it will bear fruit in the Lord’s time.

I heard a little illustration the other day which I will pass on to you.

When you lay the fire, you put in first the paper, and sticks on top and then gently lay on the coals. Now

it is ready for the light. You do not have a fire till the match is applied, but everything is ready so that when the light comes, lo ! the fire is lit.

Well now, when we teach the children the Word of God it is like putting in the paper and sticks. We seek to do it well, to bring before them what they can grasp—"here a little, there a little," "line upon line, precept upon precept." But there is still no life there till the Holy Spirit works in them. We can teach them but we cannot convert them. But we can pray. We teach the children the Word of God and ask the Lord to bless it to them. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. He gives faith to receive the Gospel. What encouragement this is to us to pray earnestly and unceasingly for our little ones, and what an incentive to teach them continually the Holy Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. May we each—parents and teachers—take courage and go on.

Loving-Kindness and Tender Mercies.

Words are utterly powerless to convey, in an adequate manner, the intensity of affection, interest, solicitude, and patient endurance expressed in the Holy Scriptures as God's attitude to man. The choicest words, in their most refined and far-reaching sense, are used, and in some cases not allowed to be appropriated to any other use, than that of expressing His tender affection for His creature. A mother's affection for her firstborn bears remarkably strong traces of it, just as the firmament displays the mighty works of His hands (Psalm xix.), or the lily (Luke xii. 27) gives evidence of the delicacy of His touch. But all come immeasurably short of that love or affection (both words are used) which is in His heart to those connected with His beloved Son by the Holy Ghost. Are we interposing any barrier to the outflow of such amazing grace ?

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“ He gave authority to His servants, and to every man
His work.” *Mark* 13. 34.

Be not Slothful.

Knowledge is not *faith*, and *principles* are not *power*. It is a mistake to think the one or the other, however much the Holy Spirit may use the knowledge of the Word or the principles of truth for our guidance and blessing.

When reading carefully the epistles, we are struck with the fact that the first thing which attracted the eye of the inspired apostle, when considering the state of the saints in any place, was not the amount of *knowledge* they possessed, but what was their condition as to “faith” and “love” and “hope,” and after *thus* considering their state, he then sought to correct and instruct them as to principles and knowledge of the truth. (See 1 and 2 Thess., also Ephesians 1. and Col. 1.) What a serious mistake then such make who place “knowledge” on the foremost ground, instead of faith and love and hope !

Our present object, however, is not to trace this in the apostolic writings, important as it is, but to inquire whether the Laodicean state, so nauseous to our Lord, is not being rapidly brought about by spiritual slothfulness ; and whether it does not call for great searchings of heart, as to how far any of us may be helping on this closing phase of the apostate church. For it is clear, that, in the apostolic epistles, we are enjoined to be “diligent,” and warned against being “slothful.” We are taught to give “all diligence” to *add to our faith* virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and love ; and in this way we should be neither idle, nor unfruitful, as regards the

knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But where this diligence is lacking, such are blind, short-sighted, and have forgotten they were purged from their old sins. We are also exhorted to be not "slothful" but to shew the same "diligence" to the full assurance of hope unto the end; as if the enjoyment of our "hope" were connected with *diligence* in the service and ways of the Lord. (2 Peter 1. 5-11; Heb. 6. 11-12.) Happy those who are diligently exercised before the Lord, as to their growth in faith, and love, and hope. (Rom. 15. 13.)

Perhaps one of the earliest outward marks of inward decline in a christian is the readiness to excuse oneself from devotedness and diligence in the Lord's service. Difficulties are spoken of, not heard of before, and dangers too are feared: so that the manifest neglect is both accounted for and excused, when such "will not plow by reason of the cold," and say, "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets." (Prov. 20. 4; 22. 13.) The human mind can easily imagine or invent obstacles to unselfish and God-honouring service, and when this is yielded to, instead of abiding in the truth at all costs, a place of ease is readily found. When we lose the authority of the Word on our conscience, that "it is given unto us, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake," we can easily think of our present temporal advantage and personal ease in this passing scene, glide away from wisdom's ways of pleasantness and peace, and become weak and helpless as to divine things. "The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth." (Prov. 26. 15.) Such have not only left their first love, but turn away from those who stand for God's truth at all costs. A drowsy state has taken hold on them, so that their spiritual movements are little more than mechanical, "as the door turneth upon his hinges," and such become as indolent in caring for their souls' welfare, as a slumbering man who grieves at the trouble of bringing again his hand to his mouth. (Prov.

19. 24.) He so slumbers that, while knowing all that is going on around him, he has no power to bestir himself. Yet, strange to say, with all this declension and indifference to the honour of the Lord, “the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.” (Prov. 26. 16.) What an appalling state! Such can only pride themselves on their *desires* while their souls are dry and drowsy, so that the scripture is fulfilled that “the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing”: and again, “The *desire* of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour.” (Prov. 13. 4: 21. 25.)

Another mark of a *slothful* man is that he roasteth not that which he took in hunting. (Prov. 12. 27.) He may associate with God’s saints, hear the Word ministered with freshness and power, and may be even struck with its blessedness and suitability to himself: but when he retires, he is so absorbed with earthly things that he takes no further interest in it. Like the huntsman’s prize, it is of no real benefit to him, because he is too indolent to occupy himself with it by meditating on the truth for his present profit. How strikingly this describes the state of many in this day. To read or to hear the Word is one thing, but to “meditate on it day and night” for our soul’s profit is another thing. A clean animal, under the law, not only gathered up food, but it chewed the cud—so that it was not only received but digested for renewal of strength and personal profit, and connected too with a walk suited to it. (Lev. 11. 3.)

We are also told that “the way of a slothful man is as a hedge of thorns.” A spiritual and earnest christian finds something almost impenetrable in the endeavour to approach such. Greatly as those who care for their souls desire it, they find *communion* in the things of the Lord to be out of the question, and conclude that God only can break through the “hedge of thorns.” (Prov. 15. 19: 12. 24.) How truly, too, it is said, that “he also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that

is a great waster.” We are familiar with it in earthly matters : but is it less true as to the things of the Lord and our daily walk and testimony ? Opportunities of honouring the Lord are missed, and never return, and the means entrusted to our stewardship are wrongly used : time is misspent, and health and strength wasted in the routine or amusements of this present evil age. “ What is the harm of this or that ? ” saith the slothful man, little thinking that one who is practically alive unto God, and seeking His glory, would never ask such a question.

The truth is that, when we fail to enjoy the love of God to us in Christ, when Christ Himself is no longer the Object and Hope of our hearts, when meditation on the Word of God becomes irksome, and closet prayer declines, when private praise and making melody in the heart to the Lord ceases, and we no longer overflow with love to our Saviour God, to His ways, His people, and His service, we begin to be slothful christians : and oh, how serious is this state ! for “ slothfulness casteth into a *deep* sleep ; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” (Prov. 19. 15.) Let it be noted that it is a *deep* sleep : alas ! so deep, that ordinary means utterly fail to awake them. How humbling and depressing is this divinely-drawn picture of *sleep*, and yet how true ! Can anything account for what we see around us associated with the name of the Lord but slothfulness touching the things of God ? And if so, how solemn and searching is the warning, admonishing us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. The thought of some is, “ I know I am saved,” “ I know I have eternal life,” and the like : but do we consider, as we ought, that if the Spirit of God is grieved or quenched by our life and walk, we may lose the comfort and enjoyment of such precious truths, and even forget that we were purged from our old sins ?

The scriptures we have been looking at have mostly an *individual* application, so that it may be asked, What about *the assembly*, looking at it as God’s corporate

witness on earth, during our Lord's absence? We need not say to many how terribly it has failed as such ; so that instead of its being, as at first, the expression of the Spirit's unity, and of the unselfish love of Christ " the Head " of the one body, division and false doctrine abound on every hand. Still the obligation of even two or three to be faithful as gathered to the Lord's name is as true as ever, and such are greatly encouraged by the Scriptures of truth. (2 Tim. 2. 20-22.) As, therefore, God's assembly is made up of individuals, it is impossible to be right with God in a *corporate* sense unless we are so *individually*. An assembly gathered to the Lord's name will always manifest the moral qualities of those who comprise it individually. Here again Scripture reminds us that " by much slothfulness the building decayeth ; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." (Eccles. 10. 18.) Nothing is clearer than that, where there is earnestness in our Lord's service, and faithful walk by those who look for His coming, there is generally found comfort and blessing collectively. But where *knowledge* of Scripture is the first thing, with lack of earnest and united prayer, little spiritual care for Christ's members manifested, the Lord's coming as our only future dropped, there you will find, not only the absence of the increase of God, but where the life, and power, and union, once known, " decayeth," the assembly discomfort is like a house which " droppeth through."

Again, we are admonished as to this by the wise man. He says " I went by the field of the slothful . . . and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down." Here we see " thorns " the emblem of God's displeasure, instead of the " trees of His own planting " ; " nettles " instead of fruitful branches ; and the " stone wall " of separation, once so decided and solid, now " broken down," so that evil associations are easily found within, and evil intruders not excluded.

All this is traced to spiritual indolence. “ Then I saw, and considered it well : I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep : so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth ; and thy want as an armed man.” (Prov. 24. 30-34.)

But we may well look up and encourage our hearts in God, while we commend one another “ to God, and to the word of His grace.” His fatherly love has not abated. The Lord is still with us, and all His resources are open to faith. So that we may exhort one another to be “ steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15. 58.)

Individual Work.

What is individual work? It is simply a telling others of our experience of Christ's love, so that they may share it. This does not call first for an expert knowledge of the contents of the Bible, or of theology, nor for skill in discussion and power in argument. It *does* call for unshaken, unshakable knowledge of what Jesus Christ has done for us, and for a deeply rooted purpose to share that knowledge with others.

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It requires more faith and courage to say two words face to face with one single sinner, than from the pulpit to rebuke two or three thousand persons, ready to listen to everything, on conditions of forgetting all.

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“ The longer I live,” said Henry Ward Beecher, “ the more confidence I have in those sermons preached where one man is the minister and one man is the congregation ; where there's no question as to who is meant when the preacher says ‘ Thou art the man ! ’ ”

The Evangelist.

There are vacancies in the heart of Christ, and the evangelist is gifted to go out and seek the lost ones to fill these vacancies. He starts from that heart, knowing what a shelter it is. He knows how it loves and cares for them, and so he goes out to seek the lost and bring them there. He is like his Master who came to seek and to save the lost, and he knows the delight of heaven over one repentant soul.

A happy and blessed path is his. Himself a gift from the Lord to men, he must be qualified by the Holy Ghost for his work. As God's herald he takes his stand in the world, and announces the good news of salvation to sinners, for *all* who will receive it.

It is not a partial amnesty that he is commissioned to promulgate, nor is it a mere pardon, however graciously conceded, that he is sent to declare. He speaks of pardon but of justification also. He speaks of deliverance from wrath, but he speaks of everlasting blessedness likewise. The threshold of hell shall never be crossed by those who give heed to, and rest in what he proclaims : and he is empowered to tell that the door of heaven has been opened to receive all who believe. The wrath of God is averted, because His Son has endured it for sinners : and the favour of God can be enjoyed, because those who believe are now accepted in the Beloved.

In the day of Israel's deliverance the words of the prophet will be fulfilled ; " Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good " (Isa. 52. 7). But beautiful even now, not only upon the mountains, but on earth, in valley, plain, hill or city, on shore or at sea, is the proclamation of the gospel of peace, till the Lord shall descend into the air, and this day of salvation shall close.

“Spikenard Very Costly.”

Who can contemplate the unspeakable costliness of that precious gift of God which we have in Christ Jesus, without feeling the heart stirred to desire that true costliness might more characterise our service and our praise? “While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof,” says the bride in the Song of songs: and Mary the sister of Martha purposed that her King and her Lord should so be honoured at the feast in Bethany recorded in John 12, her service consisting in anointing His head and His feet. It was a sorrowful service, for it had reference to His burial: yet it was also a joyful service, for it was the outcome of a love that stayed not to count the value of her offering. It was likewise a costly service in the estimate of the blessed Lord, for it was made precious by the love that could but give its best, yet counted that as far too small. God left it to Judas to tell us its value.

We would press *costliness* in service as a point needing to be taken more into account in these busy days in which much is done at little cost. It might be well had we some enemy to show us the absolute value and real cost of much that we do; he might thereby help us more than many a friend. In the service of our blessed Lord there was a costliness which we little consider. There was costliness in His entire consecration to God; costliness in His daily toil of walking, of speaking, of suffering, and of sympathy; costliness in His nightly vigils of sleepless prayings and untold tears; costliness in His bruising, buffetings, and temptations under the power of the prince of darkness who had authority to bruise His heel.

There was much of this costliness of service in the lifelong ministry of the Apostle Paul, who, like David, would not offer to his God “burnt-offerings without

cost " (1 Chron. 21. 24). It may often be said of much that is now done and of much that is given for the work of God—it " cost me nothing " ; and when such is the case can we wonder if nothing comes out of it to the glory of God ? Need we be surprised that what costs us little or nothing is valued as little or nothing by Him to Whom it is given ?

It is not the intrinsic value of the gift, or the cost of the service, that is the measure of its preciousness to God, any more than it is to us ; but the preciousness is according to the wholeheartedness that lays the heart on the altar first, and then places all it possesses on the top of it. These matters should be well pondered by us ; their importance is not to be realised by simply speaking to one another of our heavenly calling and our future hopes, but by going *with* Christ into the garden of Gethsemane and standing near Him on Calvary.

The costliness of the love of Christ had filled Mary's heart, and the result, the necessary result, was the costliness of her service to her Lord. Who can tell His appreciation of it, or fathom the deep meaning of those words in His holy lips, " Let her alone ; why trouble ye her ? she hath wrought a GOOD WORK on Me " ? (Mark 14. 6.)

We are in danger of allowing the glory too exclusively to occupy our thoughts ; but if our spiritual affections are to be deepened and heightened we must dwell much on Calvary, and then loss will be gain, and the cost of labour a joy too deep to forego. Thus our service, if it is to be Christlike, must become more costly to us, and it will then become more precious to Him, and more blessed to His Church and to the world.

" For Thee, Lord, I would labour, I would live,
 For Thee would spend my every passing hour ;
 Myself, my time, my treasures I would give—
 A witness of Thy love's constraining power."

Abounding.

A Word for Sunday School Teachers.

There are just one or two thoughts that I would like to pass on in connection with our Sunday School work.

The first is to be found in 1 Cor. 15. 58, "*Always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" This is a remarkable statement. Notice first the "always"—not by fits and starts—not when we feel led to, but "always." Some of us feel like having a class occasionally or when the children are good and attentive but we soon tire if discouragements appear. If the Lord gives us the work, we must not lightly throw it up. The word here is "always."

Next we have "abounding." Have you ever thought of that word "abounding"? It means not merely doing the work from a sense of duty—but doing it joyfully, freely, unceasingly; not only full but overflowing is the thought; "always abounding in the work of the Lord." The same precious Saviour Who loved us and died for us claims our willing happy service. "He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him." It is *His* work—this labour among the children. It is to tell of Him we are called. What can be nearer to His heart than to have the children told of Jesus—Who Himself told of the Shepherd's joy in finding His lost sheep and of the joy in heaven over one sinner repenting? How His loving care for us calls us in devotion to Himself to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord!"

My second thought is in 1 Thess. 3. 12, "*Abound in love.*" How necessary this is in work among children. Which of us has not known experimentally the value of a smile? How often a loving look controls a wayward child when a frown could only make matters worse. We must love the children if we are to win them—and not only so but we must "abound in love."

We are in our classes to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and He is the personification of love. Think how He won us. "When we were enemies," He loved us. When we cared nothing for Him, He sought us and when men with wicked hands nailed Him to the cross, He willingly took our sins upon Him and died for us. Such was the love of Christ, and such is the pattern of love set before us for our contemplation. Let us ask Him to give us hearts of love for the perishing souls around; let us pray for warm affection to our own dear scholars. May we feel the value of their immortal souls and yearn over them with true love—yea, it must be divine love which loves when there is nothing to draw out love—love which finds its source in God.

This is what wins souls. Clear gospel teaching is needful in its place but nothing can take the place of love in opening hearts to receive the message. Nothing but love will give us patience to bear with the children. Let us then "abound in love" remembering that "we love because He first loved."

The last thought is in Romans 15. 13, "*Abound in hope,*" and I specially want to emphasise how needful this is in seeking souls. If we go to our classes, dull, depressed and heavy we cannot look for blessing—no indeed we are evidently not expecting blessing. A bright cheerful manner, born of the knowledge of the love of God, commends itself to all. We can fancy our children thinking of their depressed teacher, "I should not like a religion which makes me like that." How sad we should be if we thought that was said of us! Should we not like our children to see how happy the Lord Jesus makes us, so that they realise we have something worth having? Let us then "*abound in hope,*" filled with all joy and peace in believing—hope in the soon return of our beloved Lord, hope too in the sure harvest to be reaped then from the seed sown week by week in our classes. Think of the joy of seeing those over whom we have wept and prayed, gathered with us in His own presence

in that day ! Ah we may well abound in hope for have we not precious promises from the sure word of God to rest on ? “ In due season we shall reap if we faint not.” The time of sowing draws to a close. We hear those last words of the Lord Jesus ring in our ears, “ Surely I come quickly.” Soon He will come and then all labour, all service here will be over and we shall see His blessed face and be with Him for ever. May we then just use the precious moments for Himself “ steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

At His Feet.

Silently the hours were passing,
 As she sat at Jesus' feet ;
 One blest voice all else surpassing,
 Self was hushed in that retreat.

Wondrous place of lowly nearness
 Mary chose with Him alone,
 Lord, may we too know its sweetness,
 Take her place to be our own.

Jesus Lord ! though man despise Thee,
 We may pour upon Thy feet
 All the wealth of hearts that prize Thee,
 Precious ointment pure and sweet.

Saviour ! every crown in glory
 Will be cast before Thy feet—
 Feet, that tell of Calvary's story,
 Tell of love divinely sweet.

Till that day, oh, keep us near Thee ;
 We would at Thy feet abide
 Whilst our voices rise to praise Thee,
 Son of God—once crucified.

The Queen of Sheba and the Eunuch.

2 Chron. ix. 1 Kings x. Acts viii.

These two narratives, found in distant parts of the Word, in common illustrate truths which are as dear and important to us in this distant age and place as ever they were, whether in the time of 2 Chronicles 9. or of Acts 8.

In the Queen of Sheba and the Ethiopian eunuch, who belonged, it may be, to the same country, though at such different times—we find dissatisfaction in the best things short of Christ ; but rest and fulness in Him, whether He be known to us in grace or in glory.

The Queen of the South had all royal honours upon her, and all royal honours around her. She could command the delights of the children of men, and evidently had health and capacity to enjoy them. The world was at her disposal, but the world had left her with an aching, craving heart, and she found no satisfaction in her royal estate ; and, ill at ease, she took a long untried journey from the uttermost part of the earth to Jerusalem, because she had heard of the wisdom of the king there, “ concerning the name of the Lord.” She reached Jerusalem, and there she found all and more than she had heard of, or calculated on. Her spirit was filled ; her eye saw something in everything there that possessed her soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory—for Christ was there. He shone in those days in Solomon, who was His image and reflection, and she was brought into communion with Christ in His glory in the city of the great king, called, as it has well been, “ The heaven below the skies.” The world had left her heart an aching void, and Christ had now filled it to overflowing. She counted this merchandise better than that of gold and silver, better than that of riches : and getting her questions answered, her soul satisfied, her eye filled with visions of glory—of glory according to God—she pre-

sented her gold, her frankincense, her precious stones, the wealth of her kingdom, as a small thank-offering.

The eunuch in Acts 8. was a great man under Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians: but he had long since, I may say, proved that the vanities of the Ethiopians would not do for him. He appears before us as one who had already cast the idols of that land to the moles and to the bats, and taken up the confession of the name of the God of Israel. In the obedience of this faith he had just gone where first we see him, to Jerusalem—the city of solemnities, where the worship of the God of Israel was conducted—and he had gone there as a worshipper, but he had left Jerusalem *dissatisfied*. He was on his way home to the south country with a craving, aching heart. He was still an *inquirer*—as surely so as the Queen of Sheba had been in her day, when she left her native country for this same city, Jerusalem; and the contrast here is vivid. Jerusalem had satisfied the spirit of the Queen, but it had left the soul of the eunuch a barren and thirsty place. These are among the things which show themselves to us in these most interesting pieces of history. But why this? Why would not Jerusalem do for the eunuch what it had done for the Queen? *Christ was not there in this his day as He had been in her day*. Jerusalem was not now the city where the King of Glory in His beauty was seen and reflected, and where some image of Him and some token of His presence and magnificence might be traced everywhere. It was no Mount of Transfiguration to him as it had been to her. *Religiousness* was there, but not Christ; the observances and ceremonials of a carnal worship, the doings of an earthly sanctuary were there, but not the presence of the Christ of God. This made all the difference, and tells us why the eunuch left that very same Jerusalem with an aching heart, which had filled the spirit of the Queen of Sheba with an abounding overflowing joy.

His heart, however, is to be filled as well as hers,

and that, too, out of the same fountain, Christ—only it is through the prophet Isaiah that Christ is to fill it, and not through Solomon.

In a desert spot, on the journey that was taking him back from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, Philip, the servant and witness of Jesus, is directed by the Holy Ghost to meet him. He addresses himself to him in the aching, craving state of mind to which I have already alluded. It possessed him thoroughly, so that no strange circumstance, such as that of meeting a stranger in that desert place and being addressed by him, has power to move him. The whole scene bears this character. There was the absorbing presence of one thing in his soul. "The expulsive power of a new affection" was there. He was reading Isaiah with emotion of heart, under the convictions and awakenings of the Spirit of God. But Christ was soon to be introduced to him, and the desert should then rejoice, and in the thirsty land springs of water should flow. "Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus;" and the eunuch then "went on his way rejoicing." Joy did in him and with him now what in earlier days it had done in and with the Queen of Sheba. She trafficked for wisdom and counted the merchandise of it better than that of gold and silver and precious stones, and she was willing to part with the wealth of her kingdom for it. He now can part with Philip, since his spirit is filled with the joy of the Lord, and he has got the Christ of God, as she had got Him in type before.

Precious and beautiful illustrations these of like weighty truths! Only we make certain differences. It was the *world* in all its royal splendour and resources that had left her heart a beggar, as she had tasted it in her own country. It was *religiousness* which had left his heart a beggar, as he had proved it in the city of solemnities. But whether it be this or that—the splendour of the world, or the religion of the world—the heart is but beggary and drought without Jesus.

And then again, there is this further difference—it was Christ in the *glory* that was introduced to the Queen ; it was Christ in *grace and humiliation* that was introduced to the eunuch. Solomon reflected the King in His beauty to her—Isaiah preached the Lamb in His blood to him ; but no matter, both of them were satisfied. Christ in the dispensation of present grace and blood-sealed salvation gives satisfaction and rest to the sinner : Christ in the display of coming glories in the kingdom will give satisfaction to the nations of the world and to the whole creation of God. It is Christ, whether, as the Lamb of God on the altar, or as the King of Glory on the throne. His people are satisfied, their searchings and inquiries are over ; the sinner goes away with the Lamb satisfied and at rest ; the creation of God will rejoice in Him of whom it is written, “ Glory and honour are in His presence, strength and gladness are in His place ; ” the whole creation in all its range of manifold regions shall share in the power of that day ; the daughter of Zion, the nations with their kings, the beasts of the forest and the cattle of the hills, the floods and the woods, the hills, the vales, shall then in their several ways taste and witness the universal joy and the deep satisfaction in which the creation of God shall then repose.

But once more, and I will notice another difference. In the day of the glory *the King must be sought*—the Queen of the South comes up to wait on the King in Sion. In the day of grace *the Saviour seeks*—the Ethiopian nobleman was sought and found by the servant and witness of Jesus the Saviour. How fitting ! How beautifully correct, though various, all this is ! How all commends itself to our souls, telling us something of the perfections which shine in the ways of Him with Whom we have to do !

Fellowship.

“ Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

“ What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

“ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek *diligently till she find it*? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

How often we repeat the words, “ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us.”

In the above precious Scripture we have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in seeking the lost sheep, the lost sinner “ UNTIL HE FIND ”; and in the figure of the woman sweeping the house until she find; but there is one word most striking, she seeks it “ *diligently* ” until she find it. Then the joy in each case: the joy of God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and God the Father, filling the courts of heaven with joy over one sinner that repenteth.

Beloved fellow christians, what fellowship have we with all this? Are we not rather more like a man in the wilderness who diligently seeks a nice green tree, with soft grass beneath, where he may sit in selfish comfort beneath the shade? A few nice friends will make it all the more comfortable.

Now whilst no one can hold divine sovereignty more strongly than I do, yet have we not sat beneath the green tree of selfish comfort, and said, "If the lost sheep in the wilderness are to be found, they will come just here"? Is that fellowship with the Holy Ghost or with the Shepherd-Son of God in seeking *diligently*? Surely it is blessed to sit beneath His shadow with great delight; but He says "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." If we know what it is to lie down in the green pastures by His peaceful side, yet what about that poor wanderer, His lost sheep, far away from the flock? What about the lost ones yet amongst the millions that have never heard the name of Jesus?

Did you in all your life ever seek the lost one diligently until you have found it? And when you hear of the conversion of a sinner, the deep repentance of a prodigal, does it give you any joy? Would you not *far rather* go and hear a lecture from some noted servant of Christ (and not always that) than go with Jesus to seek the lost sheep until you find it? Do you pray much for the Sunday school? Do you go there and seek diligently for a lamb, and have you much joy in bringing that dear lamb to the Shepherd's bosom? And in the infirmaries, the workhouses, the streets, the lanes? The Holy Spirit has touched the hearts of a band, chiefly of poor men, in going through the remote villages, yes, and towns too, with tracts. How gladly these receive a parcel of tracts, and how diligently they lend, or give them. Many a lost one is thus found, and many a sheep of Christ gets fed who finds no other food; and aroused by the tracts to the value of the Word of God, in many a lonely spot they learn to lie down in the green pastures. Oh think of the Shepherd coming to seek the lost sinner! And has He not given us the Spirit, who seeks diligently till He find the lost, to do this very work during His absence? And honestly, are we not asleep instead of seeking diligently?

And He says, "I come quickly." Oh, what a change if the saints of God were to awake, and seek

diligently the lost ones, and seek until we found them ! The Holy Ghost has given us this precious parable of the Lord, and He can guide us where to use the truth. The floor of Christendom itself is covered with dust and rubbish : never mind, do not be weary, *sweep, sweep* until you find the lost one.

Awake, my brethren, awake, let us have more of the joy of heaven. Rub your eyes, and say, Is it nothing to me that a sinner has been brought to repentance ! Is the love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the poor lost, degraded, guilty sinner, and the joy of his being saved—is this nothing to me ?

If you look the world over you will find wherever a true follower of Christ is in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, with the Father and the Son, in seeking the lost sheep *diligently*, until he find it, that there is blessing. And on the other hand, can we wonder if we are utter strangers to this joy of the Lord, that there is, and must be, utter barrenness and fruitless occupiers of the ground ?

The Lord speak by His own word to our souls.

The Artist's Boy.

Some years ago there lived and worked in Italy a great artist in mosaics. His skill was wonderful. With bits of glass and stone he could produce the most striking works of art, works that were valued at thousands of pounds.

In his workshop was a poor little boy whose business it was to clean up the floor and tidy up the room after the day's work was done. He was a quiet little fellow, and always did his work well. That was all the artist knew about him.

One day he came to his master and asked timidly :
 " Please, master, may I have for my own the bits of glass you throw upon the floor ? "

“ Why, yes,” said the artist. “ The bits are good for nothing. Do as you please with them.”

Day after day, then, the child might have been seen studying the broken pieces on the floor, laying some on one side, and throwing others away. He was a faithful little servant, and so year by year went by and saw him still in the workshop.

One day his master entered a storeroom little used, and in looking round came upon a piece of work carefully hidden behind the rubbish. He brought it to light, and to his surprise found it to be a noble work of art nearly finished. He gazed at it in speechless amazement.

“ What great artist can have hidden his work in my study ? ” he cried.

At that moment the young servant entered the door. He stopped short on seeing his master, and when he saw the work in his hands a deep dye flushed his face.

“ What is this ? ” cried the artist. “ Tell me what great artist has hidden his masterpiece here ! ”

“ Oh, master ! ” faltered the astonished boy, “ it is only my poor work. You know you said I might have the broken bits you threw away.”

The child with the artist soul had gathered up the fragments, and patiently, lovingly wrought them into a wonderful work of art.

Do you catch the hint ? Gather up the bits of time and opportunity lying about and patiently work out your life mosaic—a masterpiece by the grace of God. God does not give many of us great things to do : but it is the odds and ends of everyday life which He sets us to pick up and make morally beautiful and glorious. “ Gather up the fragments . . . that nothing be lost.” (John 6. 12.)

Are we doing it, day by day ? When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of what we did with our life here, what answer shall we be able to give if He asks us : “ How many baskets full of fragments took YE up ? ” (Mark 8. 20.)

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13. 34.

“The Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge.”

I would like to bring before you a few thoughts on the love of Christ. We have learned what His service is and are in the enjoyment of that, but there is something higher. I am not occupied now with the benefits that result from it but with the love that produced it.

The love of Christ puts me not so much above circumstances as above *man* in every form. I have the knowledge of the love of a Person Who knows me where I am down here. He shows me that He has been Himself in the circumstances I am in. Nothing more affects a person than knowing that there is a heart thoroughly devoted to him. Is Christ's heart devoted to me? Yes, thoroughly devoted to you. It is an immense thing too to find that the Person so devoted to you is One Who knows all about you. Such is the love of Christ.

Let me call your attention to the difference between knowing the service of Christ and knowing His heart. Look at the case of the woman who touched the hem of His garment. Just imagine yourself for a moment in her position and think what a feeling was in her mind—what a disclosure the Spirit of God had made to her heart. She saw in that Stranger there in the crowd One Who not only had power to cure her, but also with readiness to use that power, not because of any desert, but simply by contact. She is an instance of a person knowing the service of Christ and yet not knowing His love. She has touched Him but has not confidence to come to Him ; on the contrary, she is fearing and tremb-

ling and hesitating. When she comes to Him and owns the blessing she has received she gets a further thing. She learns now not His service, but His love. "And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." "Daughter"! What a feeling her heart gets now. She goes away knowing not only that she is cured but that she is loved by the Saviour.

I will turn now to some examples of learning the love of Christ. The first is the story of Joseph's brethren. We all know pretty well the history of Joseph. He was represented to his father as dead. But when the famine came, and bread was wanted, the father heard there was corn in Egypt and sent down Joseph's brethren. There it was discovered after a time that the one who had been reported dead was the one who had the bread of life. They were made acquainted with Joseph and received under his protection. It is a figure of a greater than Joseph. We learn that it is possible for a soul to be acquainted with the service of Christ and to have received its benefits, and yet not know His heart. Joseph's brethren lived for seventeen years under his care but they did not know his feelings towards them. That only came out after the death of their father, when they were forced to cast themselves directly on Joseph and had no one else to whom they could look.

If you have not already passed through this the day will come when you must do it. And then what comes out? That whilst there is the most thorough disclosure of what I am naturally towards the Lord Jesus Christ, the love that is in His heart for me shines out at the same time. What a blessed thing! "Joseph wept when they spake unto him." It was quite true, that they had behaved badly to him, but he loved them. That is what a guilty man finds when he really comes to close quarters with the Lord. There is One Who can see you without a spot. "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." "He spake to their hearts." This

goes farther than anything Joseph had done for them. This is what the guilty man finds when he comes near to Christ, not His service merely, but the love of the Saviour's heart.

I pass to another example. Cant. 5. 2. "I sleep, but my heart waketh : it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love." This is the indolent man. How often do we hear saints say "I am not so bright as I used to be !" Scripture accounts for it. You are inactive ; you are asleep. Sleep means inactivity. It is not inactivity in doing good works merely. To express Christ is greater than any good work, and if you are expressing Christ, you will not do anything badly.

Here is inactivity—sleep—and the Lord comes to awaken. It is by a knock, not a voice. A voice is from the Word, a knock is rather circumstances. She is aroused by the knock, and opens to her Beloved but finds He has withdrawn Himself. This is the depression people complain of. What is it all for ? The Lord wants to teach you what His love to you is, to bring your heart into a deeper knowledge of Himself. How are souls recovered from this depression ? We find the mode of recovery in verses 10-16. It is by occupation with what the Beloved is, all His graces and perfections. There is an instance of it in the disciples whom the Lord met going to Emmaus. "He expounded unto them in all the scriptures *the things concerning Himself.*" That is what brightens up the soul. It is not seeking to find out how you fell into such a state but being occupied with Himself.

Turn now to the New Testament for another case. Luke 5. Here was Peter giving up his ship, his time and his means for the service of the Lord. What more could be desired ? The Lord tells him in effect "You do not understand the right ground of service ; you have not learnt what I am yet." It is not denied that he was really serving Him. But you may see a man giving his time and means for the propagation of the gospel, and

yet very possibly he has never yet come to close quarters with the Lord. What is the effect when Peter recognises who the Lord is? "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Was he doing anything wrong? No, but the Lord is teaching him what He is and what Peter is. And He brings him to this: "They forsook all and followed Him." They never doubted His love afterwards. Peter could cast himself into the sea to meet Him. People think you may bring human energy and zeal into the service of the Lord, but it will have to die out some day. You must be brought to know the reality of what Christ is and that will show you what you are yourself. The result is what we see here. They brought their ships to land, forsook all and followed Him.

In John 11 we have another example of the love of Christ. It is sympathy we have here. Nothing gives us such an idea of the heart of Christ as His sympathy. Fellowship is when He raises us up to His own level; sympathy when He comes down to our circumstances, not to our level. The Spirit of God alone can give us a sense of His love following us all along our path here and entering into all our circumstances. "Jesus wept." Can you form an idea of a heart that can stoop down to what is in yours, the sense of your bereavement, to use that as an opportunity for the disclosure of His love? The house of mourning is more welcome to Him than the house of feasting because it gives Him an opportunity for disclosing His love. He comes and walks beside one, and can comfort the bereaved heart in the assurance that he is "a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Death had laid hold upon the stay of Mary's heart, but death cannot lay hold upon *Him*. Man has failed, but the Lord fails not.

One word more as to sympathy. Nothing softens a person but this. The principle of the world is, think of yourself, take care of yourself, nobody else will. But how different this is! What a different tone and manner it gives me to know there is One Who cares for me with a

perfect, unfailing love ! In Mary's case, the dearest object on earth is taken away from her ; her prop and support is gone, but the Lord says " I will use that to come in and acquaint you with my heart." He does not simply say " I will raise Lazarus " though in His wonderful grace He does raise him. What things Mary would have to talk of to her restored brother as they went along ! She could say to him " The Lord has given you back to me after teaching me how to do and bear without you ; after teaching me that He can Himself come in and with His wonderful sympathy supply the place of every loss."

So the Lord in His varied ways is teaching us one great lesson which should give a character to every one of us ; the all-sufficiency of His love. Hence I look at everything as coming from Him. If I meet with love from any I welcome it. There is not a particle of love in the heart of a saint that has not come from the heart of Christ.

Do you complain of the lack of love ? I have got more love than I can ever take in. My only regret is that I do not give out more. There is more love in the heart of Christ than you can practically understand ; therefore it is " the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

May we each join in the language of the apostle in the close of Romans 8, " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? "

Thoughts for Meditation.

" If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

If anyone serves Christ, he will be specially under the eye and notice of the Father ; when He sees any following Christ, the preciousness of that Son of His love casts its light on them.

Every particle of truth we have brings with it corresponding responsibility, proportionate privilege, and opportunity of greater gain.

“Ready to every Good Work.”

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” Titus 2. 11-15 and 3. 1.

It is interesting to notice in what setting the above exhortation is written. It follows the setting forth of the wondrous grace of God which has brought us salvation and now teaches us how to live here, bringing before us the bright hope which animates the soul and the precious Object to engage the heart. The thought of the love of the Saviour, Who gave Himself for us that He might purify *unto Himself* a peculiar people, surely constrains our hearts to seek to be here for Him. But it may be asked “In what way can I be here for Him?” “Be ready to every good work.” The Lord has placed us each just where we can be best fitted for His use. He knows our limitations, our weaknesses, as well as our usefulness, and the responsibility that is ours is just to be ready for every good work ; in other words to be available for Him to use just where we are.

As we turn to the Scriptures we find many instances of how the Lord uses His own just where they are, and often in circumstances which are most trying. Think of Joseph in prison. He was there as under the Lord, taking the circumstance from His hand and then was ready to be of service for Him. And we read “The Lord was with him and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.”

In 2 Kings 5 we find another instance, and this time it is a little captive maid in the house of Naaman’s wife.

She might have been pining under her circumstances. But no, she is there "ready to every good work" and her witness was not in vain as we all know so well. The Lord found her ready to do His work and being available He used her.

Do we not get a hint of this readiness which the Lord looks for, in His word to the demoniac who was healed and who desired to be with Him? "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done for thee." The Lord wanted him as a witness in his own home, and there by his ways to show what God had done for him. How often ways speak louder than words, especially to those with whom we live. Surely we can thus be of service to the Lord in our own homes.

We find in Timothy one whom the apostle could speak of as being "ready to every good work." The various references to him are most instructive. In Phil. 2. we read "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I may be of good comfort when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state." Here we have a true shepherd or pastor, one who cares for the saints. Oh! the need to-day for such! Oh, to be ready for this work! To care for the state of the Lord's people is very dear to the heart of Christ. How many lonely ones there are, how many depressed and sorrowing hearts! What a cheer to such is a word in season, directing their hearts to the unchangeable Saviour, whose love never fails.

In Aquila and Priscilla we get another lovely example of those who were "ready to every good work." Living at Corinth, where they were tent makers, they lovingly opened their house to the apostle Paul who "abode with them and wrought." What a joy it must have been to them to serve the Lord in this way. And how sweetly the apostle refers to them in his epistle to the Romans saying of them, "Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also

all the churches of the Gentiles.” Turning to another reference to them in Acts 18. we find them taking Apollos and expounding to him the way of God more perfectly. “Ready to every good work” surely characterised these two devoted souls.

May the Lord just speak to our hearts that we may hold ourselves at His disposal to do His bidding, being, as it were, vessels ready to His hand, available for Him to use just where He will.

Be Ye Kind.

Oh ! dear friends, let us learn, through grace to be kind, for I think if there is anything we are deficient in it is just in that—kindness. I fear there is a solemn lack of it amongst Christians, a sorrowful want as to it somewhere. Indeed, some people seem to me to think that there is some sort of merit attached to being kind—where it is, I cannot divine nor understand. It requires no great effort or self-denial to be a stick or a stone. I doubt not it is more or less according to our nature : but, O to be like Jesus Christ ! O to have the compassions and the tenderness of Himself in our souls, and to have been so touched by it ourselves, to have come so in contact with it ourselves, in our own histories, that we understand what it is to deal with others in the same way that we ourselves have been dealt with by Him.

Let us ponder those words in Luke 6. 35 :—“ He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

Fragment.

“ When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” What enabled him afterwards to do this ? He discovered that there was utter badness in himself when he meant best, and that there was perfect grace in Christ when he did worst.

“Ye belong to Christ.”

What depths of sweetness in these precious words
 That “ye belong to Christ”—yes, Christ the Lord,
 The One to Whom the heaven of heavens belong,
 The One round Whom the heavenly legions throng—
 That peerless One—how sweet that He should claim
 You for His own !

The world may scorn and tread its own proud way,
 But “ye belong to Christ”—that One Whom they
 Of earth cast out and mocked and cruelly slew,
 But God has now exalted, and to you
 The honour gives e’en now while here below
 To be His own.

If “ye belong to Christ” what harm can come ?
 Will He not care for those who are His own ?
 His arm of power and heart of love both stand
 Engaged to bless those whom His Father’s hand
 Has given to Him, to lead to His fair home—
 To be His own.

May ye His love, His grace, His meekness show
 For “ye belong to Christ” ; that all may know
 The beauties that shine forth in heavenly rays
 From your ascended Lord, by all your ways ;
 That in your lives Christ magnified might be,
 Who are His own.

Yes, “ye belong to Christ,” for He has paid
 The ransom for your souls in His own blood,
 And soon He’ll take you with Himself to be,
 To share His love through all eternity ;
 To have His loved ones for Himself alone—
 For aye His own !

Things concerning Himself.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” John 1. 12.

“The effulgence of His glory and the expression of His substance.” Hebrews 1. 2. (N.T.)

While the Godhead glory of Jesus is expressly guarded, His personal glory is fully declared as the Word, the Creator and Upholder of all things, and the One in Whom God is revealed to His creatures. His eternal power and Godhead (Divinity) gloriously displayed in creation, has ever remained a testimony to man of the invisible God. When He laid the foundations of the earth, the joy of the heavenly hosts found expression, as the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. (Job. 38. 6, 7.)

In dispensations past, He Who is the Word, at seasonable times and divers manners, appeared to men in visions, and in angelic form. In relation to Israel, He was the Angel of God's presence (Isaiah 63. 9), also the Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. 3. 1). The Angel to be their Guide through the wilderness, was He of Whom Jehovah declared “My name is in Him” (Ex. 23. 31.)

Isaiah in his vision “saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.” The veiled seraphim celebrated the glory of the thrice holy Lord of hosts. The Holy Spirit in John 12. 41 testifies of the lowly Son of man, that Isaiah “saw His glory,” thus identifying Jesus as none other in person than the Lord of hosts.

He appeared to Daniel, in the similitude of the sons of men—a glorious Object, and in wondrous grace.

In the Old Testament the Spirit presents Him before His incarnation under various names and titles, and by many types and figures. Divine Names are always in themselves some revelation of God, and so present Him, in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead

was pleased to dwell (Col. 1. 16, 19). To Abraham He made Himself known as God Almighty (El Shaddai). To Israel He was known as Jehovah, the ever existing One. In His ways He was Jehovah Jireh (the Lord will provide) ; Jehovah Nissi (the Lord my banner) ; Jehovah Rophi (the Lord that healeth thee) ; Jehovah Tsidkenu (the Lord our Righteousness). Again, He is the mighty Kinsman Redeemer (Goel) ; the Shepherd of tender care ; the Bridegroom of love.

To faith He was Priest, Altar and Sacrifice. Creation, animate and inanimate, served to set Him forth in aspects of His character, graces, sufferings, glories, service. So He is the Tree of Life, the Living Waters, the Vine, the Branch, the Stone. He is the Lion (power), the Lamb (Sufferer), the labouring Ox (service).

All these, and much more, were revelations, bearing testimony to the coming One, and yet, when He came, in Whom all the parables, types and shadows found their fulfilment, Israel refused Him and "the world knew Him not."

In the Babe of virgin birth, divinely forenamed Jesus (Jehovah the Saviour), the mystery of godliness began—God manifest in flesh. In every step of His perfect manhood, in all His words and works, the Spirit-taught soul may trace blessed unfoldings of the heart and mind of God. In blind unbelief and enmity, the Jews demanded "Who art Thou?" and He replied "Altogether that which I also say unto you" (John 8. 25. N.T.). His presence, in perfect love and obedience to His Father's will, revealed the state of man, in alienation by sin, far from God—as it is written, "They have rewarded Me evil for good, and hatred for My love" (Psa. 109. 5). To their denial of His Person, while they sought to kill Him, He declared Himself to be the "I AM." In this Name, "I AM," Jehovah Elohim, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, made Himself known to Moses.

"Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled

Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." At the cross the love of God and man's evil met. There God was glorified, and fully declared as Light and Love. The resurrection and ascension tell of the mighty victory of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is now here, sent down to testify of Him, the exalted Lord of life and glory.

The mystery of godliness is now unfolded to the wonder and joy of adoring hearts. The Holy Spirit delights to keep the hearts of those who own Him as their Saviour and Lord, in blessed occupation with Himself. To know Him, Who is infinitely beyond the utmost capacity of the highest creature to comprehend, ever leads the heart in desire to know Him more. In Him, the unknown God is known, the invisible God is seen, the distant God is brought nigh. In the glory of His Person He is known to faith, not only as Lord and Christ, but also as the Great Priest in the heavenly Sanctuary, ever living to make intercession for His feeble, wayworn people in the wilderness path, and as the righteous Advocate with the Father, for any of the Father's children who should sin. In love too, He watches over His church for which He gave Himself, sanctifying and cleansing it by the washing of water by the Word. In His due time He will come and as the heavenly Bridegroom claim His bride, presenting her to Himself, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish.

The prophetic Word points on to further glories, to which assuredly He is Heir, when He rises from His Father's throne and is manifested King of kings and Lord of lords. In His almighty power He will lay low all in heaven and earth that is not subject to God. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

"To the only God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 25. N.T.).

Called, Filled and given Wisdom.

In Exodus 25. 8 we read, " And let them make Me a sanctuary ; that I may *dwell among them.*" These words as we know were spoken to Moses when he was on the mount with God, and oh what grace is manifested in them ! God's desire was to dwell among His people, the children of Israel, whom He had brought out of Egypt, having first sheltered them by the blood of the slain lamb on the passover night. He knew them and the waywardness of their hearts, and yet His desire was to dwell among them. He chose them because He loved them, as Moses could tell them later. " The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; for ye were the fewest of all people : but *because the Lord loved you.*" Deut. 7. 7, 8.

But if God was to dwell with His people He must have a sanctuary, for none can stand in the light of His presence, and He says to Moses " Let *them* make." Yes, He is going to let His people make it ; what grace !

We read in Exodus 31. 1-6 of three things in connection with Bezaleel, Aholiab and others whom God used in this work. They were *called, filled with the Spirit of God and given wisdom.* They could never have built that beautiful tabernacle by themselves. Surely it was God's workmanship, but He used His people as His instruments. First He gave them a willing mind to bring all the material that was required. And we know they brought so much that we are told " The stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." Exodus 36. 7. Then He used them to carry out His purpose, to build the sanctuary where He Himself was to dwell, and in Exodus 39. 42, 43, we read " According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as

the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it : and Moses blessed them."

Now surely there is a lesson for us in all this, for " whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." In Eph. 2 we read that God is building an habitation for Himself now, and we know it is composed of living stones, every sinner who is saved during this dispensation forming part of it. God alone is building this wonderful structure, but He uses us as His instruments. What wonderful grace ! " For we are labourers together with God : ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." 1 Cor. 3. 9.

Now the three things which characterised those whom God used to build the tabernacle should be true of each of those who desire to be used of God now. Firstly, we must be *called*. And does not God call each one of us to labour for Him ? The privilege cannot be for some and not for others. When we know the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour, surely like Andrew, we can find someone to " bring to Jesus." There are perishing souls all around us and as we hear the question " Whom shall I send ? " may we answer " Here am I : send me."

Then how important Ephesians 5. 8 is, for there we read these words, " Be filled with the Spirit." If we are *filled with the Spirit* the world will have no place, self will have no place and the Lord will have His right place and will be able to use us as He pleases. When the Lord Jesus was here He spoke of the living water which would flow forth from those who believe on Him, after they had received the Spirit. In order for the living water to flow forth from us to others, we must drink constantly ourselves at the fountain head.

Do not let us choose our own service, but be in dependence on the Lord, to be guided by His Spirit, just to labour for Him how and where He pleases, then it will not be in vain.

Lastly, we need *wisdom*. And oh, how important this is too. In looking back we often feel what mistakes

we have made, with a true desire to serve the Lord, through lack of wisdom. But we know where this can be obtained. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1. 5. This is a promise to all who ask in faith, so none of us can excuse ourselves from serving the Lord because we do not know how. We never can win souls without God-given wisdom. "The wise winneth souls." Prov. 11. 30 (N.T.) The Lord knows just the condition of those we are interested in and are longing to help, and if we go to them in dependence on Him alone, He will guide us by His Spirit. We shall thus be enabled to bring before them just such passages of God's Word that will meet their condition even though we cannot read their hearts. Only thus can we win them, not by any wisdom of our own, but with the wisdom that is from above, from the Giver of every perfect gift, and He will have all the praise.

As the days grow darker and the coming of the Lord draws nearer may each of us be found answering to the call of our Lord and Master, remembering that the night is far spent and the day is at hand, and when that day breaks in all its splendour our opportunities for service will be for ever over.

Tell the Good News.

Hulm the great naturalist tells us that if a single wasp discovers a deposit of honey or other food, he will return to his nest and impart the good news to his companions, who will sally forth in great numbers to partake of the fare which has been discovered for them. Shall we, who have made a greater discovery, even the fountain of living waters, not seek to impart to others this knowledge? Shall we be less considerate of our fellow men than wasps are of their fellow-insects? Ought not we to act like the woman of Samaria and go and tell the good news to others?

Lapsed Converts.

“From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6. 66-69.

This is a sorrowful story—a disappointing episode in the life of the Great Worker, the Lord Jesus. We are very little workers indeed, but there are episodes in our experiences something like this. Let us, then, consider the story, that we may get some lessons from it.

What a difference the event of the evening and the promise of the morning of this day! In the morning the people had come over the lake to the Lord with their idle questions. They had no sense of spiritual need, but they knew it was a fine thing to have plenty of loaves and fishes, and this brought them around the Lord again. But He was not deceived by their pretensions and professions. He began to test them, and at the close of the day they all go back, one to his business and another to his pleasures. They no longer want Him; He does not suit their carnal purposes; He utters hard sayings which they do not understand and are not disposed to receive. Popular in the morning, He is exceedingly unpopular at night, and so they turn from Him, every one to his own way.

There are many to-day like that. They make great professions; but the Lord says, “If you make great professions to Me, I shall test you”; and when tested they are offended in Him.

They were the converts of the morning, and they are the lapsed converts of the evening. Let us turn our attention to the class they represent. Lapsed converts! We know them; we have broken our hearts over them sometimes, and we have gone into the presence of God with much heaviness about them. You have seen trees in the springtime covered with beautiful flowers,

raising hopes of abundance of fruit, but the frost came or the rough wind, and at the fruit-bearing season there was nothing to show. How many of our young converts are like that! Many make a splendid start, but an evil influence affects them and they never get on.

Some of our readers may be Sunday School teachers who have been much cheered by some of the children in their class. For a time they went on very well, then they stopped and disappointed you by going back to the things they had abandoned. What is the cause of this sad lapsing? There are several. One is lack of depth. There is no root, no deepness of earth, as we read in the parable of the sower. It is so easy to affect a child and to make things clear to his understanding. The Scripture is readily received, faith in the letter is so willingly exercised, and you think that they have been converted, and you may lead them to think so too, when there has been nothing real. I am sure some children, through unwise treatment, have suffered much injury. We speak to them of important things—of sin, of judgment to come, and of the consequences of sin, and we need to have our hearts affected if we are to affect the hearts of others. Oh for a deeper sense of sin! One characteristic of the present time is the shallow sense people have of sin. I believe it one of the greatest mercies to be given a deep sense of sin and all unrighteousness. We need to make the children understand that a little sin is not a little thing at all, and that it necessitated the death of the Son of God upon the cross to put it away.

It is not enough, then, to explain a text until it be understood and you have gained assent to it. Sometimes when one shows a certain amount of anxiety we explain a text, and because the individual's intelligence is enlightened, it is at once concluded that he is converted. But to bring light to a soul by the word of Scripture is not enough. The Word must bring life. The words of Christ are spirit and life, and they must come with definite and divine power into the soul. Do not be

satisfied with mere intellectual assent. See that the moral being is affected, that there is a hatred of sin, and some degree of sorrow for its consequences. If we do not find this let us seek to lead to it as far as we can.

Do not be in a hurry to bring anxious souls into peace. It is one of the greatest mistakes we make. The Lord did not do so with Saul of Tarsus ; he was three days in Damascus before his sight returned and peace filled his heart. Why did the Lord keep him waiting three days ? Because it was salutary for him to go through those experiences, and it is a good thing for a soul to have a deep conviction of sin. The presentation of a text may have its place and importance, and I am sure the Word of God is an excellent foundation, but do not look for mere assent. Send the soul straight to the Lord, and let him go and deal with the Lord about the matter, so that his first confession may be made to the Lord Himself. It is not our prerogative to save. We are to preach the word of salvation and present the Lord to the soul. Send them to *Me*, He says ; I will deal with them. The only thing you can do is to send the anxious soul to Christ. Do not send him to a text of Scripture. Texts of Scripture cannot save any more than the inscription upon a finger-post can convey the traveller to his destination. And so let the Scripture fulfil its duly intended function of pointing the troubled soul to Christ to Whom you send it.

There is another thing which I believe causes lapsed converts. When you deal with a soul you very often find a certain amount of earnestness and desire, and he will say, " I will be a Christian ; I will serve the Lord."

Now, if you are inexperienced, you will be very much gratified to hear that. I do not want one to hastily tell me he will serve the Lord. In the last chapter of Joshua the children of Israel said to Joshua, " We will serve the Lord, for He is our God," but Joshua was a wise man, and told them that they could not serve the Lord. When you find people so anxious to tell you they

are going to serve the Lord, you know that the root of self-confidence has not been touched. Do not put reliance on resolutions or purposes which are based upon what the convert is going to do. Teach him that he is nothing and can do nothing for his salvation, and everything that had to be done has been done. Self-confidence lies at the bottom of a great deal of disappointment and failure, when the convert is unwittingly encouraged in the false opinion that he can do anything.

Another thing leading to these lapses is bad teaching. One may be truly converted and give evidence of it, but possibly if he is under bad teaching he will go on very badly. He may be in a sect where young converts are indulged in amusements of every possible kind, which only open the door into the world again. A young convert is often jeopardised in that way, and in consequence may fall into trouble and sin. The first few days are bright and happy, then there comes a reverse ; and he begins to doubt if he was ever saved. This is the case nine times out of ten. Then he may feel so hopeless that he may go on for months or even years thinking he was never saved at all. I remember one in Victoria telling me with tears in her eyes that she believed she was saved, but someone told her that if she did not live without sin she could not be saved, and she believed it. What you want to teach the young converts is that there is restoring grace. Let them know *that* as soon as possible. Let them learn the preciousness of the verse, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1. 9. Many a young convert has said, "If I had not known that text I should never have stood."

Many young converts are exposed to peculiar difficulties. They are in godless homes, surrounded by ungodly companions, and see, day by day, sights and scenes which are unfavourable to their spiritual growth. What are you to do? You may try to counteract these things if you can. Bring them under more wholesome

influences. Get them on their knees in prayer ; let them pour out their hearts to the Lord Jesus ; the Lord delights in it. Get them together that they may help one another. One stick will not make a very good fire, but if you put fifty sticks together you will have a fine blaze. Get the young people together and give them suitable and simple instruction, which will help them to stand firm amidst all the sinful things through which their pathway lies.

Well, these are some of the things which cause lapses among young converts : shallow work, self-confidence, bad teaching and insufficient care. Let the love you have to those whom you have been the means of leading to Christ prompt you to go after them, that they may be kept faithful to the Lord Whom they have learned to trust.

May the Lord give us wisdom in all this, and may the blessed result be seen in more firmness and progress and fewer lapses amongst our young converts.

Fragment.

Have you ever thought of the twofold joy which the Lord Jesus had as He walked this earth ? One which was never interrupted, the joy He had as a dependent Man in His Father, and the other which was often interrupted by proud, independent man.

He came freighted with all that could meet man's need for time and eternity, and the heart of man was closed against Him, but whenever He met a heart to whom He could communicate the blessing, and who was ready to receive it, He had a joy in doing it, which He never could have had in glory. " At that time (when the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, had rejected Him) Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matt. II. 25.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13. 34.

The Lord's Coming.

Notes of an Address on 2 Samuel 19. ch. 20. 1, 2.

No truth in the Word of God will have more power over the child of God than the truth of the Lord's coming. Before to-morrow morning I may see His face ! This truth should energise our souls. We shall hear His voice—it may be very soon. He will take us as the objects of His heart's delight.

What I long for more than anything else is that this may not be a mere theory, but a living reality in my soul. The Lord's coming should be a wonderful power in our lives at all times. If in sorrow—well, the Word says, “Comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thess. 4. 18. Surely this is comfort. Then, if it be a question of the salvation of souls, what could affect us more and make us more earnest than the thought of the Lord's coming ? (See 1 Thess. 1. 8-10.)

The difficulty with us is that we are like the five wise virgins—*all* went to sleep. We turn in first, settle down, get drowsy and go to sleep. May God wake us up ! Well, He will with that shout. Oh ! what will it be to hear His voice ! He will take us into His Father's house. That will be the moment of *His* joy.

At the beginning of what we read, the men of Israel said, so to speak, “We can't have Absalom ; well there is nothing for it but to have the king back.” But that is not a question of the *heart* desiring the Lord back for His own sake. In the last chapter of Revelation we have, “Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” But

there is no response. Again we have, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." But still no response. Then lastly we get, "Surely I come quickly. Amen." This calls forth the answer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is *Himself* that is there before the heart. If we have Himself before us we shall long to see Him. In John 14. 28 we read, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." And if we do love Him we will rejoice because He is coming again.

Now look at the attitude of the men of Israel at the end of the chapter, verse 43. They say, "We have rights." It was their own rights, not the glory of the king they were seeking. Oh, think of the Lord's joy to have His own with Him. We shall have no greater joy than to see His joy when He rests in His love. To think that He will find in us the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! We shall rejoice then.

David turns aside from all this talk of Israel. He knew their hearts, that they had selfish interests. God grant that we may be real. God will have reality. Now the king sends a message to Zadok and Abiathar for the elders of Judah, "Why are ye the last to bring the king back?" Surely this is a challenge to us too, for we may seek to further His interests and thus hasten His coming.

Now verse 12 says, "Ye are my brethren, my bones and my flesh." That is the truth of the one body (in figure). We are members of His body. We are one with Him. How near He has made us to Himself and how dear! This was the mystery hidden from generations. There was to be that which is the complement of Christ—His body. If we realised this truth of the one body, how could there be such separations? Do we realise that we are one, and united with every child of God here on earth, and each united to Him in heaven?

Well, this moves the hearts of the men of Judah "as the heart of one man." Oh, how glorious! *One*

heart, nothing between them, one thought—we are going out to meet the king—the rejected one—to welcome him back! Surely they were happy, and how happy we may be too. Just think, one of these minutes I may see His blessed face. Does it make me happy? If not, why not?

Israel talked *about* the king's return. Judah talked *to* the king—"Return thou." (Verse 14.) So in Revelation 22. 20, when the Lord says, "Surely I come quickly," there is the response to the Lord, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The heart there is in communion with Himself. We should hold this truth of the Lord's coming in communion with Him. Think how it will be the moment of supreme joy to His heart. He will rest in His love. He breaks forth into singing (see Zeph. 3. 17), and we shall join as those who are most intimately associated with Himself. We like to think of that scene in Revelation 5, and it is we who are there seen nearest to Himself—those who have been redeemed. All creation is there, but we are nearest, members of His body.

The king returned and came to Jordan—the place that speaks of the full result of His glorious work. "And Judah came to Gilgal"—which means death to the flesh. Notice it says, "They came *to go* to meet the king." They were not settling down to wait, no, they were to be associated with him in his return to take the place of honour and glory.

Now read verse 24. "Mephibosheth . . . had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." What does this say to us? Surely it humbles us. We see what ought to characterise us. Mephibosheth is a picture of ourselves. He is a poor cripple. His heart had been won by the grace that gave everything and demanded nothing. He had "the kindness of God" shown to him. *We* know the *riches* of God's grace. Mephibosheth had not dressed

his feet nor trimmed his beard ; that is, he was not occupied with his appearance, sufferings or comfort. He had a heart completely won by David. Do we not long for our hearts to be thus carried away by Christ from our own present interests ?

Ziba slandered Mephibosheth, and we may be slandered too but what does that matter ? David had been deceived it is true, but Christ—never, and we can afford to leave all with the Lord. He will and does care for our interests here. We are so slow to leave the Lord to do so. Whether it be our interests in heaven or here, we have One there and we have One here to care for us. The word for “advocate” in 1 John 2. 1 is the same as the word translated “Comforter” in John 14, and means “one who takes complete control and care of those he is looking after.” So we have One up there and One down here to look after our interests.

Mephibosheth says to the king, “Do therefore what is good in thine eyes.” May we have grace to say the same. Then what devotedness we see in the next words of Mephibosheth, “Yea, let him (Ziba) take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.” He was only interested in David. If we are interested in what concerns the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, can we not be assured that He will care for our interests ? David’s days of wandering are over—his servant is satisfied. Oh for this attitude !

In verse 40 we read, “Then the king went on to Gilgal . . . and *all* the people of Judah conducted the king, and also *half* the people of Israel.” Judah acts as *one* man. How happy this is. May we be jealous of this—to have fellowship, not only with the Father and the Son, but with one another, and to show before the world the wonderful oneness of the people of God. *Half* Israel shows it wasn’t real with them.

Then comes a discussion. Israel says Judah had stolen David, but it was David who had stolen the hearts of Judah. They knew what it was to be near to the

king. (See Psa. 148. 14. "A people near unto Him.") Do we not long to be close to Him during this time we are waiting for Him? The Lord Jesus died to have us near Himself.

The men of Judah say, "Hath he given us any gift?" The Lord Jesus has given us many gifts, but this wasn't the motive here. It was the king they wanted, not his gifts. If we have Christ what have we not? We have everything. If they had the king back they would be the objects of his care.

Then Israel says, "We have ten parts in the king." They claim their rights, but it is not a question with us of rights. Let the Lord have a place in our hearts; we can enthrone Him there for His joy.

"The words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel." How sad! We allow the flesh to come in and we get fierce. This was not like the king, *e.g.*, in connection with Shimei what meekness David shows. Oh how ashamed we shall be of our fierceness and forcefulness! It is so unlike the Lord. How we get His gentleness brought out in Phil. 2., and even in Revelation 5 "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" is seen as a Lamb slain.

What happened to Israel next? We find a man of Belial (and we meet such) who is ready to split up the people of God. He says, "We have no part in David." This was quite true. Their affections had not been won. The men of Israel now show their true character. "The men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem." Ch. 20. 2. Jordan speaks of death and resurrection; Jerusalem, the place of glory. May we have grace to go and meet our king. We long to see Him occupying His rightful place. May we cleave to Him from Jordan until we see Him in all His majesty and glory, and find we are still members of His flesh and of His bones. I am sure there is not one of us who does not feel the lack of the power of this truth in our souls. It will separate us more from this scene, and leave its

impress on our whole life, if we have the Lord Himself before us. *We go to meet Him*—the One Who filled the hearts of the disciples here with joy, and even when He had gone, they rejoiced that that same Jesus Who had gone, would return. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They learned then this truth as never before, that the Lord was coming back again.

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thess. 4. 16-18.

What could comfort us like this? It will all end with us being with Him and like Him—to adore and praise Him for all His grace. May we be more separated to Himself—a waiting people till He come.

“Bear ye one Another’s Burdens.”

A Message from a Missionary.

The other morning hearing strange cries of joy I went outside the house to see the cause. There I found our native man also deeply interested. “What is the matter?” I asked. He replied “You see that line of men going down the hill side.” “Yes” I said. “What are they doing?” “Well” he said, “can you see another group of men at the bottom of the hill? They are waiting for help. They are bringing up the mill-stones for the olive-press and have called for help. Their cries have been heard and the line of men you see are going to their assistance.” “But” I said, “who are making the shouts of joy?” “Ah!” he replied, “look up, there you will see at the top of the hill, at the entrance to the village, the wives of those men who have gone down to

help. They are encouraging their husbands as the work is heavy and they are not able to help by lifting."

I watched the scene for a little while, and it was most interesting to see how each man took his turn whilst the women cheered. At last they all arrived at their destination and what a shout of joy! The sounds echoed from hill to hill. The men and the women all rejoiced together. Those whose burden had been so faithfully carried for them right to the journey's end and those who had done their part by a cry of encouragement.

What a lesson for the christian! Do we know the joy of bearing the burden of another? And if we are not able to take the burden, do we know what it is to share by encouraging? Are we doing what we can?

Oh! how many ways we can help another in trouble or in difficulty or sorrow—by a smile, a helpful word or a silent prayer. We cannot always help a lonely one for example, but we can write a cheerful letter to cheer him in his loneliness. We cannot take the sickness away from some who are sick, but we can perhaps visit them and sing a hymn or pray with them, or take a book for them to read or a few flowers to help them to forget their pain and suffering.

Do you know the joy of helping those who are seeking to win souls for Christ? Sometimes the burden is too great for the missionary and he cries out for help. "Come over and help us." Do you help to the best of your ability?

Perhaps, like those Kabyle women we are not strong enough to help, but oh, we can pray, and by so doing we are doing our bit in helping to bear the burden to win those dark souls for Christ. And then what will be the result? All will rejoice together in that day when the Lord comes to make up "His jewels," those who have been won for Him.

I learnt also from our man that it was part of the native law to help to carry those heavy mill-stones. What are we told to do? "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. 6. 2.

Things concerning Himself.

We can well understand the greater ease with which we could receive a person of distinction at our house, than go and visit him at his. But a visit *from* him would be the surest way of preparing us to pay a visit *to* him, and see him in those conditions and circumstances which are properly his, and superior to ours.

After this manner is it between the Lord and us. Who can tell it in its blessedness! He has been here, in the midst of our circumstances, as the Son of man Who came eating and drinking, showing Himself in the gracious freedom of one that would gain our confidence. He walked and talked with us as a man would with his friend. He knew us face to face. He was in our house.

And, after He rose, He returned to us, if not to our house, to our world—for the resurrection-scenes were all laid here. He was then on His way to His own place; but again He tarried in ours, that the links between us might be strengthened. For then, after He had risen, He was the same to us as He had been before. Change of condition had no effect upon Him—blessed to tell it. Kindred instances of grace and character, before He suffered and after He rose, show us this abundantly. Late events had put the Lord and His disciples at a greater distance than companions had ever known. They had betrayed their unfaithful hearts, forsaking Him, and fleeing in the hour of His weakness and danger; while He, for their sake, had gone through death, tasting the judgment of God upon sin. And they were still poor Galileans, and He was glorified with all power in heaven and on earth. But all this wrought no change in Him. “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,” as an apostle says, could do that. He returns to them the very Jesus they had known before. He showed them His hands and

His side, that they might know that it was He Himself. Yea, we may add, He showed them His heart, and His thoughts, and His ways ; His sympathies, and considerateness, and all His affections ; that in another sense they might know that it was He Himself.

I would not stop to offer the evidence of this from the Evangelists ; it so abounds, addressing us on every occasion in which we see the Lord in resurrection, if we do but duly heed it. But if I might for a moment pass the bounds of the Evangelists, and look at the ascended Jesus in the Book of Acts, there we find the same identity. Jesus here in ministry, Jesus in resurrection, Jesus in heaven, is the same Jesus. For from the heavens He seems to delight in knowing Himself by the name that He had acquired among us and for us, the name which makes Him ours by the bond of a common nature, and by the bond of accomplished grace and salvation. " I am Jesus," was His answer as from the highest place in heaven, when Saul, on the road to Damascus, demanded of Him, " Who art Thou, Lord ? "

What shall we say, beloved, of the condescendings, the faithfulness, the greatness, the simplicity, the glory and the grace together, that form and mark His path before us ! We know what He is this moment, and what He will be for ever, from what He has already been, as we see Him in the four Gospels. And we may pass into His world in all ease and naturalness, when we think of this.

" There no stranger-God shall meet thee,
Stranger thou in courts above."

He is " the Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," in His own proper glory. With Him " is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," according to His essential, divine nature, and so in His knowledge of us, His relationship to us, His affections for us, and His way with us.

“Give ye them to eat.”

Mark 6.

The Saviour's voice was hushed. Jesus had ceased teaching the “many things,” and the rays of the setting sun were falling athwart the faces of that awed and softened multitude. A strange thrill subdued those eager, restless hearts. Time had sped by unnoticed, and nature's wants were all unfelt, when the still silence was broken by words strangely in contrast with the sweet scene where divine love was making poor, weary hearts feel its potent sway. “This is a desert place and now the time is far spent, send them away,” the disciples urge, “that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread : for they have nothing to eat.”

Little thought they that the One they thus addressed, whose lowly grace made such intrusion possible, was He who long before, in His own divine fulness, had said, “I will satisfy her poor with bread.” (Ps. 132. 15.) “Give ye them to eat,” was His gracious rejoinder.

Uncongenial servants as they were, He could associate them with Himself in the service of His love. True enough *they* were little up to the privilege conferred on them. Small heart had *they* for the weary, hungry multitude around them. Less knowledge had they of His heart, who gave them this command. Completely taken aback, they look at the hungry crowd ; they scan the desert ; they think of themselves, and the difficulties appear insurmountable. His *glory* they see not, and their faith falls entirely short of the task imposed upon them. The old evil heart of unbelief that long before had questioned, “Can the Lord provide a table in the *wilderness* ? ” was still there ; and to the “Give ye them to eat,” they oppose, “Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat ? ”

It is very wonderful to see the Lord thus communicat-

ing to His disciples His own power, all unwilling and unworthy as they were to share it. More touching still to watch the grace that, rising above their ignorance and unbelief, presses them into a service they were so slow to enter upon. But "the poor" *must* be fed, and *they* should feed them.

"How many loaves have ye? Go and see," He says. Quickly returning, they reply, "Five, and two fishes," adding, as we learn elsewhere, "but what are they among so many?" The helplessness of unbelief could go no further, nor does the Lord parley longer with it; so, without reply, "He commanded" them to make the multitude sit down, on the green grass be it noted, in "ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." Then blessing the loaves and fishes, He breaks them and gives them to the disciples to distribute.

One can imagine the feelings of wonder and doubt with which the disciples began their distribution of those, but just now despised, "five loaves and two fishes." What, say, must the eager, impulsive Peter have felt as, in silent awe, he took from the Saviour's hands that small portion of bread that was to feed those waiting companies of a hundred hungry mouths fifty times told, "besides women and children"? How doubt must have given place to amazement, and awe to adoration, as he broke and gave a piece to this one and that one, here to the strong man, now to a timid woman, then to a lighthearted child, till every mouth was satisfied, and yet the store was undiminished, and more remained after "all had eaten and were filled," than there had been at the beginning!

What an acquaintance with *Himself*, and what an education for a *future* ministry was the Lord here giving to His disciples! True the impression *then* was not deep, and not long after, when again called upon to feed the multitude, they were as unequal to the occasion as before. But when the Holy Ghost had "endued them with power from on high," with what force and encouragement did

these scenes recur to their memories, as they went forth to minister for Him, who "the Same yesterday, and today, and for ever," assured them that not only was "all power given unto Him in heaven and on earth," but that He would be *with* them "alway even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28. 20.

And, surely, they are left on record for our encouragement and instruction, too. As servants we have to draw upon the resources of that same Jesus, now at the right hand of God, "head over all things to the church, which is His body;" who, having led captivity captive, "has given gifts to men" for the blessing of souls, and the edifying of the body.

Nearness to Christ, in His present place of exaltation, alone can make these lessons good in our souls, so as to enable us practically to meet the need of sinners, and feed the church of God; while it is as those who have *tasted* mercy for ourselves, we alone shall "faint not" under the ministry committed to us. Above all we must look away from ourselves entirely to Him who still says, "Lo, I am *with* you alway even unto the end of the world." All grace and power are *in* Him, and the greater the need, and the more difficult the circumstances, only so much the more is the opportunity *His* to meet the wants of His own in spite of everything. As servants, simply subject to Him, we require to be in living and abiding association with that heart ever "moved with compassion" towards the needy, and that hand whose power and resource know no limit.

It is not enlarged and deep acquaintance with truth, all valuable as that is in its place, that will do. Knowledge, of itself, "puffeth up," but "love edifieth." It *alone* never fails. Our apparent resources may be small; our knowledge of the scriptures relatively slight, not even equal to "five loaves and two fishes," but ever so small a portion of them, with the *love* that simply seeks to edify, and the *faith* that counts alone on Christ will meet any and every need that comes in our way, while

acting under the guidance of Him whose command still is, "Give ye them to eat."

Oh ! to be more alive to the marvellous grace of such a command, to the wondrous privilege of serving His people, and of magnifying His blessed name, by drawing manifestly on *His* strength in such a way, that it shall be *seen* that He, and He alone, is the spring and power of our ministry.

The scene we have been considering, simply makes Him manifest. Christ Himself fills the vision of the soul whilst contemplating it. The desert place, the absence of resource, the slowness and hardness of heart of the disciples, as it were, form the background that throws Him into relief. It "manifested forth *His* glory," and so should *all* our service while *waiting* for Himself.

The Hours of the Lord Jesus.

In reading the Gospels I am very much struck with the way in which every hour of the time of the Lord Jesus is filled up. There is no "loitering" in the path of the Blessed One through the world ; no seeking (like we seek) for ease : life with Him is taken up with the untiring activities of love. He lives not for Himself : God and man have all His thoughts and all His care. If He seeks for solitude, it is to be alone with His Father. Does He seek for society ? it is to be about His Father's business. By night or day He is always the same—on the Mount of Olives praying, in the Temple teaching, in the midst of sorrow comforting, or where sickness is, healing ; every act declares Him to be the One who lives for others. He has a joy in God, man cannot understand—a care for man, that only God could shew. You never find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness, He works no miracle to supply His own need ; but if others are hungering around Him, the compassion of His heart flows forth, and He feeds them by thousands.

Oh ! that we were more like Him !

“ Watching Daily.”

Proverbs 8. 35.

Oh child of God, so weary with earth's toil
 And ceaseless strife,
 Thy Master chooseth thee for high behest
 And fruitful life.
 Oh, gladly wait
 Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
 To do His bidding for the day grows late.

Take thou His message, and then hasten back
 To His dear feet ;
 And He will greet thee with His tender love
 And comfort sweet.
 Then gladly wait
 Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
 For the next message, as the day grows late.

And mourn not sorely, if thine errand seem
 All fruitless now,
 The message was thy Master's, and His mark
 Is on thy brow.
 And thou didst wait
 Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
 As the shades gathered and the day was late.

Not now the time of reckoning ; it will come
 To thee at last,
 And thou wilt smile to think of weary hours
 That shall be past,
 When thou didst wait,
 Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
 To do His bidding, ere it was too late.

A Sunday School Teacher's Tears.

A few weeks ago I heard something which rather impressed me in connection with Sunday School work, so I pass it on to you.

One Sunday a teacher had in her class a girl of ten who was exceedingly trying. After school was over, she spoke to this girl about her behaviour, and as she did so, tears were in the teacher's eyes which did not escape the scholar's notice. Five years after, that girl was converted, but she always looks back to that Sunday as the commencement of God's work in her soul.

When I heard this little incident it brought to my mind Psalm 126. 5, 6. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Dear fellow-worker, this is the sowing time, but how are we sowing? Are we sowing in tears? There is surely much to make us weep, as we look at the boys and girls in our classes. How careless many of them are, how indifferent to the wonderful love of God in sending His dear Son to die for them! What effect has this on us? Does it send us into God's presence, there to plead on our knees in real earnestness, even with tears, that they may be won for the Saviour?

Our verse is very plain, "They that sow in tears *shall* reap in joy." Yes, the reaping time is coming. If we are sowing precious seed now God has promised a reaping time by-and-by. Do not let us be discouraged, but let us go on, counting on God's faithfulness to fulfil His promise.

In Heb. 5. 7 we read that the Lord Jesus made supplication "with strong crying and tears," and should not we, who are seeking to follow Him, be really in earnest about the souls committed to us? While realising the responsibility He has conferred upon us, may we be able to leave all results with Him, counting on the

promise, " Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we *shall* reap if we faint not." Gal. 6. 9.

Oh ! my fellow-worker, are *you* going on, or are you just about to give up because you see no conversions amongst your scholars? Remember the promise of a reaping time is to those who do not faint, or in other words, go on, and the exhortation is, " Let us not be weary " or " lose heart " (new trans.). How easy it is to do this when we look at our scholars, but if our eyes are turned upward to our loving Saviour Who died for each of them, and Who is longing to save them, we shall realise that the work is His and none are too hard for Him to reach.

Surely it is something for His heart when He sees us going on in spite of difficulties and discouragements, leaving all results with Himself. And in that coming day when the sowing time and the tears are for ever gone, and all the golden sheaves are gathered in, how our hearts will rejoice as we enter into the meaning of those wonderful words, " He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isa. 53. 11.

" He that goeth forth and weepeth
 Bearing precious seed ;
 Doubtless shall return rejoicing
 Bringing sheaves indeed.

Now it is the time of sowing,
 Now the time of tears :
 Then the time of joyful reaping
 Through the glorious years.

Sure and faithful stands the promise
 Spoken by our God ;
 Nothing can that promise alter
 For it is His Word.

They that toil mid tears and sighing,
 Sowing whilst they weep,
 Soon shall change their tears to singing
 And rejoicing reap.

Lord and Master of the harvest,
 May we faithful be !
Thine will be the glorious reaping
 Through eternity."

“Manna” or “A Portion.”

In Exodus 16 we read how the manna was given to the children of Israel to feed them as they journeyed through the wilderness. There was nothing to be found in their surroundings to sustain and satisfy them, but morning by morning the manna lay round about the host and all they had to do was to gather it.

In this we have a type of the christian passing through this world which can offer nothing to feed the new nature, but surely we have morning by morning the privilege of gathering the heavenly manna. It speaks of the lowly life of the Lord Jesus here on earth. When we have learned to know Him as the One Who has given Himself for us how it refreshes and strengthens us to feed upon Him in His perfect life, as the lowly, humbled One Who could say, “I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me.” It is necessary to feed upon Him thus if we are in any measure to “follow His steps.”

In John 6 the Lord twice over emphasizes the fact that the fathers ate of the manna and “are dead.” Feeding on manna, which in type is Jesus as a lowly Man on earth, by men in the flesh, ends only in death.

To-day many unconverted people profess to believe that the Lord Jesus was a great example, but do not believe in Him as the One Who died for them. Such feeding on the manna, will, as with Israel, only end in death. In contrast to this, the Lord tells the Jews that He is the bread that came down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die, and goes on to say, “The bread that I give is My flesh.” “Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life.” That is, believing in Him as the One Who died for us, gives us eternal life, and having this we can now, with the greatest blessing to our souls, feed on Him as the manna. Christ in His lowly life of unflinching obedience and constant faithfulness to God, and grace and truth to man, is a

heavenly portion to strengthen us as we too tread life's pathway.

In that Person and that pathway, God too found His portion and delight, so that He could bear witness to Him, "Thou art My beloved Son ; in Thee I am well pleased." Luke 3. 22. When Israel saw the manna which the Lord had given them to eat they might well exclaim, "It is a portion !" (Margin Ex. 16. 15.)

The Israelites' first duty was to stoop in humble thankfulness and gather this portion the Lord had sent down that morning, for "when the sun waxed hot it melted." Likewise the believer's first concern day by day should be to gather up his portion of the blessed manna before the sun waxes hot, *i.e.*, before the day's duties, letters, news or cares come in to hinder and disturb the mind. Let us get something for ourselves from the Word, something we can feed on, something which will bring Christ before our souls and keep our hearts in His love in the busy day before us.

Individual responsibility to gather the manna is brought out in verse 16. "Gather of it *every man* according to his eating." But the head of the household had more than individual responsibility. He is to gather "for them that are in his tents." How far is this household responsibility carried out to-day by the head of the house? Is the family reading made the opportunity when the portion gathered by him that morning is distributed to them that are in his house? Or are we believers in this Laodicean age giving up the family reading, prayer and praise? May the Lord exercise our hearts and consciences as to this.

Verse 18 contains what at first seems a strange statement. "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." It might seem that in this gathering of the manna diligence went for little. But elsewhere we read, "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." This verse is no contradiction to it. Let us think of a diligent child of God gathering much of

Christ from the Word in dependence upon the Holy Ghost as Teacher. Could such an one say of any part of this Spirit-given manna "It is unnecessary for me; I can do without it?" A thousand times "No." Each thought of Him should "constant yield unchanging fresh delight." But what about "he that gathered little had no lack?" Our Father knows His children and their circumstances perfectly, and when some unlooked for hindrance suddenly prevents the one, who habitually gathers much, or when others through lack of spiritual intelligence or infirmity are able to gather only a small portion of the heaven-sent manna—that small portion is a portion of that which is infinite, and when fed and meditated upon can leave no lack.

A simple farm labourer was remarkable for his knowledge of Christ and His Word, and when asked how this was, he replied that he committed a verse or so to heart in the morning, and as he followed the plough he went over it again and again till the Spirit made it good to him. This man knew what it was to "chew the cud" or as in another scripture, he roasted that which he took in hunting.

We should particularly notice how that fresh manna had to be gathered every morning. If it were kept over from the day before, it bred worms and stank. This shows that we cannot lay in supplies to-day to last us to-morrow in the things of God. A double portion to-day will not give me the needed strength for to-morrow. Do let us see to it that each day we get our portion from the Word of God. The Lord knows what to-day's special need may be and can give the suited word for that. "His compassions fail not; they are new every morning." And morning by morning He will supply new grace, fresh love to cheer our hearts through the duties and cares of a new day.

On the sixth day they were to gather a double portion and quietly enjoy it on the seventh or Sabbath. Would not this in the present day signify that the Lord's

Day is the one on which we should sit quietly under His shadow with great delight, and enjoy what we have previously gathered of Himself ; rather than make it a day of studying the written Word ? Restfulness was to characterise the Sabbath, see verses 2, 3 and 30.

In verses 32 and 36 the Israelites were told to put an omer of the manna in a pot to remind them continually of the bread wherewith God had fed them in the wilderness. In Rev. 2. 17 there is a promise to the overcomer of being given to eat of the hidden manna. Let us connect this verse with John 21. 25, where the apostle tells us that " there are also many other things which Jesus did " which have not been written down. God has given us as much as and more than we can appropriate in our present state, but are any of those " many things " forgotten of His God and Father ? Nay, all was an infinite delight to Him. In Exodus 12. 10, that part of the Passover Lamb—wonderful type of Christ—which was more than the Israelites could eat, was to be burnt with fire, that the sweet savour of it might ascend to God for His satisfaction. So the " many other things which Jesus did " that are unrecorded for us in the Gospels, are treasured up by God for His continual delight, and it will be His good pleasure to share them with the overcomer in the eternal glory.

While we wait for this may the Lord give us diligence to gather daily much of Christ before the sun rises !

Peace, Communion and Testimony.

The Divine order is peace, communion, and testimony ; and this order remains always the same. The blessed Lamb of God now on the Father's throne must be first known as the Object of faith, through whose blood we have remission of sins, and in whom we are accepted. Then follow communion with Him by His Word and Spirit, abiding in Him, participating in His own thoughts, His own delights, His own purposes, service, and ways ; and then, as we are vessels filled with heavenly treasure, and overflowing with the grace of God to us in Christ, we seek to spread the savour of His name, and to bring others to the same precious Saviour. God grant we may know this better.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13.34.

Labour and Rest.

“The apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile : for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.”
Mark 6. 30-32.

There is a word of great sweetness and comfort in these verses. We are introduced to a scene of real labour and toil. The Lord had called the twelve, and sent them out two by two, without anything for their journey save a staff. They went forth without scrip, or bread or money : they preached, they cast out devils, they raised the sick ; it was a time of diligent service and incessant toil, but a time of labour which resulted in fruit. After this we find the apostles returning, gathering themselves together and rehearsing to their blessed Master all they had done and taught.

He had sent them forth, as it were, empty handed and destitute of all man’s resources, and now they have returned and are spreading at His blessed feet their acquired treasures, the fruit of their work and toil ; He, with all that tender grace and kindness which were ever His own, accepts it all, and in the divine and blessed love which ever sought the good of His own, He says, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile.” Let us note it well. He does not say, “Go and rest,” but “Come and rest.” Ah ! it is not the desert place that could furnish the rest, if so,

it might have been "Go," but it is Himself there, *there* where no distraction can intrude, no surge of worry, no blast of care can for a moment enter. Oh ! how blessed His company in that sweet retreat, made so by Himself alone ! How well may we sing of that—

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

But there is a further precious thought here. Our own Master and Lord knows the snare of active service, even for Him—the danger of giving it that place which alone belongs to Himself—the temptation to His poor, weak child and vessel to be more absorbed with it than with Him ; hence, how often do we hear Him say, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." We are told that "there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."

In this busy day of ours, with its confessed and crying needs on every hand, how true the picture before us is ; yet while recognising fully our clear, distinct duty to the church and the world, and not in any wise seeking to clothe our *indifference* or *selfishness* with a religious sanctimonious garb, let all who love His blessed service, which is indeed perfect freedom, bear in mind the lesson of our passage, which is plainly this, that the *quality* of our work will be poor and attenuated indeed, if it be not *connected with Christ, from Christ, for Christ*. Those who really and truly work for Him, must first of all be sustained and fed by Himself, as they hear Him say, "Come and rest." And oh ! how gracious of Him to take His poor wearied worker by the hand, as it were, aside, apart in a desert place with Himself, shutting

him out from all but Himself, that with mind undisturbed and heart undistracted, all may be gone over with Himself, in rest and quietness, and fresh thoughts of Himself and His love thus impressed upon the heart, producing renewed vigour and energy for further service for Him.

After this we have recorded a delightful instance of the deep compassion of that heart which was ever touched by distress and need. We are told the people "out went them and came together unto Him." Oh ! how He did attract the weary and wanting ones ! How He also met and taught and filled them ! How He made the desert place to yield bread enough and to spare, and then having finished all in His compassionate tenderness and goodness He Himself departed into a mountain to pray ; His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work.

But we must bring these thoughts to a close by a glance at the end of the chapter. In the departure of Jesus into the mountain, we are shewn in figure His taking His place of intercession on high ; His disciples cross the water in a boat, and we have their *vicissitudes* ; it is such a comfort to think of what is said here, " He saw them toiling in rowing." Not the shades of night, nor the earnest vigil which He kept in prayer on the mountain-top, nor the storm-lashed lake that they were crossing, none of these could hide His poor servants from the Master's eyes. Then He Who " saw them " came to them in the darkest part of the night, walking on the water in supreme majesty, *but in love*, and spoke such words of comfort, " Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid."

" In darkest shades, if He appear,
My morning is begun."

Lastly, observe it is said, " He talked with them." How blessed the *rest* of that intercourse after all the *toil* and *labour*.

Notes of an Address to Sunday School Workers.

“ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples ; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God ! And the two disciples heard him speak, and *they followed Jesus.*” John 1. 35-37.

“ Andrew . . . first findeth his own brother Simon . . . and *he brought him to Jesus.*” John 1. 40-42.

“ *Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*” John 4. 39.

(Jesus) “ went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized ; and there He abode. And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle : but all things that John spake of this Man were true. And *many believed on Him there.*” John 10. 40-42.

“ The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death ; because that by reason of him *many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*” John 12. 10,11.

These five scriptures are cited to bring before us the various means which were used in each case to lead souls to believe on the Lord Jesus. And as Sunday School workers I believe it is helpful to look at these records, as they serve as an encouragement to us in the work the Lord has given us to do.

In the first scripture we get John's rapturous exclamation, “ Behold the Lamb of God ! ” This would appear to have been the spontaneous outflow of his heart as he looked upon the Lord Jesus, Who so filled his heart that he thus exclaimed concerning Him, and those five memorable words are used to turn two of his disciples to Christ. May not this have a word for us, directing us to more heart occupation with Christ that our words may come with more telling effect upon our scholars, that they too may follow Jesus ?

Then with Andrew we have the character of the true soul-winner who seeks out his brother and brings

him to Jesus. Not much are we told about Andrew, but the little we have recorded gives us to see that he went out of his way to find souls. It was he who discovered the little lad in John 6. There are those whom we might be able to seek out and bring personally to Jesus. Many a soul who listens to the weekly message may need a personal word, and may have difficulties which will only be discovered by this individual dealing. May the Lord give us discernment and heart for this work among our scholars.

In the woman of Samaria we get a lovely example of the full overflowing confession of Christ from a soul that is fresh in its love to Him. She goes to those who had known her in sin, and speaks of Him so that many of the Samaritans believed on Him. This surely is a blessed example of the first love of a new-born soul. Ah! how much do we know of this? How soon our love cools down and our ardour too! The Lord had to complain of this in His message to the church at Ephesus in Rev. 2. "Thou hast left thy first love." What a comfort *His* love has not cooled, but it is only as we abide in the sunshine of His love that our hearts will burn and we too shall be able to testify in a way which will reach those we long to see saved.

The verses in John 10 have been a real cheer to my heart in connection with the work among the children. "Many believed on Him there." Why was that? Oh! it is full of encouragement! "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of THIS MAN were true." John was but a voice—telling of Jesus. He did no miracle, nothing to make people wonder or applaud his work, but what he said was true, and after many days it bore fruit. John may have thought his work was in vain. We know he did get discouraged, and yet the wondrous result—"many believed on Him there"—is attributed to his faithful message. Let us take heart and see to it that all things

we speak of THIS MAN are true, sowing the good seed of the Word, and it may be we shall find as John did, that our labour was not in vain, and that "many believed on Him there."

The last scripture shows what a power there is in a miracle. Lazarus had been dead, but the life-giving word of Christ had given him life, and he is a living witness to this fact, and by reason of him many believed on Jesus. May we never forget that we are miracles of divine grace! Did not the voice of Christ speak to us when we were dead in sins, and give us life? May the children see that this is so, and that our lives as well as our words are a definite witness to Christ! And so by reason of us many may believe on Jesus.

"Gleanings."

LORD we have learned of Thee,
 Seen Thee anew;
 Beheld Thy bleeding hands and side and feet,
 Heard Thee express again in tones so sweet—
 "I died for you."

That love which led Thee on
 E'en to the grave,
 Dark Calvary's mount, where Thou in love didst go,
 Defeating death and conquering the foe,
 The lost to save.

That resurrection morn,
 When from the tomb
 Triumphant Thou didst rise, the work well done,
 Thy Father's will fulfilled, the victory won,
 Gone all the gloom.

And more than even this,
 We've learned to see
 The fact that Thou hast made a plan for all
 Who, drawn by love divine, have heard Thee call
 And come to Thee.

We've heard of service, Lord !
 Our hearts were moved ;
 And as we listened Thou didst seem to say
 " Only the child with whom I have My way
 Can e'er be used."

And then we yielded all
 Into Thy hand ;
 Asked Thee to cleanse our hearts from secret sin,
 To take control and ever reign within
 As Thou hast planned.

'Tis easy so to do
 When all is bright.
 When skies are blue, and shadows nowhere near,
 'Tis easy, when no threatening clouds appear,
 To do the right.

But when the clouds arise,
 Darkening the sky ;
 When Satan tempts, how like Thy child of old
 We shrink, when we had thought ourselves so bold,
 And Thee deny.

And yet Thou art the same
 Unchanging Friend ;
 We love to hear those words " I've prayed for you,"
 And know Thy heart, so tender and so true,
 Loves to the end.

Loves, when our love at best
 Is oftentimes weak,
 When we forget those farewell words from Thee,
 " Go ye, yea go to all the world for Me,
 The lost to seek."

And so we pray Thee Lord
 To help us all ;
 To give us courage, strength for every day,
 To keep our footsteps in the narrow way,
 Lest we should fall.

Oh ! let Thy beauty, Lord,
 From henceforth be
 Seen in us all, that others too may know
 The One from whom alone all blessings flow,
 And trust in Thee.

“ Things Concerning Himself.”

“ *Thou art our Counsellor, our Pattern and our Guide.*”
 “ *Jesus ! Thou art enough the mind and heart to fill.*”

What an Object we have here to occupy the mind and heart of men and angels ! The Word made flesh, the manifestation in perfect Manhood of every moral grace, engaging the heart of God Himself ! Little do we lay hold of the excellencies, the glories that shine forth from Jesus, yet it is sweet to consider Him in any of His varied graces. We are not only delighted as we consider Him, but we have His image imprinted on our hearts ; we have Himself as our Exemplar in order that we should walk as He walked.

Let us think of Him in his *humility*, His *meekness*, His *gentleness*—sweet graces, which our hearts sadly own are so little found in our ways.

In perfect submission to His Father’s will, in the presence of the evil of man, His love and goodness refused, we hear those precious words of Matt. 11. 25-30. His spirit in the prophetic word declares “ I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain : yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God.” Isa. 49. 4. At such a time, He says “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly (humble) in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” He gives the secret, which He knew so well, of true rest. In absolute dependence, having nothing, but receiving all things from the Father, He is the Pattern of all true humility, and dependence. His life on earth, in the place and relationship He had taken, was a constant living on the fulness of His Father’s love. He was ever the dependent One. What a Pattern of humility !

In Mark 10. 44, 45 He gives the secret of true greatness. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." So in Jesus, ever pre-eminent in grace and glory, we behold a life of perfect humility. This grace, which belongs to the highest archangel before the throne, as well as the meanest of God's intelligent creation, is as has been written, "not merely a grace, but the casket in which all other graces are contained."

Only the truly humble can be meek. The sense of complete dependence, of having nothing, must produce in the exercised one, in the inner spirit, the passive grace of meekness—receiving everything whether joy or sorrow, from Him Who is all-wise as all good. So in Jesus we see meekness in the presence of man's enmity, in all the sufferings of the path of obedience, receiving all things, the trials and sorrows, as from His God and Father: When refused by the Samaritan villagers (Luke 9. 51-56), the disciples would have called fire to come down from heaven to consume them, but He said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." And they went to another village. Again in Luke 8, when His work of mercy in healing the demoniac brought out man's evil, and the Gadarenes besought Him to depart, "He went up into the ship and returned back again."

The apostle in 2 Cor. 10. 1, exhorts the Corinthians by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Distinct from meekness, which lies more in the inner spirit, gentleness is shewn in outward acts and ways. Jesus teaches the spirit of gentleness in the forgiving grace of the lord to the servant in the parable (Matt. 18. 27), the lord abating his just claim and freely forgiving the debtor, and Jesus teaches, that as forgiven debtors, we too, in gentleness should forgive, not exacting even what may be our due.

His own gentleness we discern in His reply to His servant and forerunner John the Baptist. From the

prison John sends messengers to Jesus, saying, "Art Thou He that should come or look we for another?" The trying circumstances seemed to weaken John's faith. In gentleness Jesus gives the answer, without upbraiding His dear servant, but speaks in language John well understands, to his heart.

So ever in gentleness Jesus bears with the ignorance and selfwill of His disciples. Peter learned His Lord's gentleness in sweet restoring grace after the resurrection. The Lord of glory, the same Jesus, met Saul of Tarsus in his enmity and hatred of the name of Jesus, and towards His lowly disciples, as Paul afterwards wrote, in "exceeding abundant" grace. What He was in grace on earth such He is in glory.

The Spirit of God sets Him before us, where He is, and as He is, as the only Object to occupy our hearts—"our Counsellor, our Pattern and our Guide." We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, daily, hourly, even here, bearing in our hearts the hope that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him according to the purpose of God, fully conformed to the image of His Son.

Fragment.

Precious thought! Jesus says "In My Father's house are many mansions" or abiding places. But until He takes us there to fill them, He comes down here and makes the believer's heart His dwelling place. So we may say that here on this earth there are many mansions or abiding places for the Father and the Son. Wondrous truth that He should condescend to make our heart His dwelling place, His mansion, His abode! What manner of persons ought we to be!

Is He with you ?

“And the child (Jesus) grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom ; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem ; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey ; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.”—*Luke 2. 40-47.*

It is my desire to bring this passage before you in its reference to recovery—recovery of soul. In a natural way, only let God lay His hand on us in sickness, and we want recovery ; and if we have not prayed for weeks, we commence then.

There are many saints of God in bad spiritual health because of indifferent living, and they do not appear to know of their condition. It is a good thing when the need of spiritual recovery is felt ; that is one step towards improvement. I do not speak of salvation. Thank God we have been brought to know our moral unsoundness, and through the Lord Jesus Christ we have been made whole. We are assured our *future* is secure, hence we need not dwell on that. Our continual exercise should be as to the *present*. “And herein do I exercise myself,” &c. (Acts 24. 16.)

It is interesting to notice in this passage of scripture the Lord Jesus grows and waxes strong in spirit. He is filled with wisdom, and the grace of God is upon Him. In applying this to ourselves, we remember that it is not the Lord growing, but *our apprehension* of Him that enlarges as time goes on. Let us ask ourselves “Is my

appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ increasing? ” What pleasure and delight Jesus’ parents must have found in Him as He exhibited divine wisdom and grace in His life.

They go to Jerusalem as the custom was, and when the feast is over they return. Everything seems prosperous, and doubtless they are happy *in themselves* as they start away home. All seems as right as when they were coming, (how often all seems right with us), but one thing made all the difference. *Jesus was not with them.* He tarries behind—tests their affection and interest in Him, as it were. We would think that His parents would not have let Him out of their sight! They start away and He is not with them, and we read, “Joseph and His mother knew not of it.”

They *suppose* Him to be in the company, and they go a day’s journey. The *fact* is this—they have lost the Lord; that is, His company, His presence.

At night the caravan stops, and Joseph and His mother want Jesus. It does not say what for, but the point is, they want Him and He is not there. He is sought for amongst the kinsfolk and acquaintance, and then they turn back to seek Him. That was a good step. Abraham had to do it; many since have had to do it, and so must we. If there has been departure, you must go back to the place of departure. Likes and dislikes have no place here; the flesh has to go, and there must be confession.

“And it came to pass that after three days they found Him.” After three days. They had only gone one day’s journey without Jesus, but it took three days to recover Him. Is not this full of significance to us? Can we imagine the anxiety to His parents? It is not difficult to see the lesson, but I trust we may each *learn* it.

We become a little careless in our walk, losing sight

of Eph. 5. 2, or as to our conversation (see Phil. 1. 27, first clause). Perhaps we are not particular as to the company we keep, and find ourselves like Peter in John 18. 18—accepting hospitality from the wrong people, which resulted, as we are all aware, in grievous consequences. However, we find Peter learned the lesson and, in Acts 4. 23, he in company with John seeks the right company.

Over-occupation with kinsfolk or acquaintance—indeed it takes very little—the most apparently harmless thing will upset us, and interrupt communion with the Lord Jesus.

We suppose Him to be in “the company” and soothe ourselves with this, as if others can enjoy Christ for us. It comes to this—we have lost touch with the Lord, and we know it not. We may attend all the meetings, but are we in company with Him? It is a question of heart-fellowship with the Lord. If we have not the strength and confidence of His presence (Exodus 33. 14, 15) we are like Samson when he lost his strength—he “wist not that the Lord was departed from him,” but he was in fact just in the condition for the enemy to overpower him. Nehemiah says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

The Lord Jesus does not compel us to have His company. It is there for us, and He delights in our fellowship, but if we do not want it we do not get it.

So we go our day’s journey without Him. We may feel contented, but in reality it is a sad day’s work. Then something comes along—trouble or sickness—(1 Cor. 11. 30) and we wake up to the fact that we are out of touch. Has the Lord forsaken us? No; it is not that. We have gone a day’s—perhaps a month’s or even a year’s—journey without Him. It is a good thing when we wake up to it, and better still when we turn back to seek Him.

But depend upon it, there will be three days’

seeking. This is a solemn thing, but God must teach us. We cannot play fast and loose with divine privileges. We are in the school of God, and there will be exercise and perhaps anxiety, which will cause us to value His presence more.

Has not this been the experience of some who read this? The realisation of the joy of the Lord's presence with us (I speak of the individual experience) cannot be put on for Sunday, like our best clothes. Some have gone through deep soul-exercise, and cried out, almost in despair, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." (Psalm 51. 12).

Thank the Lord, He recovers us in His good time. We regain His company, *but we never regain lost time.*

Dear brethren, our time here is but short. Do we spend our years as a tale that is told? (Psalm 90. 9.) Let me say this: our lives will be unsuccessful, and in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, a miserable failure, unless we are here for *His* pleasure.

What joy to the Lord Jesus to have us going on in, and valuing, His company. Do we minister pleasure to His heart in this way? How blessed to keep in touch with Himself, and, by a prayerful and humble walk, avoid such an experience as the scripture before us depicts.

May these few remarks be an encouragement and a warning to us, so that we may with increased purpose of heart cultivate communion with Himself. This will bring glory to the blessed Lord Jesus, and much gain to ourselves.

Oh! that each one may, through grace, be able to turn to the Lord and say, in regard to their individual and daily walk, "THOU ART WITH ME; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23. 4.) This is the satisfactory reply to the question heading this paper.

The Name of Jesus.

Some time ago a company of men were waiting in a public hall, and to wile away the time they began to sing popular songs. Among them was a christian who would not join in the singing of his unsaved companions. Seeing this, one man leaned over and said, "Can't you sing?" "Oh, yes" said our friend, "but only what my mother used to teach me." A shout of laughter went round the room, and he was asked, "What is that?" "Listen," he said, and then he sang to the tune of "St. Peter" the well known words—

" How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
 In a believer's ear !
 It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds
 And drives away his fear."

A look of surprise was seen on the faces of the men and some of them joined in the singing. The christian, with a face full of joy showed his delight in the theme—that peerless Name—its sweetness was very real to him. Again he sang—

" It makes the wounded spirit whole,
 It calms the troubled breast ;
 'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
 And to the weary rest."

The fire of that song seemed to stir up the emotions of those men, their voices increasing in volume, the christian entering into all the wondrous love of Him Who "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psa. 147. 3.

Once more the glory and sweetness of that Name filled the room as the words rang out—

" Blest Name ! the rock on which we build,
 Our shield and hiding-place ;
 Our never-failing treasury, filled
 With boundless stores of grace."

The singer, conscious that his feet were on the Rock, and that he was hidden in the cleft of that Rock, was enjoying communion with his Lord, and praise and worship seemed to flow out as he continued to sing—

“ Jesus ! our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend,
 Thou Prophet, Priest and King ;
 Our Lord, our Life, our Way, our End,
 Accept the praise we bring.”

The presence of that blessed Person seemed to be very real—the Saviour Who died to save us, the Shepherd Who sought and found us, the Friend Who never leaves us, the Prophet Who unfolds all the wonders of God’s love, the Priest Who ever lives to make intercession for us, the King of glory, with Whom His own shall dwell for ever.

The next verse was sung in a subdued voice—

“ Weak is the effort of our heart,
 And cold our warmest thought ;
 But when we see Thee as Thou art,
 We’ll praise Thee as we ought.”

This seemed almost too much for the men as they realised how fully the christian entered into the words he sang. The last verse rang out loud and clear—

“ Till then we would Thy love proclaim
 With every fleeting breath ;
 And triumph in Thy blessed Name
 Which quells the power of death.”

The song finished ; there was a tense silence for some moments. Then one, a professional singer, rose and stretched out his hand to the christian, saying, “ Shake hands, sir. I am not religious, but I do admire a man who has the courage of his convictions.” This gave our friend a good opportunity to tell out the glad tidings of salvation. One man present who was a christian, said to the singer afterwards, “ How did you do it ? I should have been terrified.” “ I do not think you would ” he replied, “ if you thought of the Lord Jesus, Who

He is and what He has done for us ; you would feel as if you must speak of Him.”

Dear fellow-believer, let us ask ourselves what we are doing with the opportunities which the Lord gives us to shew to others that we belong to Him ? We may not be called on to witness for Him in public, but if we are in the enjoyment of His love we shall be constrained to speak of Him. Surely we can tell of the One Who is our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, and point the unsaved to Him Who not only can save them from sin and its power, but can fully satisfy the longings of their hearts.

Fragment.

“ For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding ; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”
Col. I. 9-11.

This introduction presents to us a fine summary of all that one can ask of God for christians. If we had sufficient confidence in the interest which God takes in His children, we should have greater boldness in asking God, according to the intentions of His grace. We do not live enough by this grace, and that is why our prayers are so constantly stamped with the sense of want. We are often the Abraham of Genesis 15, who asks for himself, saying to God, “ What wilt Thou give me ? ” But Paul shews himself here the Abraham of Genesis 18, sitting before God, worshipping Him, and making requests for others.

Foundation Truths of the Gospel.

It is well for every preacher of the Gospel to have the following truths clearly before him.

I. **The Righteousness of God Revealed (Rom. 1) and Manifested (Rom. 2).**

This is in virtue of the obedience to the death of the Cross, of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came from Godhead glory to do God's will. God has been glorified in Him, the Son of man (John 13. 31) and now Man is rewarded in Jesus. The value of the Person who did the work gives claim on God.

Believers have God's righteousness on them (Rom. 3. 22). This righteousness is Christ Jesus in the glory of God far above all heavens.

The believer is now God's righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. 5. 21)—Christ as Man associating the believer with Himself in all that He has won.

II. **Sins Borne**—put away forever—**Judgment Past.**

Guilt has been atoned for and all sins, past, present and future as to the *actual* committal of them, have been put away forever.

III. In the work of Christ **Sin has been Condemned**, when God condemned it in the flesh in the death of His Son.

Thus the *root*, from which all fruits of evil spring, has been dealt with, when all God's "waves and billows" went over His head, as a holy God hid His face from the One "made sin for us."

IV. **Christ has been "Made a Curse" and "Our Old Man" has been Crucified, in the Cross (Gal. 3. 13, Rom. 6. 6.).**

So our responsibility as under man and law, is fully met, by closing the career of "man" as such, in open shame. The sinner is saved and redeemed by

blood, while man, as such, is judicially ended for the believer.

V. “Eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord” is now the possession of every believer.

He is beyond all judgment and not in Adam at all, but in Him “come by water and blood.” He is born of water and the Spirit too, as possessing a new nature, desiring God and His things. This nature and life are divine, and of God.

“He oft refreshed Me.”

Have you ever noticed the service of a brother named Onesiphorus? I believe it has a word for us in these days, when many are isolated and often are unable to meet with the Lord’s people for fellowship.

The apostle said of him in 2 Tim. 1. 16-18 “He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain . . . he sought me out very diligently, and found me . . . in many things he ministered unto me.”

What a lovely list of things are mentioned here, and how suggestive surely to any whose heart is filled with the love of Christ! “He oft refreshed me”—like a morning breeze, full of freshness and vitality, this dear man had often refreshed the heart of the great apostle. Although Paul may at times have been cast down, here was one who had ministered to him, who had encouraged his heart, who had cheered his spirit and sympathised with the Lord’s prisoner in his bonds. Are there not some whom we could refresh, some drooping spirits whom we could water, some whom we might be able to cheer and encourage? And then having done it once, do it often!

Of Onesiphorus it is also said, “He sought me out very diligently and found me.” And there are some

lonely ones who will only be found in this way. They will need seeking out and finding, and such service is noticed by Him Who could seek out the poor outcast woman of Sychar's well. They are known to the Lord and never forgotten by Him, yet He would have us search them out and by so doing remind them of that link which binds us together and to Christ in glory.

Both in Rome and Ephesus Onesiphorus ministered to the apostle, in what way we do not know, but it was known to the Lord and was precious to Him because done to one of His own, as He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Oh that we too may be ready thus to serve Him as we serve those that are His own !

Thoughts for Meditation.

Throughout eternity the glories and beauties of Christ will be *always* unfolding, but never *unfolded*.

A child of God had rather, ten thousand times, suffer *for* Christ than that Christ should suffer *by* him.

Faith tested is faith strengthened.

Nothing wounds love so much as indifference.

If one walks quietly, submissively and obediently with a will not seeking itself . . . one will find happiness even here.

Nothing is more healthful to one's own soul than the carefully bearing forth of the Gospel publicly or privately.

God hears the heart without words, but never hears words without the heart.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13.34.

Crowns.

In Revelation, chapter 4, John was carried up in spirit and saw the throne set and the majesty and glory of One Who sat thereon. Around the throne were four and twenty thrones, and upon these thrones four and twenty elders, representing the redeemed company of heavenly saints. You and I are represented there. It is a future scene—the time when the One now crowned with glory and honour is leaving His seat at the right hand of God the Father, to take a new place—another pathway of service—to vindicate the majesty of God on earth. Round the throne are four and twenty elders, wearing crowns of gold. Again I say, we are represented there, and the crowns are common to all who know and own the Saviour.

I desire to point out a few crowns that are special—that are to be awarded to those whose hearts are occupied with Him to-day.

The first one is in 2 Timothy, chapter 4. This is the last letter of the apostle Paul. The end of his pathway on earth was nigh. He writes “I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand.” The seventh verse literally reads thus, “I have fought the fight, the good one ; I have kept the faith.” Now he can say “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

We learn from other scriptures of his pathway of toil and suffering. On every side he met with the opposition of evil. “Kept the faith” for Paul meant

that he had stood for the rights of Christ, in a world that had dishonoured and crucified Him. It is here a question of righteousness. The world had refused the Son, Whom the Father had sent into the world, and still refuses Him. God has shown His appreciation of Christ, and in righteousness has taken Him Whom man refused, and put Him in highest glory. Paul had stood for righteousness. Righteousness demands a place for Christ to-day: It is refused by man, but Paul stood for the rights of Christ, while he preached the gospel of the grace of God to sinners. He owned Jesus as Lord.

To-day in this world is the contest between God's righteousness and man's evil. Just in the measure that we stand for the rights of Christ we will come in direct conflict with the world. Paul was sustained through all, knowing the love of the One for Whom he stood, and could say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." He knows that just as God has raised Christ, and exalted Him in glory, so for those who stand for His rights here, there will be a great reward—a crown of righteousness. He says, "Not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

The question has been raised, who are those that love His appearing? Surely there cannot be a child of God who does not love His appearing, deep down in their souls. The appearing of Christ is not the same as His coming for His saints. The coming for His own first is secret to the world, but is our hope. This is not the same as His appearing or manifestation. The Lord Jesus will be manifested in glory, as we read in Colossians, chapter 3, "When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." He will be manifested as Lord of lords and King of kings, in His glory, and we will be with Him then. As we think of the world that cast Him out, the sorrow and death that abounds, we cannot but look on with joy to the moment when He

will come : when His rights will be established, and He will bring blessing to His oppressed creatures. There is a crown of righteousness for all who love His appearing. Paul's crown will not be yours or mine. Each will have his own crown. He is coming to judge the world in righteousness. Righteousness will reign then ; and a crown of righteousness will be given to His heavenly saints, who, in the day of His rejection, have stood for His rights in the face of a godless, Christ-rejecting world.

Another crown is brought before us in the epistle of James chapter 1, verse 12. "Blessed (happy) is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." In 2 Timothy the crown is to those who "love His appearing." The crown of life is to those who "love Him." This is a more personal thought. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." Naturally we do not think in that way, but when we get to God's side of things, then we understand. He is working out our truest blessing through every trial.

Our wilderness life can only be in power as we feed upon the One Who is our life. In John, chapter 6, we read "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by (on account of) the Father ; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by (on account of) Me." So just as we feed on Him, the Bread of Life, will we live on account of Him. The trials of the way will be endured when He is the Object before our hearts.

Endurance, or patience, we find given as one of the first christian virtues. In 2 Thess., chapter 3, verse 5, the apostle prays for the Thessalonian saints that the Lord would direct their hearts into the love of God and the patient waiting (endurance) of Christ. When we are at home with the Lord, all that once tried and tested us will be gone for ever ; but now, we are called to endure. The encouragement is given, "When he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord

hath promised to them that love Him." We love, because He first loved us. So the spring of all the activities of the new nature is in Himself—in His love. In the second chapter of Revelation He says to the suffering church at Smyrna, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried. . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Another crown is presented to us in 1 Peter, chapter 5, verses 1-5. The term "elders" in the first verse does not here mean those in an official place. This is readily seen by comparing verse 5 where the younger are addressed. In the first chapter Peter had written that the prophets had prophesied as to the "sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Now as being himself a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, he exhorts the elders to feed the flock of God. We are to be here for His interest and glory. Some are fitted to take the oversight of the flock. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." And the encouragement is given, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

An unfading crown of glory is the suited reward to the faithful under-shepherds. How sweet when we think of the one who wrote these words! We remember the failure and sin of Peter in denying the Lord. After the resurrection when the Lord asked him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" Peter answered in brokenness of spirit, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Three times was this repeated. Then in token of complete restoration, the Lord committed to his care the sheep and lambs.!

In the tenth chapter of John, the Lord Jesus says, "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep." He calls them "My sheep" and values them as those the Father had given to Him. Now He commits them to the under-shepherds, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." The overseers are to care for the little flock that is so precious to Himself. Every dear sheep and lamb is known to Him. The overseers ought to be ever on the alert lest there be danger for the sheep. The flock is to be valued as God's heritage. Are we caring for His sheep and lambs? In the Lord's prayer to His Father in John 17, He said, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Now He has turned over to us the responsibility of caring for the little flock among which we are placed. The great thing is not what the sheep are in themselves, but that they are *His*—each one a part of His flock. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

All these crowns (righteousness, life, glory) centre round the appearing. The sweet thought in all three is that He Himself will be the Giver, as expressed in the lines,

" Not at the crown He giveth
But on His pierced hand ;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

Each crown will be valued because He is the Giver. Surely it is worth while to have these things before us, to encourage us in the trials and responsibilities of the path.

But even the thought of a crown can never equal the thought that we are going to be with Him and like Him. Far beyond the thought of any crown is the hope that we shall be with that loving Saviour, the blessed Object that God has set before us, to fill and occupy our hearts even now.

A Searching Question.

If a friend to whom you are greatly indebted should ask you to speak a word to your acquaintances in favour of some cause in which he was interested you would do it readily enough.

Your Saviour, who has done so much for you, asks you to make known His gospel wherever you can. Do you comply as readily with His wish as with that of an earthly friend? It requires little effort to speak if your heart is warm with love for Him, and no one can estimate the good you may do to souls that are perishing for want of a friendly word of warning, as the following incidents will show.

Two young men stopped at a wayside brook to water their horses. They were strangers travelling in different directions in more senses than one. As they paused a moment, one addressed a kindly word to the other about the interests of his soul. Then they both passed on, never to meet again.

But the young man addressed could not shake off the impression of those words, but turned them over and over during his solitary ride. This circumstance led to his conversion, and, though a young man of great wealth and brilliant prospects, he renounced all in order to preach the gospel in a foreign land. Not till some one sent him *The Life of James Brainerd Taylor*, with a portrait, did he learn who it was to whom he was so much indebted.

Just try the experiment of speaking a word for the Saviour to the acquaintances whom you meet so often who have no hope in Christ. They expect it of you.

* * *

A young lady at a boarding-school seemed so utterly indifferent, so studiously cold, that though it was a time of awakening among the girls, no one felt willing to address her. At length one who had long mourned over her case determined to make at least one direct

appeal. That appeal brought a gush of tears from the seemingly haughty girl.

“ I thought no one cared for my soul,” she said, with deep feeling. She was soon rejoicing in the knowledge of forgiveness, and her case taught me a lesson I can never forget.

“ If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand ” (Ezek. 33. 8).

* * *

On one occasion the late Charles Simeon was summoned to the dying bed of a brother. Entering the room, the relative extended his hand and, with deep emotion, said, “ I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed through neglecting the salvation of my soul ! ”

“ Nay, my brother,” replied Mr. Simeon, “ I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters.”

“ Yes,” exclaimed the dying man, “ you did ; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat and told me that I was unconverted, and that if I died in that state I should be lost. And now I am dying, and but for God’s mercy I might have been for ever undone ! ”

No wonder that this affecting scene made a lasting impression on Mr. Simeon’s mind.

* * *

A young lady at school was urged to attend to her soul’s salvation. “ I was much interested in this subject a few months ago,” she replied. “ Miss L—— was to spend a night with me, and I was very glad. I had often heard her voice in the girls’ prayer-meeting, praying for the conversion of the scholars, and I felt sure she would talk with me about my soul. But she said not a word about it. All her conversation was about some new

dresses we had, and about the merry evening she had spent. I tried to introduce the subject once by saying that I had been laughed at for being so sober, and that some one had said they believed I should get converted if I stayed in Miss S——'s school, and that I had answered I hoped I might. Miss L——— only remarked, 'I hope you will too, Julia,' and then she returned to the dresses again. To tell you the truth, I have not troubled myself much about the matter since that evening."

And I fear the poor girl has given no further thought to it. When last I saw her, she seemed as insensible as a rock. Even a sister's dying in all the agonies of remorse for a godless life was not sufficient to arouse her.

Are we ready to make known the good news to those around? May these incidents stir up our hearts to be faithful to those we meet daily, and in the sense of our weakness ask the Lord to take our lips that they may speak forth His worth that others may be attracted to Him.

Summer and Winter.

"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." (Psa. 4. 4.). What a blessed word! We lose considerably, both in reading and hearing, from not conferring with our own hearts upon the truth we may have received, or at the time felt to be applicable to us.

The ant is set before us as an example of one who prepares for the winter. Now we find that God provides us with provisions for some dreary time that is coming; but instead of being like the ant, when the winter comes, want comes on us like an armed man (Prov. 6. 11); it is not only winter, but we have no food, and all because we only enjoyed ourselves (which sleep expresses) during the summer. Nothing reveals this to us, if we at all judge ourselves, so much as the great difference between us in summer and in winter; in the former we seem to enjoy everything, we could almost imitate the lark;

but when winter, the frost and pitiless blast supervene, all the supposed spiritual joy of the summer's day is gone, and we can talk and think only of the inclemency of the air which surrounds us. This painful discrepancy or exposure of our want would not occur if we really had stored provisions, suited for the exigence to which we are exposed.

The apostle could say that he had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content ; he knew how to be abased and how to abound ; he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. (See Phil. 4. 11-13.)

I believe the soul ought to say, when it takes in any truth, " Some day I shall want it, now let me see how it fits me, and whether I have it from God ; in a word, that I have made it as much my own, as the money in my purse—as the strength by which I can do anything, or any other acquisition of which I have real possession." Better a soul should feel how unprovided he is in winter, than that he should lie down and try to slumber over it. It is very hopeful when a soul feels how it has neglected to provide for the day of trial ; that if ever a summer again occurs he will not, through God's grace, fail to make use of it.

Receiving truth without pondering or self-judgment, only leaves the soul, in the end, more barren, simply for this reason, that you weaken your appreciation of anything if you find that it only charmed you, but had no place of abiding use or benefit to you.

How happy one might be, pondering alone the thoughts and ways of our Lord. Stormy days will come ; but if we are diligent now we shall only prove, in those dreary times, the truth and excellence of His counsels. A clean animal must ruminate ; feeding well will not do, the other must follow.

Meditate and find the true applicability of all you hear and learn to yourself, and what one really learns (certainly in divine things) one never forgets.

Things concerning Himself.

LUKE 22.

In this particularly solemn chapter we may see the Lord in four connections, so to speak,—with the *sorrow itself* that was awaiting Him,—with *His disciples*,—with *the Father*,—with *the enemy*.

Verses 1-23.—As far as He is seen here, He is seen as looking directly, fully, and advisedly at the sorrow that was awaiting Him. He sits at the Paschal Table, the witness of His coming sufferings, and He tells of His body given, and of His blood shed ; at the same time refusing *for the present* the paschal cup, the expression (as I judge) of Israel's joy on the accomplishing of their redemption.

Thus we see Him in full, advised anticipation of His sorrow, looking at it directly and without the least shrinking ; refusing a single thought that could qualify or reduce it.

Verses 24-38.—In this part of this great chapter, we see Him with His disciples, but we must remember, carrying in His bosom the full sense of the sorrow He had just been foreseeing and counting on.

But it is, beloved, a great sight which these verses give us of Him. I mean in this character. When any trouble is upon us we judge right easily and without rebuke, that we may think of ourselves. But here, Jesus thinks of others. The condition of His disciples is the anxious, diligent object of His varied affections and sympathy. He warns them where their souls are getting wrong. He lets them know that He was praying for them, and providing strength for a coming hour of need and weakness. He teaches what changes they must now reckon on, and how they must get themselves ready—thus, carrying as His heart did a grief which might well have commanded or absorbed, He could, as though all were quiet within, spend His various cares, His sympathies and attentions, on those who were around Him.

If there be a moment in human history when selfishness is even vindicated by our moral sense, it is the moment of personal grief. We instinctively allow man to think of *himself* in such a moment. But at no other moment was the Lord Jesus even more thoughtful of others than in the hour of Luke 22.

It was not the hour of Sychar's well,—it was not the two days spent amongst the Samaritans,—it was not the season when Mary was sitting at His feet ; or when the family of Bethany was at the table with Him. It was not such a moment as when the centurion accosted Him in the language of a faith greater than what He had found in Israel ; or as when the poor woman touched Him in the crowd ; or as when the Syrophenician clung to Him in spite of apparent slight and indignity. Such occasions were moments of deep joy to the heart of Christ, and no wonder ; to speak as a man, He was free to wait on the occasion and serve them, and think of others in them and through them. But it is the *Paschal* Jesus we get here. It is the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It was natural for this Jesus of the house of Bethany to sit and teach,—but this was the Jesus of the last Passover ; and knowing, as one does, the absorbing selfishness of times of sorrow, this path of the mind of Christ through this part of this solemn chapter reflects something perfect and beautiful.

Verses 39-46.—Here we have the same Jesus in company with the Father,—the *same Jesus*.

He had just been serving His disciples in all the various conditions and need in which He found them ; warning them, praying for them, teaching them, providing for their blessing in every way. And so now He is surrendered to the Father's will, with the same self-sacrifice as He had been serving them. The moment is full in its terribleness, but the surrender of Himself to it is perfect. The mission of the angel to *strengthen*, tells that the cup was not to be taken out of His hand. He knew this, and felt it in the agony of that solemn hour.

But nothing touched the spirit of self-sacrifice. The will of the Father was supreme with Him now, as the need and conditions of His poor disciples had just been, and He surrenders Himself to it all.

Verses 46-71.—In these closing verses, we find our Lord in His last condition in this chapter, as the prisoner of His enemies. We have already seen Him in the gaze and near sight of the sorrow itself,—then in company with His disciples, making their need and blessing all His thought, as though He had no sorrow of His own,—then in communion with the Father,—and now in the midst of His persecutors. There was nothing here for Him. A mad and rude rabble, set on wickedness, was making Him their sport and their captive ; and then a wily and murderous, though in its way, refined Court of Elders (in its character more contrary to His spirit even than the others), purposing His death under guise of law and religion. But in Him it is a blessed path we trace. He had been in communion with the Father. He had met this hour *there*. He had surrendered Himself, as we saw, and in that surrender there is victory, in that communion there is strength. And now that He is in the battle-field itself, He is more than conqueror. He may be borne through files of the enemy. He may meet the occasion in different characters of it ; but all is strength and calmness of spirit. He challenges Judas the leader. He restores the wounded ear of one of the servants. He addresses the heads of the multitude. He has His eye upon Peter for good, when Peter was giving Him to feel at that moment that His disciples would take their place amongst His enemies. He answers the elders and priests. And in the full triumph of His soul He anticipates His kingdom and glory. This was treading the field of battle like a Conqueror. All was perfect calmness of heart. There was no agony or sweat of blood here. No falling on the ground. O how deeply the soul judges that that could not have been His way among the people, though it was equally perfectly His

way before the Father ! He had indeed already met the occasion in communion, and now He is only above it.

Such was His journey through this chapter ; we see the path of His soul through these distinct stages. Was ever anything like it ? *We* have need to be set to right in the time of trouble—at least if one may speak for another. The Psalmist had such need in Psa. 73, and again also in Psa. 77. Poor Job was conquered. It touched him and he fainted, though he had often before strengthened others. “ The stoutest ” as an old writer says, are “ knocked off their legs.” Peter sleeps and Peter lies,—and our own poor hearts again and again have told us secrets of ourselves in such moments. But in sorrow, the like of which never was tasted, Jesus is borne through every change of circumstance and connection, and all is sure to be perfection. Gold it was indeed ; and when cast into the furnace, it comes out the same mass as when in, for there was no dross.

What a sight ! what faith ! It is found unto admiration in our eyes, beloved ; and unto what acceptance was it found with God !

Only and Early.

There is a sweet and profitable lesson taught in Psalms 62 and 63. The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must “ wait *only* upon God.” “ He *only* ” must be our “ Rock,” our “ Salvation ” and our “ Defence.” This is Psalm 62.

Then we are frequently tempted to look to human aid *first*, and when that fails we look to God. This will never do, either. He must be our *first* as well as our *only* resource. “ O God, Thou art my God, *early* will I seek Thee.” This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm 63.

When we have learnt the blessedness of seeking God “ *only* ” we should be sure to seek Him “ *early*.”

Not in Vain.

“ Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as YE KNOW that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Cheer up, despondent mission worker, disconsolate Sunday school teacher, discouraged gospel preacher, weary lodging-house worker, sorely tried tract distributor ! Do you not know that however black things look, how little results you see, how many disappointments you meet in seeking to serve your Lord, everything done with a single eye, under the constraint of His love, will receive His “ Well done ” in a coming day ?

A farmer ploughs, harrows, and sows, often in adverse weather conditions, and without immediate results, but he waits in patience. In due season you shall reap if you faint not. We must also remember that the work of some is to sow, that of others to reap, but both shall rejoice together when the harvest is garnered. If we cannot all be successful servants, we can all be faithful ones. To all outward appearance there never was a more unsuccessful servant than our blessed Lord. After arduous days, and weary nights, spent in going about doing good, labouring, toiling incessantly, apparently He had spent His strength for naught. But was that so ? His judgment was with His God ; and in the day of glory soon to dawn, innumerable hosts, blessed in heaven and on earth, will witness that His labour was not in vain.

Let us labour on, cheered and encouraged that our labour is not *in vain in the Lord*. His eye discerns all done to please Him. In every good work we are to do His will. If we cannot do what we would, may it be true that we have done what we could. Whatsoever we do is to be done heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men, *knowing* that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance ; for ye serve the Lord Christ.

A Motto for the Evangelist.

(2 COR. 10. 16.)

“ *To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.*” These words, while they set forth the large-heartedness of the self-denying and devoted apostle, do also furnish a fine model for the evangelist, in every age. The gospel is a traveller ; and the preacher of the gospel must be a traveller likewise. The divinely-qualified and divinely-sent evangelist will fix his eye on “ *the world.*” He will embrace, in his benevolent design, the human family. From house to house ; from street to street ; from city to city ; from province to province ; from kingdom to kingdom ; from continent to continent ; from pole to pole. Such is the range of “ the good news,” and the publisher thereof.

“ The regions beyond ” must ever be the grand gospel motto. No sooner has the gospel lamp cast its cheering beams over a district, than the bearer of that lamp must think of the regions beyond. Thus the work goes on. Thus the mighty tide of grace rolls, in enlightening and saving power, over a dark world which lies in “ the region of the shadow of death.”

“ Waft, waft, ye winds, the story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like the sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole.”

Christian reader, are you thinking of “ the regions beyond you ? ” This expression may, in your case, mean the next house, the next street, the next village, the next city, the next kingdom, or the next continent. The application is for your own heart to ponder : but say, are you thinking of “ the regions beyond you ? ” I do not want you to abandon your present post at all ; or, at least, not until you are full persuaded that your work, at the post, is done. But, remember, the gospel plough should never stand still. “ *Onward* ” is the motto of every true evangelist. Let the shepherds abide by the

flocks ; but let the evangelists betake themselves hither and thither, to gather the sheep. Let them sound the gospel trumpet, far and wide, o'er the dark mountains of this world, to gather together the elect of God. This should be the object of the evangelist, as he sighs after "the regions beyond."

When Cæsar beheld, from the coast of Gaul, the white cliffs of Britain, he earnestly longed to carry his arms thither. The evangelist, on the other hand, whose heart beats in unison with the heart of Jesus, as he casts his eye over the map of the world, longs to carry the gospel of peace into regions which have heretofore been wrapped in midnight gloom, covered with the dark mantle of superstition, or blasted beneath the withering influences of "a form of godliness without the power."

It would, I believe, be a profitable question for many of us to put ourselves, how far we are discharging our holy responsibilities to "the regions beyond." I believe the christian who is not cultivating and manifesting an evangelistic spirit, is in a truly deplorable condition. I believe, too, that the assembly which is not cultivating and manifesting an evangelistic spirit is in a dead state. One of the truest marks of spiritual growth and prosperity, whether in an individual or in an assembly, is earnest anxiety after the conversion of souls. It is hard to believe that "the word of Christ" is dwelling richly in anyone who is not making some effort to impart that word to his fellow-sinners.

It matters not what may be the amount of the effort ; it may be to drop a few words in the ear of a friend, to give a tract, to pen a note, to breathe a prayer. But one thing is certain, namely, that a healthy, vigorous christian will be an evangelistic christian—a teller of good news—one whose sympathies, desires, and energies, are ever going forth toward "the regions beyond." "I must preach the gospel to other cities also, for therefore am I sent." Such was the language of the true Evangelist.

It is very doubtful whether many of the servants of Christ have not erred in allowing themselves, through one influence or another, to become too much localised—too much tied in one place. They have dropped into routine work—into a round of stated preaching in the same place, and, in some cases, have paralysed themselves and paralysed their hearers too.

I speak not now of the labours of the pastor, the elder, or the teacher, which must, of course, be carried on in the midst of those who are the proper subjects of such labours. I refer more particularly to the evangelist. Such a one should never suffer himself to be localised. The world is his sphere—"the regions beyond," his motto—to gather out God's elect, his object—the current of the Spirit, his line of direction. If the reader should be one whom God has called and fitted to be an evangelist, let him remember these four things—the sphere, the motto, the object, and the line of direction, which all must adopt if they would prove fruitful labourers in the gospel field.

Finally, whether the reader be an evangelist or not, I would earnestly entreat him to examine how far he is seeking to further the gospel of Christ. We really must not be standing idle. Time is short! Eternity is rapidly posting on! The Master is most worthy! Souls are most precious! The season for work will soon close! Let us, then, in the name of the Lord, be up and doing. And when we have done what we can, in the regions around, let us carry the precious seed into "THE REGIONS BEYOND."

After all the self-denial of Christ for me, is there to be none from me for Him? When He says, "I bought you with My own blood, I charged Myself with all your guilt," am I never to say, "Anything that is not for the glory of Christ I will renounce?"

Sowing and Reaping.

“ Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.”—1 Cor. 3. 8. “ Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.”—Isa. 32. 20.

Hast thou laboured in the shadows
 Though thy work seemed all in vain ?
 Hast thou sowed the seed so precious,
 Toiling in the Saviour’s Name ?

Dost thou weary of the sowing ?
 Art thou longing now to rest ?
 Do thy steps begin to falter
 Tiring of thy high behest ?

Listen to the words of promise,
 Spoken once for such as thee ;
 “ Blest is he who by all waters,
 Sows the seed untiringly.”

“ I have seen thy patient efforts,
 I have counted all thy tears,
 While for Me thou still hast laboured
 Through the long and barren years.”

“ Yes, and now I’m coming quickly
 And with Me is My reward ;
 ’Tis for faithful service granted,
 Service done to Me, the Lord.”

“ Precious to My heart thy labour,—
 All that’s done in Jesus’ name—
 Done because thou lov’st the Saviour,
 Him Who bore Thy sin and shame.”

“ Nothing done for Me forgotten,
 Though it seemed thy work was vain
 Soon thou’lt find thy sheaves in glory
 When with Me thou e’er shalt reign.”

* * *

Precious Saviour, Thou art worthy
 Till Thou com’st, Oh ! may I be
 Faithful, earnest in the labour
 Chosen by Thyself for me.

Not for bright reward I labour,
 No! Thou gav'st Thyself for me ;
 Thou hast bought me for Thy treasure,
 All I am I owe to Thee.

And when soon Thy saints are gathered
 Round Thyself, most gracious Lord,
 Then we'll cast our crowns before Thee,
 Thou our prize and bright reward !

The Sunday School Teacher's Aim.

In days like the present, when the forces of evil are so manifest, and the attention paid to children in every sphere is so increased, it behoves all those who seek to teach in the Sunday School to ask themselves what their one great aim is in connection with their work.

Do we set out to educate the children, simply to teach them scriptures and hymns? Or can we sum up our objective in the words of the apostle when he wrote, " I am made all things to all men, that I might *by all means save some* " ?

There never was a time when the devil was busier in seeking to capture the children. His agents are to be found in the cinema, where the children have a chance to see all the wickedness possible, and hear now what no children should hear. Then there are the day-school teachers, who insidiously instil into the minds of the children that they need not believe the Bible. There are the Red Sunday Schools, some Socialist, some Proletarian, some Communist, all teaching the little ones the most awful blasphemy. The papers too that the children read are filled with that which can never turn their hearts heavenwards.

Oh ! what a solemn time we are living in ! What are we doing, who know the Lord, know His saving

grace, His power to save and His willingness too? Are we seeking by all means in our power to save some from the clutches of Satan and the doom of the unsaved?

Then there is another question. How much longer have we to bring the gospel before the children? We speak of the Lord's coming, and everything would surely indicate that it draws nigh. So we may really have very little time left at our disposal. How the words of the Lord Jesus ring in our ears, "I *must* work the works of Him that sent Me, *while it is day*: the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9. 4. Oh! how ready He ever was to meet the need of those around. Nicodemus found Him perfectly accessible at night, and heard those wonderful words, recorded for us in John 3, from His lips. The woman of Samaria found Him ready to meet her need, although He was wearied with His journey. Blessed Lord and Master, what a blessed pathway of service and love was Thine!

Now He is away in the glory and His word to us surely is "*Occupy till I come.*" There is a limit to our opportunities, and His coming which will summon us to glory, will leave those still unsaved behind for judgment. May we be stirred up to

" Work while the daylight lasteth,
Ere the shades of night come on ;
Ere the Lord of the vineyard cometh
And the labourer's work is done."

Our desire is that the Lord may bring home to the hearts of each of us who labour among the young, how short the time is, the imminence of His coming, and the importance of realising that nothing less than the *salvation of the children* should be our object.

" *Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.*" Rom. 13. 11.

" *The time is short.*" I Cor. 7. 29.

" *The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" James 5. 8.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“ He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13. 34.

Our Unfailing High Priest.

“ We have such an High Priest.” (Heb. 8. 1.) For the Lord Jesus Christ ministers unto God in the priest’s office ; ministering *for us* in it.

The ministry of Aaron before God was in one of its parts representative,—he bore the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart “ *when he went* into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.” This blessed ministry the Lord Jesus sustains for us. But not occasionally as Aaron *when* he went in, but constantly ; He appears in the presence of God for us. He ever presents the saints before God as associated with all His own fulness of excellency and glory. And this in *the presence of God* within the veil, as it is said , “ whither the forerunner is *for us* entered.” And again, “ for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, *now to appear* in the *presence of God for us.*” How blessed is this ; our names written in heaven, not in precious stones, but as “ a seal upon his heart, and as a seal upon his arm.” In manifesting His own perfectness and glory in the presence of God, Jesus appears for us ! The real identification of the Church with Christ was but faintly shadowed by the garments of glory and beauty worn by Aaron.

Then there was also the ministry of incense. This was a most precious ministry, because it was the medium of the worship of the people. But the offering of incense—all variously compounded as it was—was only occa-

sional, and it might be interrupted. The fragrance of it was not perpetually before God. The plague had begun among the people, destructive judgment had come forth, when Moses bid Aaron "Take a censer and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense ;" all this had *to be* done before Aaron could run into the congregation and stand between the dead and the living. "Behold, the plague was begun among the people ; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people . . . and the plague was stayed." (Numb. 16.) But now the ministry of incense is perpetual ; "*He ever liveth to make intercession for us.*" Hence He is able to save right through, from the beginning to the end. No plague of destructive judgment can come forth against the Church because of this. It is constantly upheld in perfectness by the power of the intercession of Jesus. It is this which ever keeps it in its right place before God, however infirm or erring here.

The blessedness of the ministry of Him who ministers for us in the true tabernacle, is, that it is entirely independent of us. It is *by Him for us*. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-judgment, on many things ; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God ; whether our souls are realizing the value of what He is doing or not. Every saint is upheld by the intercession of Jesus even in his most thoughtless mood. Priesthood is part of the work of *grace*—grace that provides for the putting away our every sin, and aiding our every infirmity, and bearing our every waywardness, in order that we may never be out of the presence of God. Hence the moment the conscience of a careless saint is re-awakened, he may find full and instant access to God, because, though he has failed, the minister of the sanctuary has not. Long before he is alive to his failure, he is debtor to the ministry of Jesus for having been kept from falling. Little did

Simon think of the sifting power of Satan, but the Lord who had prayed that his faith might not fail, could point out to him his danger. And so with us oftentimes. We see our failures, or the might and craft of our enemies, and then how precious is the thought that the intercession of Jesus for us has been over all. We are led to value the intercession of Jesus *after* failure or danger is discovered—as surely Peter was ; but its real value is that it is perpetually offered and perpetually prevalent. However we may fail, therefore, the resources of faith can never fail ; for faith reaches out to God, and God's provisions of grace in Jesus, over every failure. If there be one deeper anguish of soul than another, it surely must be for a saint to become conscious of sin, but to be without faith to look to God's gracious provision to meet it ; but Jesus prays that our faith may not fail.

We are apt to regard the intercession of Christ only as occasionally exercised on our behalf, and exercised because we have applied to it ; yea, we know that men have gone so far as to make it appear that the intercession of Jesus was only to be called out by a secondary intercession of others, such as the Virgin, or departed saints, or the Church. But how false is all this ! No ; His ministry is marked by the same grace now as when on earth. “ I *have* prayed for thee ” was His word to Simon Peter. And so when He saw the multitudes fainting, He well knew what He would do, and do without being asked. And so now—His intercession is of the same grace ; it is according to His own divine and gracious estimate of our many needs. He knows how, in our practical danger, weakness, and foolishness, we look in the eye of God, and He ever makes intercession for us accordingly ; maintaining us thus in His own fragrant perfectness. In the challenge of the apostle as to where a charge can be brought against God's elect, he winds up all with this, as though he could go no higher, “ Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh *intercession for us.*”

In another aspect the present ministry of Jesus is one of offering ; as it is said, “ wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.” Or, as it is subsequently said, “ in which were offered *gifts* that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience.”

Under the law the worshipper might bring his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, but then the priestly ministration began. The priest must lay it on the altar, where alone it could be accepted of the Lord. The worshipper himself could not offer immediately to the Lord. It was only through the priestly ministration that it was an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord. But now it is by the offering of Jesus Himself, once for all, that we are sanctified as worshippers. Jesus gave Himself *an offering* and a sacrifice unto God of a sweet smelling savour ; and now whatever comes up to God through Him, has the value of His own offering attached to it, and is of a sweet-smelling savour also. Thus God perpetually attests His own value of the offering of Jesus ; even by accepting as precious, through Him, all done or offered in His name. To ask in the name of Jesus is therefore of unfailing efficacy, because God is always well-pleased in Him. We know, as priests, the divine estimate of Him through whom we draw near to offer. What a comfort then is it to be assured that our persons, our prayers, our thanksgivings, and our services, have, all of them, before God, the sweet savour of the name of Jesus set upon them. Everything we desire or do as having the Spirit of Christ Jesus, however mingled, or however feeble, is *thus* accepted for Jesus' sake.

And remember He is a perpetual offerer, as well as a perpetual interceder. He Himself says of those who know not God in Him and through Him, “ Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god : their drink-offerings of blood will *I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*” But to us, because of this

His ministry for us, the word is, “ By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks (making confession) to his name.”

It was the priest alone who knew how to appropriate the sacrifice ; he only knew what was for God, what for himself, what for the worshipper, and what was refuse. It is indeed most blessed for us, that there is a minister for us which separates the precious from the vile ; and which orders all according to God. Our Great High Priest thus ministers for us. He takes up that which to us seems so clogged with infirmity and so mingled with impurity, that we can discern no preciousness in it, and separating the precious from the vile, He offers what is really of the Spirit in the full value of His own offering. If any soul is awakened to the desire of serving the Lord, what sorrow have they found in having to learn the wretched imperfectness of all that which they attempt. But if thus we are oftentimes dispirited and ready to grow weary in well-doing, let us remember this present ministration of Jesus for us ; such should know its value, for their labour is not in vain in the Lord. How will “ Well done, good and faithful servant,” gladden the heart of many by and by, who here have only deplored their constant failures. Think you, dear brethren, that the Philippians thought their trifling remembrance of the apostle Paul, would have found its way before God as an offering made by fire, of a sweet-smelling savour unto God? But it did. The apostle, in communion with the Great High Priest, could see Him take it up and present it in His own name. (Phil. 4. 18.) Thus they were producing fruit, through Jesus, precious unto God ; even as just before the apostle had said to them, “ being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.” (Chap. i. 11.)

Yes, let the saints as priests judge themselves and their works, and if they find, as they assuredly will find, but little of the precious, let them know the One who

judges above, and who delights to take out the precious and present it to God in His own perfectness. Oh ! if it were not for this ministry on high, how could we read the word, " To do good and to communicate forget not, for with *such* sacrifices God is well pleased."

Faith's Ivory Palaces.

By-and-by all the Lord's garments will smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, by reason of the greetings of His people. God will have anointed Him to the throne " with the oil of gladness " : and they will welcome Him out of their " ivory palaces." (See Psalm 45.)

That dear woman, whose memorial is in the gospel all the world over, began this greeting while Jesus was still in humiliation (faith in her overlooking the flesh, the disallowance of men, and even the cross itself in the sight of the resurrection and the kingdom).

Beautiful and precious faith ! a faith that could talk of life in the midst of death, of glories and crowns in the face of degradation and scorn, and which thus raised and gladdened the heart of Jesus when full of approaching paschal sorrows.

Against the day of His burying she had kept that ointment. She knew Him as appointed to death, but she knew Him as appointed to resurrection also. And she comes in the faith of " the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow," to make Him glad out of her ivory palace. (Matt. 26.)

Love did an acceptable service afterwards. It came to bury the dead. It brought its spices to the tomb. It wept with them that wept. It died with Jesus. " Let us also go," it said, " that we may die with him." But this was not faith. Faith looked beyond the grave ; love looked into it.

Different measures of light will separate disciples from each other, but not from their common Master. This woman, Mary, the sister of Lazarus was not at the tomb afterwards. Her richer knowledge of Christ kept her apart from such a journey and such a task. She could not have been there. Faith, or light and knowledge forbade her. But Magdalene and others are there, and the angels and the Lord of angels will meet them there, though Mary cannot.

Oh the sweet and sure truth which all this illustrates in days of distraction like these ! Disciples are now separated through divers measures of light and knowledge, like these women of faith and love : but those who, though in the place where faith would not have them, are yet where love had sent them, shall know something of heaven and of the presence of Jesus.

Well to know the meltings of pity over sorrow according to love, and well to know the gladdenings of hope over sorrow according to faith. But the spices of the women at the tomb were but as graveclothes : the box of spikenard of the woman of Bethany was an ivory palace. Faith used it in anticipation. The humbled Jesus was then to faith the anointed King, and faith was saying, " while the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

I may add, the wise men of the east had ivory palaces for the Babe at Bethlehem, their faith treating Him as the King of the Jews, the enthroned God of Psalm 45. Beautiful faith that was indeed, and somewhat kindred with hers who anointed the despised Galilean at Bethany. They greeted the Babe, she the Lamb appointed for the slaughter, out of her ivory palace. (Matt. 2.)

It will be an easy thing to greet Jesus in the day of glory. All will do it then. (Psalm 45. 8.) But to have done it thus at the opening and close of His humiliation, at Bethlehem and at Bethany, was excellent faith indeed.

One Soweth, another Reapeth.

It was just an ordinary piece of land, grown over with weeds of every description and sadly neglected for years. Accepting the offer of the ground, we set to work to clear it, and weeks of real hard work it was. Then it was duly planted, hoed and looked after, and the results were most satisfactory in the quality and quantity of the crops that were reaped.

There were also other things learnt in working this old piece of ground which have greatly encouraged us in a wider sphere of cultivation. The servant of Christ is oft discouraged as he surveys the ground of his labour which the Lord has assigned to him. But in hope he ploughs and digs and cleans, and back-aching and heart-breaking work it is oft-times. This may be your line of things and as far as you are concerned no fruit will ever be seen as a result of your labour. But it is after all the most important, this breaking up, this preparation for the seed to be sown.

Again, beloved servant of Christ, you too may not be privileged to see any result of the sowing year after year of the precious incorruptible seed, but this too is most necessary. Or your part may be to watch over the first shoots as they appear, and how gentle and patient must you be, giving each its proper treatment, in order to bring them on and get them established. And yet again you may see no fruition to your labours.

And now finally the fruit, the blooms, the harvest, here it is, and thou, most honoured of all servants, to thee it is given to gather. Souls are thine and joy in heaven as each and all are brought in, but in bringing these to the Lord of the harvest remember His word, "Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." He that soweth and he that reapeth will rejoice together, and He Who sent them will tell each and all to enter into the joy of their Lord.

Let us therefore each one go on in the sphere where He has told us to work, conscious that every day's work is to the one end and not one will be wasted or lost. "The harvest is great," we are told, which indicates that many beforehand have laboured, but now He says, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers." Let us bend more to our task, in the consciousness that it is the Lord's work, that we are His servants and whether it be obscure, humble or honoured, let us keep going by the grace that He gives in the dignity of the servants of Christ.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Fragment.

Paul may plant and Apollos water, but the increase is of God. How constantly is this forgotten! In the Gospel of Mark, that Gospel so instructive to all servants of Christ, the Pattern of all true service, the Master tells His disciples, "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*. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." What can the sower do to make the corn grow while he sleeps? The seed grows, but "*he knoweth not how*." Would that all labourers in the gospel more heeded portions like those of 1 Cor. 3 and Mark 4. Let us cast the seed into the ground and leave the increase to God, Who alone can give it. Like the husbandman let us patiently wait for the early and latter rain.

Things Concerning Himself.

“ Ye are come to . . . Jesus.” Heb. 12. 22, 24.

What a wondrous theme is this of surpassing glory and grace ! “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” “ The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.” “ No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

Faith discerns, in Jehovah’s possessed (acquired) One, the true heir and the blesser of the whole inheritance of glory. Eve said of her firstborn son “ I have gotten a man from the Lord,” and named him Cain, meaning ‘ acquired ’ or ‘ appointed,’ thinking that in him she had the promised deliverer. But the true Seed of the woman (in whom was the promise of life) was yet to come.

In Proverbs, chapter 8, we hear His words, the full expression of divine wisdom, “ I was daily His (Jehovah’s) delight, rejoicing always before Him and My delights were with the sons of men.” He in whom all the counsels of the Godhead centred, became God’s gift, not to angels but to men—to those who were alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works. Coming into the world, He said, “ Lo, I come . . . I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” Again, as the dependent Man, He says “ O My soul, Thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art My Lord ; My goodness extendeth not to Thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all My delight.” Psa. 16. 2, 3.

He has glorified God in His path of humiliation and obedience unto death, and has accomplished redemption. Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father and now Himself glorified, He has sent down the Holy Ghost to

engage the hearts of wisdom's children with Him where He is and to fashion them according to His image.

The Holy Spirit directs our hearts to that lowly path of love here on earth, in which every beautiful grace shone. His delight was to bless and He, the true Seeker, became the true Finder, and yearning hearts were satisfied. Joy and gladness attended His steps. Yet He was the Man of sorrows, refused and rejected by the world He had come to bless. He, the Blessor, the Healer, had not where to lay His head.

The woman of Samaria discovered in Him, as He sat by the well, wearied with His journey, the giving God. Here was One who knew all her history, all her wretchedness and sin and who could invite her to ask the living water, that ever endures to the satisfying of the heart. He brought before her the giving God who delights to bless and her needy heart gladly received the gift, a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

His path of love ended at the cross. He could say "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." No creature can ever fathom what He passed through or what it involved for Him to stoop from Godhead glory to the contradiction of sinners against Himself and to Calvary's shame and woe. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor"—what poverty!—"that ye through His poverty might be rich." Well may we who are so enriched, re-echo the apostle's cry "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" "Unspeakable" here implies "beyond all tracing or searching." So too we read "No man knoweth the Son but the Father."

Now seated on the right hand of God, He waits the appointed time when He will come to claim His own. Before He comes forth to vindicate the majesty of God in judgment on this Christ-rejecting, sin-possessed world, He will descend from heaven to raise the dead in Christ and change the living. He will take His ransomed to Himself, according to His promise "I go to prepare a

place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am, there ye may be also." What ecstatic joy will ours be then—to be for ever with Himself in fulness of bliss. Then shall each body of humiliation be fashioned and formed by Almighty power according to His body of glory and all shall be fully conformed to His image.

He has promised "Surely I come quickly" and glad expectant hearts reply, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

" Oh ! what were the glory without Thee,
Thou Son of the Father's delight !
Thyself—not the radiance about Thee—
We own as the Star of the night.

That radiance be brighter, more glorious ;
The diadems over Thy brow
Be many, O Saviour victorious !
Yet only our Object art Thou ! "

An Encouragement to Sunday School Teachers.

A short time ago I was travelling in a bus when a young person sat down beside me. She made several remarks and I thought seemed anxious to get into conversation. I wondered if the Lord might have a message for her through me, so I looked up to Him for guidance.

She told me that she had been visiting a friend, who was in hospital and then remarked, " I don't expect you remember me, but I shall never forget you." I looked surprised, so she explained that she had attended some children's meetings which we had held when she was quite a child.

She went on to tell me that one evening at the close of the meeting I had asked her when she was going to give her heart to the Lord Jesus. " Those words stuck to me," she said, " and I never see you without thinking of them."

I then asked her if she had done this, and was pleased to find out that she had been saved for twelve years, and so we were able to rejoice together. The incident she referred to had passed from my memory, but no doubt the Lord used those words as a link in the chain of blessing to her soul.

How often we find that the Lord uses the personal word to bring souls into blessing. We notice this especially with the children in the Sunday School, and oh ! what wisdom we need to speak the right word at the right time. How carefully we need to watch each one, and be much in prayer for them too.

In these days when so many around us are turning away from the gospel message, may we be more earnest than ever in seeking to win the dear children for the Lord. Not only may we seek to present the gospel clearly and simply in our classes, but may we take a real interest in each child, trying to win their confidence and affection, and then look out for opportunities of personal contact with them.

The Lord alone knows how much there is to discourage in this corner of His vineyard, but His word encourages us to buy up the opportunities, and not be weary in well-doing.

“ Have you not a word for Jesus ? Will the world His praise
 proclaim ?
 Who shall speak if ye be silent ? Ye who know and love His
 name.
 You, whom He hath called and chosen, His own witnesses
 to be,
 Will you tell your gracious Master, ‘ Lord, we cannot speak
 for Thee ! ’
 ‘ Cannot ! ’ though He suffered for you, died because He
 loved you so !
 ‘ Cannot ! ’ though He has forgiven, making scarlet white
 as snow !
 ‘ Cannot ! ’ though His grace abounding is your freely
 promised aid !
 ‘ Cannot ! ’ though He stands beside you, though He says,
 ‘ Be not afraid ! ’ ”

“ Jesus.”

“Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.” Matt. 1. 21.

“And set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Matt. 27. 37.

“A name which is above every name JESUS.” Phil. 2. 9, 10.

Oh ! Matchless Name, all other names excelling,
 'Twas given from heaven at Thy lowly birth ;
 The greatness of the Father's love revealing
 The fulness of Thine own intrinsic worth.
 Jesus Lord Jesus ! Ever the same,
 Crowned now with glory, we triumph in Thy Name.

Oh ! Matchless Name, all other names excelling,
 'Twas written by Thy foes upon the cross ;
 To all the world, the love of God forthtelling,
 Proved by Thy sorrow, suffering, shame and loss.
 Jesus, Lord Jesus ! Ever the same,
 Crowned now with glory, we triumph in Thy Name.

Oh ! Matchless Name, by God the Father given
 To Thee, now seated on th' eternal throne ;
 The Name through which lost sinners are forgiven,
 Who rest upon the work that Thou hast done.
 Jesus, Lord Jesus ! Ever the same,
 Crowned now with glory, we triumph in Thy Name.

Oh ! Matchless Name, all other names excelling,
 Name at which every knee so soon shall bow,
 Lord Jesus Christ ! our hearts with rapture swelling,
 We own Thee, love Thee, praise Thee even now.
 Jesus, Lord Jesus ! Ever the same,
 Crowned now with glory, we triumph in Thy Name.

Bread Cast Upon the Waters.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” Eccles. 11. 1.

If I am walking with God, I shall know something of this blessed life of a Christian in this world. In John 21 how different we find it. The disciples there are seeking their food from the waters, not communicating of their own abundance. This is just the opposite to this exhortation in Eccles 11. In the one case I am seeking something from this scene for myself, in the other I am seeking to communicate to others from my own abundance. The difference is immense. Man is so constituted that he is always of necessity a giver or a receiver. And if I launch out upon the troubled waters of this life, seeking to get something from them, I must learn, as all of us will have to sooner or later, that John 21. 5 has a lesson in it for me. (I am only speaking of Christians.) I shall find that when the Lord asks me, after the dark night of my toil, “Have you any meat?” that I have only one answer to give Him, as they had. And “they answered Him, No.”

This world—the moral scene through which I am passing—does not contain Christ. It had no room for Him when He trod it in grace, and it has no room for Him to-day. Hence, if I am a Christian, it cannot satisfy me; for it cannot minister Him to me, and nothing can feed the soul that has once tasted of life but the “bread of life.” (John 6.) Bread is often referred to in Leviticus as the staff of the natural life (Lev. 26. 26; Psalm 105); and in like manner Jesus only is the manna that came down from heaven—the spiritual food—the “Bread” for His people to-day, the Giver of life too to those that have it not. What then has satisfied you, that which you daily find to be enough, learn to distribute to meet the needs of those around you. Christianity is never selfish—it always thinks of others. Whatever the need or the sorrow may

be, there is relief. Jesus is the "bread of life." (John 6. 33, 48.) "Cast thy bread upon the waters : for thou shalt find it after many days."

It is only the ministry of Christ that will meet and alleviate the sorrows all around you. This will minister to all earthly sorrows, and will lead on the soul to what is eternal and lasting—"Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Give a portion to *seven*" (the complete number), "and also to *eight*" (that is, God's grace goes beyond all evil, and thus is without limit), "for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." "They need not depart ; give ye them to eat." (Matt. 14. 16.) But before you give it, it must be "thy bread ;" that is, it must be what you live upon yourself, of which you minister. Nothing else is really yours. If Christ is not your daily portion—the satisfying One for you—how can you speak of Him or minister Him to others? Your words will seem to them but as "idle tales," for the Spirit will not add the unction of His power to words that are not true and real as to yourself.

But the privilege and responsibility remain. Christians are directly addressed in the words at the head of this paper ; nor do I admit that they have no application to us. If powerless to minister Christ, what then am I living upon day by day, since it is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" ? The Lord Jesus died to give me all I needed, to satisfy me as a poor sinner, and to fill me as a saint. "Children, have ye any meat ?" Am I filled, satisfied, fed day by day ? If so, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7.) So that I may communicate to others. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Is my Christianity then marked by this exercise of it ? "Upon the waters"—restful or restless—"bread" is to be cast, reminding one of Rev. 17, "The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Such then is to be your life and mine ; and if we enter into what Christ is, it will be so spontaneously, daily, a life of casting our “ bread upon the waters,” only doing this in perfect rest and contentment of soul. This marked His life on earth. The people—everybody, the place—everywhere ; for we are told, “ In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand ” (that is, go on, continue) : “ for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that.” May we live day by day in perfect rest of heart ; experience what it is to have Christ with us, the only changeless, great, and satisfying reality in this changing scene, brightening and gladdening the house or the business, and therefore ministered in all our footsteps, “ until He come.”

When He makes up His Jewels.

“ Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching : verily, I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” Luke 12. 37.

Then—“ His servants shall serve Him ”—serve Him then as we *ought*, and not according to our *thoughts*, as we do here, alas ! so often.

“ And they shall see His face ; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there.” No need there of burning lamps ; for “ they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light : and they shall reign for ever and ever.” That is, not only shall they reign with Christ over the earth during the thousand years of the millennial kingdom of righteousness and peace, where “ righteousness reigns,” but in the eternal state of the new heavens and the new earth, where “ righteousness dwelleth ” (referred to in 2 Pet. 3.). His servants, so poor, feeble, and unworthy here, but then perfect like Him in glorious bodies, “ shall reign with Him for ever and ever.”

Fellow servants of Christ, what wondrous prospect is yours and mine through grace ! Is it not worth the while to serve a Master so gracious, patient, kind, and liberal ? Even a glass of water given by you in His name to a faint and thirsty one, shall not lose its reward ! Every tear wept in sympathy, with one of the suffering ones of Him, Who wept at Lazarus' grave, will He "gather in His bottle ;" every word of comfort spoken to one of His sick, isolated, or sorrowing ones in some out of the way corner or upper-chamber, will be written down in His "book of remembrance," to the credit of them that "feared the Lord and thought upon His name." "They shall be His," and His great *new* Name, that once despised Name of the humblest of all servants, that Name which is above every name, and at which every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth ;—that glorious Name of JESUS shall be written on the foreheads of His servants in the full blaze of glory !

In the day when the Lord will "make up His jewels," every tear wept in sorrow and sympathy for His sake, will shine like a diamond in the sunlight of His countenance, "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," when all His numberless servants will reflect His glories ; as the dewdrops in the field, sparkling in all the various colours of jewellery at the rise of the sun, reflect the glory of the heavenly orb. And what is it, beloved, that render those tiny dewdrops fit to be reflectors of His glory ? It is because they are pure, and free from any earthly alloy ; for they came from heaven, and therefore reflect heavenly glory.

Thus it will be with the saints, the servants of the Lord, when they will appear with Him in glory, clothed upon with their house that is from heaven, in their glorious bodies, their glorious livery, the "gala-uniform" of the soldiers of Christ. There will be nothing *then* in their bodies, no earthly or fleshly alloy, no mixture of

self to prevent them from fully reflecting the glories of the once despised Jesus of Nazareth, when He, Whose "visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men," will come to "sprinkle many nations;" with His "countenance as the sun shineth in his strength," yet with "healing in His wings" for His earthly people.

What a radiant reflex will His servants then be! How different to what we are now, alas! Would God we were more like *dewdrops*—*little, pure, and empty, i.e.,* without alloy! What different lights, what different reflectors of Christ's *beauties* should we be in this world, and in days like these!

Heralds of Peace.

Jesus Himself was the Prince of Peace. He passed through a world of unrest, in the calm of heaven. He was ever in the bosom of His Father. No circumstances ever ruffled Him. Sorrow and rejection pressed upon Him; unbelief and hardness of heart met His gentle spirit, to chill, if it were possible, the love of His heart; still He went on. He sighed at man's unbelieving spirit, but lifted up His eyes to heaven. The Samaritans would not have Him in His mission of love, because His face was as it were, to go to Jerusalem; *i.e.,* His heart was bent upon a path which ended in the cross and shame. He bows in submission and passes onward to another village, rebuking James and John, for they knew not what spirit they were of. His yieldingness is known unto all. (Luke 9.)

At His end, when all His sorrow stood before His soul: even when He had surveyed its mighty depths and accepted the cup from His Father's hand, He passes through shame and scorn and spitting, in calmness and peace. No moving of His heart to haste; no reviling when reviled; no threatening when He suffered—His case was with His Father. In the midst of all—with

girded loin, as Servant of servants, He thinks of Peter's fleshy blow which cut off Malchus' ear ; He touched and healed it, repairing His poor impulsive Peter's rashness. He still has His eye on Peter. He thinks of him as one who specially needs His care. His eye is turned on him at the moment the cock crew to disclose to him the distance his heart had wandered from his Lord. Silent before His foe, He commits Himself to Him that judges righteously, when His judges were condemning (and they knew it) an innocent Man. He was as " A man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs."

O how His loveliness judges our ways ! What trifles move our hearts to haste ! But still our calling is to be the heralds of peace, and of the Prince of Peace ; to carry into a world of unrest a spirit of peace and restfulness, which is to be found only where self is broken and God is trusted.

This condition of soul results as the outflow of Christian character. The inward condition formed and braced by the word of God ; the conscience perfect to face the foe. No thought for self is needed, and the heart is thus free to go on with God and think of others, and, with restfulness of spirit, shedding blessing upon those around.

A Motto.

" Till He come " is the motto of a true watcher for Christ. He says to Peter, " If I will that he tarry *till I come*, what is that to thee ? Follow thou me " (John 21. 22). Again, to the rest in Thyatira, He says " That which ye have hold fast *till I come* " (Rev. 2. 25). To all His servants He says, " Occupy *till I come* " (Luke 19. 13). The Holy Spirit may well add, " Ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come* " (I Cor. 11. 26). Thus we are taught to follow, to hold fast, to serve, and to remember Him. For how long ? say you. " Till I come," He replies.

“TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.”

“ He gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work.” Mark 13. 34.

The Snares of the Lord’s Servant.

“ The Philistines be upon thee, Samson.” (Judges 16. 4-21).

The condition of Israel, portrayed in the book of Judges, is a picture of that of the Lord’s people to-day. Both are found in a place of blessing, to which they have been brought by the goodness of God, and both have fallen into a sad condition through their sin and unfaithfulness. In both, the individual is called to rise above the low condition of the many, and to contend for the Lord’s glory and the blessing of His people.

Samson was alone in Israel. To-day many are afraid to stand alone for God. They look round for precedent and example, for human companionship, instead of looking to God alone for guidance and strength to serve Him.

How often the words of Judah (Judges 15. 11) are echoed to-day: “ Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us? ” If a man seek to serve the Lord in devotedness and energy, even christians will discourage him, because it disturbs their dishonourable ease. They speak of prudence, but the Lord says “ Thou hast left thy first love.” (Rev. 2. 4.)

When the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost there appeared tongues as of fire and it sat on each of them. He appeared as a dove when He descended upon Jesus, but after Jesus was glorified it was as tongues as of fire to signify energy, enthusiasm, burning zeal for Christ. A wonderful thing happened.

An invincible power took up its abode in men on the earth, and was to change the lives of millions. The gates of Hades could not prevail against the power of the risen Christ. This power is available to each of us by faith.

We are now not pleading for the wild fervour of the fanatic who is driven by his own imaginings to all kinds of extremes unsanctioned by the Word, or for the shallow enthusiasm of those who anon with joy receive the Word but because they have no root, in time of temptation they wither away. We plead for the sustained ardour that draws its constant inspiration from Christ in glory, and that need never fail while He is there and His Spirit here. Sever that ardour from Him and it loses its power and heavenly character. It either fades out or goes into foolish extravagance.

The christian is not an ordinary man. He is called to complete devotedness to God. "They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5. 15.) This is the measure of the devotedness that the Lord has a right to expect from His own, but to live up to it may involve the reproaches even of fellow-believers.

The Nazarite (Num. 6) was to have long hair, which speaks of confessed weakness and dependence, to drink no wine, that which typifies the joys of the natural man, and to avoid contact with a dead body, symbolic of that which is defiling and unsuited to God. Samson was a Nazarite from his birth, but particular emphasis is laid upon his long hair as the secret of his strength. "If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him." (1 Cor. 11. 14). The courage and strength of a christian should be of a different order from those of the natural man. In the latter the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life play their part. In the christian self should be consciously weak and faith relying on Christ alone. Where the secret of strength is maintained the man of God may perform feats of courage and

endurance beyond all that is of nature. This is the lesson of Hebrews 11, and of the story of Samson.

Samson had serious faults even when his secret was kept and his strength unimpaired. This tells us of the Lord's faithfulness even when we are unfaithful, but his trifling with the enemy took him into danger and eventually led to his undoing. Christian, beware! Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. The beginnings of departure from the Lord are subtle.

Samson, trifling with the enemy but still keeping his secret, suggests that Delilah should bind him with seven withs or strings that have never been dried. Some peculiar strength may reside in those bonds which still have the greenness or freshness of nature in them. But Samson rises from sleep at the shout of danger and the divine power dwelling within him breaks the withs as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. The green withs would appear to speak of the power of nature, natural affections and desires used by the adversary to hinder the testimony. One recalls that the Lord Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and after forty days without food was tempted as regards the satisfaction of the needs of His body. The same Spirit now indwells the believer, although alas often sadly grieved. Elsewhere the Lord would not allow natural relationships, beautifully maintained in their proper place, to hinder His Father's business (Luke 2. 45 and Mark 3. 31-35). "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14. 26.

One might speak of missionaries and martyrs who have triumphed in this way in the power of the Holy Ghost. In the year 202 A.D. Perpetua, a christian woman of noble birth, twenty-two years of age, was led before the Roman Governor of Carthage. Her aged father, a pagan, brought her infant son in his arms and

stood before her. "Have pity on thy father's grey hairs," said the governor. "Have pity on thy helpless child. Offer sacrifice for the welfare of the Emperor." "That I cannot do," she answered. "I am a christian." Shortly after, singing a psalm she entered the amphitheatre to be tossed by a cow and so to enter the Lord's presence.

Perhaps the affections of a young disciple are engaged with one who loves not the Lord. The power of nature is strong, so strong as to appear irresistible, even as seven green withs. But the One Who claims the entire life can give the power to triumph over everything that the enemy would bring in to hinder. Alas how we fail in these things little and big, because we forget what we Nazarites are to be to the Lord.

Secondly, Samson invites Delilah to bind him with new ropes never used for work before, but these too are broken like threads. Here the enemy tries to ensnare the man of God with that which is new or untried. Such are the attractions of the modern world, its many subtle devices to engage the heart and to give the christian no time for reading, meditation, prayer and service. But the power of the Holy Ghost in the dependent child of God can triumph over these and fix the eye on Jesus Christ the Same yesterday and to-day and forever. With so much to see, to know, and to do, the world looks more attractive to-day than ever before, but true life—eternal life—is "to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Divine spiritual energy is necessary if the christian is not to be deprived of his soul's sustenance to-day.

Thirdly, Delilah weaves his hair with the web and fastens it with the pin, but Samson awakens out of sleep and goes away with the pin of the beam and with the web. The passage of the shuttle in Job 7 is symbolic of the fleeting days of our lives, and in Isaiah 38 the threatened cutting off of Hezekiah's life is likened to

the action of a weaver in separating the web from the thrum or fringe of threads remaining attached to the loom when the work is complete. In a less figurative way the web is plainly suggestive of days of toil, the routine of our avocations. The lesson would appear to be that although the christian finds his weakness interwoven with the circumstances of his daily life, its necessities and duties, he is to rise up in the power of the Holy Spirit and bear himself in the place where God has put him for God's glory. He is not to allow the testimony to be hindered by his circumstances, but to make circumstances the very means of glorifying God. Thus his hair remains in the web and yet he is the Lord's freeman. One might say, "My position is so difficult. There is so much opposition in the office and I am so prone to failure myself that I am fain to keep silence. Another who has a business of his own is much better placed to serve the Lord." All such suggestions are the wiles of Delilah. There is divine, overcoming, strength for the dependent one.

Then comes the sad fall. Samson yields up his secret to the enemy and is undone. Even so is it with the christian who tries to make the world a third party with God and himself. His confessed weakness is his strength through dependence and communion with the Lord. He cannot share divine secrets with the world, as the world, without losing the power of them himself.

He that is spiritual discerns all things and he himself is discerned of no one (1 Cor. 2. 15). He has spiritual intelligence to discern the true character of things, but to the world he is inexplicable, also its praise and blame are nothing to him.

But if the christian tries to make the best of both worlds—to stand for the truth and yet to cultivate the approval of the ungodly, he will find that his testimony has lost its power and the world itself does not respect him.

Once a Samson, called Martin Luther, was summoned to Worms to stand before the great ones of the earth. "There sat Charles, sovereign of half the world. And there on either side of him were ranged the peers and potentates of the German empire—bishops and archbishops, cardinals in their scarlet robes, papal nuncios in their official magnificence, ambassadors from the mightiest kingdoms of christendom, to say nothing of deputies and officials. Such was the assembly of the States-General at Worms. And gathered, the reader may ask, for what? It was really to hear the trial and judge the son of a poor miner. Dressed in his monk's frock and hood, pale-faced and worn with the fatigues and hazards of his recent life, he stood silent and self-possessed in the midst of more than five thousand spectators. 'Yet prophet-like that lone one stood, with dauntless words and high,' answering all questions with force and modesty."

When he was asked whether he would retract his writings he desired time for consideration that he might frame his answer aright. "One day was granted. Whatever may have been Luther's reason for this request we need not stay to enquire: one thing is certain, that it was overruled by God to discover and reveal the secret springs of Luther's strength and courage, and the strength and courage of faith in all ages. That wonderful prayer which was offered up shortly before his second appearing, is the most precious document in the whole history of the reformation.

"For a moment Luther felt troubled; his eye was off the blessed Lord; he was thinking of the many great princes before whom he had to stand; his faith grew weak; he was like Peter when he looked at the waves in place of the person of Christ; he felt as if he would sink. In this state of soul he fell on his face and groaned deep thoughts which could not be uttered. It was the Spirit making intercession for him. A friend hearing his distress, listened and was privileged to hear the

broken cries of a broken heart ascending to the throne of God.

“Luther was but emerging from the darkness of superstition ; he had not fully learnt the blessed truth of death and resurrection, of his oneness with Christ, of his acceptance in the Beloved. But his nearness to God, the power of his prayer, and the reality of his communion, refresh our hearts after an interval of three hundred years.” The next day he gave the answer that shook the power of the papacy and secured the triumph of the reformation.

How can you walk in the Spirit to-day ? By getting into the Lord’s presence like Luther, confessing your need of Him every moment and seeking His grace, feeding on His Word and walking in communion with Him. He is able to make all grace abound towards you, able to keep you from falling, able to save to the uttermost, able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think.

The Spirit does not occupy us with Himself so much as with Christ the Object of faith above. This is walking in the Spirit. This is invincible strength to serve Him without help of man. But “the children of Ephraim, armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.” (Psa. 78. 9). When we reach the glory we will have to own that the sinews of war were fully provided and that we failed to use them, even as Israel refused to go up to take the land at God’s command (Numbers 14).

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” (Eph. 6. 10-13).

Buying up Opportunities.

“What is my work? I cannot preach; I am no use at visiting the sick and poor; what can I do?”

Many years ago a dear old saint of God, who worked in the central meat market, was complaining of the lack of opportunities and experiences he had. “Look at Brother ——,” he said, “he is always having opportunities of serving the Lord. Only lately he has been used in bringing souls to a deeper knowledge of the truth. I never have that joy.”

The brother of whom he spoke came to him and said, “You come in contact with many men during the day, market employees and customers. If they speak of the weather, do you speak of the goodness of God in giving it? If they are in trouble or distress do you tell them of the comfort and love of God? If it is a bad day and they grumble, do you say to them, ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’ If you do, you will soon be in conversation which will enable you to tell them of the grace of God and of His wonderful salvation. You will be surprised at the opportunities you will have, and of the readiness with which they will listen.”

“I never thought of that,” said the old brother. “I will try it.”

A week later he came with a face radiant with joy. “It works! It works!” he said. “What works?” he was asked. “Why, what Brother —— said. Do you know, I am astonished at the number of christians there are in the market, and the many efforts to spread the Gospel. One after another I have spoken to, and it is wonderful the opportunities the Lord has given me.”

This dear old brother has now been with the Lord for many years. From that time until the Lord took him Home, he went on taking the opportunities thus given him by the Lord Who gave him many encouragements.

The following incident may prove how the Lord uses His servants if they are ready to speak for

Him at all times. In a railway office were three clerks ; one, a christian, was seeking during an interval to shew his friend the way of salvation. He felt greatly discouraged at the callous indifference he met with, thinking his effort a failure. He did not know that the Spirit of God was working and while his friend was not affected by the word spoken, the other clerk had heard every word and his conscience was reached. He passed through deep exercise, and before long confessed the Lord and was eternally saved.

When the young christian learned of the goodness of God in saving his companion they gave themselves together to the study of the Word. Then opportunities came which they took, and though a number of years have passed, they have continued to speak the word in season and out of season, preaching publicly as well as telling individuals the story of His love. The result was not as this young christian expected but as the Lord intended, Who knew the desire of His servant and blessed His own Word in His own way.

Dear fellow-believer, do not be looking for some special or great work. Do the things near at hand, taking the opportunities that are offered you.

“ Let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Gal. 6. 9.

“ In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand : for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” Eccl. 11. 6.

When He comes, then the time for love's labour is o'er,
 We can preach, we can visit, can wrestle no more :
 The sword will be sheathed and the race will be run,
 The harvest be reaped, and the victory won.

The third watch of the night, or the fourth may be past ;
 Of the twelve hours for working, *this* may be the last ;
 Then wake, brother, wake ; work, brother, to-day :
 To-morrow the Master may call us away.

Is it I or is it the Lord ?

“ And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight, that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou swarest unto their fathers? . . . I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in Thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.” (Num. 11. 11-15.)

Here we find the spirit of Moses crushed beneath the ponderous responsibility which devolved upon him, and he gives utterance to the anguish of his heart in these accents.

In all this we see Moses evidently retiring from a post of honour. If God were pleased to make him the sole instrument in managing the assembly, it was only so much the more dignity and privilege conferred upon him. True, the responsibility was immense; but faith would own that God was amply sufficient for that.

Here, however, the heart of Moses failed him (blessed servant as he was), and he says, “ I am not able to bear all this people *alone*, because it is too heavy for *me*.” But he was not asked to bear them alone; for God was with him. They were not too heavy for God. It was He that was bearing them; Moses was but the instrument. He might just as well have spoken of his rod as bearing the people; for what was he but a mere instrument in God’s hand, as the rod was in his?

It is here the servants of God constantly fail; and the failure is all the more dangerous because it wears the appearance of humility. It seems like distrust of oneself and deep lowness of spirit, to shrink from heavy responsibility. But all we need to inquire is, has God imposed the responsibility? If so, He will assuredly be with me in sustaining it; and having Him with me, I can sustain anything. With Him, the weight of a

mountain is nothing ; without Him, the weight of a feather is overwhelming.

It is a totally different thing if a man, in the vanity of his mind, thrust himself forward and take a burden upon his shoulder which God never intended him to bear and, therefore, never fitted him to bear it. We may then, surely, expect to see him crushed beneath the weight of it. But if God lays it upon him, He will qualify and strengthen him to carry it.

It is never the fruit of humility to depart from a divinely appointed post. On the contrary, the deepest humility will express itself by remaining there in simple dependence upon God. It is a sure evidence of being occupied about *self* when we shrink from service on the ground of inability. God does not call us to service on the ground of our ability, but of His own ; hence, unless I am filled with thoughts about myself, or with positive distrust of Him, I need not relinquish any position of service or testimony because of the heavy responsibilities attaching thereto.

All power belongs to God, and it is quite the same whether that power acts through one agent or through seventy ; the power is still the same : but if one agent refuse the dignity, it is only so much the worse for him. God will not force people to abide in a place of honour, if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there. The way lies always open to them to step down from their dignity, and sink into the place where base unbelief is sure to put us.

Thus it was with Moses. He complained of the burden, and the burden was speedily removed ; but with it the high honour of being allowed to carry it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest to be elders of the people, and officers over them ; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there ; and I will take of the

spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them ; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." (Num. 11. 16, 17).

There was no fresh power introduced. It was the same Spirit, whether in one or in seventy. There was no more value or virtue in the flesh of seventy men than in the flesh of one man. " It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing." (John 6. 63.) There was nothing, in the way of power, gained ; but a great deal, in the way of dignity, lost by this movement on the part of Moses.

In the after part of Numbers 11, we find Moses giving utterance to accents of unbelief, which called forth from the Lord a sharp rebuke. " Is the Lord's hand waxed short ? Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not." If my reader will compare verses 11-15 with verses 21 and 22, he will see a marked and solemn connection. The man who shrinks from responsibility, on the ground of his feebleness, is in great danger of calling in question the fulness and sufficiency of God's resources.

This entire scene teaches a most valuable lesson to every servant of Christ who may be tempted to feel himself alone or overburdened in his work. Let such a one bear in mind that, where the Holy Ghost is working, one instrument is as good and as efficient as seventy ; and where He is not working seventy are of no more value than one. It all depends on the energy of the Holy Ghost. With Him one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him seventy men can do nothing. Let the lonely servant remember, for the comfort and encouragement of his sinking heart, that, provided he has the presence and power of the Holy Ghost with him, he need not complain of his burden nor sigh for a division of labour. If God honour a man by giving him a great deal of work to do, let him rejoice therein and not murmur ; for if he murmur, he can speedily lose his honour. God is at no loss for instruments. He could,

from the stones, raise up children unto Abraham ; and He can raise up, from the same, the needed agents to carry on His glorious work.

Oh ! for a heart to serve Him ! A patient, humble, self-emptied, devoted heart ! A heart ready to serve in company, ready to serve alone, a heart so filled with love to Christ that it will find its joy—its chief joy—in serving Him, let the sphere or character of service be what it may. This assuredly is the special need of the day in which our lot is cast. May the Holy Ghost stir up our hearts to a deeper sense of the exceeding preciousness of the name of Jesus, and enable us to yield a fuller, clearer, more unequivocal response to the changeless love of His heart !

What is my Object ?

(Judges 7.)

The greater the difficulty of the time in which I am, the more I have to learn that the only true regulator of my course is the Lord Himself as my object. When I know Him thus, I am “ holding the Head, from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together increaseth with the increase of God.” When Christ is my object, He is both my guide and my support. He not only occupies my heart, but He nourishes me with His own strength, in order that I may accompany Him in His mind and counsel.

Gideon is presented to us in this chapter as the centre and rallying-point of the true hearts in Israel in a time of difficulty. Midian and Amalek were to be overcome. Thirty-two thousand gather around his standard ; of these, twenty-two thousand are fearful and afraid, and there remain ten thousand. But these are now to be tested as to whether they are fit and prepared to go forth with Gideon. And the Lord's mode

of testing them is "Bring them down to the water and I will try them for thee there." *Why to the water?*

Now there are two phases in man's history ; one is adversity, or, as we may call it, difficulty ; the other prosperity ; and each is placed before us in its moral effects in Deuteronomy 8. The wilderness was the time of difficulty. There the soul was learning God ; there the strait became the occasion of God's help when the soul had found out that it had no other resource, and thus was truly strengthened ; for the real measure of our strength is the measure of the strait we have passed through with God. God's great purpose in leading me through the straits of the wilderness, is to lead my soul into the simple dependence of hanging on His word apart from and beyond any provision or arrangement. Thus difficulty or adversity differs much from prosperity. In difficulty I am thrown on God, and any strength that I have must be in Him ; if I have any it will come out then. In the day of adversity all my resources according to the strain bearing on me, will be pressed into use ; and if I fail, it is a proof that my strength is small. But in prosperity my resources are not so necessarily in God, and if I have a weakness I have an opportunity of gratifying it. Hence, the Lord warns Israel lest, in the prosperity of Canaan, they should forget Him.

And now we may understand the nature of the test to which Gideon's army was subjected. The water represents prosperity or mercies ; it may be anything which addresses ourselves, and, which, though provided or allowed of God is, as addressed to ourselves, in no way connected with Gideon and his work. *But it is the test.* If Christ be not simply and definitely my object, things, good things, which address and suit myself, and for which I may be thankful as mercies, will engross my attention, and Christ as my distinct object is lost. And not only so ; but if He be not my distinct object, I am not "holding the Head," and as a

consequence, am not nourished or enabled to hold on and accompany Him in *His* objects and purpose. And here it is that so many true-hearted ones are turned aside. The water tests them, and it assumes such specious forms that they see not that they are tested by it, and so are often found wanting. Various are the forms it takes. One great test is our own usefulness. This is Martha-like: she was full of serving Christ, and, in a measure, it became her as mistress of the house. But her heart was more in her work than in the Lord, and she was not one of the three hundred. Nine thousand, seven hundred threw themselves on their knees to drink water—were engrossed by it. The three hundred did not deny the existence of the mercy, they lapped it—took just what was necessary and no more, for they had another object. Gideon was their object, who doubtless was looking on to see who would be able to stand the test. And any who *did* stand it, he not only equipped suitably for the conflict, but put them in the blessed place of imitators of himself. “As I do so shall ye do,” are his words to them; they were to be similar to himself in place and action. What more blessed, more honourable for a soul in this day of difficulty; and how fully answering to us now. If our Lord be simply our object, we are *as He is* in place and action; we are “holding the Head,” and He nourishes us up into His own mind and ways at the time.

Another test may be our reputation among men, which Paul calls “loss for Christ.” His own righteousness, which would have given him a place among men, he counts as dung, something not to be touched.

Another test (as in Col. 2) is the effort the heart makes to set itself off by will-worship, etc., and is thus turned from Christ. It is as I surrender the water—prosperity—that I am devoted, fit for Gideon. Everyone ordinarily is seeking some prosperity, but our devotedness to Christ is in proportion as we surrender it. Yet, *in* the surrender it is that we receive an “hundredfold

more ! ” The Lord in the same breath in which He tells the young ruler that he must leave all and follow Him, and when Peter retorts, “ *We* have left all and followed Thee,” replies, “ You will have an hundredfold more.” Had not the three hundred ?

The Lord be thanked that He has given us such an object as Himself, and that as our hearts make Him such, so we are helped, nourished and guided according to His very mind.

Walking by Faith.

“ For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor. 5. 7.)

To a certain extent it is doubtless true that every christian may be said to walk by faith, and not by sight. But the largest charity will not allow us to think that, all christians at all times, in their course through this world, are, according to the force of the principle enunciated by the apostle, as gathered from the connection in which it stands, practically, and characteristically, walking by faith, and not by sight. Nay, if we turn in upon our own consciousness, it may be asked which of us is found, day by day, and in all our varying circumstances of life, so giving to the things which are unseen and eternal their due and controlling power in the soul over the things which are seen and temporal, as to be habitually, and in the sense of the apostle, walking by faith, and not by sight ?

To be *saved* by faith is one thing, to *walk* by faith is another. And Scripture does not present these things as so conjoined that where the one exists the other, without care or concern, and without our watchfulness and warfare, will necessarily follow. “ By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” This casts us upon God as the gracious and sole author of our salvation, thus endearing His character to our hearts while it gives them their

sure and eternal ground of confidence in His favour. But Scripture also speaks to us thus: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and please God, so ye would abound more and more." This throws the soul inward upon *itself*, to see how far its habits and principles, its conduct and feelings, or, as Scripture beautifully expresses it, "The issues of life," are in accordance with the will of God. "For (adds the apostle) ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification," etc.

The balance of Scripture is destroyed where the mind is occupied alone with privilege and grace, and is impatient of the aspect of duty and obligation. And it is to be feared on the part of those who profess to be separated from the general corruption of Christianity, but whose separation is a thing of nought if it be not a separation to *God* and holiness, that there may be springing up amongst them a new and subtle kind of Antinomianism, in constantly looking at the Church's abstract position, and perfectness in Christ, as if the mere mental recognition of that secured to each individual a position and acceptance with God which could never be forfeited, and beyond which it was impossible he should be advanced. Every word of God is true; but it is true in application only as far as it is truly applied. Truth is not truth to *me* until it is reduced to living act. Every distinct proposition of the word of God asks for itself a definite reception by faith, "faith which worketh by love." The ends of a divine revelation are not accomplished in us except as it brings the soul and God together, in the harmony of truth communicated and truth obeyed. This, and not a light kind of second-hand dealing with the terms in which truth is expressed either in Scripture or by men whose hearts have felt its power, is the obedience of faith.

"We walk by faith (says the apostle) not by sight."

This is not equivalent to the thought that we are saved by faith, however true that may be. To *walk* is indicative not of a point but a progress. Neither can walking by faith be reduced to the vagueness of a general principle leaving to the individual mind to fill up the undefined outline of its application. Nothing, I think, can give more definiteness and force to this simple but comprehensive proposition, "For we walk by faith, not by sight," than the way in which it is interjected by the apostle in the passage under consideration. It is presented in connection with the most wonderful unfolding of the character and consequences that mark the reception of the Gospel by the soul which are traced onward through all the vicissitudes of our earthly course, giving a victory over every trial and even over death itself; linking every sorrow and suffering, that is met in the power of faith, with eternal glory; pointing the soul, in the dissolution of all its present associations, to a "building of God, a house not made with hands;" and intermediately giving to death this simple character of being absent from the body and present with the Lord; in issue landing the soul in this simple purpose of life, "endeavouring, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him."

The eye that is steadily directed to the world that is unseen and eternal, will bring home to the soul a thousand intimations of coming glory and of attractive goodness, which are missed entirely by the christian even that is unduly occupied by the things of this world and time.

The spectacle of the starry heavens and all the glory of the celestial sphere may be alike the object of the contemplation of the astronomer in his observatory, and the midnight traveller as he lifts his transient glance ever and anon to the spangled canopy on high. But while the one gazes with wrapt wonder on the limitless fields of space, has his senses bathed in all the glory of revolving suns and spheres, as through his telescope they are seen to thread their mazy way through never-

ending galaxies of brightness ; the other beholds little more than an outstretched pavilion of blue hung with its tiny lamps, which, twinkling with glowworm brightness, shed their feeble rays to guide him in the bewilderment of his steps. The objects of contemplation are the same to both, but how different are the emotions awakened by them in the minds of each ! So is it with the christian that steadily gazes with the eye of faith into the disclosures of that world which faith alone can apprehend, and the christian that does not indeed *disbelieve* the record of those things which God has prepared for them that love Him, but who, in a practical sense, could hardly—at least in the apostle's application of the phrase—be said to “ Walk by faith and not by sight.”

In infinite grace, we know God so watches over the feeblest and faultiest of His children, in their course, as to make all things work together for their good. But this is far wide of the truth which was before the apostle's mind in the passage now before us. Here the scope and purpose and entire bent of the soul, whether in active labour or in patient suffering, are directed to the things which are unseen and which are eternal, to the exclusion, as to any dominancy over the soul, of the things which are seen and temporal.

There is nothing more wonderful than the calm and confident way in which each point is explained and disposed of in the questions that are discussed in the opening verses of this chapter (2 Cor. 5). If we think of what death is, what conquests it has made, what is involved in the dissolution of the ties that bind us to the present scene of existence, what utter powerlessness there is in nature to meet the approach of death, what darkness and uncertainty mark all the reasonings of philosophy concerning what is hidden from us in the future by the veil of mortality, we cannot but see and wonder at the love that opens out such a vista of glory and triumph through regions of death and discomfiture of all human

power and hope. The body which we now possess, and which is subject to decay and dissolution, is but an earthly tent that death takes down, to be replaced by a "building of God," an eternal habitation, in those heavens where Jesus finds His home and where God's glory eternally reigns.

There may be groaning now because of the weakness of nature, and because of our association with a creation that, through sin, is itself made to groan; but this only compels the more earnest outlook of the soul, and the more longing desire to be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

But where this is not the object of desire, and where the soul has not a title to this provision of God, what is there for it but the most terrible unpreparedness for a scene on which it is compelled to enter? For what pregnant sorrow is there in the expression, "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." This heavenly house must be ours, the soul must be clothed upon with this, or else we must "be found naked."

It is *life*, and not *death*, that Scripture always presents to the believer as the proper object of his hope. It is for life and glory that Christ has redeemed us, and not for death and corruption. And God has wrought us for the self-same thing; and the earnest of the Spirit, is the witness and earnest of the inheritance and of glory.

But, come life or death, there is always a ground for confidence. Death *may* come. Be it so. If we are at home in the body, there is so far a necessitated absence from the Lord. If we are absent from the body, it lands us with Him Who is the object of our desire. "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." And the issue of all, where it can be truly said, "We walk by faith, not by sight," is summed up in the words, "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." Amen.