

THE
CHRISTIAN FRIEND

And Instructor.

PAPERS FOR THE COMFORT AND EDIFICATION
OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

“Hold fast the form of sound words.”—2 TIM. i. 13.

“Exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.”—HEB. x. 25.

“Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”—JUDE 20.

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THE CHRISTIAN FRIEND.



THE CHURCH AS THE HOUSE OF GOD.

1 COR. iii.

WE may notice two aspects in which the assembly (church) of God is spoken of in Scripture; first, "the body of Christ" (Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 18); second, "the house of God." (1 Tim. iii. 15; Eph. ii. 22.) In this second aspect there is again a distinction made in the word of God between the building as it will be in heaven, when every living stone will have been fitted into its place and the whole have grown "unto an holy temple in the Lord," and this building viewed as at any time existing on the earth. Of the former it is evident that Matthew xvi. 18 speaks, where the Lord declares that against what *He* builds the gates of hell shall not prevail; and again Ephesians ii. 20, 21, where the whole building is "*FITLY framed together,*" not yet completed, but "groweth unto an holy temple *in the Lord.*" Of the latter our chapter especially speaks, besides Eph. ii. 22, 1 Tim. iii. 15, and other passages, where the assembly of God as existing upon earth, and not in its future, is viewed as "the house of God," "the temple of God," "an habitation of God through the Spirit." This was formed on the day of Pentecost by the gathering together in one of the children of God who before were scattered abroad; and the Holy Ghost

descended and filled the house—the assembly of God—with His presence. In the wilderness the habitation of God was a tabernacle, and when that was consecrated the glory of Jehovah descended and filled it. (Ex. xl. 34, 35.) In the kingdom, the tabernacle gave place to Solomon's temple, and again the glory of Jehovah filled it. (1 Kings viii. 10, 11.) On the day of Pentecost, God again took possession of His house by the Holy Ghost.

But ere we proceed, one thing should be noticed with respect to the assembly as the body of Christ. In that, Scripture speaks of a *Head and members* vitally united together by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) In the house of God, on the contrary, we have stones and a foundation, and corner-stone and a master-builder, or "architect," and the living God as He who dwells in it. To confuse one line of thought with the other is ruinous to "rightly dividing the word of truth." Moreover there is no such thing as a "member of a church"; in Scripture it is "membership of the body of Christ," and a member of Christ can never cease to be a member; the figure of the natural body is used to show its oneness; and of this natural body Psalm xxxix. speaks, "In thy book all my members were written, . . . when as yet there was none of them." How much more true of those who were given to Christ before the foundation of the world. (Compare John xiv. 19, "Because I live, ye shall live also.") His body is *Himself*—"His own flesh"—which He nourishes and cherishes, and therefore there cannot be such a thing as a false member of the body of Christ; but there may be bad materials built into the house, as we shall see. And further, this union between Christ and His body

is so intimate that in 1 Cor. xii. 12 the whole body, *i.e.*, Head and members, is called "Christ," just as in Gen. v. 2 it is said that God made man, male and female, and called *their* name "Adam."

Returning to our chapter, we note that all the saints, at any time existing upon earth, are not only living stones of the heavenly temple, but have been gathered together by *human instrumentality* into the assembly of God, or, to keep to the figure used, built into the temple in which the Spirit of God dwells; in the case of the Corinthians, by Paul and other labourers. But let us bear in mind that there is not a trace in Scripture of such a thing as independent churches forming themselves into associations according to their own convictions. The only thing known in Scripture is "the assembly of God." Into *that* the New Testament workmen gathered—the house of God, into that the stones were built. In verse 10 Paul declares that the grace of God was given to him as the "architect," and he had laid the one and only foundation—others might build on it, but other foundation could not be laid. Mark, what is spoken of here is not the foundation of a sinner's salvation, but of the building which is the habitation of God—His temple upon earth. There has been no other architect but Paul appointed by God; there can be no other foundation laid, though many have taken the place of master-builders, and laid down the foundations for the churches they sought to form, in "creeds," "confessions of faith," &c.

If we revert to the tabernacle wherein God dwelt in the wilderness, Moses was, as it were, the architect, receiving the patterns from God (Ex. xxv. 40, xxvi. 30); and David, in the same way, was architect

of the temple, giving the pattern to Solomon of "all that he had by the Spirit." (1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12.) Nor could there have been a deviation from it in either case. Alas! we of this dispensation have done so, and formed churches according to our own patterns, one of the chief reasons being, that the idea of "God's house" has been lost, and the church has been regarded more as the dwelling-place of saints than of God the Holy Ghost. For it is evident, if we regard it as the dwelling-place of God, His dwelling must be according to His own mind; and any departure from it is a step towards bringing it into that condition when it could no longer be His habitation, though His patience is long, and His true saints will ever know His presence with them till they are caught up to heaven. The foundation then of the house of God upon earth is "Jesus Christ," and Paul says, "*I have laid the foundation;*" but note when the heavenly temple is spoken of, apostles and prophets are the foundation stones (Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14), Jesus Christ Himself being the *chief cornerstone*.

To return. Paul having laid the foundation, others built on it. "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." "Gold, silver, precious stones" might be built, or "wood, hay, and stubble" might be added; it depended upon the builders; but the coming day would declare it. Paul himself could look forward to that day, and view his work in the light of it; those whom he had gathered he looked to be his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord *at His coming*. The work would stand when tried by fire; such an one's work would abide, and he receive a reward. "Ye are our glory and joy in that day."

Secondly, a converted man is supposed (*v.* 15), but his work will not stand the fire—the scrutiny of God’s holy judgment; he suffers loss as a workman, though he himself is saved, “yet so as by fire.” It is as a man who has surrounded himself with possessions, from the midst of which he is saved, but they are burnt; his work is not his “glory and joy.” Thirdly, there is not only a bad workman, but he himself corrupts the temple of God. He is corrupt himself, and therefore he is a corrupter. “Him shall God destroy.” Now mark what was the occasion of this solemn warning of the apostle. The Corinthians were a clever people in this world, and they were beginning to bring their own cleverness and energy into the temple of God; they had not learned to become fools that they might be wise. Our *own* wise thoughts are our greatest hindrance. “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.” To bring in human wisdom into the assembly of God is so far to begin to render it unfit for His habitation; it is as if Bezaleel had deemed that his own wisdom could deviate from the patterns given to Moses; instead of which he had wisdom *given* him to follow out the patterns.

Thus far we have looked at the *building*. If we now turn to 1 Cor. xii. we shall there find the Spirit giving us by the apostle, as it were the furniture and services of the house *as he received them from the Lord*. “If any man think himself to be a prophet, *or spiritual*, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” (1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38.) Alas! we may say again, that we of this dispensation have been careless as to the building, so that not only

have other foundations been sought to be laid, and bad materials built in, but the internal orderings of the assembly also have not been according to the commandments of the Lord.

The first point the apostle notes is the Lordship of Christ, of which the Holy Spirit was the witness. The assembly is the sphere of spiritual gifts or manifestations. Anything spoken derogatory of Jesus was not of the Holy Ghost, and no one could say Jesus is Lord but by the same Holy Ghost. Here then is affirmed a solemn first principle, that the Holy Ghost bears witness in every spiritual manifestation to the Lordship of Christ. Compare Heb. iii. 6: "Christ . . . Son over His own" (*i.e.*, God's own) "house." "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," &c; and He divides to each severally as He will (*v.* 11), so that all needful gifts are from the Holy Spirit. Again, "There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord." All services are directly under the one and same Lord. "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." In whatever way (and there are diversities) a service is carried on, the energizing power is of God. To use a figure, the various members of my body are *gifts* to my body. Take my hand, as an example, it is one of the most necessary and important; but with it I feed myself. That is a *ministry* to my body. But how is the *operation* of feeding myself to be wrought? It is by the enabling power of Him in whom I live and move, and have my being. So in the assembly. There are gifts of the Holy Ghost; the ministries are under the Lord, and the enabling power is of God. It is not because I have a gift that I am to use it either

at my own will, or under the will and control of others, save as all ought to be subject one to the other, as "God has tempered the body together," but under the Lord Christ. If this had been recognized at Corinth, there would not have been the confusion there was, nor would they have gloried in man had they recognized that it was not human power or wisdom, but God who operated each gift in each one ("all in all").

The apostle then speaks of the varied gifts, and, using the comparison of the body, shows how all were in the unity of the body, and not for self. My hand cannot be for itself, nor for one part or other which it may esteem more highly, but for the body. "Now," says the apostle, "ye are Christ's body" (v. 27); and "God has set some *in the assembly*," &c. The ordering of the house then in its services and furniture is *of God*, and what we need to realize is, that any other order is confusion. It may not appear so to human wisdom—with it human arrangement would be best—but in God's house it is ruinous disorder.

I would notice the difference now between the sign-gifts; that is, such as were for signs—tongues, miracles, &c.; and edification-gifts, as teaching, exhortation, &c. In Eph. iv. we have no sign-gifts mentioned at all. There the Spirit is more speaking of what was the body and bride of Christ, of what He nourishes and cherishes, and will finally present to Himself without a spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. We find then that the gifts mentioned there are for the perfecting of the saints, &c., "*Till* we all come . . . to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" that is, they continue till each individual member of the whole Church is come to the one perfect Man in glory. We are *now* all

growing up into Christ by the ministry of these abiding gifts: first, apostles and prophets—those *we* have in the word of God; and oh, what wisdom of God to give them to us in that way, so that we have unchangeable foundations!—"Are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." (Eph. ii. 20.) Then we have evangelists, pastors, and teachers; for gathering first, and then perfecting the members of the body. These we may always count upon. They are gifts of the Spirit, given by an ascended Lord, who has led captivity captive for the nourishing of His own body.

But the apostle tells us in 1 Cor. xiv. that tongues were for a sign, not to those who believe, but to them that believe not. God had given to the assembly not only gifts for its own edification, but those whereby it might minister the grace of God to the world. First and foremost, tongues, by means of which every man might hear in his own dialect in which he was born the wonderful works of God. Nor were the bodies forgotten, but gifts of healing told that the gospel of God was not words only, blessed as they were, but active love to men; and we find consequently that while handkerchiefs from Paul's body healed the sick Ephesians (Acts xix. 12), as a witness, accompanying the word which all Asia heard, yet Paul left Trophimus, himself an Ephesian, sick at Miletum (2 Tim. iv. 20), and *that* when he was begging Timothy to come to him; not that some in the Church were not healed, as Dorcas, but the aspect of such gifts was to the world.

Two things might be affirmed as reasons why they have ceased: (1) the unfaithfulness of the Church,

which was already using her ornaments of grace, as in the case at Corinth, for self-exaltation and show, and not to exhibit to the world the worthiness of her Lord; (2) and the fact that Christianity is now "believed on in the world" (1 Tim. iii. 16), and needs not miraculous power to establish it; that has been done. But, on the contrary, we are told that in the latter days some shall depart from the faith, and give heed to *seducing spirits*, &c. (1 Tim. iv. 1); that is what has happened. At Corinth they "came behind in *no gift*." We have no longer sign-gifts; but it is important to see that what we have is set *by God* in the assembly, and ordered and energized by Him. In chap. xiv. we have distinctly the ordering of the assembly, which the disorder of the Corinthians had upset. The great thing was, "Seek that ye may excel to the *edifying* of the Church." "Let all things be done to edifying." So much was this to be sought that the prophets were to speak two or three, and the others judge. We can easily see that at any meeting more than two or three speaking would not be to edification. Profit would be lost if too much were given to digest. *All* might speak if they could do so for edification. If there was a *revelation* all must give place to that. We cannot have that now, as revelation is complete; but the order of God's house we can maintain as against disorder. Moreover, it is true that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." That abides, though the unity of the building has been destroyed, and of no section can it be said that it is "the assembly of God;" yet is there no other ground for those who bow to the Lordship of Christ to take than to gather to the name of Jesus Christ, to maintain that He is Lord

of all ministries and services, to own the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, who abides, as sent by Christ, and not on account of our faithfulness, and that all gifts are His, and that the power of using them is alone of God, as also the power of worship. It is useless to *assume* anything; it is blessed ever to count on the faithfulness of God, for "He abideth faithful;" and thus, *What we have* hold fast till He comes.

T. H. R.

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. ii. 1-7.

THE connection of this chapter with that which precedes is both intimate and striking. The apostle was led to depict his circumstances and his situation in the darkest colours; for in truth nothing could be gloomier to the outward eye than the outlook at that moment. He himself was a prisoner, and "all they which are in Asia" had turned away from him. It was therefore a grave crisis in the history of Christianity, and one in which divine wisdom was required to guide aright the feet of the faithful. What then are the counsels which, at such a time, the apostle gives to his "son" Timothy? First, he says, "*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*" (v. 1.) It is not what most would have expected. At a time when so many were turning their backs upon God's chosen vessel of the truth, surely some degree of severity, some little sharpness, would be advisable to recall the saints to a sense of their responsibility before God in acknowledging the authority of His servant. Such might have been the thoughts of man; the thoughts of

God were of another kind. Timothy was to be strong in the *grace* that is in Christ Jesus—the grace given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began—that grace of which Christ in His incarnation and death, was and is the expression, and which is stored up in Him. (See 2 Cor. viii. 9.) This is full of instruction.

But how was Timothy to be strong in grace? The word is the same, for example, as that found in Philip-
pians iv. 13, and this will supply the key to its interpretation. It means that he was to be strengthened inwardly by this grace, and that so he would be best prepared to stand in an evil day, and to cope with its prevailing evils. There is no weapon we are so often tempted to lay aside as grace, but we learn here that it is in proportion to outward decay, unfaithfulness, and corruption, that we need to be built up, fortified by it, in order to deal effectually with the difficulties of the path. The man of God himself therefore must be continually established in grace, as well as be unailing in its presentation as the mightiest means, in the power of the Holy Ghost, both to confirm the wavering and to recover the backslider.

In the next place he says, "*And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" (v. 2.) This remarkable instruction is very significant. It shows clearly that no further revelation was to be expected, and that the provision contemplated, as a barrier against the inroads of false doctrines and pernicious errors, was the transmission of the truth, as it had been received of the apostle (and certified to be apostolic teaching by many witnesses) to faithful men who should be competent to hand it on unadulterated

to others. Not a hint is given of any successors of the apostles, or of any authority whatever in the church, to whom an appeal might be made to define the truth and to expose false doctrines. The apostle's confidence is in God, and the word of His grace (see Acts xx. 32); only he would have Timothy to be diligent in imparting the truth to such as would be thereby qualified to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. The waves of error were already rolling in from every quarter, and the inspired apostle urges his beloved Timothy to raise up in this manner "breakwaters" to intercept their force, and to guard the saints from their destructive power. So now our safety is to be found first in building ourselves up on our most holy faith, and then in diligently instructing the saints that they may know how to discern between truth and error, and thus to detect the artifices of the adversary.

The apostle proceeds to insist upon some necessary personal qualifications for the work to which Timothy was called: "*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.*" (vv. 3-6.) Every servant of the Lord should ponder, and ponder again and again in the presence of God, these grave and weighty words—words which will never lose their solemn force as long as labourers are found in the Lord's work. First, then, the servant must know how to endure hardness,* for such

* Literally it is to suffer affliction, or, as it has been translated, "Take thy share in suffering." (See chapter i. 8.)

must be expected by every "good soldier of Jesus Christ." None knew this better than he who penned these words, who, after recounting his persecutions and dangers, adds, "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," etc. If therefore he exhorted Timothy to "take his share in suffering," he had himself trodden the path, and thus does but encourage him to follow in the same steps. And where is the servant, it may be enquired, who does not need this admonition? To shun the cross is a common temptation, and it is only when we are under the power of the constraining love of Christ, with a single eye to His glory, that we are impelled to a joyful identification with the sorrows and sufferings of His interests here upon the earth.

The figure employed institutes a comparison. A soldier on service expects to endure "hardness," and so also should the soldiers of Christ. The apostle therefore adds that no man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life. He makes arrangements, on the other hand, to lay aside all his business responsibilities that he may be absolutely free from all other claims so as to be at the absolute disposal of his commander. Are the soldiers of Christ to be on any lower level? Are they to seek to serve two masters? Are they to engage only in the conflict when they can spare time from other engagements? Most blessed is it when busy men devote their leisure to the Lord's work, preferring His interests to their own ease and comfort; but the apostle speaks here of another class of servants who, in the power of the Holy Ghost, disengage themselves from every human claim because

they desire to please, to be under the absolute control of, the Captain of their salvation. It will be a sad day for the church and for the saints when such are no longer found, and a sure sign of the decay of the energy of the Holy Ghost in their midst.

Another figure is next introduced for further instruction. In the olden games and contests those who strove were bound to observe the rules, if they would obtain the prize. So likewise those who engage in the Lord's conflicts have to remember that they must "strive lawfully," be in subjection to His conditions of service, which must be carried on in conformity to His will and His word. This is of the utmost importance; for many a right thing is done, even by otherwise good soldiers of Jesus Christ, in a wrong manner or at a wrong moment, whereby the end is defeated. The Lord's servants must wait entirely upon the Lord's will both for the time and the mode of their warfare, or they will not gain the crown of His approval. Nowhere is this more plainly taught than in the siege of Jericho. To human eyes the manner of conducting it, the method of warfare, was nothing but folly; but it was the Lord's way (and "the foolishness of God is wiser than men"), and the victory was assured.

In addition, the husbandman (and this introduces yet another comparison) must first labour before he can partake of the fruits.* Our Lord reminded His disciples of the same principle when He said, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth

* The translation of this verse is somewhat difficult, and it might be rendered as found in the Authorized Version, but the context leaves but little doubt that the sense is as given above.

may rejoice together. (John iv. 36.) It is indeed a universal law, that labour must be expended before the harvest can be enjoyed; and it is this which Paul recalled to the mind of Timothy. The tendency of all, and especially of the Lord's servants, is to forget this salutary truth in the intense desire to gather in, and feast upon, the fruit. It should therefore be remembered, and thereby we should be saved from many disappointments, that now is the time of labour, and that it will be the time of labour until the Lord's return, and hence that our only concern should be to be found diligent and faithful in our service. The time of partaking of the fruit is future, and the knowledge of this will encourage our hearts to persevere in service, and all the more in that our enjoyment of the fruit will be in communion with the Lord. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm cxxvi. 6.)

The apostle having placed these things before Timothy, urges them upon his attention: "*Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee* understanding in all things.*" (v. 7.) If we take these words as they stand, they contain an exhortation and a prayer, or at least the expression of a strong desire, which directs Timothy at the same time to the Lord as the source of the power to understand divine things. It would seem however, as stated below, that the better reading is, "The Lord shall give thee understanding in all things." This gives a slightly different, though very important, meaning. While equally reminding Timothy of his dependence on the Lord for power to apprehend His mind, it gives also a

* The preferable reading is, "And the Lord shall give thee," etc.

connection between "considering," or "thinking upon," the apostolic communications, and the action of the Lord in opening his mind to understand Paul's inspired words. And this connection always subsists. The more we consider, weigh, meditate upon the Scriptures, the greater will be the activity of the Holy Spirit in unfolding their teachings to our souls. It is indeed when we are occupied with the word of God in calm and peace, in the presence of God, that the Lord draws near and gives us understanding; and hence this exhortation to Timothy. It is therefore not by the application of the mind, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit, that divine things are entered into and understood—a lesson much needed in a day of mental activity and intellectual research.

This exhortation would seem to be a connecting link between verses 6 and 8, and applies therefore to that which precedes as well as to that which follows.

E. D.

"THIS LIFE."

1 COR. xv. 19.

EITHER UNDER SATAN'S HAND OR UNDER GOD'S.

"WHAT is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James iv. 14.) But it is this life, so apparently unworthy of consideration, yet so pregnant in its after results, that Satan seeks to wholly usurp for his own use, as the wilfulness in a child does a toy—to destroy it, and then cast it away.

The life of the apostle Paul is a remarkable illustration of a life at one time in Satan's hand, at another in

God's. Earnest we find him in each. When the Lord takes up the natural life, despoiling the “strong man” of his prey, that life becomes *supernatural*, and so was his. He is touching the strings of Paul's life (after Acts ix.), and in Acts xx. 24 what sweet music its chords give forth: “Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course.” And is *this* the life that was once spent in breathing out “threatenings and slaughter” against Christ, and against all that were His? Yes, it is the same life. It is still “the life that I livē in the flesh” with all its cares; for thus he speaks of it in Galatians ii. But a new power is behind it. What is it which has wrought this wondrous change? The answer is not far to seek, it is in verse 20: “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.” It is the hand of the Master that is sweeping over the strings now, bringing out the music of *His* will, and the melody of the strain thrills our hearts as we listen to it.

What grace has come in to carry us by a power above nature—supernatural—to alter the whole occupations and objects of a man's daily life! “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” He says, “I have suffered the loss of *all* things.” Nature had no voice here. Does he regret their loss? No. If he has suffered the loss of all things, his present judgment of them is, “Yea doubtless, and I *count* all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

Oh that we all as Christians knew more of the satisfying power of the Master's hand playing on the strings of “this life!” What a deliverance would it be for us from all the miserable *selfishness* so commonly

seen in the lives of some called Christians to-day. Instead of it what heavenly melody would be produced from us, carrying its own reward with it—the satisfying joy of a life devoted to others. Paul knew this, and it encourages us to listen to him—if in any way seeking the same path. "And I will *very gladly* spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." This as to his serving the saints; and if it were a question of the race he was running, it was, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as the one that beateth the air." Or, again, was it a question of satisfaction in his every day circumstances? He will say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." Paul carried that truth which made him a debtor to all men, and he lived merely for others. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."

Does the meditation humble us? We are here but for Christ, as Paul was. May we know more of the power of the Master's hand bringing out from us, and also satisfying us. May "this life" of yours and mine be onward one bright illustration of the meaning of our Lord's own words, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

H. C. A.

ABSOLUTE consecration to Christ is the strongest bond between human hearts. It strips them of self, and they have but one soul in thought, intent, and settled purpose, because they have only one object.

WHAT IS EATING THE FLESH AND DRINKING THE BLOOD OF THE SON OF MAN ?

JOHN vi. 53-58.

THERE can be no doubt that in the English part of Christendom around us men are taking two great directions—one, that of positive unbelief or infidelity of a materialistic kind; the other, the adoption of a sacramental system, whose fundamental doctrines are bringing back souls to the bondage of popery. Leaving aside the first question, that of positively professed atheism (where, let us remark, it is not science that has brought man to it, but his own wicked heart with false “scientific” objections), let us briefly look upon the second, and especially in connection with the verses in John vi. referred to above, and which are so often misapplied in the present day to a false sacramental perversion of true Christianity.

It may be well to notice the true force of this wonderful passage before speaking of its misuse. The Lord Jesus in John vi. is presented to our hearts as the Son of man, the Bread of God come down from heaven, giving life unto the world. At the beginning of the chapter the Jews had wished to make Jesus a King by force, after that He had performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes; it was what is called the people’s choice, and was thoroughly disapproved by the Lord. The people would have liked a king who would give them bread and fishes every day, but they strongly disliked the word of His mouth that spoke to their consciences.

They had understood well enough when He commanded them to sit down upon the grass, but they could understand nothing when He spake of His death, implying their own lost state. The Lord will not accept the place of King, nor will He be revealed as Prophet, until this present time be run out, when He shall appear to the whole earth in these wonderful characters; but *now* He is rejected, despised on the earth, hidden in heaven, alone upon the mountain, whilst the whole world ripens fast for judgment.

What then is the meaning of this portion of the Word, where Jesus is presented to us as the Bread of God come down from heaven? In the first part of the verses referred to the Jews had asked, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" And the Lord replies, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." The living Bread that came down from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, must *die*, and there can be no real possession of life unless a dead Christ be *eaten*; that is, unless He be truly received and known as the living One who died; and here we have an immense truth that marks out clearly the present position of believers. It is not only the stupendous fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, but that we obtain life by feeding on a dead Christ. We have our present portion with Him who died. The Christian believer has received this, and although here death with Christ is not presented as in Romans vi., yet we have the solemn fact of our receiving, *eating*, being identified with the Christ that died. The blessed Lord in dying left this state of things for ever; that is, the state of things upon this earth in the midst of which He was pleased

to walk; and we in receiving Him learn that we too have our part with Him. How little is such a truth understood! and how surely will the flesh resist the thought of dying and of death! and yet what deliverance to a true saint!

The sacramental system that would apply this to the eucharist falls to the ground as soon as the true import of the passage is understood; for the fact of the utter ruin of man implied here is fatal to it. What indeed must the state of all the fallen sons of Adam be that the Lord Jesus Christ must die (and this is why His flesh and blood are spoken of separately) before that any one can have life? And so far from man being ultimately saved by partaking in outward means of grace that confer benefits upon his soul, verse 53 shows his utterly lost state, and the necessity (solemn thought!) of the death of Christ and its reception in order to have life. The whole teaching of the gradual change of man through partaking of the sacraments is a fatal delusion, and a denial of his ruin, and of the infinite value of the death of Christ to save him; and it is sad indeed to see this superstitious doctrine making so much progress in the present day. The Lord's Supper is not here spoken of at all; but it is very true that no one can enter at all into the blessed enjoyment of it (see 1 Cor. x. xi.) until he has understood the blessed Lord's love in going down into death to save us poor lost ones; *then* with grateful and adoring hearts, and in perfect liberty through His death and resurrection, we can celebrate His love, and remember *Him* as the One who died for us. We remember a *dead* Christ.

But is it true for us, beloved brethren, that we enter

into these things? The Lord goes on to say, in verse 56: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." That is, not only must a Christ who died be received in order that we may have life, but we are fed in true communion thus—by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. There will be no sense in talking to one who is eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ (that is, whose part as a known, enjoyed reality is with the Christ who died) of religious rules and restrictions. Such a person is feeding spiritually upon that blessed Saviour with whom he is for ever associated, and knowing Him thus, as the One that died, he finds a blessed deliverance from this present evil world, and from all the wrong and ambitious desires of the heart. Truly we must be thus fed to be able in practice to deny ourselves, and to enjoy full communion with the blessed Jesus. May our hearts know it more and more. His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed.

In verse 57 we have another thing. It is not eating His flesh and drinking His blood, but "as the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." It is another part of this most blessed subject; it is the dependence of the life that we now possess (for Christ liveth in us), upon Him who is its glorious object. It is a living Christ here, and we live by Him (in true dependence, and having Him ever before us), even as He when on earth walked as a truly dependent Man, and lived by the Father. Oh, wonderful grace! Thus the apostle in Philippians iii. went straight on in a straight path, and could say, in Galatians ii., that the life he now lived in the flesh he lived by faith of the

Son of God. If feeding upon a dead Christ delivers from this life and world of sin, feeding upon a living Christ enables us to draw from Him at every moment the strength to finish our course to His glory, so as to make each of our lives a testimony to Him and His power. "One thing I do."

Thus instead of a false religious system, which would ever try to give some place to fallen man, we find in these wonderful verses the utter ruin of all men; the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the believer's part in it with Him, where all that is of the old man is judged; and then the believer with a new life living by Him who is its object. May we know more and more the power of this to the glory of His name!

E. L. B.

DEATH was the end of life to sinful man. Resurrection is the end of death, which has thus no longer anything in us. It is our advantage that, having done all it could do, it is finished. We live in the life that destroyed it. We come out from all that could be connected with a life that no longer exists. What a deliverance! Christ is this power. He became this for us in His resurrection.

DEATH is the means of sanctification, the Holy Ghost its power. Christ died to sin; we are counted as having died with Him, and so dead to sin. Thus in a dead, risen, and ascended Christ we get everything.

"A FULL CHRISTIAN."

WE are *in Christ* according to His perfection before God. *Christ in us* is the ground and measure of our responsibility, but in which He is the source of our strength, and that according to what has been said in the beginning of the chapter. A Christian is a man who has not only been born again (which is absolutely necessary), but in whom also the Holy Spirit dwells. He directs the eye of the believer to the work of Christ, and teaches him to appreciate its worth. He it is who gives him the consciousness that he is in Christ, and Christ in him (John xiv.), and fills his heart with the hope of glory, with the certainty that he will be like Christ, and with Christ for ever and ever. When the converted man knows that his sins are forgiven; when he can cry "Abba, Father;" when he has the knowledge that for him there is no more condemnation, he is delivered; he stands in liberty before God, and he is freed from the law of sin and death. But he is a full Christian—"perfect;" only when he understands by the Holy Spirit that he occupies the place of Christ in relationship to God, that God is his Father and God because He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; when he understands that he has passed out of the position of Adam into the position of Christ, that he has died with Christ, and thus that it is no more he who lives, but Christ in him. (Gal. ii. 20.)

J. N. D.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

JOHN xvii. 3.

IN 1 John i. we see definitely what eternal life is: it is Christ. That which they had seen, contemplated, and handled from the beginning, it was Christ—the eternal life which was with the Father, and had been manifested to them. Thus again, in chap. v. 11, 12: “This is the testimony, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Paul, in the epistle to the Ephesians (i. 3, 4), presents to us this life in its double character. In the first place, that which answers to His nature, that which Christ was and is personally; and, secondly, our relationship with the Father; that is to say, sons, and that in His presence. We participate in the divine nature, and we are in the position of Christ—sons according to the good pleasure of the Father’s will. That is the nature of this life.

Here it is presented objectively. In fact, in our relations with God, that which is the object of faith is the power of life in us. Thus Paul says, “When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me;” but in receiving, by grace, by faith, the Saviour that he was to preach to others, he received life; for Christ is our life. But, as I have already said, it is the name of the Father that is the key to this chapter. God is always the same; but neither the name of Almighty, nor that of Jehovah, nor that of Most High, carries life in itself. We must have it to know God thus; but the Father sent the Son that we might live through Him, and he that has

the Son has life, and he only. But the Son has fully manifested the Father; so that the Son being received, the Father was also; and the life displayed itself in this knowledge: faith in the mission of the Son, and by Him; faith in the Father in sending the Son in love as Saviour. The glory of Christ Himself will be the full manifestation of this life, and we shall participate in it; we shall be like Him. Still it is an inward life, real and divine, by which we live, although we possess it in these poor earthen vessels. It is no longer we that live, but Christ that lives in us. Infinite and eternal blessedness which belongs to us already as life according to these words: "He that hath the Son hath life." But this places us also in the position of sons now, and brings us later on to bear the image of Christ.

J. N. D.

II.

ROMANS iii. 25.

THE word translated in this scripture "propitiation" should be, without doubt, rendered "mercy-seat." It is the same word in Heb. ix. 5, where it is so given. This will explain the term "set forth." In the tabernacle the mercy-seat in the holiest was shrouded from the view of all, save the high priest on the day of atonement. Really, therefore, it was a concealed mercy-seat. In contrast with this Christ as the mercy-seat is exposed, exposed to all in this day of grace in the preaching of the gospel, and every one is free, nay, is invited to approach. But whoever would respond to the invitations of grace must come "through faith in His blood," an allusion surely to the blood annually sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat in the wilderness. *On* the mercy-seat it made propitiation, inasmuch as it answered all the claims of a holy God in respect

of the sins of the people, glorified Him according to all that He was; so that He could righteously maintain relationships of grace with Israel. *Before* the mercy-seat, where it was sprinkled, not once, but seven times, it was God's perfect testimony to man that propitiation had been made. Now it is in the gospel that the testimony is rendered to the fact that propitiation has been made by the blood of Christ (He made peace by the blood of His cross), and whosoever receives this testimony, and comes to Christ, as the mercy-seat through faith in His blood, finds that all his sins have been for ever cancelled, put away. But here our attention is directed rather to God's action. This blood on the mercy-seat, Christ in the efficacy of His sacrifice, declares God's righteousness in "passing over," through His forbearance, the sins of the saints of old (for the blood of their sacrifices derived its value from its typical reference to Christ); and it also laid the foundation on which He can be just, on which He can act righteously in grace, seeing that He has been glorified by it concerning our sins, and justify, declare righteous, every one who believes in Jesus. In this wondrous way God is set at liberty to justify freely the ungodly by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. How blessedly simple! And what encouragement is thus given to approach the mercy-seat (Christ) in fullest confidence in the efficacy of His precious blood!

E. D.

III.

HEBREWS vi. 18-20.

There can be little doubt that an allusion is found in this scripture to the cities of refuge in the Old Testament. (Numbers xxxv. 9-34.) There are indeed two points of comparison which can scarcely be

overlooked; viz., fleeing for refuge, and the hope set before those who have found refuge. As in the Old Testament the manslayer fled for refuge to one of the appointed cities, and, if he had a claim to the shelter, was in perfect safety from the revenger of blood, so in this scripture believers are looked upon as having fled from coming judgments to a sanctuary guaranteed by two "immutable things" — the word and the oath of God. As likewise the manslayer, while he was sheltered in his refuge, lived in hope of the death of the high priest, inasmuch as then he would return to the land of his possession, so also believers have their hope, together with strong consolation, while they abide in their sanctuary. But their hope is the coming out of the High Priest; for it is then that He appears the second time without sin unto salvation. It is this hope which is described here "as an anchor of the soul," during the time of waiting, "both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." What pains God has taken to assure the hearts of His people, to give them present confidence and security in the provision He has made, and to dispel every doubt concerning the future by exhibiting to their gaze Jesus as the Forerunner within the veil! For the fact that He is there is the divine pledge that He will return and have us there also with Himself in the glory. It is this hope (not faith, as in the English Bible) that we are exhorted to hold fast without wavering, on the ground that He is faithful who has promised. (Heb. x. 23.) E. D.

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

“The Head of the body, the Church.”—COL. i. 18.

“The Church, which is His body.”—EPH. i. 22, 23.

IN considering the Church as the Body of Christ, it is needful to bear in mind at the outset—first, that the body is not complete without the Head; and, secondly, that the Head necessarily gives its character to the body. Any intelligent Christian would admit that the Church is the Body of Christ, and that all believers are members of Christ; but habits of religious thought preclude the right apprehension of these truths; hence the true character of the body is little known. That each believer not only possesses the same life, but as a living fact is united by the Holy Spirit to every other believer in the world, is recognized by a few only. Still less is the truth possessed, that all believers so united together *are* also (not should be) in vital union by the same Spirit with the Head. The truth of this union of all believers to one another and to the Head is thus expressed in 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13: “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” The baptism of believers into one body was a complete operation of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The Church as the Body of Christ was then actually

formed. It may be well to speak here of the individual position of those who compose it. The great characteristics of a Christian are, that every question as to sin and sins between God and himself has been eternally settled in the cross, and that he has received the Holy Ghost. Two consequences flow from the latter: his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the life of Christ risen in which he is alive to God is characterized by, and is in the power of, the Spirit of God—"the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." These are solemn truths, and we may well pause to ask how far we enter into them.

It is impossible to enter rightly into the corporate position, unless the true Christian standing is known. The Body of Christ is not in any sense of the first man; its origin is in being quickened together with Christ out of the death in sins in which men universally (Jew or Gentile) were. Here all distinctions known among men are gone, and Christ is everything and in every one. (Col. iii. 2.) In Himself Christ has formed one new man. Thus we get the very nature of the body; it is entirely of Himself; the Head gives its character to the body. It is a body united to the Head; the life of the Head is its life; it derives its support from, and is governed in all its functions, by the Head. This is a weighty consideration for what are called "Bodies of Christians" and "Independent Churches." "Not holding the Head" necessitates being directed by human wisdom and governed by some other headship under the arrangement of men.

Further, though the Church as the Body of Christ was "the mystery from the beginning of the world hid in God," and the subject of "eternal purpose in Christ

Jesus our Lord," yet the actual formation of the body could not take place until the last Adam had been in the deep sleep of death. The saints who compose His body are quickened together with Him who, though He went into death, is a quickening Spirit. God has quickened them together with Christ, and He (Christ) has imparted His own life to them as risen out of death. The revelation of the mystery could not be made until the second Man had taken the place destined for Him in eternal counsels at the right hand of God; it was delayed until the full and final enmity of the Jewish nation precluded the hope of Jerusalem again receiving her King; then the new centre at the right hand of God could be disclosed, and He who sat there owned the saints on earth as Himself. (Acts ix. 4, 5.) What a character this gives to the Church! It is His body which is seated in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named. In the millennium His name will be excellent in all the earth, but this is glory set above the heavens in the Son of Man. (Ps. viii.) In Colossians the apostle unfolds the glory of His person (ch. i. 15, 19; ii. 9) as the One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, and the saints complete in Him; in Ephesians the place in which he is set as Man, and the name given to Him above every name. When He had taken this place destined for Him in the counsels of God, Head over all things, then could be disclosed that the Church was His body.

The consideration of this will show that the Church is not of the world. It is indeed the house of God, and as such the pillar and ground of the truth; but in its own relationship to Christ, it is the body of the

exalted and glorified Man. While the ages and dispensations of this world were going on, it was hid in God—a mystery not made known to the sons of men. It was future when Christ was upon earth; its period is between the ascension of Christ and His public manifestation in glory. Hence it is called the mystery, or rather Christ and the Church are the mystery. The economy of the mystery is no part of the public earthly development of the ways of God in Christ. Hence the apostle Paul, as the special vessel of the grace of God in the administration of the mystery, preached among the Gentiles “*the unsearchable riches of the Christ.*” In the Person of the Christ, no longer on earth, but a glorified Man, are riches which cannot be traced out. This One, not known after the flesh at all, was preached to the Gentiles.

If we ponder this wealth of glory as well as grace in Christ, and the church as His body—the fulness or complement of Him that filleth all in all—we can, in some little measure, understand how by it is now made known to the heavenly intelligencies the all-various wisdom of God. We understand it as we look at the church united to the Head and not apart. The administration of the mystery cannot separate the Head from the body, Christ from the church. The lustre from the Head is thrown upon the body. Nay, it is Himself. Its formation as also its building up and growth are entirely of Christ. It cannot be supplied from this world, nor from the first man; it is from the Head that the nourishment is ministered by which it grows, and from the same source it is fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth. (Col. ii. 19; Eph. iv. 16.) The gifts for its

edification are given according to the measure of the gift of *Christ* when He ascended up on high. The Church is the body of Christ as He now is in glory at the right hand of God, and is nourished from thence.

It may be asked, "Are these thoughts of the body of Christ to be indeed realized in the Church now?" The answer is, "It is not for us to have different thoughts (whatever we may see around) from those which are in the mind of God." Moreover, it is not by being occupied with the Church, save as we are in communion with the Head about it, that we shall rightly estimate its character. Our eyes must be upon the Head; the more we contemplate His glory, the more we shall recognise what befits His body. Further, our own state of soul may have somewhat to do with our apprehension of this, as of every other truth. Do we then believe that individually we derive *everything* from Christ? that we are not only "rooted," but also "built up in Him"? that we are "complete in Him"? Do we recognise for ourselves the putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, that is, by the cross—the burial out of this world with Christ by baptism? and then, that we who were dead in sins are quickened together with Him? that we are of Him and in Him according to the grace of God? Until this is learnt, that the true Christian condition derives nothing from self, that the flesh and the world cannot minister to it, but that Christ is all, it is impossible to understand rightly how entirely the body is of the Head.

Something also must be known in real enjoyment of the love of the Father as the eternal source of every relationship. Of Him every family is named in heaven and earth. Hence the apostle prays, in Eph. iii. 14–19,

(and mark the remarkable words he uses), "*I bow my knees* to the Father . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory"—Christ, the glorified Man, is the centre of this wealth of glory, as the Father is the source—"to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that the Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." What a marvellous desire, that the One who fills all things (the centre indeed of glory, but the Revealer of such an ocean of love that, as another has said, "The only cognizance we can take of this space is, that we cannot get out of it") should dwell in the poor little heart of a saint; hence, he proceeds, "being rooted and grounded *in love*, in order that ye may be fully able to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." This is infinity indeed; but He who dwells in our tiny hearts fills it. We look, as it were, above, it is Christ; below, Christ; this side, Christ; that side, it is still Christ; and here we are lost in this ocean of love. "And to know the love of the Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that ye may be filled to all the fulness of God." A little mote may float in a sunbeam; it cannot indeed comprehend the beam, but it is bathed in it, and filled with it. Thus does the apostle desire (well might he bow his knees) that all saints might know love divine and eternal in a glorified Man; but yet in Him the fulness of Godhead glory.

The Church is the vessel of glory to God by Christ Jesus through all ages world without end. But the Church that He will present to Himself in glory without spot or wrinkle is the Church that Christ nourishes and cherishes as His body now. This relationship of the Church to Christ exists now as it

will in glory ; it is its true and proper relationship. Not to act upon it is to falsify its whole character. In order to our entering into its position as the vessel of glory to God, we are told that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that even an apostle could ask, according to the power that works in us. What but the power of God that wrought in Christ when He was down under our sins in death, to raise Him, and set Him in that place in glory where we have considered Him ; and now has quickened together with Him, and raised and seated in Him in heavenly places lost sinners like ourselves, could operate in us to form us in all the power of love into correspondence to the Head. It is not by thinking of ourselves, but of His grace, and how it has been manifested towards us, that we shall be able to enter into our corporate relationship to Him.

It is the good pleasure of God's will that saints now should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Oh that He might give each one to know better what that grace is ! In order to this, let any try to conceive, if possible, the contrast between an Ephesian walking in darkness and the lowest degradations of heathenism, and the brightness of light, wondrous love, peerless perfections, and heavenly glory of the Lord Jesus ; or what the moral distance between a Pharisee such as Paul, bent on establishing his own righteousness at the expense of the murder of the saints of Jesus, and the Lord Jesus Christ, establishing the righteousness and glory of God in the heavens at all cost to Himself on the earth, murdered here, but seated there—and then ponder grace, as the light of glory in His face shone down on the Pharisee and out to the Ephesian, to take

up both in its embrace according to the power of redemption, and make them one with the exalted Lord in glory. Such His grace—it will be enhanced in our souls as we grow in acquaintance with Himself. We shall know it in all its fulness when He presents the Church to Himself in glory, and when we enter the Father's house as those accepted in the Beloved.

T. H. R.

MOSES IN NUMBERS XI.

It has often been noticed, that the mixed multitude were the immediate cause of Israel's murmuring; but it should be remarked at the same time, that it is always a more ordinary thing to follow a bad example than a good one. In a similar case, Paul exhorts the saints to follow those who were walking at the head of the procession, and not to be looking back at the rear, to those who might very well be compared to the heterogeneous mixed multitude of Numbers xi. (See Philippians iii. 17, *etc.*)

Moses in this chapter feels that the burden is too much for him, and ends his first discourse in verse 15 with a petition to be "killed out of hand." He appears, all through the passage, to great advantage as a noble and disinterested soul, but, occupied with himself and his own resources, he felt himself unable to accomplish the task of leading the people through the wilderness. It is a very remarkable thing that the two grand figures of the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah, both begged to be allowed to die in peace. Death is a sovereign remedy for an energetic person, whose task is too hard for him; and surely neither Moses nor

Elijah were wanting in energy; but they had to learn that it was not *their* power or energy that could accomplish their tasks, though they never could have known what the great Apostle to the Gentiles speaks of in 2 Corinthians; that is, the power of the resurrection, and the full and perfect mistrust of all that is of the natural man.

The word "I" is found very frequently in Moses' speeches in this chapter, and when this (I, me) becomes the object of our thoughts we generally find words to express them. Moses had said (Exodus iv. 10,) "I am not eloquent . . . I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue;" but he becomes eloquent when "Moses" is the theme of his discourse (see verses 21 and 22 of the chapter before us), he finds the use of his tongue in describing his own difficulty; and that is natural to all men.

But the great and blessed lesson to be learnt in this remarkable passage is the faithfulness of God whilst chastening His rebellious and lusting people, and the boundless resources of Jehovah in the wilderness when, to all appearance, everything had come to a dead stop, and the mere energy of man is proved to be nothing worth. Nothing could be more interesting to us at the present time, when the enlightened leaders of the nineteenth century, leaving God out of their calculations, assure us that it was physically impossible for Israel to cross the desert, and when not a few may be found following the mixed multitude in all manner of worldliness and self-seeking.

Moses lost a great privilege, but the same power was exercised by Jehovah though he employed seventy other men; the power of the Spirit was distributed, but not

increased. The answer to the question, "Have I conceived all this people?" is fully given by the Lord in His untiring patience in this wonderful passage.

But the application must be made to ourselves. It has often been shown that in the first chapters of this book a full and perfect provision is made by the Lord for the march of the whole camp across the wilderness, and that the most terrible failure occurs the moment the camp begins actually to move. The oft-repeated story of failure after having been established in blessing by God is seen here, and may serve as an illustration of what has occurred in the church of God upon earth from Pentecost up to the present time.

We may consider for a moment, without going back further in history, the actual state of things in the present day—the state of utter failure and weakness, and the unchanging grace and power of our God and Father in Jesus Christ, whose goodness will never fail us to the end of the journey. "Is the hand of the Lord shortened?" It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings; and this blessed Leader never complains, as Moses did, of the weight of the charge He bears. The wilderness journey, for us, is drawing to its close; but we are still in the wilderness, and need to look up to Him at every moment, and He will not fail us.

The contrast between Moses and Paul has often been presented. Moses in verse 12 of this chapter asks if he has brought forth the people, that he should be charged with the burden until the promised land be reached. Paul, on the contrary, in the epistle to the

Galatians, was willing to suffer pangs afresh, in order that the saints might receive blessing and Christ be formed in them. We may well notice the perfect trust in the Lord in the apostle, and the perfect mistrust of everything that is of man; and it is not going too far to assert, that Moses had not understood the end of man, of his efforts, his excellence, and his energy, in Numbers xi. He could not, as we have already noticed, say with Paul, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not have our trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead." A more striking passage than this, where we must be careful not to confound an energetic, noble nature (see verse 29) with the power of God, is perhaps not to be found in Scripture.

If ever there were a day in which we need to look entirely to the Lord, and to Him alone, it is the day in which we live; and by faith we look up to Him, the Leader of our salvation, to Him whose arms were once extended upon the cross as He bare our sins, and who ever liveth to lead us through every difficulty to the eternal glory. It may be said that the people of God are so dispersed, the century in which we live is so wicked, the power of the enemy so strong, and many other things, but we know that His arm is not shortened. It may be a severe lesson to learn, that of mistrusting man, and our own selves most of all, but a blessed lesson after all, and we look towards Him in the excellent glory, and to the God of glory who has placed Him at His right hand, praying that we may glorify Him for the rest of the journey in the desert. May we be found walking in true dependence, prayerfully, and with true confidence in Him.

E. L. B.

PAUL AND AGRIPPA.

ACTS xxvi. 28.

AGRIPPA, surprised and carried away by Paul's clear and straightforward narrative, relieves himself from the pressure of Paul's personal address by saying, "In a little you are going to make a Christian of me." Charity might have said, "Would to God that thou wert!" But there is a spring in the heart of Paul that does not stop there. "Would to God," says he, "that not only thou, but *all* those that hear me . . . were . . . *altogether such as I am*, except these bonds!"

What happiness and what love (and in God these two things go together) are expressed in these words. A poor prisoner, aged and rejected, at the end of his career he is rich in God. Blessed years that he had spent in prison! He could give himself as a model of happiness; for it filled his heart. There are conditions of soul which unmistakably declare themselves. And why should he not be happy? His fatigues ended, his work in a certain sense finished, he possessed Christ, and in Him all things. The glorious Jesus, who had brought him into the pains and labour of the testimony, was now his possession and his crown. Such is ever the case. The cross in service—by virtue of what Christ is—is the enjoyment of all that He is when the service is ended; and in some sort is the measure of that enjoyment. This was the case with Christ Himself, *in all its fulness*; it is ours, in our measure, according to the

sovereign grace of God. Only Paul's expression supposes the Holy Ghost acting fully in the heart in order that it may be free to enjoy, and that the Spirit is not grieved.

A glorious Jesus—a Jesus who loved him, a Jesus who put the seal of His approbation and love upon his service, a Jesus who would take him to Himself in glory, and with whom he was one (and that known according to the abundant power of the Holy Ghost, according to divine righteousness), a Jesus who revealed the Father, and through whom he had the place of adoption—was the infinite source of joy to Paul, the glorious object of his heart and of his faith; and, being known in love, filled his heart with that love overflowing towards all men.

What could he wish them better than to be as he was except his bonds? How, filled with this love, could he not wish it, or not be full of this large affection? Jesus was its measure.

J. N. D.

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. ii. 8-13.

THE transition from a consideration of the needed personal qualifications for the work to which Timothy was called to the motives which should sustain him is in the highest degree significant. In one word, the apostle sets Timothy down in the presence of the Lord—*“Remember* Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead according to my gospel.”* (v. 8.) The order

* The introduction of the word “that” could only have proceeded from a misconception, and it enfeebles, if it does not altogether destroy, the apostle's meaning. The word “was” is also needless.

of these words has been changed in our version ; they should run as follows : “ Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel.” The difference is important ; for, taking them as they stand in the original, it is at once perceived that “ Jesus Christ raised from the dead ” is the prominent thought, and also more especially connected with the words “ according to my gospel.” For it was indeed the “ gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,” that was especially committed to Paul (see 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4), the gospel that proclaimed that Jesus Christ, the Christ who had been here and was crucified, had been raised from the dead and glorified as man at the right hand of God, having the glory of God displayed in His face. The expression, “ Of the seed of David,” tells us that Christ was true man, and what He was on earth in His presentation to the Jews. In the epistle to the Romans the same two things, if not in the same order, are linked together. Giving them as they really stand, we read, “ The gospel of God . . . concerning His Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Chap. i. 1-4.)

As to the force of the combination of these two aspects in Timothy—Jesus Christ raised from the dead, and His being of the seed of David—we may give the language of another : “ The truth of the gospel (dogma is not the subject here) was divided into two parts . . . the fulfilment of the promises, and the power of God in resurrection. These, in fact, are, as it were, the two pivots of the truth—God faithful to His promises

(shown especially in connection with the Jews), and God mighty to produce an entirely new thing by His creative and quickening power, as manifested in the resurrection, which also put the seal of God upon the person and the work of Christ." It was Jesus Christ, therefore, in all this wide-embracing character, as born into this world of the seed of David, but as having been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, that Timothy was to remember, to have ever before his soul, as containing the whole truth of his message, and as supplying him with an all-powerful motive for fidelity and endurance in his work.

This was, as we have seen, Paul's gospel; and now we learn once again (see chap. i. 8-12) that its proclamation entailed persecution. He thus continues: "*Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.*" (v. 9.) This was true at the moment of the apostle's writing, and we have only to read the record of his activity in the Acts to discover, as indeed was testified to him by the Holy Ghost, that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city. Bearing the precious message of the gospel, the ministry of reconciliation, and, as an ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech by him, entreating men everywhere to be reconciled to God, not only was his message constantly refused, but he himself was looked upon as a disturber of the world's peace, and, finally, was shut up in prison as a malefactor! So completely, however, did the apostle lose sight of himself in his concern for the interests of God in the gospel, that he found his consolation in the recollection that, if he were in captivity, the word of God could not be confined. A like contrast is

often found in the Acts. In chap. xii. Herod puts James, the brother of John, to death, and "proceeded further to take Peter also." But this very activity of the enemy brought in the interposition of God. Peter is delivered from his captivity, Herod is smitten, and then the significant statement is added, "But the word of God grew and multiplied." (v. 24.) In such ways, when the enemy deals proudly, God steps in and shows that He is above him.

Paul has even a deeper consolation: "*Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*" (v. 10.) It has often been remarked that the Lord Himself might have used these words, and hence only one in the enjoyment of fellowship with the Lord's own heart as to His people could employ such language; for, in truth, the object of the Lord's own sufferings was the salvation of His people. He suffered, as we all know, as no other could, because He made expiation for our sins; but the point of the apostle's statement is not the character but the object of his sufferings. By the grace of God, therefore, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, he was enabled to suffer all that came upon him, in connection with his testimony, for the elect's sakes. He was made willing, nay more, with something of the love of Christ for His people animating his soul, he even desired, to endure persecution, if so be they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with all that was connected with it, even eternal glory. And it should be ever remembered that the same path is opened to every servant of the Lord. If smaller vessels than the apostle, they may yet have the same desires, aims, and

objects; and they will have them just in proportion as the affections of Christ fill their hearts. Intense love for His people, because they are His people, is one of the most essential qualifications for service; for this will become, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the spring of unwearied devotedness to Christ for their eternal welfare.

In verses 9 and 10 the apostle seeks to encourage Timothy in an evil day by a reference to his own path, and by the exhibition of the motives which, through grace, governed his own soul. He now proceeds to remind him of certain divine principles, or of certain infallible consequences resulting both from identification with, and from unfaithfulness to, Christ in His rejection.

*"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself."** (vv. 11-13.)

The exact significance of "this is a faithful saying," or, literally, "faithful is the word," is not at once perceived. It may be the solemn asseveration of the truth of the following sentences; or it might mean that these truths were current among the saints, and that the apostle takes them up to apply them to the matter in hand. (Compare John iv. 37.) To Timothy they would, at such a moment, have great force and solemnity. Tempted at least to shrink from the cross involved in his service, nothing could be more seasonable than to be recalled to the truth, that if we have died with Christ, we shall also live with Him. Now death with

* The word "for" should be inserted before the last clause: thus, He abideth faithful; *for* He cannot deny Himself.

Christ lies at the very foundation of our Christian position; but blessed as it is in delivering us from all that would enslave us in this scene, it involves certain responsibilities. The apostle thus wrote to the Colossians, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though *alive* in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" (Chap. ii. 20.) Having been associated with Christ in His death involved their acceptance of the place of death in this world. So with Timothy, with us all. If we take the place of being dead, no persecutions, no dangers, could turn us aside from the path of service. It will moreover encourage us always to consider ourselves dead, and to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, to remember that our living together with Him is the divine consequence of association with Him in death. For, as the apostle says elsewhere, "If we have been planted together in [identified with] the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom. vi. 5.)

It is the same with the next statement: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." Not that our reigning with Christ is in any way dependent upon our present suffering, but rather it is that suffering here is the appointed path for those who will be associated with Christ in His kingdom. This was shown out in type in the direction that the purple cloth was to be spread upon the altar before it, with its vessels, was covered with badgers' skins for its transport through the wilderness. In like manner we read that "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." (Rom. viii. 17.) Being what

we are, and the world, the flesh, and the devil being what they are, suffering with Christ is a necessity, and specially in the path of service; but if it is so, He sustains us by the prospect of association with Himself in the glories of the kingdom.

These are encouragements, but there are also warnings. Should we, alas! deny Him (and denying Him here has its full force of absolute apostacy), He will deny us. (See Luke xii. 9.) If, moreover, we believe not, the Lord will not fail to accomplish all the purposes of His heart, all the thoughts of His love; for He cannot deny Himself. He is in no way dependent upon our fidelity or service, though He may be pleased to bestow upon us the privilege of being His servants, of labouring in His vineyard. Daunted by constant opposition, we may be disheartened, fall into despondency, be tempted to think that the light of the testimony is altogether extinguished, and thus come under the power of doubt and unbelief. But the Lord will work on, spite of all our faithlessness, in the accomplishment of His will, and in His own time will infallibly present the Church to Himself "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The knowledge then that God is faithful, and that He cannot deny Himself, is assuredly a rock on which the feeblest and most timid of His servants may repose in the darkest moments; and it affords also an encouragement to look beyond the confusion and the ruin, to that blessed future when every thought of the heart of God for His Church and for His people will have its perfect and eternal realization in the glory. E. D.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

“How far is Christ practically formed in our hearts and minds? I mean not, as in Galatians, Christ formed in their souls, but formed in us so that His thoughts are our thoughts, His cares our cares, His subjects of interest our subjects of interest, and none other. So it was in Paul; and so it might be wherever His life reigns in us, although our portion and calling be not so Nazarite as were Paul’s. I ask for more of this for myself in my remaining sojourn down here—one thing, and but one—that, standing and abiding in Christ where I am, my range of affections and thoughts may be in unison with His until He comes. I can think of nothing as more blessed than this reproduction in oneself of His life, already ours through faith, but needing the unhindered action of the Holy Ghost—fulness of the Holy Ghost—in order to be practically seen and known of all around, as enjoyed by the soul in the secret of God’s presence. The dust of the wilderness—one thousand and one little cares—would then drop off; or, if remaining, be but as the last year’s fruits that have still survived the autumn blasts and the hard frosts of winter, and will drop off as spring returns and the fresh flow and sap come, and show what is and what is not virtually connected with us.”

G. V. W.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

JOHN xx, 22, 23 ; ACTS ii. 1-4.

THERE is a great difference between these two scriptures. It is clear from John vii. 39, that the Holy Ghost was not bestowed upon believers, did not come to dwell in them in the sense of Acts ii., until after that Jesus was glorified. It is also seen from the words of the Lord Himself that He did not regard the action in John xx. as in any way anticipating the special blessing of Pentecost. (See Luke xxiv. 49 ; Acts i. 4, 5.) Distinctly understanding this will prepare us to consider the meaning of the Lord's words in John—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost," etc. It is, in fact, the fulfilment of chap. x. 10 : "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Before the cross, during His earthly sojourn, His disciples, who really believed on Him, had life ; but it was only from Him in resurrection that they could receive it "more abundantly." But the fact that they did so receive it involves the new place taken by the Lord as risen from among the dead. He was the Second Man in incarnation ; but He did not take His place as such, and indeed was not in the condition of the Second Man, until after the resurrection. It is this fact which imparts to the scene in John xx. all its significance. Jesus had already revealed to the disciples, through Mary, that His Father was now their Father, and His God their God. He had thus associated them with Himself in His own relationships ; and thenceforward He was the Head of a new race. When therefore He

came into their midst, where they were assembled, after that He had spoken peace unto them, shown them His hands and His side, commanded them to go forth in the power of the peace He had bestowed, He communicated the life more abundantly to enable them to enter upon their new place and relationships: a life, the full issue of which would be conformity to His own condition in glory. It should also be remarked that the very form in which He communicated the Holy Ghost, as the power of life, explains its meaning. "He breathed on them;" and, turning back to Genesis, we read that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Chap. ii. 7.) The first man was quickened by a divine communication of breath, was then "made a living soul;" "the last Adam," as a quickening Spirit, breathed of His own life in resurrection upon His disciples, and they lived in its power through the Holy Spirit. This contrast, moreover, involves undoubtedly the truth of the person of the Lord; but into this we do not here enter.

Such then is, we apprehend, the truth of this scene and action. What the disciples received in this way was the Holy Spirit as the power of life, corresponding with what we find in Romans viii. 1-11; to receive the indwelling Spirit as power, as the anointing, as well as the earnest, the seal, and the Spirit of adoption, they had yet to wait until the day of Pentecost. And hence it was not until Pentecost that they were brought into the full Christian position.

E. D.

II.

LUKE xv. xvi.

We find three things before the Lord teaches His disciples concerning making themselves "friends of

the mammon of unrighteousness." The first is the grace of God towards us, in three parables of Luke xv. In the first and second we have the absolute grace that seeks: Christ the Good Shepherd, and the Holy Ghost searching with the light of truth. Nothing at all is done by the persons, who are the mere objects of the saving grace. The great subject is, Grace is God's joy; the shepherd is happy, the woman is happy, the father is happy. It is God's happiness to have souls saved. In the third parable we have the prodigal's reception by the father when he comes back. There is, first, the working of sin; next the working of grace; and then the father's reception. We have the whole series of gracious dealings till the man is clothed in the best robe, and is at the father's table.

That is, grace, in chap. xv., has come, and visited man, and takes him out of Judaism and everything else; and then we find, in chap. xvi., that man is a steward out of place. In the Jews, man was tried under the best of circumstances. Man—Adam—was a steward, having the Master's goods under his hand; but he was turned off because he was unfaithful. And then comes this question, "How can I, if I have these goods under my hand as steward, and am turned out of place, how can I take the mammon of unrighteousness, and use it to advantage? I do not use it for myself now, but with a view to the future." The steward, for example, might have taken the whole of the money for the hundred measures of oil to spend it; but if he had done so, that would have secured nothing for the future; and, therefore, while he has the power, he uses it to make friends for himself, to receive him into their houses after he should be put

out of the stewardship. So with us. While we are here, we have the mammon of unrighteousness; and, as we are taught in 1 Tim. vi. 17, we are not to trust in the uncertain riches, but so use them as to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. We turn, that is, this mammon of unrighteousness into friends, that, when we fail, we may be received into everlasting habitations. We are put out of all that man has as man, that we may yet have it for a time; but by proper use of it we get reception into everlasting habitations. We use this world for the future.

“They shall receive you” is only a form for “You shall be received.” “When we fail” is when all this scene is gone, and this life ends; that is, when stewardship is over.

Then, in the third case, our Lord draws the veil, and, says, as it were, “Now look into the everlasting habitations.” The poor man Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into the bosom of Abraham. The rich man used all for himself in this world, and the result is here disclosed—he is in torment, with not a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. The lesson then is: Do not use the world for present enjoyment; but use it in view of another world. “Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” (*v.* 25.) Besides, if we do not use this world’s things in grace, we cannot, after all, keep them; and therefore the Lord shows that we have the privilege of turning them into friends available for the future. We see also how the other world belies the whole of the present. God’s blessing on a Jew

was marked by the possession of such things, but the Lord unveils the other world to tell him how all these things are now changed. J. N. D.

III.

2 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

In verse 3 we have the general statement, that if the gospel be hid (veiled) it is veiled in them that are lost; verse 4 gives the action by which the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, is intercepted, hindered from reaching the hearts of the unsaved: "the god of this world" (age) steps in and blinds the minds (the thoughts) of them that believe not. It should be especially noticed that the word is not "world" but "age." Two scriptures will aid in its interpretation. In Rom. xii. we read, "Be not conformed to this age;" and in 1 Cor. ii. 8 we have "the princes of this age." The first of these would mean that we are not to be moulded by the influences of the moment through which we are passing, whether literary, scientific, philosophic, political, or social—the sum, in fact, of all the influences that go to form, at any time, the life of men as men; and the princes of the age are the world's, or the nation's, leaders, who, wise, as men speak, in their own generation, are utterly blind as to the things of God. When therefore we read that the god of this age blinds men's minds, we understand that he effects this by bringing in thoughts, whether through this world's teachers, or through their books, which are opposed to the truth of the gospel. A popular book, for example, which ignores sin, and consequently the atonement, while professedly dealing with spiritual things, would be one of his most successful instrumentalities for darkening the minds of unbelievers.

And how many such are in circulation, even among those who claim to be Christians! This is very solemn; and it calls, at the same time, for increasing vigilance on the part of those who in any measure know the truth, to detect and to frustrate the unceasing efforts of the enemy to quench the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

E. D.

THE MOTIVE FOR CHRISTIAN WALK.

BEFORE we are in the glory we are never on a level with the position we hold, while we have only this position to sustain us. We must look *above* our path to be able to walk *in* it. A Jew, who had the secret of the Lord, and who waited for the Messiah, was pious and faithful, according to the law. A Jew who had only the law assuredly did not keep it. A Christian who has heaven before him, and a Saviour in glory as the object of his affections, will walk well upon the earth. He who has only the earthly path for his rule will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it; he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks. The eyes upwards on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which, consequently, will glorify Him and make Him known in the world. Seeing what we are, we must have a motive above our path to be able to walk in it. This does not prevent our needing also for our path the fear of the Lord to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, knowing that we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

J. N. D.

THE BLIND BEGGAR.

THE Servant's lowly pathway lies
 Through cursèd Jericho ;
 A vale of drought, of sightless eyes,
 And ill-concealèd woe.

Oh ! what might change a valley sad,
 And sight and healing bring ?
 What Trav'ler can make Baca glad,
 And like a fountain spring ?

What Power can change a valley sad
 To life and joy serene ?
 Glory Divine, so humbly clad,
 Jesus, the Nazarene.

" He stops and calls, and summons me ;
 Say, do I hear aright ?"

" What precious gift have I for thee ?"
 " Lord, to receive my sight."

He spoke, and straight in those blank eyes
 The deep dark pupils roll ;
 Instinct with sense and meaning rise
 The windows of the soul.

The soul perceives the Servant then
 In the full light of day—
 The fairest sight to God or men,
 And follows in His way.

E. L. B.

FRAGMENTS.

THERE is no greater source of weakness than the constant tendency to compare the present with the past. The wise man thus says, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this." The divine method is to lead God's people to draw their strength from the contemplation of the future. When, for example, the restored remnant were cast down as they were building the temple, so mean in appearance in comparison with that of Solomon, the Lord's message was, "The latter glory" (such is the true rendering) "of this house shall be greater than of the former;" and all the glory of Messiah's presence and reign was continually unfolded before their eyes for present sustainment and encouragement. So also all the promises to the overcomers in the seven churches are connected with the future. In the Hebrews the past is recalled (x. 32), but only to urge the saints to rise to the same standard. Generally the Holy Spirit would attract our thoughts to that blessed future when individually we shall be conformed to Christ, and when the church will be presented to Him glorious and without a blemish as the source of present encouragement and strength.

THERE is a difference between natural ability and divine gift. The former ministers to the mind and intellect, the latter to the heart and conscience. The former attracts to itself, forms a "school of opinion;" the latter commends Christ, and builds up the church. In the first man is prominent, and in the second Christ only is seen. On the other hand, hearing may be with the mind, or with the heart and conscience. In the former case man, and in the latter Christ, is before the eyes. What need therefore for self-judgment both for those who preach the Word and for those who hear?

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.*

MATTHEW iv. 1-12.

I DESIRE to speak to-night of the practical bearing of these verses, and also of the grace of the Lord in it all: how man in Him is brought into this place with God; and it is the model of our place, as we get in the previous chapter where the heavens are opened, the Holy Ghost descends on Him, and the voice comes, "This is my beloved Son." What is remarkable in it is, that where He brings out the model of the place into which He brings us, there is the first revelation of the Trinity. It is in the blessed Lord becoming a man that we have the full revelation of all truth. Redemption alone could bring *us* into this place. What characterizes Christianity is the revelation of the God-head—sovereign grace of course. In virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ becoming a man, comes this revelation, and that gives the place He brings us into by redemption. In the first part I read, the other side of our place comes out; that is, the conflict with Satan down here on the earth; but *the conflict does not begin till He gets the place of Son*. We must distinguish between *slavery to Satan* and *conflict with Satan*. The *saint is never in slavery*, and the *sinner is never in conflict*. Here the Lord is binding the strong man; now he is bound, so that if any man resists him he will flee; but at the same time we have to pass through temptations and difficulties, and here He gives us the model of how we can overcome.

* These are faithful, but unrevised, notes of an address given in 1872.—[ED.]

We get first the place to which we are brought by redemption; that is, as regards our relationship to God. We are now servants of God, and obedience is our path. Adam ought to have obeyed; everything was blessing around him; there was one test of his obedience, and he failed. Supposing a man is brought to this place by redemption, there is still the disposition to do his own will; temptation is there, and then comes the exercise of heart about this obedience in the relationship of sons with God. In this place of sons—Christ's place—sealed by the Holy Spirit, the place that was His by right and title, I have everything to learn, but the relationship is settled. I have to learn and to judge what is in me; but I have now God's will as the *source* of *all* my conduct, not the *rule* only, and there is a real difference.

The flesh never has God's will as the source of its conduct; it may be checked and stopped by it, as the rule. A person may have a will of his own, and the Lord may stop it; it is checked; but that was never the way with Christ. His Father's will was the origin and source of all He did. *We* have to be stopped sometimes, but that is not Christian obedience. Christian obedience is the will of God being the *motive*. The Christian starts in the place of a son, and the question comes, How he, being a man, can be consistent with this relationship? and there exercise of heart comes in.

We have to notice, and it is exceedingly sweet, how completely the Lord takes this place with us, how He takes us into His place with Himself as sons, and then comes to our condition and circumstances—sinlessly, of course—and to the conflict. We are often led by the flesh, but He was led of the Spirit, just as He tasted

death by the grace of God, and we by sin. But it is a wonderful testimony to the grace of the Lord, how He is *interested* in us and has taken up our cause. On the cross He was alone; in all the rest He takes us into His place, or else comes into ours. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be *touched* with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (rather, sin apart). He can give *intelligent* service, because He has gone through it, and His perfectness came out in it. Mark how thoroughly He came into our circumstances, not sin. When Adam was tempted, he was in the enjoyment of all the blessings God had given him, and he laid it all aside for a bit of self-will. He lost confidence in God; and if I have not confidence in God to make me happy, I must make myself happy. The will comes in, then lust, and then transgression. Men do not trust God's will for their happiness and blessing, and that is the principle of all sin.

Christians fail in it often, and the exercises we get are to lead us into it. Here Christ is where everything is to try a man—forty days without food, with the wild beasts, in every respect the opposite of paradise. Then mark, as everything hung on Adam's obedience (if he failed everything was gone), so here everything hung on Christ's obedience. He could not fail; but if He did fail in that desert spot—passing His time with Satan, so to speak—everything was lost to man. The trial was to be made, and He must overcome. Adam failed in spite of every blessing; Christ comes in grace and overcomes. Then He is hungry; there is no sin in that. God has put hunger into our natures as an intimation when to eat. Then Satan comes (v. 3) and

says, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Satan takes the ground of His being Son, he does not call that in question; nor does he with the Christian: when he raises that question we have not settled our affairs with God. The place revealed to us is that of sons; redemption has taken us out of the old place and put us into that of sons. The question is what God thinks, not what we think. And God has *made* us *sons*. Then it is a question of conduct in the relationship, not of responsibility as to my state. I cannot be a naughty child unless I am a child; and the temptation of Satan here is founded on Christ being a Son.

Note that the snare and temptation and difficulty is how to walk down here in this relationship. See if your souls stand in faith in this place with God. It is the place of every Christian. It is another thing to be in the consciousness of it. Satan assumes it here, and says, "Command that these stones be made bread." It is a subtle thing; he does not show himself out as Satan. There is no sin in being hungry, and the Lord *could* turn the stones to bread. It is a wile of Satan; he comes with that which is "no harm." But *it is harm if it is my own will*; for I am to eat and drink and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. If I am doing it merely because it is my own will, it is harm; but the Lord keeps the consciousness of His place as a servant. The devil uses the testimony of His being a Son (chap. iii. 17) to get Him out of the place of a servant; but He had come to obey, and to do whatsoever His Father commanded, and He says, as it were, "It is not my Father's will to make these stones bread." The perfection of His place makes the will useless. It

is not a long chain of reasoning, but if I, with the consciousness of being a son, keep in the place of a servant, Satan can do nothing. The whole thing was to get Him to do His own will, and that is the whole principle of sin. Having left God, we do our own will. What meets Satan completely is, that I am a servant, and servants are not to command, but to obey. I have no word from God, and therefore I don't do it. What is remarkable is, the Lord says at once, "It is written." That word of Scripture, a single text, is enough for the Lord, and for the devil. Satan has nothing to say; he is dumb, and does not attempt to take up the question. The spring and power of life come in: we are begotten by the Word, and we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Satan must either drop his will and show himself Satan, or hold his tongue, and he was not ready to show himself. The Lord is in the place of a son, and does not go out of that of a servant. He does what He is bid, and till the word is there, there is nothing to do; and that is *living by it*. He says, "I have no word from God about it." That is the character of Christian obedience; not a rule that checks the will, but the word of God producing it. Do you not like to do your own will in little tiny things, that are "no harm," as we speak? God has taken up this life we live in the flesh, and *He* has a will for us all the way along. In the wilderness, where there is no way, there is *a way*—a divine way—that the vulture's eye hath not seen; but the simplest believer that follows God's word has this way, and lives by it. The word of God is that by which we live in active positive life.

Satan drops that and takes up another thing—"Cast

Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee," &c. (v. 6.) It would have been His own will if Christ had done it. Satan takes up scripture, and says, "It is written," to make Him do His own will. But He says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." People abuse this often; they use it as the very opposite of what it is. When people talk of "tempting God," they mean trusting Him too much. Satan says, "Throw yourself down, to see if God will be as good as His word." "I have no need to throw myself down. I know He will do it when the time comes. Of course His word will be fulfilled. Why am I to see if it will be?"

In obedience there is perfect confidence in God; no uncertainty as to whether God will be as good as His word, but perfect obedience and entire and absolute confidence. I don't act to try if God will be as good as His word; but when the time comes, I have entire courage to obey. If I die, I go to heaven. So much the better. But we know little of that—being martyrs, I mean. If you see some sacrifice before you, this or that to give up, there ought to be such confidence in God that you obey without the smallest question. He makes all things work together for our good. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. Whatever comes, I have entire confidence in the Lord's faithful love, and courage to do His will. What matter if the cities are walled up to heaven, if they fall at the blowing of a ram's horn? No matter what comes, it comes from the Lord for our good. He puts us in the wilderness to exercise us on these points; but I start with His will for the source of my conduct, and I need not hesitate, having absolute obedience and confidence in God.

Satan has no more to say. His wiles are done; and then he shows himself, and asks the Lord to take the world. (*vv.* 8, 9.) He likewise presents the world to us, and says, "If you will follow me, the prince of it, you will get riches and honour and position." But everything is Christ's, and everything is ours—"Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Satan wants me to take it from *him* in this way, by my lusts, as something the flesh desires here; but "all things are ours: life, death, things present, things to come," &c. Then the Lord (*v.* 10) addresses him as Satan, and sends him off. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He knows flesh does not resist him; it is Christ, and he is off.

If you find something that has a claw in your heart, and you cannot tear it out, it tears your flesh too much, you cry to the Lord, and it is gone. It is positive deliverance from another, not progress. In cases where some certain thing has power over the mind, it is not you, you hate it, and you cry to the Lord, and find it gone. Christ has bound the strong man. Could you say in all you have set about and done to-day, it was the will of God set you about it? There is weakness and infirmity in us; but when we get our eye fixed on Christ, all is joy and blessedness in Him.

Satan leaves the Lord, and angels come and minister to Him. (*v.* 11.) There was all the host of heaven serving Him, and so they are serving us: "Ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" ministering to us in every way that it is God's will they should minister. We have to overcome; but there is the blessedness of this host—He directing—to help and strengthen us in the path.

It is a great thing to get the consciousness of the place we are in. Being in it, we are set to make our way through the world as befits sons in it. We have to learn not to have a will here and a will there, and we are exercised and tried—and meant to be. The things that Satan ensnares the world with *offend* the new nature. I would just ask, Are you *prepared* to take the word of God as that by which you are to live every moment? Content in your heart to say, Whatever pleases God is for me? Are you willing? I don't ask if you *do* it. If you are not *willing*, you want deliverance from that which is between your heart and Christ being every thing to you. We are redeemed out of the power of the strong man, and if we resist, we keep him out. The Lord give us to see the grace of His giving us this place, and the way He showed how the heart is to be exercised in passing through this world. The time is coming when we shall find that every thing, where He has not been, has been folly and wretchedness!

J. N. D.

LIGHT.

LIGHT is in itself invisible,* but it illuminates everything. What we see around us in the physical world is not the light, but matter lighted up by it. The very canopy of heaven (that is, the air) is made visible by the light shining upon and through it, and if we could be transported into empty space, traversed as it is by the light,

* It is a mere figure of speech to talk of the *visible* and *invisible* rays of the spectrum. This does not strictly mean that the rays themselves are visible, but that they have the power of illuminating surfaces, or not.

we should not see the light itself, although it would shine upon and manifest ourselves or any substance that might come in its way.

The word of God uses this as a beautiful illustration or rather image. "God is light" is the message that we have received of Him, "and in Him is no darkness at all." "God is light," it is His nature, and He was eternally light before ever there was a universe to be illuminated (just as He was eternally love before ever there was ever a creature to be loved). "Light," to quote the words of one no longer amongst us, "is perfect purity, invisible in itself, and manifesting everything as it is before God." It is likewise said that God dwells in light that no man can "approach unto," and this is light inaccessible in itself.

But the light came into the world, into the midst of the darkness, when the Son of God appeared upon earth in the form of a servant, as man. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And nothing is more interesting, though at the same time nothing more humiliating, than what is recorded in John's gospel of the presence of the light in this world of moral darkness, and the effect of that presence upon men. Nothing could escape manifestation, and though eyes to see were wanting, though the general blindness of man perceived naught, yet the light shone, and showed so clearly the state of man, that no one was able to pass before it without intercepting its rays. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, proud blasphemers, or Israelites indeed in whom there was no guile, no matter what the character might be, all was lighted up and manifested before God. "The light shineth in the dark-

ness, and the darkness comprehended it not."* The blessed Lord left a world of dark, blind souls, insisting that they could see, and that they loved darkness rather than light. See the wonderful termination of the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel.

The true light was that which, coming into the world, shines upon every man. This has nothing to do with the conversion of men, but refers to our subject; that is, the outward lighting up of men. Do not talk of "inner light," or any such thing, but rather contemplate with wonder the presence of the Son of God upon earth, in the midst of the prevailing darkness, and see everything illuminated by that presence, though the darkness comprehended not the light. What a field for study are the eighth and ninth chapters of John, and indeed the whole book!

Thus far we have noticed briefly the effect of the presence of the light in this world when Jesus was here.

But it is said, as to the present time, in Ephesians v., that we believers are light. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (v. 8); and we might compare this wonderful passage with 1 John ii. 8, where we are said to possess the divine life in virtue of our union with Christ. "True in Him and in you" (this could not have been said before His death and resurrection): "the darkness is passing away [not passed] and the true light now shineth." In Ephesians v. the truth is most clearly stated; we *were* darkness, but now are light in the Lord. How wonderful, and at the

* Notice the change of tense in verses 4 and 5 of John i. Space does not allow us to go further with so interesting a passage: "The light shines in the midst of the darkness" is in the present as an abstract, existing fact; but then it is said "the darkness comprehended it not"—a past tense.

same time how blessed, that the divine life in us should be so presented! The exhortation to walk as children of the light is founded upon this; for the fruit of the light (not "Spirit," as in our translation) consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, proving that which is acceptable to the Lord. The essential difference between the darkness and the light is here clearly presented, and practical separation from the unfruitful works of darkness insisted upon. In verse 13 we find again the true character of light stated, as we have noticed in other passages, "That which manifests everything is light;"* and, notwithstanding all the feebleness of the present testimony, it has often been noticed that the true characters of people come out when they take their place with those who are endeavouring (with all their failure) to walk as children of the light. How many, if the bare truth were known, have retired because the light exposed their motives—their selfishness, ambition, etc.—till then concealed in a world of darkness! Ye are light in the Lord, says the Word; and the fruit of the light is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Righteousness and truth have never been popular, any more than the light itself. May we enter more fully into the fact of possessing the divine nature in the midst of a dark world, judging in ourselves all that is not practically consistent with it. We might compare 2 Corinthians iv. 6 with this interesting passage, praying the Lord to give us to understand these great truths.

Thus, during the present period of grace, the saints are the light of the world, and make manifest by their walk the sad moral state of things around them.

So much has been said of the future, that one

* This is the true sense of this passage.

hesitates to proceed; but it may be noticed that the darkness is now passing away, that the true light shines already; and when our blessed Lord shall be revealed in glory, the perfect day will have come. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand, and we are called children of the *day*, as well as children of light; for we belong to Christ, and that glory shall be ours. During the reign of Christ, the light will be displayed in a far different manner to that which we have been noticing. It is a solemn but blessed thought, that we, the redeemed heavenly saints, shall see the Lamb as the luminary of the interior of the holy Jerusalem,* and be in the very presence of uncreated light (there is no need of sun or moon) undazzled, seeing Him as He is. Blessed are they who understand our present position in the light as God is in the light; but what will it be *then*? It has been pointed out that the light will be shed in a modified form upon the millennial earth and nations. They shall walk in the light of the holy city, where all the glories of redeemed creation, the precious stones, shall separate and modify the rays that no creature not glorified could bear for a moment, so that the earth itself shall be illuminated by that most glorious though subdued light.

It will be said that even this display will not change the heart of man, and to this we fully agree. Our subject is the light, and we have very briefly noticed its display under different circumstances. May we be found walking in a path of true separation from all that is of the darkness, and ever remember that we are (now) light in the Lord.

E. L. B.

* The exact words are, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light (the 'lampstand') thereof." (Rev. xxi. 23.)

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. ii. 14-19.

THE following exhortations are for Timothy's own guidance as a teacher, and consequently for the instruction of all who, divinely qualified, may seek to edify the people of God. "*Of these things,*" the apostle says, "*put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.*" (v. 14.) The "these things" will refer to verses 11-13, the divine truths which abide through all changes and all phases of the condition of the Church, inasmuch as they are bound up with the Lord's moral nature, and therefore with the very essence of Christianity. They can therefore never be forgotten without damage, and unless indeed there is an open departure from the faith. It is on this account that Timothy is urged to keep them continually before the minds of the saints; and at the same time he was to charge them "to testify earnestly" before the Lord that they should avoid all word contentions (logomachy), which, instead of edification, tended to the subversion of the hearers. Jewish believers were under great temptation to this kind of discussion, for they had been accustomed to hear their rabbis exhibit their argumentative skill in reasonings upon the value even of the letters that composed the words of Scripture. And whenever spiritual life and energy decline, Christian teachers fall also into the snare of entertaining their hearers with ingenious and

fanciful interpretations, drawn from historical details, or from types and figures, instead of ministering Christ. Let it then be observed that such discussions are not only "to no profit," but they also actually turn aside those that listen. Alas! when believers, like the Israelites, become weary of the heaven-sent manna, there are always those at hand who will seek to gratify the palate of nature.

It is in contrast to all this that Paul proceeds, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" There are two things in this exhortation. First, Timothy is to "use diligence" to commend himself, not to his hearers, but to God. This principle is the safeguard of all who are engaged in public service. As the apostle says elsewhere, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. i. 10.) And again, "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (1 Thess. ii. 4.) Nothing else will keep the servants of God but to have Him before their souls, for then they will remember in all their service that it is His verdict of approval alone they have to seek. (Compare 2 Cor. ii. 17.) Secondly, Timothy is to approve himself to God by being a good workman. It would be possible for a servant to really strive to commend himself to God, and yet, through ignorance of the truth, to be a bad workman. How many godly, devoted men, for example, have had their eyes opened to perceive (and with what sorrow has the discovery been made!) that they had been misleading souls for years! It is not only necessary therefore to be godly, to have a single

eye, but there must be also that knowledge of the Lord's mind, as revealed in the Scriptures, which will enable those who are in the place of teachers to rightly divide, "to cut in a straight line" the word of truth. Diligence is requisite for this—diligence in the prayerful study of the Word—and it is this which is really enjoined upon Timothy. Ability to teach is a divine gift; to be a good workman is the result of study, training, and practice, in dependence upon the power of the Holy Ghost.

He was to be occupied with the Word; "*but*" he is told to "*shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*" (vv. 16-18.) There is no more successful snare of Satan than the seduction of the Lord's servants into foolish controversies. To contend for the truth in a day of departure from it is one of their first responsibilities; but this is a very different thing from turning aside to verbal discussions and "doubtful disputations," or, as the apostle here expresses it, "empty voices"—words or sounds without significance for the believer. It can never indeed be too often asserted that the best way to refute error is by the statement of the truth; and controversy conducted in this way will edify both speaker and hearers, while profane and vain babblings will only tend to produce more impiety, because they harden both the heart and conscience.

Not only so, but their word—that is, the word of those who fall into these babblings—will eat as doth a

canker, or, more exactly, spread as a gangrene.* That Timothy might not be left in doubt as to his meaning, the apostle cites the illustrative cases of Hymenæus and Philetus. These had, it would seem, the place of teachers, and had fallen into the grievous error, not of denying the resurrection, but of declaring that it was already past. It may be well to call special attention to this subtle form of false teaching, for there are many believers of the present day who are liable to be betrayed by the speciousness of a seeming super-spirituality. And the teaching of Hymenæus and Philetus had this pretentious character, for they made the resurrection a spiritual thing;† and it is quite possible that they based their contention on Ephesians ii., where we read that God has quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, &c. But “concerning the truth” they erred (literally, “missed the mark”), and the effect was to overthrow the faith of some. “The faith” here is used for the thing believed; and thus these false teachers really turned souls aside from the truth, led them away from what they had previously professed to believe. It is not a question of salvation, but for the time, at least, these misguided ones surrendered the truth, becoming the prey of their deluded leaders. Can anything be more sad than to be used of Satan to lead the Lord’s people astray? The Lord Himself said, “Whoso shall offend” (that is, “be a snare to”) “one of these little ones that believe in me,

* A gangrene is an eating sore which, gradually spreading, almost always ends in mortification. No more striking figure to set forth the danger of “vain babblings” could possibly be employed.

† In Corinth the resurrection was altogether denied, and Paul met it by affirming the resurrection of Christ as carrying with it the resurrection of His people.

it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew xviii. 6.) Hymenæus and Philetus—and how many, alas! since their day!—were a snare to some of the Lord's little ones; and the fact is recorded for the admonition and warning of all who have, or take, the place of teachers in the church of God.

The apostle turns from the sad effects of heretical doctrine, and finds consolation in that which is firm and indestructible: "*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*" (v. 19.) In the form of this pregnant statement there is doubtless, as we have elsewhere shown, an allusion to Zechariah iii. 9; but in this place it is the meaning of it that must occupy our attention. And this is to be sought, first of all, in the contrast to what the apostle had just written. Hymenæus and Philetus had been instrumental in overturning the foundations of the faith in some of the saints; but, spite of all that Satan had succeeded in doing by their means, the foundation of God stood, and was immovable. This is no small consolation in a day of confusion and ruin. The enemy may be permitted to wreck the public form of Christianity, and to turn its teachers into advocates of rationalistic or superstitious imaginations; but there still remains for faith this sure foundation of God, on which souls may repose, whatever the fury of the storm, in perfect peace. It is not the question here what the foundation is—though there be but one, viz., Christ—but it is rather the fact that there is a foundation of God, which

is absolutely beyond the reach and the power of all Satan's artifices.

The further significance of this statement is discovered in the twofold seal, or inscription, which the foundation bears. (Compare Zech. iii. 7; Rev. xxii. 14.) First, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Time was when men also knew who were the Lord's (see Acts v. 12-14); and the apostle himself had often sent letters—as, for example, "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse"—assured that his epistle would reach the known company of believers in the place. But now all was changed. All they which were in Asia had turned away from the apostle, and the profession of Christianity, so widespread, had become so merged in the world and worldly things that it was impossible for the outward eye to distinguish the true saints of God. As in the days of Israel's apostasy under Ahab, Jehovah alone knew the seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal, so now the Lord alone could with unerring certainty recognize His people amid the mass of professors that had crowded into the Church on earth. It is the same now in Christendom. Nations call themselves Christian, and their "temples" and "churches" are filled with so-called worshippers; but, while we may be certain that in the case of large numbers it is nothing but profession, it is a great consolation to remember that the Lord discerns in every place who are His, that not one real saint is unnoticed by His eye. I "know my sheep, and am known of mine;" and this still holds true for the comfort of those who have heard His voice. There is, however, more: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ" (it should be

“the *Lord*”) “depart from iniquity.” The Lord, on His side, knew, and knows, who are His; and His people, on their side, in the ruin in which they are found, are under the responsibility of departing from iniquity. It belongs to them, if they name the name of the Lord, as being under His authority, to depart from every thing—every association, every habit and practice—which could not be attached to His name. How different is this teaching from that which is now current, to the effect that in a day of confusion like the present it is impossible to walk in the path of separation from evil! This word of the apostle’s is the answer to all such reasonings, and sets forth, at the same time, the abiding responsibility of every child of God to depart from evil; and we thus learn that any association whatever with iniquity is contrary to the Lord’s mind.

E. D.

CONSECRATION.

CONSECRATION—a word of comparatively rare occurrence in the Holy Scriptures, but where used fraught with the deepest and most precious meaning—is of infinite import and blessing to our souls. In ordinary speech it is generally understood as the entire devoting to God of self or substance, and thus is linked intimately with sanctification. That this thought is scriptural is clear from 1 Chron. xxix. 5, where David invited the congregation to consecrate their service to the Lord; and 2 Chron. xxix., when in Hezekiah’s day, after the apostasy of Ahaz, the congregation of all Israel is anew consecrated to the Lord. We learn too, from the same

chapter (v. 33), that "things" were consecrated or made sacred to the Lord.

But apart from these instances (where the word is used in a limited and general sense) it is only Aaron and his sons that are said in Scripture to be consecrated, though any man or woman among the children of Israel might consecrate themselves by vowing the vow of a Nazarite. It is probably in Ex. xxviii. 41, xxix. that we have for the first time the full teaching as to consecration, and blessed indeed it is to remember that the voice of Jehovah alone broke the silence of the holy mount while instructing Moses as to what fitted Aaron and his sons to minister unto Him in the priest's office. How solemn the occasion, and deeply concerned was the honour of Jehovah! Man was to be permitted to approach Him in His earthly courts. A thing unprecedented hitherto, indeed, impossible; but redemption being now accomplished in the power of the sprinkled blood, Jehovah would have His dwelling-place with man. But if so, what befitted that Presence and what should fit man to draw near? Three times had the Lord specially required Moses' attention to the pattern showed him in the mount; first as to all the furniture of the sanctuary itself (Ex. xxv. 40), then with respect to the structure of the tabernacle (xxvi. 30), and finally of the altar of burnt-offering. (xxvii. 8.) The veil and hangings are not thus spoken of.

The dwelling-place and furniture arranged, the Lord graciously appoints those who should minister *unto Him* in the priest's office, together with their garments for glory and for beauty. (xxviii.) Then says He, "Thou shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister," &c. (xxviii.)

Here then before the details are given we have the order of power. First, for us to enter the heavenly sanctuary is needed the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Himself the Seal, the power, the unction from the Holy One, and the source and energy of all that follows. Next in importance comes the thought of consecration as distinct from "to sanctify them." Notice the term employed. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word, here translated "consecrate," is "to fill the hand," and the corresponding Greek word in the Septuagint is also used in Heb. ii. 10, v. 9, vii. 28, x. 14. This is evidently a fact of deep significance, the intention clearly being to connect these scriptures for our instruction. What "fills the hand" of God's priestly worshippers the next chapter (Ex. xxix.) sets forth, and joy it is to the heart to see in the detail of it how the excellency of the person of the blessed Lord is jealously guarded. Aaron first is clothed and anointed alone, before any sacrifice or other service is performed. Adorable Saviour, Thou alone art worthy! Yet, how truly are we one with Thee! "Thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons." (v. 8.) Thou Leader of our salvation! Thine "hand filled" through sufferings! But it "became Him," and it was in "bringing many sons to glory." (Heb. ii. 10.)

Of these sufferings the chapter (Ex. xxix.) then proceeds to speak. In Leviticus viii. we read the history of Aaron's consecration; and, together with the distinction of the person, in type, of the blessed Lord, we notice that sanctification is first before us. Thus the anointing of Aaron was to sanctify him, and the offering the bullock for a sin-offering was to sanctify the altar. Indeed not even with the ram for the burnt-offering, but with "the other ram" (v. 22.), is the thought of

consecration introduced. The power of the Holy Spirit is surely needed and the glorifying God about sin ; but consecration is *founded* on this, and the being identified with all the sweet savour of that burnt-sacrifice—an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Then follows consecration : it is the offering and presentation before God of all that Christ's sacrifice is to Him according to the intelligence of Christ, and the feeding upon it in communion in the holy place.

How graciously does the Lord Jesus associate us with Himself in this. He was Son, but He learned obedience from the things He suffered ; and having been perfected—His hand filled—He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. (Heb. v. 8, 9.) What are His thoughts, bearing upon Him—His person characterized as it were by, the marks of the Cross ! We too sprinkled by the blood—ear and hand and foot. What unfathomable depths of communion are we permitted to have our part in, as anointed and indwelt, associated with Himself in the power of the Spirit. For if He is a Son “perfected for ever,” we are sons, and such a high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens. (Heb. vii. 26.)

We learn moreover that the consecration of the priests lasted seven days, a perfect interval of time, during which they were not to go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The hand is to be full for God all this interval of grace, and our souls to abide in His unveiled presence in the heavenly place. How forcibly does this remind us that we have not only been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, but “by one offering He has *perfected*

in perpetuity the sanctified" (Heb. x. 14)—the hand filled continuously. But if this is our unchangeable place and portion, may our souls have ever that energy that abides in Christ in order to realize it.

In conclusion it is deeply solemn to notice that the word "consecrate" or "fill the hand," which Moses learned alone from the lips of the Lord at the top of the mount, he first employs to express the unflinching judgment of those who had corrupted themselves and turned aside out of the way commanded them. (Ex. xxxii. 29.) Said he, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me . . . slay every man his brother," &c. "And the children of Levi did so: and there fell that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate [fill your hand] yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing." Is our hand to be filled with Christ in the Father's presence, His eternal delight, offering the sacrifice of praise continually to God, the fruit of the lips confessing His name? Then it must be in rejecting all that is corrupt in the camp and contrary to that name.

W. T. W.

THERE are two kinds of Nazarites; those who, like Samson, were so from their birth, and those who "separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord." (Numbers vi.) All believers answer to the first class by virtue of the sanctification of the Spirit; but only those answer to the second who walk through the world in separation from evil, and in entire devotedness to Christ, through the power of an ungrieved Spirit.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

THE meaning of "being made conformable unto His death" is clearly seen from the context. Strictly speaking, the commencement of verse 10 is connected with "Christ Jesus my Lord" in verse 8, the words between being in some sort a parenthesis. The apostle says, "Yea doubtless, and I count" (not only counted in the past, but still do count) "all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And then, after setting before us that he had suffered the loss of all things for the sake of a glorified Christ, and that now he desired only to have Christ as his gain, in contrast with those things which had constituted his gain as a Jew in the flesh, and "to be found in Him," &c., he proceeds, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Verse 9 goes on to the future, in accordance with the truth of the epistle in which salvation is always looked upon as completed at the coming of the Lord; whereas verse 10 gives us the apostle's desires in view of His path through this world. First then it is, "That I may know Him"—know Him, that is, in the place where He now is; and this knowledge will ever increase with growing intimacy, and thus is never attained, that is to say, perfectly attained. We know Christ now, but we desire to know Him more fully; and thus it is still all

our aim, with Paul, to know Him. Next, "And the power of His resurrection." By death with Christ we are detached from this scene; by being raised with Him we are carried up into the sphere where He now is. (Compare Col. iii. 1-3.) The power of His resurrection is that which draws us up, in virtue of having Him as our life in resurrection, into our new place before God; so that our minds are on things above, and not on things of the earth; for we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. "The fellowship of His sufferings" is the next thing, as a necessary consequence; for when we live in the power of the life which we have in Christ risen, we must suffer in our measure in passing through this world, as Christ suffered. But these sufferings of Christ went on to, and included, death; for as suffering from the hands of man, He died a martyr. (Compare Heb. xii. 3, 4.) Hence it is that the apostle adds, "Being made conformable to His death;" for he had been made willing to die, like his Master, a martyr's death, in view of the glorious prospect of resurrection from among the dead. This is the only sense in which being made conformable to the death of Christ is found; and only those therefore who have been put to death, as Stephen was for example, in the character of witnesses for Christ, have been permitted to enjoy this privilege and blessedness.

II.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 21; iii. 17.

The two very similar expressions—"prepared unto every good work," and "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (or, unto every good work)—are, in their

combination, very instructive. In the first we have the essential qualification for being serviceable for the Master's use. If a man "purge himself out from among" the vessels to dishonour, then he shall be a vessel to honour, ready to the Master's hand; for he is sanctified, apart from all that would defile and be a dishonour to the Lord's name, and, as such, meet for whatever service the Master may require. In the second expression our attention is directed not so much to the state, as to the equipment, for service. Paul thus exhorts Timothy in the midst of the evils and errors that had sprung up, and that would increase, in the midst of professing Christianity, the great house, to continue in the things he had learned, and had been assured of, knowing that they were inspired communications which he had received from the apostles. He also reminds Timothy that he had from a child known the written word of God (in this case the Old Testament Scriptures) which was able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. This led him to state the character of all Scripture—that it was inspired, and was profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto every good work." The meaning of "perfect" and "thoroughly furnished" will aid us to apprehend the force of the apostle's statement. The word perfect, then, only found in this place, might be rendered "complete," "suitable," or "exactly fitted," while "thoroughly furnished"—only used twice—might be given as "fully equipped." The first of the passages, therefore, points out rather what is the personal state requisite for service, whereas the second teaches that

divine knowledge, and divine knowledge gained from the Scriptures, is also needed to furnish or equip us for every good work. This should ever be borne in mind; and we see a perfect illustration of it in the temptation of our blessed Lord. Absolutely holy, He did not encounter Satan with His holiness, but with the word of God. So also in Ephesians vi., after all the armour, expressive of state of soul, is given, there is added the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. If, therefore, we desire to be used of the Lord we should seek first to be separate from evil, and, moreover, to have acquaintance with His mind as revealed in the word of God, our own hearts and consciences being already under its power. We shall then be both "prepared" and "thoroughly furnished" unto every good work.

III.

2 TIMOTHY iv. 10.

Three times Demas is mentioned by the apostle. In Colossians he writes, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." (iv. 14.) In Philemon he terms him, in company with Marcus, Aristarchus, and Lucas, as a "fellow-labourer;" and in 2 Timothy he has to say, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (age). Nothing can be more sad than this closing notice of one who had been identified with such a vessel of testimony as the apostle Paul. The final break with Paul might have been sudden, but we may be sure that he had been long before in a backslidden state of soul. The very way, indeed, in which he is mentioned in Colossians, after Luke, the

beloved physician, would seem to indicate that Paul was not ignorant of his condition. An open failure is always preceded by a gradual decline of spiritual life and energy. It is thus the Lord deals with His people. If they have grown cold, and are turned aside in heart from His ways, He permits them sooner or later to be tested, that their state may be discovered. This was the case with Demas. His heart had long been upon the present age, and the captivity of Paul and the consequent "afflictions of the gospel" were but the occasion of its manifestation. A time of persecution is always a time of searching, and Demas could no longer conceal his condition, and he therefore forsook the apostle—the Lord's prisoner—and followed his heart into the world. He might have been a real Christian, not merely a professor, but, lacking courage, he lost the opportunity of fidelity to the testimony at such a solemn crisis, and surrendered himself to the influences of the age, all of which were antagonistic to the truth, and to the devoted servant to whom the truth had been committed.

The "age," as distinguished from the world, has generally a moral signification, and is expressive of the sum of the influences that are at work around us in the world at any given moment; and it is precisely these influences that constitute the danger of God's people, and to which so many, like Demas, succumb, and "make shipwreck" of their testimony. It is on this very account that the apostle writes, "Be not conformed to this age." (Romans xii.)

E. D.

SEARCHED AND KNOWN.

PSALM cxxxix.

WHAT is brought before us in this psalm is the searching power of the Spirit of Jehovah. It is not merely the omniscience of God, nor His omnipresence, which is felt when the truth of this psalm is realized, but the soul is brought into the presence of God. The very innermost recesses of the heart are pervaded by an all-searching power. "Thou understandest my thought afar off." The conduct, the walk, and the words—indeed, all that flesh is and does—are known, but known in such a way that the soul becomes conscious of the searching power of the Spirit of God.

Moreover, there is no hiding from it; no place where it is not. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Heaven? Not only God is there; His presence fills it. Hades? "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering." (Job xxvi. 6.) No wonder the psalmist should say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." It is not that anyone might say, "God knows everything; and, of course, He knows all about me." A person might have that consciousness and yet not know what it is to be searched by the Spirit of God. We must come into the sense of it. Until it is so there will not be the full sense of what the salvation of God is.

It is in reference to the subject of this psalm that in Hebrews iv. 13 it is written, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have

to do." Two things are brought before us in the end of this chapter—the piercing, discerning power of the word of God; and "His sight." The Word is the instrument of the Spirit. By it the Spirit of God deals with me; but, further, He makes me conscious of being manifest to God. There is no created thing that is not manifest in His sight. Thus I am not only sensible of the action of the discerning power of the Word, but of the all-pervading, all-searching power of the Spirit and presence of God; for "*all things* are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Everything is open before Him—heaven and hades, the place of the dead, as well as the recesses of the heart of man.

We could not say perhaps that we have Christ personally in this psalm; but we could not understand it in its completeness, if we do not see Him in connection with it. He is the filling out of all Scripture. Supposing I quiver, in the sense of the searching out of the Spirit of God, and am ready to say, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" I know the Spirit has also searched Christ. Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. He has taken flesh, and as such been fully tested, only to find absolute perfection. At His birth He was "that holy thing" formed by the Spirit of God. The sealing of the Holy Ghost, and the voice from heaven at His baptism, attest the Father's good pleasure in Him; but it was upon the cross that the full testing of the Holy One of God took place. There He was searched in the most solemn way. He offered Himself as the burnt-offering to God. The searching in the burnt-offering was upon the altar.

First the blood was shed in atonement, then the animal was flayed. The skin answers to the outer character, what is seen before men. We may have a fair outer appearance, covering the moral depravity within; but lovely as His ways were among men, He was all perfect within. The animal was divided, and the very inwards exposed and offered, subjected to the searching power of the all-penetrating judgment of God. In Christ it discovered nothing but absolute perfection; nothing but a heart that turned to God at the moment when as the Sin-bearer He was forsaken. There, in those moments of suffering under the eye of God, sin got its character as nowhere else. It was searched out there, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. Death, too, as the judgment of God on flesh—what it is as the Lord Jesus knew it in all its terrible-ness—has been met. Hades, the place of the power of death, is naked before God, but Jesus has been there; He has filled it. If now we look up into heaven, every ray of glory in that blessed place shines in Him, and proclaims His title to be there. He fills it. He who has thus been searched has filled the place of death and judgment, and He fills that bright scene of glory.

There is a further truth disclosed. The psalmist recognizes himself to be the handiwork of God. "Thou hast possessed my reins . . . I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Here, again, if we could not connect Christ with this psalm, and so pass on to being the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus, where all has been wrought under the eye of God, instead of praising, we should quail under the sense of being manifested in

His presence. "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke v. 8.) We have then, in Ephesians ii. 1-10, the fulness of that which the Spirit of Christ utters in Psalm cxxxix. There we have Christ in death. He descended into the lower parts of the earth. (Psalm cxxxix. 15; Eph. iv. 9.) It is there we see Him in this epistle, and that is the birthplace of the Church; we are quickened together with Him. He is the Head of the body, the Church, who is the firstborn from the dead. "Curiously wrought," is the word used for the embroidery of the hangings for the doors of the tabernacle. (Exodus xxvi. 36; xxxvi. 37.) The veil was of "cunning work." This word has the sense of "purpose" or "device." That was represented in the inside veil. What was seen outside was the beautiful embroidery which answered to that which was of cunning device inside—every grace that was *manifested* in Christ and reproduced by the Spirit in the saints. In Psalm xlv. 14 it is mentioned in connection with Israel: "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." That is the reproduction of Christ outwardly, as the wrought gold is the glory within.

We may note another point in connection with the workmanship of God. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Why "fearfully"? Because the travail of the soul of Christ in death is the birthplace of the Church. Her origin is from the place of His sorrows and sufferings. A passage in Exodus xxxiv. will help to illustrate the connection of these sorrows with Psalm cxxxix. The future birthplace of Israel as a nation will be in the terrible moment of Jacob's trouble, but in the depth of their misery they will find

their deliverance in One who has borne their griefs and carried their sorrows. Their salvation is entirely the result of the death of their Messiah. In verse 10 the Lord thus answers the intercession of Moses, to take a stiffnecked people as His inheritance (*v.* 9): "Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels." The people are looked at entirely in relation to the mediator, as in verse 27: "After the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." The Lord proceeds, "And all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee." "Terrible" is here the same word as "fearfully" in Psalm cxxxix., and in its full application refers to the great tribulation through which Israel will pass. Moses does not actually pass through it, but as the mediator he has to take it up in spirit. Christ, as we have seen, has taken into His own soul those terrible, fearful sorrows here announced. There too, as we have said, in those unutterable depths of anguish, where not only governmental wrath against an ungodly nation was tasted, but where all the power of death and the judgment of God were fully known, did He travail, according to the will and purpose of God, for the members written in His book. We may well say, "I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." The birthplace of glory could only be in the sufferings of Christ. All has been wrought in the lower parts of the earth. There were the members formed that are quickened together with Him.

In the closing verses of the psalm the Spirit of God leads the soul to desire this searching in order to its treading the upward path—the way everlasting—with-

out hindrance. This way leads up to where He, who has traversed the whole path of sorrow, even to the lower parts of the earth, is now in the glory of God. It was all traversed under the searching eye of God, and now awake in resurrection He is still with Him. He has reached that place of perfection for man in divine righteousness and glory. Having been made perfect through sufferings, the many sons are being brought to the glory where their Leader is. That is the way everlasting; and if our hearts are in that path which He has trodden, we shall desire the searching which would expose any and everything in us that would prove a hindrance.

It is the office of the Spirit of God to take of the things of that glorified Man, and show them to us; but if there is a "way of grief" in us, He has then to search us as to it, so that there may be no hindrance to the soul being in the light of heavenly glory. There all is Christ. We are indeed in the scene where He suffered, but we understand what brought Him into it—the needs be for those sufferings under the eye of God; and in our measure, and according to the grace given us, we learn to suffer with Him. It is natural for us to shrink from suffering. But when we see how not only flesh, but the whole created scene is searched by the eye and Spirit of God, we shall seek to avoid savouring of the things of men, as Peter did when he said, "That be far from thee, Lord." We understand those sufferings as the introduction to that glory which can never be disturbed. May the Lord give us to tread the upward path which leads thither, accepting through grace something of the fellowship of His sufferings.

T. H. R.

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. ii. 20-26.

THE next thing that comes before us is the state into which Christianity, in its outward form in the world, has fallen: "*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*" (vv. 20, 21.)

It will be observed that the apostle does not exactly say that the house of God contains vessels to honour and to dishonour, though this be true when we speak of the house of God as built by man under responsibility, according to its presentation in 1 Cor. iii. It is a comparison rather that he uses; and hence he says, "In a great house." At the same time, it must not be forgotten that this is what the house of God on earth has become—a sphere in which believers and mere professors, good and faithful servants and evil servants, have become so mixed that vessels of gold and silver are mingled everywhere with those of wood and earth. When the house of God was formed on the day of Pentecost, it contained only those who were really believers; for the Lord then added "such as should be saved." But very soon, as Jude writes, certain men crept in unawares; and thenceforward that which called itself Christian was a mixed, corrupt thing.

Such was the state of things which had arisen even in Paul's days, and from which the Spirit of God takes

occasion to lay down principles for individual guidance, both at that time and in succeeding days, when the confusion and corruption indicated should become more pronounced. We say "principles for individual guidance;" for it is of moment to remark that, to quote the words of another, "discipline for individual faults is not the subject here, nor the restoration of souls in an assembly that has in part lost its spirituality; but a line of conduct for the individual Christian in respect of that which, in any way, dishonours the Lord." To apply this language indeed to the separate assemblies of the saints would be to falsify the teaching of the apostle in other scriptures, and to justify the tolerance of almost any and every kind of evil in the midst of the saints. On this account it cannot be too earnestly insisted that the apostle is dealing with the external form of Christianity, of which the believer himself forms part; "for he calls himself a Christian, and the great house is all that calls itself Christian." In these circumstances, what the Holy Ghost here affirms is the individual responsibility to be in separation from evil, according to what has been seen in the previous verse, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." In verse 22 we have the nature of this individual responsibility more precisely described.

The apostle then says, "If a man" (rather "any one") "therefore purge himself from these," &c. The language is very strong; literally it is, "Purge out himself from." The word "purge out" is only found in one other place, where it is, "Purge out therefore the old leaven" (1 Cor. v. 7), which was to be done by the Corinthians in "putting away from among themselves that wicked person." But here—and it is in the

contrast the teaching lies—we are to purge *ourselves* out from the vessels of dishonour. The Corinthians had to put away evil from their midst, because it was sin in the assembly; we have to separate ourselves from evil (because it is instruction for the individual, and not, as in their case, for the assembly), in order to be approved for the Lord's service.

Such then is the Lord's mind for His people in a day of confusion and evil. Two questions, however, remain to be answered. The first is, What are the vessels to dishonour? and, secondly, Has the apostle the Lord's servants only in view? To take the latter first, it is abundantly clear, we judge, from the words, "If *any man* purge himself," that all Christians are contemplated. If this be so, as we cannot doubt it is, the vessels to dishonour will mean, not a class, but those, whether Christians or simply professors, who are defiled with evil of any kind, whether from their evil ways, or from their public associations, whether ecclesiastical or secular; those, in a word, who, claiming to be Christians, are contaminated by association with, or engaged in, anything that dishonours the Lord's name. And let the reader observe, that the responsibility is not to judge the personal state and condition of such vessels, but to purge himself out from them and their associations, because, whatever they may be or do, he is under the obligation, as naming the name of the Lord, of departing from iniquity.

The consequence of separating from such vessels is, that we shall be vessels unto honour (and this will explain the meaning of the vessels of gold and of silver in the preceding verse), sanctified, set apart, and holy as so set apart, and meet, or serviceable, for the

Master's use—prepared unto every good work. This is a solemn word for believers, and never more so than at the present moment. Do any, then, desire to be used of the Lord? Here is His own qualification for service; and be it remembered that the qualification is within our own reach and attainment, in dependence on Him who reveals it to us, and through the power which He will bestow. Then, when once qualified, it is His to take us up, and use us how, where, and when He will; for by it we are "prepared unto every good work."

There is, however, also the positive side of separation, and hence the apostle adds, "*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" (v. 22.) This word is more especially addressed to Timothy, but its significance lies in the connection, following as it does upon the verses just considered. All the temptations that appealed to such as were young, or rather the desires to which the temptations were addressed, were to be shunned; and while, on the one hand, he was to "flee" from these, he was, on the other hand, to "pursue" after the things here indicated. Purpose of heart will be needed both for the one and the other, and nothing will beget this save having the heart occupied with Christ, and thus brought into communion with His mind; and, as a consequence, having the single eye. Righteousness, practical righteousness, comes first—that righteousness which is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. viii. 4), and which is displayed in holiness of life and ways. Then faith—that faith which is a fruit of the Spirit, and which distinguished so many of the saints of old, as recorded in Heb. xi., and was exhibited

in their confidence in God under all circumstances of trial, adversity, and the manifested power of the enemy. Also "charity"—that is, love—which in its essence is the divine nature, and which is described, as it is seen in saints, by the apostle in 1 Cor. xiii.; and, finally, peace—peace as between the saints, as a consequence of enjoyed peace with God in the soul, but which can only be pursued where the graces just named are previously found. (Compare Isaiah xxxii. 17, James iii. 17, 18.)

Note, moreover, that these things are to be "pursued" in company with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It is often contended that separation from evil would, in a day like the present, lead to a path of isolation. This scripture is a complete answer to such a contention; and indeed it is evident that those who recognize their individual responsibility to depart from iniquity, and to follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, must find themselves in the same path, and be drawn together in the same company.

It should also be observed that the believer is expected to distinguish those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, as well as those who are vessels to dishonour; and that it is as much the Lord's mind for him to be in company with the former, as to purge himself out from the latter. The confusion is undoubted, but, wherever there is a single eye, there will be little difficulty in discerning the Lord's path through it; and it is no small consolation to know that there will never be wanting, even in the darker days yet to come, those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, or guidance for those who seek to do the Lord's will, to direct to the place where such are to be found.

Once more the apostle warns Timothy to beware

of controversies: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes." (v. 23. Compare v. 16.) It is, literally, foolish and "undisciplined" questions; and it has been pointed out by another that the word "undisciplined" is often used for a "mind not subject to God, a man following his own mind and will." This will explain the kind of questioning referred to—those which spring from man's own thoughts and reasonings, and which therefore could not fail to produce strifes.

The introduction of this last word, "strifes," furnishes the opportunity for a beautiful description of what should be the character and conduct of a true servant. "*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*" (vv. 24-26.) The word translated "strive," as that also in the preceding verse rendered "strifes," should be rather "contend," and "contend" in the sense of fighting, coming into conflict in an evil way.* While therefore the servant of the Lord must maintain the truth, in spite of all opposition; withstand his fellow-servant to the face, if need be, as Paul did Peter when the truth of grace was in question, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, he must never descend from the platform of the truth, as a positive revelation from God, and as

* Out of some eight times the word, either as verb or noun, is found in the New Testament, it is never used in a good sense. Twice it is rendered "fightings." (See 2 Cor. vii. 5; James iv. 1.)

entrusted to him as a witness, to engage in conflict with those who raise foolish and unlearned questions. He, on his part, should come out from the presence of God with the authority of the truth established in his own soul, and thus enabled to proclaim it dogmatically in the midst of all the uncertainties of human contentions, from entering into which he will also carefully guard himself. With a message for all, he ranges himself on the side of none in their conflicts, for he should speak to all alike in the name of the Lord.

Moreover, as to his own spirit, he is to be gentle unto all; undisturbed by the passions which govern men in their party contests; calm, as in the enjoyment of the presence of God; governed in all his thoughts and feelings by that mighty grace of which he has been made the subject, and thus, strengthened through the operation of the Spirit of God, enabled to present the gentleness of Christ to all to whom he is sent, and with whom he may have to deal. He is also to be "apt to teach;"* for with questions raised on all sides affecting the word of God, he should be ever ready to explain and affirm its meaning. Next, he is to be patient, or rather "forbearing," in the sense of suffering any and everything that may come in the path of service from the hands of opponents. It still refers to the spirit of the servant, as may be seen from the use of the word in the exhortation, "Forbearing [or bearing with] one another in love." (Ephes. iv. 2.) And hence the apostle proceeds, "In meekness instructing [or setting right] those who oppose them-

* There is no doubt that this word is sometimes used in the sense of being teachable, but it is more in consonance with the context to render it here as in the text.

selves;" that is, who oppose themselves to the truth of God. And to sustain the servant in such a spirit, he is ever to remember the possibility of the recovery of opponents. The enemy of to-day may, in the grace of God, be the friend of to-morrow; and never losing sight of this, he is to go on meekly instructing, and looking to God to give the opposers repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.

The last clause of this verse (*v.* 26) has occasioned considerable discussion. The point raised is, whether "his will" is God's will or Satan's. If the former, the meaning is, "that they may recover themselves" (or come to their senses) "out of the snare of the devil" (who are taken captive by him) for His will—that is, for the will of God—the object of their recovery being that they might for the future be governed by the will of God. If the latter, it must be taken as it stands, and then it means that these opposers are taken captive by Satan to do his will.* Whichever view may be adopted, the solemn teaching of the scripture cannot be resisted, that those who oppose the truth are the instruments, as being in the snare, of Satan, and that as such they have been taken captive by him as his prey. Such is the revelation here made—that all who resist the truth of God, who refuse it, however eminent they may be in the world of intellect or science, are nothing more than the poor slaves of Satan, led of, if not inspired by him, even as the servants of the Lord are led and taught by the Spirit of God. E. D.

* Further discussion on this question must be left to grammarians. A note on the expression in J. N. D.'s *New Translation* may be consulted. The Revised Version seems to perplex the reader, rather than translate the passage.

THE RED HEIFER.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.)

IN the books of Leviticus and Numbers we find three aspects of the sin-offering—the great day of atonement (Leviticus xvi.); the sin and the trespass-offerings (Leviticus iv. v.); and, lastly, the sacrifice of the red heifer. (Numbers xix.) Before turning our attention to the last, which is indeed the subject of these pages, let us glance rapidly at the two other kinds of sin-offering.

I.

THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT.

LEVITICUS xvi.

God had redeemed Israel at the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea, sheltering them from judgment, and delivering them from the bondage of Egypt, in order to bring them at last into the land of promise. From the moment they entered the wilderness, the Israelites were the people of God in virtue of redemption; thenceforth God could dwell in their midst. But, in point of fact, Israel was a people in the flesh, defiled by sin, and so the tabernacle of God remained “among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” (Leviticus xvi. 16.) This is what a holy and righteous God could not tolerate; for He would have denied His own character, and proclaimed that sin did not sunder every relationship between man and Him. Hence God must find a way of receiving Israel before Him, which would maintain His character

and not derogate from His glory ; a means of purifying the sanctuary, His abode, from the uncleanness contracted from the presence of a defiled people ; a means too of assuring to His people the happy certainty that for God the question of sin was settled by removing from the conscience of every Israelite all trace of past guilt before Him. God provided this way for Israel by means of the offerings of the day of atonement.

The first and most important of the four acts which characterized this day was the high priest's entrance into the most holy place with the blood of the bullock for himself, and of the goat of the sin-offering for the people. This blood, placed *upon* and *before* the mercy-seat, proclaimed the worth of the offering for the reconciliation of the people to God, and the perfection of its results in permitting Israel to draw nigh to God. The purification of the holy place prefigured the reconciliation of all things (see Colossians i. 19, 20)—the purification of the whole creation defiled by sin, but which, in virtue of the work of Christ, will one day be put in complete harmony with God's character, so that God can dwell among men. (See Revelation xxi. 3. Compare John i. 29.) The high priest's coming out from the holy place made known to the people the fact that the work had been accepted, and the question of sin settled between Israel's representative and God ; indeed, the iniquities of the people confessed over the head of the scapegoat were borne away into a land not inhabited, and were never to be found again ; so that the consciences of the children of Israel were cleansed and delivered from the weight which had hitherto bowed them down in affliction of soul before God.

But the law made nothing perfect. As to the real efficacy of this great day, we know that the blood of bulls and of goats can never take away sins; propitiation, had it been efficacious, would have been so only for a year. Moreover, all that took place on that day testified that the way into the holiest was not open, that the veil was there, and that sinful man was banished from the holy place where God dwells.

Now all that Israel did not know, and of which they could only catch a glimpse in the future through a veil, is at the present time possessed by Christians in perfection. It is the great truth which the epistle to the Hebrews teaches. The offering of the blood of Christ, which is of eternal efficacy, will never be repeated. Christ, the High Priest, is entered, not into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, and has sat down at the right hand of God. The veil is rent, the way is for ever open, and the worshipper can go into the holy place with boldness, having no more conscience of sins. The end of Hebrews ix.* corresponds with the four acts of this solemn day. There we find, first, that as the high priest went into the holy place with blood, so Christ, after having offered Himself without spot to God, is gone into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (*v.* 24); secondly, that once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (*v.* 26)—a putting

* The whole of this epistle, with the exception of a few details, treats of the offerings of the great day of atonement—a circumstance calculated to bring to light the immense importance for us of this day considered as a type.

away which corresponds with the purification of the sanctuary;* thirdly, that, as the scapegoat, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (v. 28); fourthly, that, like the high priest coming out of the tabernacle, He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation to those that look for Him. (v. 28.)

The type then of the great day of atonement has been fully fulfilled in Christ. If as yet we do not see sin put away, we know that the work is accomplished which is the foundation of it. If our High Priest be still hidden in the holy place, we have nevertheless the positive certainty, by the Spirit sent down from heaven, that our relationships with God are definitely and unchangeably established; and we do not need, like Israel, to await the coming out of the High Priest to learn this. And yet, better than Israel could, we await Him without sin unto salvation. In short, if our sins are put away from before God, they are so also from our consciences, and they are carried into a land not inhabited, where even the eye of God will never find them again.

II.

THE SIN-OFFERING.†

LEVITICUS iv.

IN this chapter we have quite a different case to that of the great day of atonement. Here the question is, not how God can dwell in the midst of His people, or rather upon what basis He can establish and keep His *relationships* with them, but upon what terms

* It is clear that the whole value of the work is likewise included in this verse 26.

† For brevity's sake we omit, in what follows, the trespass-offering.

either people or individuals can draw nigh to God when communion has been broken by some specific sin. What in fact is striking at the outset in this chapter (as also in the case of the red heifer) is, that the point is not to establish relationships with a God who is still just while justifying the believer, but that it is a question of restoration for each sin which has spoiled the enjoyment of these relationships.* This is the reason why the sin-offering follows the peace-offering of chapter iii. The latter was the type of the believer's communion with God about the sacrifice of Christ. If this communion had been broken by sin, how could it be restored? Chapter iv. gives us the answer.

Before proceeding further, let us remark how little we really know of fellowship with God. It may be defined in few words—*having but one mind and one heart with God*. About what? do you say? About everything—sin, the world, ourselves—but, above all, about the work and person of Christ. And when we do know something of this communion, how little do we enjoy it, for it is broken by the smallest sin that we commit, even in thought.

The only sins dealt with in Leviticus iv. are sins of ignorance—sins which would have been ignored by the people or individuals, had there not been someone intelligent enough to make them known to them.† To

* It must however be added, that *in reality*, under the law, relationship with God was disturbed by every sin, hence the continual renewal of blood-sprinkling. Besides, Lev. iv. and v. present the sin-offering in the aspect of satisfaction offered to God for every act of sin.

† Besides, for Israel under law *wilful* sin was without resource. The law admitted of none. Whoever committed it should be put away from amidst the people. Remark, amongst others, the case of

argue about ignorance and a state of inability to be aware of a trespass was useless, for ignorance was already a fruit of sin.* It was precisely such trespasses which served to show how abominable sin is in the sight of God. For these sins there must be sacrifice, for they had robbed the Israelite of all possibility of approach to God, either before the veil for worship (chapter iv. 6, 17), or at the altar of incense for communion (chapter iv. 7, 18), or even at the altar of burnt-offering (chapter iv. 25, 34), where the worshipper was individually received before God, according to the perfection of the sacrifice. This being the case, the sinner through ignorance brought a victim who must be identified with him. In certain cases the priest ate the victim, appropriating the sin, so to speak, and removing it from the guilty. The blood of the victim, sprinkled at the very place where the one who had sinned must draw nigh to God, resembled provision made beforehand to permit of his resuming his place. The victim burned outside the camp answered to the righteousness of God acting in judgment; and finally, the fat consumed on the altar showed the full satisfaction which the heart of God found in the sacrifice. Upon every fresh sin of ignorance (or trespass) the

Achan, a wilful sinner who had to be cut off, whilst Israel, on the same occasion, having sinned through ignorance, could be restored. Under grace there is a perfect resource for *all* sins—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all* sin." There is *only one wilful sin* which is now without resource, it is apostasy from Christianity; that is to say, the abandonment of Christ and His sacrifice. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb. x. 26.)

* Notice amongst others this terrible word—"If a soul touch any unclean thing . . . and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and *guilty*." (Lev. v. 2.)

offering must be repeated and the victim's blood shed, in order to re-open the way to God and to allow the sinner to draw near. But for a Christian there is nothing of the kind. If he have sinned, he does not come to the blood of Christ to be re-washed, he does not need to await a further shedding of blood to enable him to draw nigh; for the work accomplished on the cross, and which laid the foundation of his reconciliation, has at the same time established once and for ever the basis of his communion. He learns that, if he have sinned, Christ *is*, not *will* be, the propitiation for his sins; and that if he have been in need of an Advocate with the Father, he may find this Advocate in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the propitiation for his sins. Thus he can approach with boldness. The perfectness of the sprinkling—sevenfold sprinkling—is before God (*v.* 17) long before the believer is restored. That which this type prefigures is contained in these words: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1, 2.)

In the application to the Christian of the two preceding types, we have noticed, in the first, reconciliation accomplished and relationship with God established once for all. In the second, the means of restoration—the basis of communion being laid once for all in the blood which admits of the sinner's approach to God. But these types by no means include all that is necessary for the restoration of a soul out of communion. There must be, before it is regained, deep exercise of conscience, with which Numbers xix. will occupy us in detail.

H. R.

(To be completed, *D.V.*, in our next number.)

BABYLON.

MUCH has been said about Babylon, and the subject fully treated. A few practical remarks as to her present state may however be not altogether useless.

It may be well to go back to the book of Joshua for an illustration of the capital of the world becoming vanquished; but in the illustration we shall find that God's commands were carried out fully, whilst in the application they were neglected. In Joshua xi. we find the taking of Hazor, which was the head of all the kingdoms of Canaan, and the utter destruction of the whole city by fire. It has been well said that the church (and we are speaking of the church here as the outward professing body upon earth—"the professing church," as people say) made its greatest mistake in taking possession of pagan Rome, and in appropriating, instead of destroying or refusing, the riches of the great "head of all those kingdoms," and in embellishing herself and her pontiff with imperial gold and purple.

This is what has formed Babylon—that is, the appropriation of the world's glory to the so-called church—and as we see her in her actual state, we may well wonder with great amazement as we trace the transformation of "the church" from the day of Pentecost up to the present time. The change was not effected in one day, any more than pagan Rome was built in one day; but the change was made, and if we compare things present with things past, we shall perceive it with striking clearness. To go no further than the first meeting-place of the assembly

as contrasted with the so-called central temple of Christendom, we shall find, on the one hand, a company thoroughly unworldly, formed by the Holy Ghost, looking up, from a simple upper-room, to the risen Christ in heaven, having nothing upon earth but the opposition of men; and, on the other hand, the finest architecture, the glory of the world, the triple crown, the sculptured throne, and a large dove to represent the Holy Ghost in world-renowned stained glass.*

Everything then has been changed and reduced to material form—the glory of the world is there, the glory of the humble Christ not known. Living reality has given place to cold sculpture, the blessed Spirit of God ignored. One language, but it is that of the Roman earth, the language of the Latin world—not understood by the poor souls that use it. And then behind the malachite and the marble, the cornices and the painting, death itself is seen to lurk by those who have eyes to see, and the enemy of our souls detected as the prime mover in an arch-imposture. It was once well said, that the presence of Jesus as the rejected Saviour in the midst of all these things would expose at once the whole system.

It will be thought by many that this is an exaggerated picture. Let such compare Acts i. with Revelation xvii. and xviii., and it will be admitted that the comparison that has gone no further than two localities (the meeting-room at Jerusalem and the great Roman temple) is just and right. Babylon is become the habitation of devils, the hold of every unclean spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

* In St. Peter's the great eastern window represents thus the Holy Spirit in a picture—a poor substitute for the original, who is not to be found there at all.

But why speak of these things? Because the danger of falling into the depths of the deceit of Babylon is imminent for thousands of souls in England. We were speaking, some little time ago, of the evil of a sacramental system taking the place of perfect redemption in Christ. This is one of the effects of the blinding teaching of Babylon, and is pleasing to men who will never believe that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and who willingly receive the teaching of sanctifying it in this way, though the flesh can never be sanctified. What we now wish to point out is the utterly false position taken by the church as being queen of the world, and reigning, not by the power of the Holy Ghost, but by human power and wisdom, sustained by false teaching from the enemy.

Some few distinguishing marks of Babylon may be noticed; and in speaking of this, may God preserve all true believers from falling into her snares.

She is addicted to bright colours—purple, scarlet, and gold; that is, she has all the world's glory, and at the present time is making many efforts to attract souls by a display of such treasures. People seem never to tire of speaking of the good the church is doing with her resources and influence in the world. There has been, they say, quite an æsthetic revival during the last fifty years.

She talks much of the Lord Jesus, but in a carnal way, and as the Son of Mary. The Lord in the message to Thyatira in Rev. ii. presents Himself as Son of God. An impression may doubtless be made on the feelings in a "dim religious light" by such a hymn as "Jesus, Son of Mary, hear!" and by similar invocations; but all this leads away the soul from the

true knowledge of the blessed Jesus, dead and risen, not known according to the flesh. (See 2 Cor. v. 16.)

She will try to persecute and silence those who preach a simple, pure gospel that shows the ruin of man and the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ. She will insist that she alone has a right to dispense blessings, and that salvation is obtained through partaking of sacraments. She will speak of mysteries, having herself obscured and mystified what was blessedly plain and clear.

She will not recognise the mediation of Christ. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The Lord Jesus has brought the believer to God in such a manner by His work, that he has perfect liberty in His presence, and knows that Jesus ever represents him in that presence. But we have, in the system we are speaking of, the priest taking the place of mediator, and coming between the conscience and God. Babylon's pontiff, with all his prestige and grandeur, is from the beginning an imposture; for the word of God shows us clearly that there is no priesthood of this kind now upon earth in Christianity (see Hebrews vii. and viii.), and our blessed Lord Himself only became a priest after He was risen and ascended, having fully accomplished His work and purified our souls for ever. Babylon utterly ignores the priesthood of Christ, and has set up a worldly sanctuary of her own, forbidding true access to God.

Many more marks might be noticed, but we will leave these few preceding ones to the prayerful consideration of all readers; and should any be tempted to follow the attractions of Babylon, we pray the Lord in His mercy to open their eyes, that they may understand the full, perfect value of His work and His

present care for His scattered sheep ; and thus knowing Him, they may be proof against the wiles of Babylon. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

E. L. B.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

LUKE xxiv. 49.

It is impossible to attach too much importance to the direction which the Lord here gives to His disciples. By "the promise of my Father" is meant the gift of the Holy Ghost, for which they were to remain in the city of Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost. (Compare Acts i. 8.) Until they should be thus "endued with power from on high," they would be without the final and crowning qualification for service. It is in this fact that the special teaching of this scripture, in connection with what precedes, is found. The Lord had expounded unto His disciples (at least to the two) in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. He had convinced them of the reality of His resurrection from among the dead, by submitting His body to be "handled" by them, by showing to them His hands and His feet, and by eating before them "a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb." He had opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures ; and He had given them their commission to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, thus constituting them His witnesses. But with all this they were not as yet properly qualified. They believed that Jesus

was risen, they understood the scriptures in their application to His suffering, His death, His resurrection, and His glory on high, they were divinely appointed to bear testimony to Him and to the efficacy of His work; but all this, ever necessary and important, was of no avail without the power of the Holy Ghost. Surely there is a significant voice in all this for the Lord's servants in every age. Knowledge of the scriptures, ability to explain and apply them in their several dispensational relationships to Christ, a direct call from heaven to preach the word might all be possessed; but though possessed, could not be rightly and divinely exercised, save in the power of the Spirit of God. It might be well enquired if knowledge and understanding have not been more diligently sought than the power which can only come from the action of an ungrieved Spirit.

II.

HEBREWS x. 23.

It is difficult to understand why our translators have rendered the original of this scripture, "Let us hold fast the profession of our *faith*." There is no question of any difference of reading, and yet the word "*faith*" has been substituted for "*hope*," and thereby the whole sense of the scripture altered. It should be then "the confession of the hope" which we are urged to hold fast. What then is "the hope" to which the writer refers? It is mentioned first in chapter iii. 6: "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Passing onward to chapter vi., we read of those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (v. 18.) And the next two verses explain that the hope, which we have as an

anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, is Jesus, who has entered there as our forerunner, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. In chapter ix. we further read that Christ will appear the second time, unto them that look for Him, without sin unto salvation. (v. 28.) If we now combine these scriptures, it seems evident that "the hope" of this epistle is Christ coming out of the heavenly sanctuary for the salvation—salvation final and complete—of His people. This hope, as so explained, would carry with it a peculiar force for the Hebrew saints, to whom this epistle was primarily written, accustomed as they had been, especially on the great day of atonement, to await the coming out of the high priest from the holiest, in evidence that all the rites of that day had been efficaciously accomplished. An illustration of this is found in the gospel of Luke. Zacharias had gone into the temple (*ναός*) of the Lord to burn incense, "and the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." Again, "And the people . . . marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple." (Chap. i. 10-21.) So in the epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus, the Son of God, has, as the great High Priest, passed "through" the heavens into the heavenly sanctuary, and His people are waiting outside, down here, for His reappearing, and this constitutes their hope. Well might the Holy Ghost exhort us to hold it fast, for there is no part of the truth which believers are so liable to surrender as the hope of their Lord's return; for it is bound up with the very essence of Christianity, and with the nature of the heavenly calling.

E. D.

“THY LATTER END.”

GOD'S DESIRE FOR US TO CONSIDER IT.

DEUT. viii. 16 ; xxxii. 29.

“O THAT they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” In the life of a man of purpose everything takes its colouring from the end to be attained. And if this is so in the natural life, so surely should it be in the exercise of the divine life. Hope—that is, *something beyond*—is the spring of human life from the cradle to the grave, even when a man's view is limited to this world. True hope has to do with God and His purpose.

In the daily life of a Christian, when the end to be attained is clearly seen, and God's purpose is accepted by the soul, still, I think, he has to learn another thing on the road. Nature always resists God's purpose for us, and we have to learn God's estimate of it as the flesh. I think we shall find there is no other way to go on. There is one way out for us, and God will surely bring us out, and accomplish His purpose in us all ; but I must go through the process, painful as it is, wherein I learn what flesh is, and that God's heart is set upon the *end* for me, and not on the necessary flesh-rejecting, present process through which I am passing. He wants my heart to be set upon it too. Nothing diverts Him, and everything moves on in my circumstances, which He has arranged, toward the accomplishment of His purpose for me. Whatever may happen to me on the road, God's heart has in view

the *end*, where there shall be no flesh and no evil occurrent. He would have us now, as we thread our way along His path for us (the every-day circumstances of each human life), to be in communion with His mind about this. He would occupy us with what are His ultimate purposes and counsel respecting us.

When a poor sinner considers his "latter end" *as a sinner*, it must land him in the blackness and horror of despair. And it is just at this point that the gospel comes in with all its blessed and gloom-dispelling light. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, for the "out-shining" of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." I see here that it is all settled, all finished for me, a poor guilty sinner. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." And that glory which shines now, and which I see in the face of Jesus Christ, is God's warrant and rest for my soul. "The true light now shines." All is done. Thus the heart is set at rest as to the question of sins and judgment. But still I have to learn with God what the flesh is, and its corruption. This is the process when I have accepted God's purpose and counsel respecting me, and as I accept the one I have to learn the other. But God would teach me the incurable nature of the flesh that is in me, not by occupying me with *it*, but rather with His purpose respecting *me*. I am privileged to say, wherever I may be along the path, But we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans viii.) I can say, It matters little what the fare on the road may be, so that I know surely and clearly what awaits me at home. God's

desire is to occupy you with what awaits you there. Christ is there, and the joy of that scene is what He is. You are going to be exactly like that Christ.

It is in this way that I learn what the flesh is, not by being occupied with *it*, but by being occupied with God's final purpose and counsel for *me*. I say, Is this God's purpose to conform me to the image of His Son? How unlike Him I am now! What a wretched thing is this flesh in me—nothing but rebellion all the way along! This is true; but as your eye is upon the end and that blessed Object (to which, remember, it is God's purpose to conform you, and not yours to conform yourself), you are “changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

It was not when the apostle Paul was looking at himself that he saw how imperfect he was, but it was when he was looking at Christ. “I press toward *the mark*.” “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend [lay hold of] that for which I am also apprehended [laid hold of] by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. iii.) Perfection here is complete likeness to Christ in glory. This was God's purpose for Paul, and nothing else is His purpose for each of us. But seeing that it was, getting hold of it in his inmost soul only set the apostle running faster in the race. “I press toward the mark.” It was clear and distinct before his eye, and it eclipsed for him everything else. “That I may win Christ.” Has it become the eclipsing substance for us all?

Satan always is seeking to occupy me with myself. This occupation never leads to a true judgment of

myself, though to be moaning over my inconsistencies may appear to some to be pious and humble. The true object is outside; and as I am engaged with it, and with God's purposes respecting me, I fashion my way and judge myself as an obstruction to those purposes. But Satan can get a good man occupied with himself. Job is an example of this, and in twenty chapters he expresses it; but God had to empty him of all that. (xlii. 5, 6.)

To get you so completely before yourself that God's purposes respecting you are all as if He had none—this is the object of the enemy. Herein was the ground of all the failure of Israel in the wilderness. Were they looking in unbelief at their strength, or in faith at God's purposes for them, when they thought of the giants of Anak?

I am going to be like Christ in glory; and as I look at that Christ I am "changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit." God's desire then for me, as expressed in Deuteronomy viii. 16, xxxii. 29, is, that I should consider the end—*His end* for me; and it is similar to what I find Paul considering in Phil. iii. He says, "I press toward the mark."

H. C. A.

THE heart is always upright when it says, "To me to live is Christ." Paul had no object but Christ, and he walked day by day by that—Christ as source, Christ as object, Christ as motive, Christ as character. All the way through Christ was his life, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that the rage of man and Satan had no power over him. Self was practically gone.

THE RED HEIFER.

III.

NUMBERS xix.

THE subject of the book of Numbers is the journey of the children of Israel across the desert, typifying the Christian's journey through this world. On the road he is exposed to all sorts of defilements which effectually interrupt communion with God. Their character is worthy of remark, and should speak seriously to our consciences. They are no longer sins committed by mistake, or through ignorance, as in Leviticus iv., and made known to us by others;* but they are sins committed inadvertently, or from lack of vigilance. *Simple Christian watchfulness* is the way to avoid losing communion during our daily life. Besides this characteristic, there was another which was common to these sins. *In every case* defilement was contracted by contact with death, or the result of death. It was impossible when unclean to allege ignorance as an excuse, for no one could deny what death was. It was the most palpable and absolute *proof* of sin: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "The wages of sin is death." Sin was then made evident by its consequences, so that the man who touched death had no excuse to proffer.

* When the high priest had sinned (Leviticus iv.) it is not said, "If his sin . . . come to his knowledge," as in verses 14, 23, 28. In proportion to our nearness to God, so does the Holy Spirit, acting by the Word upon our conscience, make us aware of the least sin, without any need of human intervention to point it out to us.

Defilement on account of death might be contracted in two places—in *the tent or in the fields*. In the second case, the individual only was unclean; in the first, the defilement extended to all that was in the tent, and particularly to every *uncovered* vessel. Of what frequent occurrence is this kind of defilement among Christians! In the fields, in public, amidst the world, there is usually more watchfulness, because of the liability to observation from hostile people, who seek to find fault in order to have an opportunity of speaking against the gospel. In the tent, in the more or less restricted family circle, it is easy to be inattentive, and less on the watch. Things are tolerated which would not be before every one, and there is less restraint because it is private life. Certain worldlinesses are accepted which would be avoided in public; such and such an evil is excused on the ground that there is no one to criticise. Death is in the tent. What is the result? If there be an uncovered vessel it is defiled. Uncleanness contracted within the tent spreads to our immediate surroundings. How is it that the children of Christians become so often worldly in their ways, and give up the truth which has been taught them in their father's house? Doubtless there may be many causes for it; and I admit that, in most cases, *great* worldliness on the parents' part is not the reason; but have they not often to acknowledge with humiliation, that they have tolerated in the family circle some worldly defilement which has influenced the uncovered vessels, thus exposed through our negligence to such an influence?

The second kind of uncleanness from death was that contracted in the open fields. There, if lacking in

vigilance, death might be encountered under four different aspects; a bone, a man who had died a violent death, a case of ordinary death, or a grave.

A bone is only distantly allied to a dead body. Corruption is no longer at work there. Sun and rain, the effect of time, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, have long ago removed every vestige of adhering matter; while its remoteness from its origin only renders it the more common; at any moment bones may be trodden under foot in the fields, and men have come to consider them useful, and even indispensable. What then is this common sin symbolized by a bone—this sin accepted by all, so frequent as to be unheeded, and which the world is surprised to see dealt with by some as a scandal and a shame? Dear Christian reader, you will meet with it everywhere, when, like the Israelite in the fields, you are obliged to be with the world. At every step you will be met by—the seller who deceives the buyer as to the quality of his goods; the banker who prefers his own interests; the physician who deceives his patients; the man of the world, who compliments to the face, and disparages behind the back—all this, and much besides may be likened to the oft-recurring bone. Are we Christians getting tainted by such principles? Are we, in any measure, ceasing to regard them as defiling? Let us be careful, for they destroy all communion with God.

The second and the third cases were those of violent or natural deaths; violence and corruption, the two great classes of sins which God had before Him when He said that He would destroy the world by a flood. The world has not changed. The declarations, "They have *corrupted* themselves;" "Destruction and misery are

in their ways;" "*Violence* covereth them as a garment," are still true; but the question for us Christians is, Are these things absent from our walk when we have to do with the world? If we are wronged or slandered; if we have personal grievances against others, what do we manifest? Is it a peaceful or a violent spirit? On the other hand, there is a moral corruption surrounding us, like the air we breathe, which is to be found in what we hear, or read, or see, in the people who pass by us; it shows itself in broad daylight, insinuates itself amongst the shades of night. Do our desires go after these things, and do we allow ourselves to be touched by this surrounding corruption? Ah! let us be watchful to keep our eyes and our ears, our hands and our feet, our thoughts and our hearts, from such defilement; let us hate "even the garment spotted by the flesh."

The fourth case was a grave. A grave might be unwittingly walked over. (Luke xi. 44.) The Lord makes use of the figure of a sepulchre to portray the hypocrisy of a heart which presents a pleasant appearance, whilst within it is full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. (Matthew xxiii. 27, 28.) The grave is a heart that voluntarily hides its internal corruption beneath a fair exterior. Such were the Pharisees whom the Lord blamed. And what multitudes of God's children come in contact with such graves in their daily life, accepting the principles of the world's religion, and contenting themselves with a religion of forms to which the state of the heart in nowise corresponds! Alas! a Christian may be defiled by a grave. He may also be, in this sense, a hypocrite himself. The apostle Paul had avoided such uncleanness. He did not seek the approval of men, but of

God. He said, "We are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." (2 Cor. v. 11.)

Touching a grave is defiling, and destroys communion; and an evil thought is enough, a single lust hidden in the heart and ignored by every other being. Often we are dry and barren, the Word is uninteresting to us, and joy and power are lacking. Why? We may not know the cause; but the fact is, communion is lost. Let us ask God the reason. He will reply, that we have touched a grave. We may only have to judge a single lust which the heart has involuntarily cherished without having even carried it into action; it suffices to render us defiled persons.

Let us now consider what was to be done when an Israelite was unclean from contact with death.

The means of purification was a red heifer without spot, and upon which had never come yoke. This was a type of Christ, a Man without sin, who had not even been subjected in His nature to the consequences of sin. This heifer was to be slain before Eleazar the priest, and her blood sprinkled seven times directly before the tabernacle of the congregation—the place where the people stood before God to worship. It was not as on the great day of atonement, when the blood was carried into the holy place within the veil, and placed upon the mercy-seat, under the eye of God. Here the blood met the eye of the man who was drawing nigh to God after having sinned. It was an act analogous to that of the sin-offering, although in the latter case the sprinkling of blood took place elsewhere. For restoration it was necessary, above everything, that the eye of faith should encounter the blood

offered for the *propitiation*, and which had arrived before the sinner at the place where he could meet God.* Without this first act restoration could not be possible. When we have failed, if we do not know that Jesus Christ, the righteous One, is the propitiation for our sins before God, we shall remain at a distance, instead of drawing nigh to Him. Our ignorance makes us think that we have lost through sin what never can be lost, even our relationship with God, and we make these relationships depend upon our conduct, whilst in point of fact our *communion* depends on it. The fruit of this ignorance is not restoration, but despair. Real purity of walk will always be founded on the full assurance which the blood of Christ in the presence of God gives to our souls, and which we behold as having perfectly satisfied God about sin.

The body of the heifer that had been slain was burned outside the camp. It was the same with the victim offered for the sin of the high priest or the people (Lev. iv.), and the offering on the great day of atonement; for it is said, "No sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire." (Lev. vi. 30.) The body burnt outside the camp denoted the *holiness* of God, who must banish sin from His presence, even when borne by Christ. What then was the severity of His judgment, since this judgment consumed the holy victim who bore the sin! The victim, it is said, was a

* There is no place of meeting for man with God where the blood is not to be found. Be it at the altar of burnt-offering (Leviticus iv. 25, 34), before the tabernacle of the congregation (Numbers xix. 4), at the golden altar (Leviticus iv. 7, 18), before the veil (Leviticus iv. 6, 17), or before or upon the mercy-seat. (Leviticus xvi. 14, 15.)

thing most holy. But the ashes of the burnt heifer loudly proclaimed at the same time that sin was *not imputed* to the sinner, and that this great question had been definitely settled between Christ and God.

Three things were cast into the fire to be consumed with the victim (*v.* 6)—cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet. Cedar wood in Scripture represents the greatness of man, hyssop his littleness, and they are the two extremes that comprise the natural man, the two extremes likewise of his wisdom and knowledge (1 Kings iv. 33), all of which is only fit for the fire. Man, in whatever way looked at, finds his end and his judgment in the cross of Christ. Scarlet is a picture of the glory of the world, of that which is of renown here, of the world in the aspect which most attracts the attention of man. Moreover, God has judged the world at the cross.*

Thus the Israelite who was defiled encountered at the outset, before the work of his purification began, three great facts, without which his restoration would have been impossible; three facts accomplished outside of himself in his favour, and which were entitled to encourage him during the solemn moments through which he would have to pass. So it is that God shows to the believer, who has contracted defilement in his progress through this world, that propitiation and non-imputation of sin are the answer to his state; and more, that he has been crucified with Christ, and the world crucified to him.

Another detail may be added. All those who had

* The same elements are to be found in the cleansing of the leper. (Lev. xiv. 6.) There all the glory of the world, all that man is, all that he knows, must be dipped into the blood, *must bear the stamp of death.*

touched the body of the heifer which was burned were unclean until the even. This is indeed well calculated to impress upon the soul of the believer a horror of sin, for even the preciousness of the perfect victim could only enhance the character of the sin which demanded the sacrifice. Remark, on the other hand (Leviticus vi. 24-30), that all who touched or eat the flesh of the sin-offering were sanctified by it. It was "most holy." If God turned away His face from Christ made sin, the Saviour was none the less "most holy," and was at the very moment when He offered Himself the Object of perfect satisfaction to the Father's heart. Once atonement accomplished, the Father could manifest His good pleasure in Him by raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His right hand.

Let us now examine in what way the restoration of an unclean person was accomplished.

A man that was clean gathered up the ashes of the heifer, and laid them by carefully in a clean place. When an Israelite was defiled by contact with death, part of these ashes was taken, and running water poured upon them in a vessel, after which a clean person sprinkled, with hyssop dipped in the water, the tent, and the vessels, and the unclean person. Scripture teaches us the signification of this type. Living water (John vii. 38, 39) is the Holy Ghost, in this case applying to the soul by means of the Word, not the blood to cleanse afresh, but the remembrance of the sufferings borne by Christ under the judgment of God, by which God has judged man and condemned the world. His love in giving Christ to this effect, has accomplished the work to deliver and to bring us to Himself, so that we may walk in holiness before Him.

This typical act shows us then, in a vivid manner, all the conscience-work necessary in order that a child of God, if he have sinned, may regain fellowship with his Father. What! have I lost, by my negligence, that fellowship, which, together with salvation, is our most precious possession. It is the highest privilege which a believer can enjoy, and with a view to which I have received eternal life (1 John i.); fellowship, that is being called to share in the thoughts and joys of the heart of God concerning everything! Had I been watchful I should have been maintained in this fellowship; I should, even instinctively, have had a horror of all that God abhors. Had I been in communion, I should have valued Christ and His sacrifice as God does; I should have shrunk from the sin which was the cause of the sufferings of Christ; I should have had love enough for Him to keep me from touching what caused Him to suffer.

This is what the ashes mixed with running water typified to the conscience of a defiled Israelite. This purifying sprinkling necessarily brings humiliation with it, at the same time presenting to the soul the infinite value of that which was accomplished on the cross for it. At length the restored soul learns not to have any more confidence in the flesh. Our short-comings, judged in the presence of God, open our eyes to see that neither God nor we can expect anything from ourselves, since at the cross God condemned sin in the flesh; that the point for us is, not to make resolutions to sin no more, for man's resolutions can accomplish nothing, but to accept the fact of the total ruin of man, in order to be able to walk in the holy liberty and power of the new man.

A long time must not be allowed to elapse between the failure and the restoration. God appointed three days, at the end of which the water of purification was applied for the first time. He who thinks he has done everything when he has confessed his sin *at the very moment* of his defilement, is generally more or less superficial; while he who puts off humbling himself, commonly allows his conscience to become deadened by the delay. Satan persuades him that the fault is not so serious, that many others have acted as badly; and thus the soul gets sleepy, and forgets the gravity of the sin. In many cases this forgetfulness leaves the coast clear for Satan to return to the attack. Hence it is that so many Christians end by being put away from the assembly. "But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean." (v. 20.)

The unclean person was sprinkled twice, on the third and on the seventh day. Communion is easily lost, but not so easily regained. Humiliation is not communion, but only the road to it. A lapse of three days, forming part of a period of seven days, was necessary for restoration. If we have enjoyed the blessing of intimacy with the Lord, we would gladly be restored directly we have sinned. We should like instantly to recover, both the power lost through our neglect, and those blessed communications with the Father which are the fruit of unclouded confidence. It is not, cannot be so. This practical cleansing is not accomplished at once; it is a longer process. Humiliation must precede joy.

Think seriously of it, dear reader. If we really value the power and the joy of fellowship with the Father and the Son, do not let us allow anything to rob us of it. On the one hand, nothing can be compared to it; on the other, everything which we encounter in the world destroys it. The world is like a scarlet rag, which, in spite of the brilliancy of its exterior, is only fit for the fire; at bottom it is but a place of bones, corruption, and graves; and if we, with hearts so easily deceived, set forth to walk carelessly on this unclean soil, we shall very quickly be defiled ourselves, and suffer the sad loss of communion. Let us then be on the watch against all these things. May we value communion with God sufficiently to hate, with our whole renewed man, whatever would interrupt it.

H. R.

WORKS OF FAITH AND GOOD WORKS.

I WISH to point out the difference between good works and what we might call more properly works of faith; that is, acts which in themselves prove that the doer of them has faith. To deeds of this sort James refers. "Show us thy faith," he says, "by thy works." Feeding the hungry would not necessarily show I had faith. But here is a man about to slay his son. "Dreadful," says natural conscience; but God has bidden him do it. The doing it against nature showed that Abraham believed God. It was the obedience of faith—faith in the God of resurrection. But there is nothing in this act which the natural man could approve. It has nothing of the character of a good work commonly

and properly so called. Again, here is a woman (Rahab) who sides with the destroyers of her city. By it she saves herself—nothing noble in that—and at the same time is enrolled among the worthies of faith. But her conduct was disgraceful among men on earth. Her justification was, that earth had revolted from the God of heaven and earth. This, however dimly, her faith recognized; for she says, “Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath;” and she reverted to her (and our) true allegiance, thereby becoming a traitor in Jericho, but seeking and finding mercy with God. But there is nothing good, in the ordinary sense of the word, in her action.

So if you read down the famous list in Hebrews xi., among the heroes and sufferers of faith I do not think you will find one marked by good works. Not a Dorcas who clothed the naked, or one who gave her substance to feed the poor. That is to say, that those actions which *demonstrate* that a man has faith are not usually or necessarily good works in the ordinary sense, but are actions which, without faith, might be even bad actions, or would often be mad or foolish ones. For instance, for a father to slay his son; for a people to march into the sea, as Israel (Ex. xiv. 15); for soldiers to attempt to take a city by marching round it seven days. (Joshua vi.) Works of faith can only be appreciated by faith until God vindicates them. Then Abraham's dwelling in a tent as a stranger and pilgrim, instead of building a city, will not be vindicated until the resurrection. Nor the reason that dying Joseph should be anxious about the burial place of his bones, which was a finer act of faith than forgiving his brothers.

The natural man cannot appreciate faith. Not so

with good works. These the natural man can appreciate fully, for man is benefited by them in his temporal interests. The present day is a day for good works in many quarters, for which we are thankful; but it is not a day for faith. It is a day of unbelief, of prudence, of sight. Combinations, like clubs and insurance societies, whereby men fortify themselves against the chances and changes of this mortal life—all this is sight. Now, how important it is to remember that what is pleasing to God is faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Faith believes that He is, and therefore relies on Him. Nature cannot help us here. A tender heart may sympathize with, and, where there are resources, succour the distressed. All beautiful, but it cannot help us to do a work of faith. Happily faith is not always being tested, though it ought always to be present. It may be tested sharply only a few times in our life. These are golden opportunities which we so often shrink from and so often, alas! fail in, but in which some win immortal honours. The great justification of faith—that is, what makes it right and rational to walk by faith—is the fact that God has raised up Jesus Christ from among the dead. He "raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Peter i. 21.) Now, if God brought up that blessed Man of faith from the grave, there are no circumstances out of which He cannot bring us, and there is no pathway of *obedience* which we are not justified in treading.

But we may notice that we are not responsible to do works of faith. I mean, that we have not to seek in any way to display our faith. David does not seek a bear to slay. The gold does not seek the furnace. But

when we come to good works it is quite different, for we are to be diligent to maintain them. It is responsibility. While some are very active at the present time in good works, I think there is a tendency in others rather to neglect them. This may be from the selfish slothfulness which is common to us; and also in part from the evil connections in which good works are often found, and the various motives from which they may flow.

So far from good works proving the existence of faith, they may be the fruit of unbelief itself, as when the Romanist, or Pharisee, rests on them as a ground of salvation, or a help towards it, instead of resting entirely upon the precious blood of Christ. Again, they may be the fruit of natural kindness of heart, though this is probably very rare, apart from the direct or indirect influences of Christianity. But let us remember that grace cannot exist in the heart and good works be absent. For instance, the very hour of the night in which the jailor is converted, and before he is baptized, he washes the stripes of Paul and Silas. What God looks for in the saints—that is, in justified sinners—is, that they should be good people. Of old He planted a vineyard to get fruit. That was Israel. We now are branches in the true vine in order to bear fruit. So in John v., those who rise to life are those “that have done good.” This of course shows that none can truly do good apart from faith and the new birth; but it makes manifest God’s delight in those that do good. So again, in the judgment of Matt. xxv. (where we know that the Church does not appear), only those are saved whose faith found practical expression in good works. “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye

gave me drink," &c. See how the apostle presses good works on us in Titus iii.: "Put them in mind . . . to be ready to every good work. . . . I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." And again, "Let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." Would it not be much for the health of our souls if, when we had a little time, or strength, or money that we could spare, we looked round to see what good we could do? This kind of a soul Dorcas was. Her death was such a loss that she was given back again. People of this kind also adorned the corrupt church of Thyatira. See, too, what is said of the widow in 1 Tim. v., "Well reported of for good works;" and "if she have diligently followed every good work;" and this woman had brought up children as well. Now we happily see people around us bearing this character. Here is one sitting up a night with a sick person. Another running in in a spare hour to make a dying saint's bed. Another taking charge of the little children to let a mother get to the meeting. There are numbers of such things to be done that would relieve many an honest groan, but could we be enrolled among those who have diligently followed every good work?

If we turn to the life of our Lord, both good works and acts of faith abound. "He went about doing good." Blessed story! And He was "the author and finisher of faith." He ran the whole race. The invisible joy of the glory was the crown before the eye of His faith, and for that "He endured the cross, despising the shame." This was faith. May the Lord grant us the grace to seek His footsteps, and to win His praise.

C. D. M.

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. iii. 1-9.

HAVING dealt with the evils that were already prevalent in his own time, the apostle passes onward to the eve of the close of the dispensation: "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*" (v. 1.) In the first epistle he had spoken of "the latter times" (1 Tim. iv. 1); but he is now more precise, and speaks of the end of "the latter times," the closing days of this present interval.*

We learn, then, that perilous (or difficult) times will distinguish the last days. How different is the future of Christianity in this world from the representations of its popular advocates! These love to sketch the gradual conversion of the world by the preaching of the gospel, and the consequent gradual subjection of men and things, human governments and institutions, to an absent Christ and Lord.† The inspired revelation here given of the course of Christianity dispels at once this illusion, and convicts its propagators of igno-

* That this is the true interpretation of the expression may be seen by comparing Numbers xxiv. 14 and Deuteronomy iv. 30. The apostle John speaks of the "last time," characterized by "many antichrists," who had been once "with us," but had gone "out from us," and who were therefore apostates. These were actually existent in John's day, but, as such, were prophetic of the close, as well as of the antichrist who will "deny the Father and the Son." (1 John ii. 18-22.)

† For example, we recently read that Christianity was intended to purify the individual, and through the individual human society, the consummation being, that the will of God would be done on earth, as it is in heaven!

rance of the very scriptures they profess to preach. For what is the truth? In chapter i., as already seen, all that were in Asia had "turned away" from the apostle of the Gentiles; in chapter ii. he tells us that the Church had become like a great house, in which were found side by side vessels to honour, and vessels to dishonour; and now he lifts the veil and permits us to see that evil and corruption will increase, and hence that, as the end approaches, perilous times, accompanied by the corruption here named, must be expected. The path of Christianity *in this world* is not therefore like that of the just, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, but it will be one of increasing gloom and darkness; for "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." It is no small consolation to remember that He who has forewarned us of these things is Himself all-sufficient to sustain, and to enable us to walk in His ways in the midst of surrounding and growing dangers.

We have, in the next place, both the cause and the features of the "perilous times." "*For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*" (vv. 2-5.) It would scarcely be for edification to enter in these pages upon a minute explanation of all these terms; but the reader himself should solemnly weigh them in the presence of God, as he will then be able to compare them with the moral features of the present day. We

cannot, however, forbear to add the following striking remarks of another: "If we compare the list of sins and abominations which Paul gives at the beginning of the epistle to the Romans, as characterizing heathen life, and the moral degradation of men during those times of darkness and demon-worship, with the catalogue of sins that characterize those who have the form of godliness, we shall find that it is nearly the same, and morally quite the same; only that some of the open sins which mark the man who has no outward restraint are wanting here, the form of godliness precluding them and taking their place. It is a solemn thought, that the same degradation which existed among heathens is reproduced under Christianity, covering itself with that name, and even assuming the form of godliness. But in fact it is the same nature, the same passions, the same power of the enemy, with but the addition of hypocrisy."*

"From such" Timothy is exhorted to "turn away." If the last days refer to the end of the day of grace, why, it may be enquired, is this direction given to Timothy? The answer is, that these moral features were already beginning to appear; and they will appear with increasing distinctness, while the Lord Jesus tarries, until at last they will culminate in the full-blown sins and corruptions here described. When, therefore, the apostle adds, "From such turn away," he gives a direction which is applicable to every age, and indicates that it is the Lord's mind for His people to be in entire separation from all this moral corruption. Once more, as will be seen, it is the responsibility of

* *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, by J. N. Darby, vol. v., p. 219, third edition.

the believer to discern the evil, indeed the persons involved in it, and to walk apart from them, whatever their pretensions or forms of godliness.

The means of detection are also supplied. "*For,*" the apostle proceeds, "*of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (vv. 6, 7.) Several things should be noticed in this comprehensive description, a description which covers both the seducers and their followers. First, the manner of their procedure is given. They are of the kind "which creep into houses." It is noteworthy that almost all false teaching, or at least that which claims a superior spirituality, begins in secret, and thus forms a school before it is manifested. Some of the saddest heresies that have ever disturbed the Church of God commenced in this way—either by private visits, or by the circulation of "notes" amongst a chosen sympathizing few. This method carries with it its own condemnation; for whatever will not bear the light cannot be of God, and whatever is given of Him is for the Church. Secondly, the prey of these false teachers are "silly women* laden with sins." It is in this last phrase that the explanation of the power of these corrupters of the truth lies. The foolish women are a class who, having many sins on their conscience, and thus made to feel them as a burden, would be peculiarly susceptible to any teaching which promised both relief and liberty; for they were not only burdened with their sins, but they were also led away with "divers lusts," or many and various desires.

* It is only one word, but it is rightly rendered "silly women."

It is what the flesh ever craves—deliverance from past sins, and indulgence for present gratifications;* and inasmuch as these “silly women” hoped to obtain both from this new teaching, they became the willing slaves of their evil instructors. Then, lastly, we read that such—*i.e.*, the silly women—were ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of truth. This again is another characteristic of a false system of doctrine. Those who accept it are always deluded by the prospect of a fuller knowledge, for it is ever surrounded by mystery, and thus they are enslaved at the will of their teachers.

But, it may be urged, the corruptions here named are so unblushing that no sincere souls could ever be deceived and entangled. It should therefore be observed that all these abominations are *concealed under a form of godliness*, and that it is the Spirit of God who, through the apostle, drags them here out into the light for our warning and guidance. Under such a cloak these men might outwardly pass, as the Pharisees of old did, for pious and devoted men; for they would be sure to make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while within they might be full of extortion and excess. (See Matthew xxiii. 25.)

The next two verses give further instruction on the subject. “*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all,*”

* This is exactly what Popery professes to give. By confession to a “priest” absolution is obtained, and by the recitation of a few “prayers” at stated times indulgences, which allow free course to the flesh, are promised.

as theirs also was." (vv. 8, 9.) Jannes and Jambres were the magicians of Egypt who withstood Moses and Aaron in the presence of Pharaoh. When Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, as the Lord had commanded, and it became a serpent, the magicians "also did in like manner with their enchantments." (Exodus vii. 10, 11.) They thus resisted the truth by imitating the action of the Lord's servants; and it is in this way the truth will be, and is being, opposed in the perilous times. It is precisely in this character of opposition that the danger lies for unwary souls. Thus at the present moment all the false systems of men claim that they present all the characteristic truths of Christianity, or that these truths are only expounded in accordance with modern ideas. Satan is too subtle to commence by denying the truth of God; and hence he seeks first of all to insinuate that which seems like the truth, but which, under the expansion of which it is capable, finally ripens into anti-Christian error. This is why the name of Christ is attached, for example, to many soul-destroying systems, and why men, who really ignore every fundamental truth of Christianity, claim to be Christians.

The outward garb, then, of these resisters of the truth will be Christian in appearance, but the opened eye will detect that it is not the real thing, but an imitation. More than this—for the Holy Ghost exposes their true character—they are men of corrupt minds, and reprobate, tried and found worthless, concerning the faith. Inwardly they were evil men, and, tested by the Christian faith, they were to be rejected.

Great, however, as may be the power of the enemy as thus displayed, there is a limit fixed. It might seem

for the moment as if Satan were about to gain, through his servants, a complete victory. But, as we read in the prophet, when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him, so here it is declared that these corrupters "shall proceed no further," they shall be arrested in their wicked work, and their folly shall be publicly exposed. It was so with Jannes and Jambres. For a long time they withstood Moses, but at length, when God stepped in and created life at the word of Moses, they were baffled, and were constrained to confess that it was "the finger of God." Whatever, therefore, the apparent success of Satan's servants, confidence in God should never be lessened; for the believer may surely count upon Him to vindicate His own truth in His own way, and in His own time. This is the consolation of the godly in times of corruption and apostasy; and together with this the assurance may ever be entertained that, though the Church, like Israel, may be sifted by these false teachers, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. The power of the enemy, whatever his malice, is thus only an instrumentality in the hands of God for testing and purifying His people.

E. D.

SCRIPTURE NOTE.

PSALM cxxxii.-cxxxiv.

THE order of these psalms is both interesting and instructive. In Psalm cxxxii. a place is found for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty One of Jacob; and, as led of the Spirit, the invocation is uttered, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy

strength," &c. (vv. 8-10.) The answer, transcending all the psalmist's thoughts, is vouchsafed, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish." (vv. 14-18.) The house of Jehovah is built, and Jehovah has taken possession of it, and, together with this, the provisions of His grace, the blessing of His people, and the execution of His purposes, as touching His Anointed, are pledged and guaranteed. (Compare Acts ii. 38, 39.) In the next psalm (and, may we not say? as a consequence) we have the beautiful spectacle of brethren dwelling together in unity, a spectacle fragrant (comparable as it is to "the precious ointment") alike to God and to men; and inasmuch as "the precious ointment" is a figure of the anointing by the Holy Ghost, the secret and the power of this unity are declared. It is precisely the same in the Acts. Immediately on the saints being built together as an habitation of God through the Spirit, we read that they continued daily *with one accord* in the temple (Acts ii. 46), and that the multitude of them that believed were *of one heart and of one soul*. (iv. 32.) Another consequence follows in Psalm cxxxiv.—viz., perpetual praise—"Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary [or in holiness], and bless the Lord." The allusion is to the provision made

by David for the constant worship of Jehovah in the temple, in the appointment of the chief of the fathers of the Levites as singers, who should be employed in that work day and night. (1 Chron. ix. 33.) The instruction for us is, that when brethren are dwelling in unity in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, praise can flow out unhinderedly. This was the case also at Pentecost. (See Acts ii. 46, 47.) There is yet another thing. Following upon the exhortation to incessant praise, the petition ascends, "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion." (v. 3.) For when the people of God glorify God with one mind and with one mouth, He is able to bless them according to the thoughts of His own heart. We thus read that, at the dedication of the temple, "As the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." (2 Chron. v. 13, 14.) Precisely the same order is seen in the displayed blessing at Pentecost; for immediately after the spirit of praise that characterized the saints is noted, we read, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." The blessing of the Lord was exhibited upon them, and through their instrumentality. (Compare Acts iv. 31-33.) May we be enabled to apprehend the lesson!

E. D.

PARDON AND DELIVERANCE.

ROMANS vii.

To understand this chapter it is necessary to notice that the subject of it begins at chap. v. 12. Thus from that verse to the end of chapter vii. it is all one subject, which is fully discussed and gone into. At the end of chapter iv., and beginning of chapter v., we have pardon, forgiveness, and justification; but in verse 12 we begin the discussion of the evil principle in us—not sins, but sin. The power of all doctrine lies in the practical apprehension of that doctrine. Without the practical experience of the doctrine, the practical apprehension of it in the soul, doctrine is mere theory, and has no real power in life. From chapter v. 12, then, the subject is not pardon nor forgiveness, but the principle of evil in us, and God's way of deliverance from it. We have then the experience of the root of the matter—sin in us, besides which nothing is to be found in the natural man. Pardon and deliverance may go together in the soul, but they are separately treated in Scripture. Peace with God is not deliverance, neither is deliverance peace with God. They may, as I have said, go together, but in themselves they are quite distinct. Many a soul has peace with God who does not know what deliverance is, but I have not got on to God's ground unless I know deliverance for myself practically. What is the good of being told God's way of salvation, if I have no part in it? So what is the value of the doctrine of deliverance to me, if I am not delivered by it?

The discovery and experience of the active principle of evil in the natural man is a terrible lesson to learn, but if it is not learned we have not yet got on to God's ground of rest. Now it is just here that Satan often gets the advantage. He proposes all manner of schemes, which are lies to the very root, to get those into his grasp who have, through grace, escaped. He cannot get possession of them again for eternity, but he will do all he can to hinder them from enjoying the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, his object being always to mar the testimony. God takes up the question in a way that makes it simple to the simplest. If we do not understand it, it is because we seek to get hold of it in some other way than that in which God sets it before us. God does not appeal to man's mind, but He addresses Himself to the heart and the conscience. Through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ the conscience finds rest and peace, through the Person the heart is won. God no more speaks to man's mind after conversion than He does before.

We have all to go through the lesson with God; indeed, there is no possession of the blessing otherwise. It is the recognizing in ourselves the utter helplessness to do anything but evil, utter inability to do that which is pleasing to God. All must, sooner or later, go through the experience of chapter vii., must learn that "in me" (*i.e.*, in my flesh) "dwelleth no good thing."

This is a new lesson for the soul to learn, but it had already been taught by God in the case of Moses, the meekest man on the earth. With all his honesty of heart, his simplicity of soul, his meekness, he needed the lesson just as much as the vilest and most refractory sinner. When God chose him he was

surrounded with all the power of Egypt, passing as the son of the king's daughter, and living in the palace. But in faith he leaves all that, though he might have argued that God had placed him there in order to direct that power on behalf of God's people; but in faith he leaves it all to take his place with the poor suffering people of God—a wonderful lesson for us of practical faith in God, and the path it takes. Then he acts in the flesh. Indignant at the oppression of his brethren, he resists in human strength the oppressor, and he kills the Egyptian. And then he flees, runs away from the very power he had abandoned; he flees to escape the consequences of the power he had exercised.

And then we find him in the desert, where he has to learn that no energy of the flesh can do God's work. First, at the burning bush, when he draws near to see, he learns that it is holy ground he is upon, and that he must take off his shoes from his feet in approaching where God is. Then, at the end of his desert life, God matures this lesson in his soul. It was blessed for him that he had to do with God; indeed, it is the only way in which any progress is made in the soul. And so we find him face to face with God, being prepared of Him for His service. And note, it is Moses who begins the objections. He says, "They" (the children of Israel) "will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." And God replies, "What is that in thine hand?" What is *thy* power? Moses says, "A rod. And God says, "Cast it on the ground;" and Moses did so, and it became a serpent, and he "fled from before it." Here, indeed, was a lesson for him. The power of his own hand, the rod of which he had made experience in

Egypt when he slew the Egyptian, was under the direction and influence of Satan. Left to himself, in reliance upon himself, the natural force that he possessed, and the weapon he trusted in, was under the power of the enemy, and guided by him. And now the Lord says to him, "Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail;" and he did so, and it became a rod again in his hand. Thus he receives again from God the force, the power, but under His direction now. This was indeed a wonderful lesson for him—surely for us too. But how gracious all this is—God preparing and fitting out His servant for His service!

But he has more to learn yet. He has to learn where the source of natural power is, and what the will is that is there; that Satan works through the heart, and thus controls the hand. And so God says to him, "Put now thine hand into thy bosom;" and he did so, and drew it forth again "leprous as snow." Here indeed was a deeper lesson! It was not the contraction of evil by contamination, but that the root of evil was in himself, in his own heart. There was evil all around, it is true, but the evil principle was there in the heart itself, and how could that act upon or deal with the evil around? The will and the heart guide the hand—the will which is always contrary to God, and the heart that is so bad that nothing from without entering in can make it worse. At God's command he puts his hand again into his bosom, and draws it forth as the other. Thus he learns the cleansing power of God.

But the truth has to come out and be learned practically. Moses has more to learn yet. He has to show himself in his heart and will before God. And

how graciously God bears with him, and leads him on! Condescends to listen to and answer him! Again the objection comes from Moses—"O my Lord, I am not eloquent." When I get there I shall be without words. And God says, "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . Have not I the Lord? . . . Go, and I will be with thy mouth." But now the evil comes fully out in all its hideous reality—the heart, the will of "the meekest man on the face of the earth." "O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send." All was out now—not merely the natural force under Satan's influence, not merely the leprosy inside, but the manifestation of the will that ruled in the heart.

I do not say Moses was in Romans vii., but I say that this is the lesson we learn there. Before we can turn away from ourselves we have to go through a kind of Moses-experience. We turn away from ourselves in abomination and horror, as from a judged and condemned thing we can no longer bear to look upon. And this is experience; but, thank God, an experience that ceases. Experience is not deliverance. Deliverance is getting out of the place we were in, through death—Christ's death for us, and our death with Him—and recognizing this, at the hand of God, in heart and soul. It is not actions that are in question here when we speak of deliverance, but that which produces the actions. We are never said to be delivered from our actions, for we are responsible for them. Deliverance, as I have said, is from that which produces them. We may restrain ourselves from the gratification of desires, we may avoid all manner of things in this way, but this is not the point in Romans vii. Here it is

said, I am not to have the desires. "Thou shalt not covet." It does not say whether the object be good or bad; that indeed would not touch the question. It is, "Thou shalt not have desires." What then am I to do now? I must die; for as long as I live the desires will be there.

And here note, in passing, the first commandment is positive, "Thou shalt love;" the last is negative, "Thou shalt not covet." But both are addressed to fallen man, both recognize him as in that state. If we take the first, it imposes as a command upon man that which proves man to be alienated from God, that which is nothing worth unless it comes freely from the heart. "Thou *shalt* love the Lord thy God." What would be the relation of a parent and child if the parent had to command the child to love him? Obedience there might be, but the very command shows a moral distance, an alienation of heart.

But in the last commandment we have a negative thing—"Thou shalt not covet." Here we are brought to the end of ourselves, and the root of evil is laid bare. The apostle says, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Now deliverance is through death, and through that alone. On any other ground sin will have the mastery. The old nature is too strong, too bad, for any power to change or to better it. Under law, I may seek to put a bridle on that which has the mastery over me; but God gives deliverance from it, and that through death alone. How then can man bridle what God can deliver from by death only? I may make good resolutions, take pledges, &c.; but resolutions and pledges only prove that I do not reckon

myself dead—that I have not yet come to the point where deliverance is cried for as a need of the soul. The lesson must be learned individually, we must each go through it with God; and there is no getting into chapter viii. without going through chapter vii. Indeed, fancying oneself in chapter viii. is otherwise a false and spurious thing.

“The law is holy, just, and good.” The man with life in his soul—nay, more, pardoned and justified—consents thereto just because he is a child of God. Indeed, a man may have life and pardon, and justification too, and yet not know deliverance, and in that state he fights with himself. He tries to keep under that which he knows is evil, simply because he has to do with God. Contending against it, he tries to control the evil inclination, and he may try his best. The more in earnest he is with God, the more he will try. And it is a good thing to try; for it is only by trying that we come to the end, and find, practically find, that sin has the mastery over us; that, do what I may, the lusts remain. I may refuse the gratification of them, I may try to restrain or to control them; but there they ever are to be restrained and controlled; but when God says, “Thou shalt not have them,” they should not be there. The soul knows that God and sin cannot go on together. What then is he to do? What can he do? He cries, but he does not cry for mastery and victory; he cries for deliverance—“Who shall deliver me?” Deliver me from myself, this body of death. He has recognized the two natures in himself.

Man cannot arrive at a sinless state; he only deceives himself if he thinks to do so. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

But God's mind is, that we should come to a delivered state. Thus the undelivered one cries, and cries according to God too, for deliverance. It is a blessed cry, but a strictly individual one. There is no despair in it. He cries to Another beyond himself, to One outside himself; and there is but that One, the One to whom all power is given on earth and in heaven. Then comes the answer; and as the cry is made individually, so the answer comes to the individual and to him alone. No one can give deliverance to another. One may point the way, one may tell how one reached it oneself; but one cannot impart it to another. The one who cries for the deliverance is the one who thanks God for it—the cry and the thanksgiving come from the same lips. You may set the way of deliverance before me, but you cannot put my feet in the way; you may put it before me clearly and distinctly, as far as reason and mind are concerned, but you cannot put me into the place. Nothing but the power of God, resulting from my having to do with Him, can do so. The answer is to the one who cries, and to him alone; and from him comes the thanksgiving, and from none other.

Deliverance does not come from the recognition of known truths, but from the recognition of what is in oneself, and what God's power is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here then is a delivered man, and it is just here that experience ceases. There is no further experience of the evil of the human heart, except as a thing I am delivered from. No doubt one may go on to learn more and more the evil of the thing, but it is a thing I am delivered from. Do I say, I am looking forward to the day when I shall be actually wholly delivered—the day of His coming? If that is what I

am saying, it merely shows I am not delivered now, but that I am looking forward to being so some day. If delivered, I look forward to His coming, to the joy unspeakable of seeing Him and of being with Him; but not with a view to deliverance. His power has, through death, already accomplished that for me.

And now let me add, that the one who is delivered can never fall back into the undelivered state—the state of Romans vii. He may get into a low, a bad, a miserable state of soul; but he can never fall back into *that* state. He has discovered himself, he has cried to God for deliverance, and he is delivered. He can no more get back into the undelivered state than the bird that has been set free, after well-nigh beating its life out against the bars, can voluntarily return to its prison after tasting the pure air of liberty. We are speaking of practical realities; it is waste of time talking of things that are not. Deliverance is a practical reality. Were it only attainment, I might have it perhaps one day and lose it the next, and indeed never be sure whether I had it or not. But we are delivered from ourselves, that we may bring forth fruit unto God. We have no more to do with sin, save as a judged and condemned thing we are delivered from. The power of the truth lies, as I have said, in the practical realization of it in our souls. When we shall see His face, we shall be like Him; we shall find ourselves without that which we now have to judge, without this great incubus which I must now treat as dead. *Must*, did I say? No, thank God, I *can*. Ah, we shall be no losers in that day! We shall find ourselves altogether without that which, even now, we do not want, and which, through His grace, we can

look upon as dead, and ourselves as thus delivered from it.

The great practical importance of deliverance is not relief merely. It is not merely comfort, and ceasing from conflict. It is the ceasing from self-occupation—ceasing from having to do with self, except as a judged thing I am delivered from—and liberty to take up, to enter into and be occupied with, the interests of Another, even of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this world of sin where He was crucified. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this. All true testimony flows from it, and indeed is to be found there alone. The undelivered soul is occupied with himself, his own progress, growth, short-comings, and improvement, and the like. Thus self is before him, and is his object, and he is not free to be occupied with the Lord and His interests here. At best he is occupied with his own conformity to Him—a thing of which Scripture does not speak; for when it speaks of conformity it says, “Being made conformable unto His death.” The delivered soul, and the delivered one alone, let me repeat, is free to take up the interests of Christ, and in the reality and joy of deliverance to enter into them, and in liberty with Him bear the testimony that is according to His mind. But I must again say the reality of it all is, in having individually to do with God.

There is no deliverance save through death—death with Him. If you seek it in any other way you will never get it, because no other way is God’s way. You will only be like a bird in a cage, fluttering against the bars to get free. It is only when the struggle is given up, and it falls exhausted to the bottom of the cage, crying helplessly for liberty, that a Hand comes in and

sets it free, in the pure air and light of His presence, His love, and His power. And now let me ask, Is it a bitter thing to be told you are dead in the death of Christ? Bitterness! If it does not come to the soul joyfully it is because you have yet a hope, a miserable hope doomed to disappointment, in that which God has condemned. The soul that has cried for deliverance does not say, "I accept it," but, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." He receives it with joy, and he rejoices in the Deliverer, and thus the heart goes out to God.

In chapter viii. there is no continuation of the experience of chapter vii. When deliverance is learned, the door behind us is closed—shut and locked, so to speak, by God. Then we go on to learn the marvellous, ineffable goodness and power of God, who has taken us up and placed us before Himself in Christ. We taste now what heavenly blessedness and comfort are. The door is closed on our former experience, and He brings us on to new ground to learn with Himself what He is doing for His own glory, and the glory of His beloved Son. And then He speaks of groaning, but not for oneself. It is the delivered soul only that groans, or can groan for others. What is all around is felt, and felt according to God, and therefore it says, "We groan within ourselves" (not for ourselves—I do not groan for a dead thing I am delivered from) "waiting for the adoption," &c. We groan for, pray for those who cannot, do not know how to groan or pray for themselves.

May the Lord in His goodness give us each to have thus to do with Himself. There is no real faith nor power in the truth, save as the soul has to do with God in learning it.

P. A. H.

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. iii. 10-17.

THE walk of Paul is the closest approximation to that of Christ recorded in the Scriptures, and it is on this account that he is often led of the Holy Ghost to refer to himself as an example to others. This is the case here. He has been depicting the moral corruptions that will mark the perilous times of the last days; and then, mindful of the difficulties of those who may desire to be faithful to the Lord, as exemplified in Timothy, he exhibits himself as a pattern to all who may be found in these circumstances: "*But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.*" (vv. 10, 11.) It is of great importance to observe that "my doctrine," or teaching, comes first. His teaching was the truth committed to his trust; and we thus learn that nothing will preserve the saints in a time of abounding error but the possession of divine truth; and also that a walk according to God—for "manner of life," or conduct, comes next in the list—can only flow out from a knowledge of the truth. (Compare Col. i. 9, 10.) Nothing either edifies or sanctifies but the truth (see John xvii. 17-19); and it lies therefore at the basis of all steadfastness, and it forms, at the same time, a walk worthy of the Lord. Thereon follows "purpose." He will not

say "fidelity," for the Lord alone pronounces judgment upon the faithfulness of His servants; but he says "purpose," because, through grace, it was the one desire of his heart to follow the Lord in all circumstances and at all costs. (See Phil. iii. 9-11.) Besides this, he can mention faith; for confidence in God distinguished this devoted servant in all his trials. It was this alone that sustained him amid the corruption that seemed to be flowing in from every quarter; and it was this alone also that enabled him to be "long-suffering" in the midst of all that was taking place, and even towards the adversaries of the truth; to exhibit divine "love" in the presence of the evil, even though the more he loved the less he was loved; and also to be "patient," to endure as knowing, spite of all appearances, what would be the final issue of the conflict.

But there was more to be added. Such teaching and such a life, in the face of the enemy's power, could not escape trials and sorrows; and hence the apostle recalls to Timothy's mind the "persecutions" and "afflictions" which he had undergone in his service at the places with which Timothy was conversant. (Compare Acts xvi. 1, 2, with Acts xiii. xiv.) If, however, he recounts his sufferings in his service and testimony, it is but to magnify the Lord's faithfulness; for he adds, "But out of them all the Lord delivered me." There might have been persecutions; but while, like the psalmist, he had to say, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," he could also unite in his testimony, "But the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Psalm xxxiv. 19.)

The experience of the apostle was to be no uncommon one; for he says, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in*

Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (v. 12.) It will be perceived that it is not said that all Christians, nor that all who live godly, but it is all that *will* live godly *in Christ Jesus* who must be persecuted. Stress is to be laid upon the word "will," for it means that there is a real desire, purpose of heart even, to live in this manner; and also upon "in Christ Jesus," because it shows that it is the life in which Christ Himself is both magnified and displayed. Those then whose hearts are set, through divine grace, to follow Christ fully, like Caleb of old, to own no authority but His over the heart and conscience, to have no guide but Himself and His word, and thus to be apart from all that dishonours His name, cannot, in the difficult times of which the apostle speaks, escape persecutions. If any who call themselves Christians do avoid the hostility of the world or the enmity of Satan, they can only do so at the expense of faithfulness to Christ. May this truth sink deeply into our hearts!

In contrast with those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, and as giving force to what he has just said, as well as to cast Timothy more completely upon the divine safeguards for such a perilous path, the apostle says: "*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*" (v. 13.) These evil men and seducers, it should be well noted, are not men of the world, but those who are inside the professing church, claiming to be Christians, having a form of godliness if they deny the power thereof. This fact once more shows that there is no hope for Christianity, in its public form, in this world—that there is no prospect of its recovery or purification; but that, on the other hand, it will go from bad to worse, until, as

we learn elsewhere, assuming its final phase of Laodicea, it will be "spued out" of the Lord's mouth as a nauseous and abhorrent thing. The power of the enemy is seen in the fact that, while these evil men will deceive, they will themselves be deceived, a foreshadowing of those in the future, after the Church is caught away to be with the Lord, on whom God will send "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." What an immense comfort to remember, while gazing on such a picture, that the Lord will deliver all His faithful ones out of all the afflictions and persecutions which they may have to suffer!

In the next place, Paul points Timothy to the source of all guidance and strength for his own path, and he thereby teaches how believers in all ages may be fortified and preserved, both from evil and from the power of the enemy, in a difficult day. "*But continue thou,*" he says, "*in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" (vv. 14, 15.) This significant instruction demands the most careful attention. It will at once be observed that the apostolic communications are put on a level with the written Word, the Old Testament scriptures, with which Timothy had been acquainted from a child. (See chapter i. 5.) These communications have since been committed to writing, and are now found in the epistles of the New Testament; but at that time they were conveyed to the Church through inspired men, such as the apostle Paul. And it is of the utmost moment to observe that Paul claims for them divine

authority, and can thus exhort his child in the faith to continue in the things he had learned and believed, knowing, as he did, from whom he had learned them ; that is, in his case, from the apostle.

And Timothy's safety, amid surrounding corruptions, was to be found in continuing in what he had already received. As another has said, "Security rests upon the certainty of the *immediate* origin of the doctrine which he had received : and upon the Scriptures, received as authentic and inspired documents, which announced the will, the acts, the counsels, and even the nature of God. We abide in that which we have learnt, because we know from whom we have learnt it. The principle is simple and very important. We advance in divine knowledge ; but, so far as we are taught of God, we never give up for new opinions that which we have learned from an immediately divine source, knowing that it is so." The apostle indeed guards Timothy, and all, from two common and pressing dangers : First, from the snare of resting our confidence, of having the foundation of our faith, in any thing short of the divine word ; and, secondly, from being decoyed from off this foundation by pretended developments, or by the progress of modern thought. We are to *abide* in that which we have received from the word of God, and thus to refuse to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines ; and for this reason we are to accept nothing short of God's own word—no human opinions, however venerated, or however commended by the sanctity of their authors—as the basis of our beliefs. The apostle John in like manner writes to the babes of the family of God : "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning." (1 John ii. 24.) And

there never was a day when this lesson was more needed. Confronted, as we are, on the one side by a boastful and superstitious religion, which grounds its claims, traditions, and practices upon the writings of men, and on the other by a daring infidelity, which appeals from the Scriptures to human reasonings, we learn that our only safety lies in cleaving to the sure and infallible Word; and that, resting in it, we shall be impregnable against the attacks both of the one and the other. To continue therefore in what we have learnt from the Scriptures is our blessed resource in the perilous times in which our lot is cast.

Coming to details it will be perceived that the apostle refers Timothy to two things—the means of preservation from the attacks of the enemy; namely, by continuing in the things he had been certified of by the apostle; and, secondly, the certainty and the consequent enjoyment of salvation through the written Word, and faith which is in Christ Jesus. We are always most courageous in the presence of difficulties or enemies when in the personal enjoyment of salvation, and on this account the two things are here combined. (Compare John xx. 21; Ephesians vi. 17.)

The introduction of the word of God leads the apostle to state the character and uses of all scripture. He says, "*All scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*"

* We must refer the reader to other pages for a discussion of this translation—whether it should be rendered "all" or "every" scripture. The question is of no importance whatever to those who receive the Bible as the veritable word of God.

(or "every good work"). (*vv.* 16, 17.) All or every scripture is then divinely inspired, given by the operation of the Holy Ghost through human vessels as a revelation of the divine mind (see 2 Peter i. 21); and the apostle in another place claims this inspiration for the words in which he delivered his message: "Which things also we speak," he says, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which [in those which] the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. ii. 13.) It is not only therefore that the Scriptures contain, but they also *are* the truth; and they are thus absolutely infallible, and, as such, have attached to them God's authority because they are the expression of His own mind. They are therefore to be received, unquestioningly received, as the voice of the living God to our souls; and thus the only proper attitude to be taken up when they are read is that of Samuel, who said, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

The uses of the Scriptures are next given. First and foremost they are "profitable for teaching," being, as we have seen, the revelation of God's mind for His people; also for "reproof," or "conviction," for, inasmuch as they are the divine standard, the character of our conduct or actions is at once discerned by their application; for "correction," since they not only convict of sin and failure, but they also point out the right path for God's people; for "instruction in righteousness," because they contain precepts and exhortations applicable to all the relationships and responsibilities, whether towards God, one another, or towards men in general, in which the believer can possibly be found. The word of God is thus the only, and the all-sufficient, source of instruction for His people.

Finally, the object of a true knowledge of the Scriptures is added; it is "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto every good work." Attention to the exact force of the words "perfect" and "throughly furnished" will guide us into the apostle's meaning. The former—only found in this place—might be rendered "complete," "suitable," or "exactly fitted;" the latter, only used twice, might be given as "fully equipped." In chapter ii., as we have seen, it is said that if a man shall purge himself out from among the vessels to dishonour, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, "prepared unto every good work." If now these two passages are combined, their teaching will be the more clearly seen. The preparation unto every good work then, in chapter ii., refers rather to the requisite personal state for service; while that in the scripture before us points out that divine knowledge, and divine knowledge gleaned from the Scriptures, is also necessary to make the man of God suitable for service, to furnish or equip him for every good work. In chapter ii. we learn that the vessel must be sanctified, and in chapter iii. that, so far from being empty, it must be filled with the knowledge of the word of God, if it would be in a condition to be used in the Master's service. If therefore the man of God would be "complete," he must resort to the Scriptures, and, as Timothy was exhorted in the first epistle, "meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all:" for the only weapon that can be used in service and conflict is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

E. D.

ALONE WITH GOD.

ANYONE can see that from the moment sin came into the world God has sought a people who should be separate from this vast stream of evil which has rolled over the world like a flood. Separation *from* is taught first; it is the negative side. Then comes separation *to*; and this is the positive side. To be right with God, the first only, is not enough, although with us all it comes first to "cease to do evil." We then go on to what is positive, and "learn to do well." (Isaiah i. 16, 17.)

"The people shall dwell *alone*, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Numbers xxiii. 9.) Here we have the negative side of the truth of separation. They are not *counted* among the nations. The world goes on, and so mean are they in its eyes that it ignores their very existence. The Lord's people are people of no reputation—not worthy to be in any way considered. Apart from the rush of human strife, they dwell alone. Oh, to accept this as the Lord's word concerning His people! for it was the Lord who put this word into Balaam's mouth.

But further, Israel "shall dwell *in safety alone*." (Deut. xxxiii. 28.) The thought of God is still this same word for His people—"alone." Israel is only *safe* when he dwells "alone," as to all that surrounds him. *He is safe then*. No enemy can touch him then; and why—why is this? We must turn to another passage for the answer.

"Let them make Me a sanctuary; *that I may dwell*

among them." (Exodus xxv. 8.) If they are *contented* to " *dwell alone,*" and contented not to be "reckoned among the nations," God Himself will come and tabernacle among them. What a wonderful word that is, "Judah was *His sanctuary!*" (Psalm cxiv.) Here was a place where the Creator could find an asylum of rest, while the billows of sin rolled over all around. And this is the positive side of separation. His people must now be consistent with a fact that God is present with them. Everything must take its colouring from this fact. "The Lord is there." Then as to every enemy they are safe. Every enemy retreats. "The sea saw it, and fled." "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob."

No marriages were to be made with Moab; no intercourse or alliance of any kind with the people of the land. "The people shall dwell alone" ("in safety alone"), and God, "whose name is Jealous," will dwell among them. (Exodus xxxiv. 14.) They are *alone with God.*

Such is the truth, and may we accept it in all its naked simplicity. Nothing *can* be added to it, or God is not enough. For us it is still, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew xviii. 20.) H. C. A.

THE Church is the vessel to hold the glory of the Lamb.

THE believer is a vessel for the display of Christ in this world.

“FAINT YET PURSUING.”

WITH each countenance turned to the orient side,
Come on the Three Hundred to Jordan's swift tide ;
Jehovah has called them, and onward they go,
So weary and faint, yet pursuing the foe.

The Lord drew His sword in His glory and might,
When the lamps shone like stars in the dead of the night ;
When the Midianite hosts turned and fled in dismay
From a cake of baked barley and pitchers of clay.

The Angel had come to the chief's lowly home,
And appeared in the fire as Jehovah-Shalôm :
Now deep be thy peace, and profound thy repose,
'T is He that appoints thee to scatter His foes.

O Lord, give us hearts to reply to the call,
To make a surrender of self—nay, of all !
Not pausing to stoop or to kneel at the brink,
But lapping, like dogs, without stopping to drink.

O Lord, give us hearts to pursue without fear,
Though Succoth may slander and Penuel sneer ;
For yet a few hours, by the power of our God,
And Satan himself 'neath our feet shall be trod.

Wouldst be seeking for solace, or turn from the fray,
When the Lord of the battle is leading the way ?
'T is Jesus that calls us, and forward we go,
So weary and faint, yet pursuing the foe. E. L. B.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

GENESIS iv. 23, 24.

“IN the history of Lamech we have on man’s part *self-will* in lust. He had two wives, and vengeance in self-defence; but, I apprehend, an intimation in God’s judgment, that as Cain was the preserved though punished Jew, his posterity at the end, before the heir was raised up and men called on Jehovah in the earth, would be sevenfold watched over of God. Lamech *acknowledges* he had slain to his hurt, but shall be avenged.” Thus far is a citation from the well-known *Synopsis*. A few words may be added in further explanation. The “self-will in lust” of Lamech is seen in his wilful departure from the institution of marriage in Paradise. (Genesis ii. 24.) He acted in self-gratification in having two wives. He also, as pointed out, avenged himself, and that at the cost of the life of his enemy. The two forms of evil, on account of which God afterwards sent the flood, viz., corruption and violence (see chapter vi. 12, 13), are both combined in Lamech. Hence he acknowledges that he had slain a man to his wounding and hurt; for these things must bring down the judgment of God. But Lamech also, as descended from Cain, is a type of the Jew of a later day; and, inasmuch as he is introduced before the “heir is raised up”—that is Seth, who becomes a figure of Christ (for it is in His days, in the kingdom, that men will call upon the name of Jehovah)

—there can be but little doubt that the sin of Lamech is a foreshadowing (as also the sin of Cain) of the wickedness of the Jews in rejecting and crucifying Christ. In this light all is plain. The sin was great when the Jewish nation by wicked hands crucified and slew their Messiah; and it was most surely to their “wounding,” and to their “hurt;” for to this day they abide under the judgment of God on account of His blood. (See Matthew xxvii. 25.) Notwithstanding, great as has been their iniquity, God preserves them, and avenges, and will avenge them “seventy-and-sevenfold” on any nation that may seek to destroy them from off the face of the earth.

II.

MATTHEW xiii. 58; MARK vi. 5.

THE difference between these two scriptures is characteristic; that is, in accordance with the respective presentations of Christ in Matthew and Mark. In the former gospel, where Christ appears as the Messiah, it is no question as to His power to do the mighty works; but it is rather the state of the people, their inability, through unbelief, to profit by His presence in their midst which is made prominent. Hence the record is, “And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” In Mark, on the other hand, where Christ is seen as the Servant, our attention is directed to the fact that unbelief limited His activity. There He was seeking to bless; His heart yearning over His people; but their unbelief raised up a barrier, so that we read, “He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.” And are not these two things often witnessed in service at the present day? How often, for example,

is it, when the gospel is preached, that the power of the Lord is present to heal (as we read in Luke v.), and there are few, if any, ready through faith to receive the blessing. Again, it is often the case that the Lord's servants are hindered and limited by the unbelief of the audience. They have come forth from the Lord's presence, in communion with His mind, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, and yet the message they proclaim falls powerless on the souls of those to whom it is addressed. In many such cases it is, as with the blessed Lord Himself, that they are circumscribed by unbelief. It is, therefore, always needful to remember that, if all things are possible with God, all things also are possible to him that believeth.

III.

HEBREWS ii. 17, 18.

Two things are clear from the teaching of this epistle. First, that the priesthood of Christ is connected with, and indeed based upon, the propitiation which He made for sins; and, secondly, that the scene of His priesthood, the place of its exercise, is heaven. (See chap. i. 3; ii. 17; viii. 1-6; ix. 23-28.) But in the scripture before us we learn that it was necessary, in order to His qualification for the office, that He should in all things be made like unto His brethren. He was thus, in bringing many sons unto glory, as the Captain of their salvation, made perfect through sufferings. It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, thus to deal with Him who identified Himself with His people. Since the children were, moreover, partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He

might destroy him that had the power of death, in order to emancipate as many as, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He was thus in all things made like to His brethren, with the object of being qualified to act as Priest. Two terms are then given to indicate the nature of the qualification; viz., "merciful" and "faithful." It was needful for the high priest in the olden economy to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." (Chap. v. 2.) But Christ became a merciful High Priest, One who could feel for and tenderly sympathize with those for whom He acts, through becoming man, and suffering Himself to be tempted in all points like as we are—sin apart. (Chap. iv. 15.) The word "faithful" points rather, we judge, to the execution of His office Godward, though it would not exclude the idea of fidelity in dealing with those whose cause He has undertaken. The phrase, "in things pertaining to God," may therefore be taken as covering the two aspects.

The next thing mentioned is propitiation (not reconciliation) for the sins of the people. Christ was both victim and priest; and it was He, the priest, who made propitiation. But, as we have seen, it was not until He entered heaven that His real priestly work began. Propitiation is, however, here brought in as indissolubly bound up with His priesthood, and, as the next verse shows, as the foundation of its exercise. It might therefore be said that in verse 17 we have the qualification and basis of His office as priest, and that in verse 18 we have the functions, or one of its functions, exercised; "for," as the apostle writes, "in

that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Other functions are specified afterwards. Here the priesthood is viewed in relation to a tempted people; and the Spirit of God calls our attention to the fact, that He who was in all things made like unto His brethren, and who made propitiation for their sins, is, as the merciful and faithful High Priest, abundantly qualified, as having Himself suffered being tempted, to succour them out of all their temptations.

IV.

HEBREWS ix. 24-28.

IT has been recently remarked, that there is in this scripture a most striking correspondence with the four-fold rites of the great day of atonement; and it is to this we desire especially to draw the attention of our readers. First, the entrance of Christ into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, is contrasted with the entrance of the Jewish high priest "into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true." The latter entered "every year with blood of others." But Christ—not to offer Himself often; "for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." This brings before us the second correspondence, or rather contrast. Both entered. The Jewish high priest made propitiation, after he entered, "with blood of others;" but, let the reader mark it, in view of recent discussions, the work—propitiation, surely—of Christ, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, is connected, *not with His entering, but with*

His appearing; that is, His first appearing in this world, and *with the sacrifice of Himself*. This is conclusive as to the fact of propitiation having been completed on the cross. The point is most important. Thirdly, we read that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," the substitutionary aspect of His work for His people corresponding with the scapegoat bearing, and bearing away, all the transgressions and sins of Israel which had been confessed over it, and transferred to it by the laying of Aaron's hands upon its head. (See Lev. xvi. 21.) Lastly, as the high priest of Israel came out, after the completion of all the rites of atonement, and in token of their accomplishment (Lev. xvi. 23, 24), so to "them that look for Him" will Christ "appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 28.) Unlike the Jew, we already know, by the Holy Ghost, that the work of atonement has been finished and accepted; but the appearing of Christ the second time will but be the consummation of His work in the full salvation of His people. E. D.

V.

REVELATION xiv. 6.

I BELIEVE the everlasting gospel is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head; that is, the declaration that the Lord shall destroy with power when He comes in judgment. It is the announcement that the hour of His judgment is come, the unchanging good news right from the beginning and onward. From the first Christ was to bruise the serpent's head. The Christian has the special relationship—union with Him who is going to bruise the serpent's head—being thus identified with the King of the kingdom. J. N. D.

A LETTER ON THE TRUTH OF THE ONE BODY.

MY DEAR H——,—I was delighted to get a letter from you, and to hear of blessing round you, and amongst those you are with. And now I trust this question of the truth of the ground upon which you stand, which hitherto has been made so easy for you, has only come up to make it the more real, through the exercise to your own soul.

Many of us have had to fight our way into the path *against* the circumstances, that, brought up as you have been, have been, as it might seem, *favourable* to you. But no one can escape exercise of soul in having to do with God and His truth, and so it meets *you* in this form.

It is a precious principle of God, that “if thine eye be *single*, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Even the clearest truth without this fails to give the light we need, though with the eye single to Christ, as our object, the truth will not be withheld. But what constant diligence of heart, seeking to keep ourselves before God that His Word may detect the heart’s being diverted by any other—it needs, that He Who gave Himself for me may shine in the excellency and glory before the eye of my soul: *that* takes the light and power out of all that would divert in attracting or distracting from Him; then the eye will see clearly to discern between men’s maxims and motives and principles and God’s. And how great the contrast!

But now what is God's object for the glory of Christ in this present time on earth? What is He doing? Are there given us in His Word principles to form and direct our path in everything? Or are we left free, through lack of these, to choose for ourselves in anything? Is the question a worthy one for our redeemed souls, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?"

The answer is found in the revelation of the mystery of which Paul's epistles are so full. See Rom. xvi. 25, 26; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. iii. 3-11, v. 23-32; Col. i. 24-27, ii. 2, 3; namely, the eternal counsels of God for Christ, that when His work was done, and He was raised from the dead and glorified, He should have the Church given Him as His body. It is formed by the Holy Ghost, come down from that glory where He has first taken His place as its Head, of all who have received the glad tidings of their salvation, who are thus united to their Head as His body, and to one another by the indwelling Holy Ghost.

This body is the only one we find in Scripture—"The Church, which is His body." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) In Eph. i. the general standpoint (so to speak) of the truth presented to us, whether of our individual position (4-7), the inheritance or of our corporate position, is that of God's counsels in eternity. Hence here, and here only, as far as I am aware, the body is presented as the complete number of all who are Christ's, from the coming of the Holy Ghost to His coming—each little one of His necessary to "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," from Pentecost till He comes. Of course myriads of these have fallen asleep, and, their bodies in the grave, their spirits are with Christ,

awaiting *with* Him the moment we await here away from Him, *i.e.*, the resurrection morning.

If this were the only aspect of the Church given us in Scripture (and this is as far as most evangelical Christians see), it would be impossible to *act* on the truth of it, the most part of those who compose it being out of the scene of action. But it is not so. When we take the Word, we find that in every other passage where the body of Christ is spoken of, it is an *existing company* on earth that is in question. This flows from the great leading fact of the Church's existence, *i.e.*, that the Holy Ghost who has formed the body (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13), and maintains it in its unity, has come down upon earth and dwells, as to His given place,* for the glory of the Son of God in the Church *on earth*.

Thus, for instance, see 1 Cor. xii. 25-27, addressing the Corinthians, the apostle treats them as the body of Christ in Corinth; responsible to express this their existing unity on earth, by having mutual care for each other; suffering and rejoicing together, if one member suffer or be honoured. All this of course is out of the range of those who have passed into the Lord's presence. They belong to the unity of the body, and will be manifested as such in glory, but for the time being they have passed out of the sphere where the Holy

* As to His given place, I say, because, as God, of course He is in heaven and everywhere—just as Jesus could say when on earth, because of His divine glory, "The Son of man which is in heaven." (John iii. 13.) As to the place of the Holy Ghost—on earth dwelling in the believer—see John xiv. xv. xvi., where this is largely developed in its *individual* aspects. For His *corporate* presence see 1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 22; and, as to its effects, 1 Cor. xii. 7-13, where we have the manifestation of His presence in *gifts*, which clearly do not belong to heaven but to earth.

Ghost has formed the body, and maintains it in its unity down the lapse of ages since Pentecost.

But what marvellous privilege for you and me, dear H——, to be united, from the moment we received the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, to the Lord Jesus in heavenly glory, and therefore to all that are His, and that by grace we *know* it, when so many of His dear ones round us know nothing of it! But with the knowledge of our union comes our responsibility to act on it. And if we begin to see something of what this unity was to God, the object of His eternal counsels for the glory of Christ—what it is to Christ's love as having given Himself for it (Eph. v.), and how it is the present work of the Holy Ghost on earth come down to be the servant of His glory, how could we consent to the sorrow and sin of taking any place, or identifying ourselves in any way, with what wilfully, or more generally in total ignorance, sets up for man's right to choose for himself of what association he will become a member? *God* has chosen in His sovereign and abounding grace to make us members of a body that has for its Head the glorified One who gave Himself for us, and embraces all who are His in an indissoluble unity, the only body that He recognizes, with which too He connects inseparably the central act of the Church's worship on earth, *i.e.*, the Lord's Table: "For we being many are one loaf, one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf." How dreadful to think that what Christ instituted as the symbol of that unity should have been taken by men to be the symbol of each sect in its sectarian place, and thus of utter disunity. For you will see that in the light of these principles of Scripture, every association that does not

in principle embrace every member of the body of Christ as such must be a sect.

Well, dear H—, if ignorance of and indifference to the truth is widespread, and those whom Christ died to gather together in one are scattered by the enemy through thirteen hundred differing human associations on earth, what is one who has learned the precious mystery of our union with Christ to do? Does our most exalted privilege cease to be the measure of our individual responsibility? Does God change the principle of the dispensation because we have failed from almost the first to walk according to it? No trace of such a thing is to be found in Scripture. On the contrary, the later epistles all indicate the very state of things in which we find ourselves, and give us instructions how to walk according to God's principles in the midst of the evil. And here comes in the abiding principle for faith, whatever the dispensation, and by which alone there can be a walk according to God (2 Tim. ii. 19), that is, separation from evil.

And see the three steps in the path so clearly marked out. (1.) I purge myself from all that has come into God's house to His dishonour. (19–21.) (2.) Verse 22. Watch your own heart, and keep it diligently, lest Satan get in there and mar your outward separation by inward unholiness. (3.) Seek out those similarly separate from evil and walk with them, following what is suited to God. But, as the Word says, "He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey," so we must expect, dear brother. But it is worth loss and reproach and suffering here to win the approval of Christ. (Rev. iii. 8)—(belonging just to the time we find ourselves in, see verse 11.)

The Lord give you to be faithful in the testing circumstances you find yourself in, your heart large to rejoice in all that God works in His sovereign grace around you, your feet in the narrow path. (See 2 Cor. vi. 13; then 14, &c.) The Lord keep you very near Himself! Only in communion with Him can we find strength to withstand the flood of worldliness and false association of Christians that we meet with everywhere, and to pursue with patience the path of His will.

J. A. T.

SPIRITUAL SLOTHFULNESS.

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 and principles of truth for our guidance and blessing. The Laodicean element, alas! so rife on every hand, is what we have most to dread, and most resolutely to *overcome*; and what is Laodiceanism but men priding themselves on holding orthodox principles with practical indifference to the honour and claims of our Lord Jesus Christ? Many of God's children are suffering in their souls from lack of spiritual acquaintance with God's mind as revealed in the Scriptures of eternal truth; but this is not the root of the palsied state of a large number of those who profess to be God's saints. God be praised for those who know, on the infallible authority of His word, brought home to their hearts by His Spirit, that they "are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus," and abound with praise and thanksgiving because of it.

When reading carefully the epistles, we are struck

with the fact that the first thing which attracted the eye of an inspired apostle, when considering the state of the saints in any place, was not the amount of *knowledge* they possessed, but what their condition was 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. Look, for instance, at the first epistle to the Thessalonians. He says, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of *faith*, and labour of *love*, and patience of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. And in the second epistle to the same assembly he wrote first of all, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your *faith* groweth exceedingly, and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." (1 Thess. i. 2, 3; 2 Thess. i. 3.) *Then* in each epistle instruction as to the *knowledge* of God's truth followed. In Ephesians he says, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus, and *love* unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you," and then prays that the Father of glory may give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge* of *Him* . . . that they might *know* what is the *hope* of His calling, &c. (Eph. i. 15-23.) What a serious mistake then such make who place "knowledge" on the foremost ground instead of faith, and love, and hope!

Again, if we turn to the epistle to the saints at Colosse, the same inspired apostle says, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your *faith* in

Christ Jesus, and of the *love* which ye have to all the saints, for the *hope* which is laid up for you in heaven," &c. He then prays they "may be filled with the *knowledge* of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" he has also great conflict, or agony, lest they should come short of the apprehension of the mystery of God, and he sets before them great principles of truth as to their being in Christ Jesus, with the view of delivering them from the philosophy and traditions which threatened to undermine their faith. He clearly showed them that, as being in Christ Jesus, filled full in Him, and holding fast Christ the Head of the body, they would be delivered from rationalism on the one hand and from ritualism on the other, and walk worthy of the Lord.

Our present object, however, is not to trace this further in the apostolic writings, important as it is, but to enquire 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 i. 5-11 ; Heb. vi. 11, 12.) Happy those who are diligently exercised before the Lord, as to their growth in faith, and love, and hope. (Rom. xv. 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. xxvi. 13 ; xx. 4.) 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. xxvi. 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. xix. 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. xxvi. 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. xiii. 4; xxi. 25.)

Another mark of a *slothful* man is that he roasteth not that which he took in hunting. (Prov. xii. 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. xi. 3.)

We are also told that "the way of a slothful man is as an 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. xv. 19; xii. 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. xix. 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. ii. 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. x. 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 collec-

tively. 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," and 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. xxiv. 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 "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.)

H. H. S.

THE DEPRESSED SERVANT.

God is not unaffected by this condition. He has His eye upon His servant, and will care for him. One of the lessons of the way is to get hold of how God can stoop, and delights to stoop, to arrange the *little* things for His servants. Alas! how distrust of the One whom we serve—distrust of the interests of His heart in us and in His people—thrusts its way oftentimes before the soul. Who would have thought of the blessed God preparing a cake, baking it, filling the cruse, and then sending His angel to that poor, weary, depressed servant of His, to tell him of what He had ready for him! Such is the heart of Him whom we serve. And Elijah eats and sleeps, and again is aroused by the angelic watcher to eat yet again. (How God *lingers* near us, so to speak.) “And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.”

Oh, to be able to detect the “cake baken on the coals.” There it is *preparing*, when the poor weary heart only requests “for himself that he might die.” Not yet Elijah, nor at all. The “chariot of fire, and horses of fire,” are HIS way for thee.

“The journey is too great for *thee*.” He who cares for us has provided the sustenance. He who alone *knows the need of the way* meets it. Be assured there is the “cake baken on the coals” and the cruse of water for the depressed servant, and as we partake we gain strength. Cannot the servant who reads this bear witness? And so it ever is. “And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went *in the strength of that meat* forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.” H. C. A.

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. iv. 1-8.

THERE is a manifest connection between this section and the close of the preceding chapter. The apostle had shown how the man of God might be thoroughly furnished, or entirely equipped, for every good work; and he thereon founds an appeal to Timothy to be diligent in his service. He says, "*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; * preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*" (vv. 1, 2.)

These are solemn and weighty words, and need to be devoutly weighed in the divine presence, and especially by the Lord's servants; for they set Timothy, and with him the labourer in every age, in full view of his responsibility, while, at the same time, they remind him of the tribunal before which the character of all service will be ultimately tested. It is, in fact, a searching appeal to the conscience; for "the *appearing* of Christ is always in connection with responsibility; His *coming* is with the object of calling us to Himself in connection with our privileges. Here it is the first of these two cases; not the assembly, or

* There are several variations in the reading and rendering of this passage. We subjoin the translation most generally approved: "I charge [or testify] before God and Christ Jesus, who shall [or is about to] judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom." (See the *Revised Version*, also the *New Translation*.)

the Father's house, but God, the appearing, and the kingdom. All that is in relation to responsibility, government, judgment, is gathered together in one point of view.*

Coming to details, it may be observed that Timothy is charged, first, "before God," the apostle thereby calling forth a present exercise of conscience (comp. 1 Thess. i. 3), as he teaches him that all his service is carried on under God's eye. Next, it is, "and Christ Jesus, who is about to judge the quick and the dead." As he writes in another place, "We labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of [acceptable to] Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. v. 9, 10.) All judgment has been committed to His hands, and although no believer will ever be judged for sins, the character of his works and service will be manifested and declared before the tribunal of Christ. To have this before the soul is therefore, on the one hand, a blessed encouragement, and, on the other hand, an energetic motive to fidelity. Furthermore, the apostle adds, "And by His appearing and His kingdom."† If we accept "by" instead of "at" His appearing, it is simply strengthening the ground of the apostle's appeal, bidding Timothy thus to labour on in the prospect of the appearing in glory of that Lord whom he now served, and who, when He thus appears, will establish His authority by divine power throughout the whole earth. (Compare Titus ii. 12, 13.) The

* *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. v., p. 229, third edition.

† The following note may be helpful: "Some read 'at' His appearing, &c. It may be taken (*i.e.* if this reading is preferred) as 'according to,' that is, the judgment is according to the power and glory of His appearing and His kingdom." (Note in *New Translation*.)

servant who really waits for his Lord cannot but keep his loins girded and his light burning.

Having supplied Timothy with such an assemblage of motives for perseverance and fidelity, the apostle indicates the character of his work. He sums it up at the outset in one pregnant exhortation: "Preach the Word." This was his one responsibility, whatever the state of things around. Indifference, decay, and corruption were increasing, and would increase; but instead of being disheartened, and using this as a reason for inactivity, Timothy was all the more, on this account, to "proclaim the Word." He was, as God's watchman, to keep the trumpet of testimony to his lips, and to give forth no uncertain sound, whether men would or would not hear. He was not responsible for the effect of the testimony; he was not to be influenced by signs of blessing or the absence of it. His sole concern was to be faithful, and in order to this he must continue to proclaim the message entrusted to his stewardship.

The urgency of the need is shown by the next clause: "Be instant in season, out of season." All times were to be alike to Timothy; his work must never be intermitted, he must be ever on the watch for an opportunity to fulfil his vocation. To one who had a "burden of the Lord" resting on his soul, no time would be unseasonable, but, like Jeremiah, he would find that the Word was in his heart as a burning fire, and he would be weary with forbearing, and he would not be able to stay. (Chap. xx. 9.) He was thus bidden by the apostle to be "urgent" in season and out of season.

We come next to the special forms of his ministry. Proclaiming the word is general, but to convict,

rebuke, etc., is more specific, pointing out the various needs of souls, especially at such a moment. "Convict" is the same word as "rebuke" in 1 Timothy v. 20, and signifies to convict of sin by demonstration to the conscience.* "Rebuke" has here its proper force, as may be seen from its use, for example, in Mark viii. 33, where the Lord rebuked Peter. It is a word therefore that would seem to contemplate opponents to the truth, false or Jewish teachers, unless indeed open backsliders be in view, such as were turning grace into licentiousness.

Lastly, he was to "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," or teaching. "Exhort" is a large word, as is shown by its being translated sometimes "comfort," and sometimes "encourage." Here however "exhort," as we judge, expresses more nearly the apostle's idea; for he adds, "With all longsuffering and teaching." There would therefore be much to encounter in apathy, if not in active opposition, in the service of exhortation; but Timothy was to continue in it spite of all, and to maintain in this path a meek and unruffled spirit—only to be done in the presence of God, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The reason given for unwearied assiduity in his work is most striking: "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall*

* There seems to be but little foundation for the ecclesiastical use of the word rebuke in discipline, as found in 1 Tim. v. 20. The meaning of the word there may be gathered from the following note: "Or 'reprove.' But it is bringing home demonstratively to a man's conscience. It means 'to put to shame,' 'prove,' 'conquer,' 'rebuke,' but with conviction." (See the *New Translation*.)

be turned unto fables." (vv. 3. 4.) It was not therefore in the prospect of large results that Timothy was to proclaim the word so earnestly and zealously; but he was to use the present moment as knowing that the opportunity was brief for such a ministry, that teachers would speedily arise who would adapt themselves to the desires of the natural heart, men who would please the fancy, and flatter the imagination, of their hearers, under the pretext, too, of having discovered new and striking things in the Scriptures. It should be observed, however, that this species of corruption commences with the hearers. It is they who "will not endure sound teaching," and who "after their own lusts will heap to themselves teachers," to satisfy a diseased and itching ear. This class can be traced all down the path of church history, and the reader will have no difficulty in identifying it at the present moment. Plain scriptural teaching—that teaching which merely explains and applies the mind of God as contained in the Scriptures, does not suffice for such hearers, nor the teachers whom the Lord sends, as they prefer to "heap up," to choose, their own; and, when listening, their heart and conscience are never exposed to the action of that word which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, for they only bring with them "itching ears." The issue could but be one; they turn away from the truth, and they turn unto fables, for these alone could minister to their unhealthy appetites.

In contrast with all this, the apostle, turning again to Timothy, exhorts him: "*But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*" (v. 5.) To watch is, in

this place, rather to be sober—"that sober clearness of mind resulting from exemption from false influences," and which can only be acquired and maintained by walking before God and in communion with His mind; to endure afflictions points to the character of the path of the servant in an evil day. (See chap. i. 7.) He was moreover to do the work of an evangelist, for, inasmuch as he was the delegate of the apostle, his gift was of an apostolic nature; and he is thus directed to preach the gospel as well as teach and preach the word.* Then summing up all together Timothy is to make full proof of his ministry, or his service, and in the way here shown, that is, by his whole life being devoted in the energy of the Spirit to the work to which he had been called.

Another motive is supplied as an incentive to Timothy's zeal, the prospect of the apostle's speedy departure: "*For I am now ready to be offered,† and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: 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.*" (vv. 6-8.) "The absence therefore of apostolic ministry, so serious a fact with regard to

* Apart from the apostles, and cases like Timothy and Titus, the gift of an evangelist would never seem to have been combined with that of a teacher. The only two combined, as may be learned from the fact that one article is prefixed to the two nouns, are pastors and teachers. (Ephes. iv. 11.)

† The more exact translation is, "I am already being poured out;" but whether this is to be taken as a drink-offering (see Phil. ii. 17, where the same word is used) is doubtful. That it refers to the apostle's departure to be with Christ is clear; the only question is as to the allusion contained in the word used.

the assembly's position, makes the duty of the man of God the more urgent. As Paul's absence was a motive for working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, so is it also a motive for him who is engaged in the work of the gospel to devote himself more than ever to his ministry, in order to supply as far as possible the lack of apostolic service by earnest care for souls, and by instructing them in the truth that he has learnt." For, together with the apostle's passing off the scene, apostolic authority, and, it may be added, apostolic inspiration ceased. The word of God, then completed (See Col. i. 25, reading complete instead of fulfil), remained, and it abides for the consolation and guidance of the saints, and as it was Timothy's, so it is every true servant's, responsibility to "preach the word," and that alone, for the instruction and edification of the Church. We are commended to God and to the word of His grace. (Acts xx. 32.)

The apostle, in the expectation of his departure, reviews his course, and, as led by the Holy Ghost, he is able to affirm his fidelity. Precious grace of God to his devoted servant, to permit him to write such words with the unerring pen of inspiration! The fight he had fought, or the conflict he had waged, he knew was a good one. It should be noted that he only speaks of the character of the conflict, and not of the manner in which he had carried it on. His course was now ended, and he had kept the faith. Many had departed from it, but he, by grace, had kept it, maintained the truth, and had indeed transmitted it exactly as he had received it. He turns, in the next place, to the future, to the prospect that awaited him, and he tells us that there was for him a crown of righteousness. "The crown

of righteousness, that is to say, the one bestowed by the righteous Judge, who acknowledged his (Paul's) faithfulness, was laid up and kept for him. It was not till the day of retribution that he would receive it. We see plainly that it is reward for labour and for faithfulness that is here meant. This, or its opposite, characterizes the whole epistle, and not the privileges of grace. The work of the Spirit through us is rewarded by the crown of righteousness, and every one will have a reward according to his labours."* This last sentence affords the key to the next clause. "All who love His appearing" describes all believers; but not all will have the *same* crown. All alike, as subjects of grace, will be conformed to Christ in glory, but there will be differences of rewards, and these will be apportioned by the righteous Judge, and according, therefore, to His infallible judgment; and hence the apostle can say, "Not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." This, too, is of grace; for if Paul laboured more than the other apostles, it was by the grace of God; and whatever service is rendered by any, it is only grace that produces and acknowledges it. What a motive, then, is here furnished to devotedness! The Lord gives power for His service, and then "at that day" He will award the recompense, even for a cup of cold water which has been given in His name. The reader will remember that the appearing is always the goal for the servant, and the expression "that day" is here connected with the same period.

* *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. v., p. 232, third edition.

LIGHT.

A SEQUEL.

WE have noticed briefly, in a former number, the exterior effect of the light, if we may use such an expression; that is, its effect in illuminating surfaces; the presence of the Lord Jesus as Light upon earth, the actual presence of the saints as light now, and the future millennial day, when the nations shall walk by the light of the heavenly Jerusalem.

But there is another aspect of the effect of light; that is, not merely the outward illumination of persons and things, but the inward lighting up of the heart, and its results, as we shall find in 2 Cor. iii., iv. And first of all let us look at 2 Cor. iv. 6, where we find the following: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts* to cause to shine forth the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The same God who first caused the light to shine out of the midst of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, and if we turn to the first chapter of Genesis we shall find the illustration here employed by the Holy Spirit. In the second verse of Genesis i. we find the state to which things had been brought upon this earth a long time after the creation; and it has been rightly pointed out that things were not created so, and that there is a long interval between verses 1 and 2. Darkness and desolation were there, and in verses 3, 4, and 5 God caused the light suddenly to shine, and

“separated the light from the darkness.” Some one asked the other day *how* God had separated the two; a question which may well be reverently left with the almighty Creator of the glorious wonders of creation.

The light shone forth at the word of God: “Let there be light: and there was light;” and the Holy Spirit refers no doubt to this passage in 2 Cor. iv. 10. It is with this shining in our hearts that we are now occupied; these hearts were black and desolate enough before the light shone in them, and we bow with reverence and adoration before the God who caused the light to shine in by His sovereign power, where all before was dark.

But we have here several expressions in connection with this that claim our attention. The light shines in a certain definite manner, so that in verse 4 of 2 Cor. iv. it is called the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, and this leads us back to the third chapter, where the apostle Paul speaks of the glorious Christ with great liberty, and of our perfect and blessed liberty in the very presence of His glory, as having been justified through His work, as having received the Holy Ghost, and as being able to gaze upon the glory of Christ with uncovered face, and as being changed from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit.

Volumes have been written about this, and our great fault has been to have talked much of light and of glory, when our testimony as an existing fact upon earth has been anything but glorious; but the blessed truth of God cannot be changed, and the God who has shined into our *hearts* has illuminated them in order that the knowledge of His glory in the face

of Jesus Christ may shine out of them into this world. This was carried out in so wonderful and simple a manner in the apostle Paul that he could say, in preaching the gospel, that if it was hid, it was by a special Satanic action, the god of this world having blinded men's thoughts, so that the light of this glory should not shine for them.

But this wonderful subject—that is, the light shining now in our hearts; light proceeding from a definite and well-known luminary, the face of Jesus Christ—must not be neglected because we have failed; the luminary itself has not grown paler than when it shone around Saul of Tarsus, and shone into the dark heart of the misguided Pharisee, disclosing to him the glory of God. The career of this wonderful vessel of God's grace and power is that of a man whose heart is filled with the light that had shined in. Those who accompanied him (Acts xxii. 9) may have been dazzled for a moment by that flash that was brighter than the sun; but with Saul of Tarsus there were two things to be noticed, that is, his being blinded by the light that shone about him, his being blinded by that light in which no mortal can stand, and at the same time illuminated as to his heart by the shining in of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This inner effect of the light (and this is our subject) may be observed all through his life, from Damascus, where he begins by praying, to the last thing that we hear of him, where, still looking up confidently to the Lord and counting upon Him, he speaks of Him and His glory to Timothy, as having Him in full view. Surely we may say that the light of the glory of God shone as steadily as ever in him there in the midst of the

increasing gloom; and if we follow his history between these two extreme points, *i.e.*, its wonderful beginning and end, we find a man changed from glory to glory. We find a heart fixed upon the Lord Jesus by grace, and shining forth from that heart the glory of God; and that in a life of true patience, meekness, self-denial, where the moral glory of the Lord Jesus may be seen in His apostle.

That which is thus true for the great apostle, in his immense service and labour, is true for each one of us in our little measure. Poor and feeble as these words are, they will not be lost if any be led to enquire prayerfully what is the meaning of the light shining *in* our hearts (and not merely on men, as we noticed in John i.), so that they may be led to a deeper communion with our blessed Lord, to a truer knowledge of the glory of God, and to a fuller manifestation of it in a patient life of self-denial in this world. May God graciously lead us all in this same direction!

E. L. B.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

GENESIS xl. 14, 23; LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

THERE is a twofold contrast in these scriptures. Joseph prayed to be remembered in the time of the chief butler's exaltation, and was forgotten; he put his confidence, for the moment, in man, and he was disappointed. The dying malefactor, on the other hand, prayed in his distress, but in faith, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom;" and he received the immediate answer, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt

thou be with Me in paradise." His confidence was also in a Man; but that Man was the Messiah, David's Son, and also David's Lord, and hence he was not confounded. The reader will learn for himself the precious lessons that lie in this contrast; but some of the most obvious may be indicated. First, it is vain to seek to anticipate, as Joseph was tempted to do, the Lord's deliverance by any human means; secondly, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes; and lastly, "they shall not be ashamed that wait for" the Lord. (Isaiah xlix. 23.) E. D.

II.

NUMBERS x. 10; 1 COR. xi. 26.

THERE is an intimate connection, though not evident at first sight, between these scriptures. In the first we learn that the trumpets of silver, made of "a whole piece," were to be blown "in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months . . . over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God." Without entering into all the features of this ordinance, two or three points may be specially noticed. First, the blowing of the trumpets was testimony for God, and testimony, too, in connection with redemption, as shown from the material of which the trumpets were made. In verse 2, for example, they were used to call the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps; just as God's testimony now gathers the saints out from the world and around their true Centre, and leads them onward in their journey. Secondly, only the sons of Aaron—the priests (v. 8)—

were permitted to blow the trumpets; for only those who enjoy intimacy of access to God, and are in communion with His mind, can render His testimony, according to Himself, in the world or amongst His saints. Thirdly, the blowing of the trumpets was for a memorial. It called the attention of God, so to speak, to His people, and brought in, as faithful testimony ever does, His power on their behalf. (Comp. verse 9.) Passing now to the second scripture, it may be observed, first of all, that the Lord's supper strikingly answers to the peace offering; for this sacrifice represents in figure the communion of the offerer with God, with Christ, and with the whole Church; and it is thus no mean foreshadowing of the privileges of the saints who are gathered around the Lord at His table. The question then is, whether there is anything in connection with the Lord's supper corresponding with the blowing the silver trumpets over the peace offering. The answer is, "For as often as ye eat this [the] bread, and drink this [the] cup, ye do show [announce] the Lord's death till He come." The act, therefore, of breaking the bread and drinking the cup is God's trumpet, proclaiming His testimony to the death of His Son, our Lord. What an immense privilege is it, then, to be associated with this act—to be gathered week after week to eat the bread and to drink the cup in remembrance of the Lord, and to be, in this way, God's witness-bearers, in communion with Himself, with Christ, and with all the saints, amid the moral darkness of this world. Let it be remembered, moreover, that this blowing of God's trumpet is to us a memorial before our God, and that it calls Him in, in all that He is as revealed in redemption, on behalf of His people.

E. D.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

DEUTERONOMY viii.

THE Christian cannot be in a difficulty for which Christ is not sufficient, nor on a long, dark road where he cannot find Him enough. God's rest is where he can find perfect rest. Do you think God could find rest in *this* world? Have *you* ever found rest in it? Though He was perfect love above all the evil, yet He could not rest. When the Jews charged the Lord Jesus with breaking the Sabbath, He says that sweet and lovely word: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Could love rest in the midst of woe? When all the saints are perfectly conformed to Christ in glory, when, as is expressed in Zephaniah (and we may apply it to ourselves), "God will rest in His love," He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. There will be nothing that hinders the enjoyment of the love and glory of God. Oh, the blessed future that is before us! The full result of redemption will be accomplished, and God will rest, because His love has no more to do to satisfy Himself.

God wants, as a present thing, our hearts to be in tune with His in our everyday life. He wants that. Therefore we find here: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart," &c. Now, God says, "Your heart and Mine want to have a little talk together. I am going to show you what is in your

heart, and to show you that *I know it.*" He has brought you to Himself; and do you think that, if all that is in your heart is not brought out to Him, it will be all right between you? Do you think a father likes to have his heart all different to his child's heart? He likes that the whole spirit, soul, and mind of his child be suited to his mind. God passes us through the wilderness that we may learn this. You often see a true Christian not knowing where he is at his death-bed, because he has not had everything out with God day by day.

"Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." The exercise of Paul was whether his heart was in everything attuned to God's heart. Christ's heart was. He could always say, "I do always those things which please Him." Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony, that he pleased God. He was walking in God's presence, and the effect of it was he pleased God. You could not walk with God without having everything out with Him. If you have something on your conscience you will not be happy. Every step we take we see Him better, the light gets clearer, and we find things to judge that we had not known must be judged before—according to that which you know of the glory of God. Are your hearts up to it? And supposing they are not, what is the effect of God's presence? Why it has to set my conscience to work in order to bring me into communion. "My son, give *Me* thine heart." Now come, are your hearts given to God out and out?

"He humbled thee." (v. 3.) He brings us to our bearings. He causes us to live by faith. "Fed thee

with manna." Do not our souls sometimes loathe the light food? Is it not often true that Christ does not satisfy our hearts? Of course, if our hearts are cleaving to something else, Christ will not satisfy us. "Man doth not live by bread only." Christ quoted this to the devil in the wilderness. He had no word from God for the stones to be made bread, and He had taken on Himself the form of a servant. His will was motionless until it had God's will to make it act. The word of the Lord abides for ever; that is the dependence of faith. Mark another thing, that while God kept His people in dependence on His word to guide them, He did not allow their raiment to wax old, neither their feet to swell all the forty years. He thought of everything for them, for "He withdraws not His eyes from the righteous"—not for a moment does He cease to think of them.

Then comes another character of His dealings. "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (v. 5.) First of all, God passes us through circumstances which exercise us (feeding us and taking care of us all the time), and then there is the positive discipline for the breaking of the will. Every day one sees God doing it; and we often don't know where we are, and get questioning the love that did it. Look at Romans v. God loves us as He loved Christ, and we are rejoicing in hope of the glory where Christ is. And *not only so* (when he has gone through the whole thing, that is not all), I am not only rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, but I am rejoicing in tribulations also, because God is not withdrawing His eyes from me in them. The hope is so much the brighter; for, oh, I say my rest is not here—that's a

clear thing! And the hope makes not ashamed, because I have the key to it all in the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. It is God's ways and work to make us know ourselves. There can be no question of the love because He has given us the key to it all.

How, then, has He proved it? Why it goes on to state that in the next verse: "Christ died for the ungodly." Then he says again, "*Not only so.*" What? "*But we also joy in God.*" I have got to know myself, all my waywardness and forgetfulness of God, that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing; but in this way of self-judgment I have learnt to joy in God. It is to bring the heart into this tune with God that He has to break it down and humble it. But this being in tune with God is never reached—that settled consciousness of association with God—until, through these ways and words of God, we have got to the bottom of self. It is not that we shall not always have to contend with it; but its back is broken, and I have henceforward no trust in myself. The natural man says, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" But at the end (Ps. cxxxix.) he says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." Up to the knowledge you have of divine things, is your heart in tune with Him? Could you say, "*Search me*"? It is a painful process sometimes.

"Lead me in the way everlasting." Beloved friends, there is a way everlasting, and it is in that way everlasting that God comes and searches the heart. Are you content to have every motive searched out? It must be so if our communion with God and joy in Him is to be full and uninterrupted. We get these three things—the proving of our hearts, the chastening, and

the conflict with Satan (*v.* 15)—“to do thee good at thy latter end.”

Beloved, if your souls would walk in peace and fellowship with God, you must learn that there is no good in you; but you must also learn to know Him in the perfectness of His love. It is present joy and fellowship with God; and if we go on with it, when death comes, then it is “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” and it is the brightest moment in the life. All these exercises of heart are self-knowledge. If you want to walk so as to glorify God in fellowship with the Father and the Son, then you must go through this having the conscience exercised to be “void of offence;” and as to the affections of the heart, having Christ at the bottom, and a walk which no one can blame at the top, but between them *are all the thoughts and intents of the heart*. You must have the soul practically exercised before God. You must learn the ways of God with you that you may be in tune with Him. The Lord give us to know more of a walk with Him, that we may have the kind of peace Christ had in His walk down here—that peace of heart which the soul knows in fellowship with the Father and the Son. The Lord give you to know what it is to have everything in your heart *open before God*.

J. N. D. (1878.)

WHEN I say, Christ lives in me, I must always add, “The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Divine life in a creature-nature is always objective. This is its essential excellence.

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

PSALM li.

I HAVE not read this psalm in view of its dispensational meaning. I suppose most of us know that it is the confession of the believing Jewish remnant before God, on the ground of having caused the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. They confess their bloodguiltiness, and thus come into blessing—the fruit of that death in expiation.

What I wish you now to look at a little is the personal, directly personal, application and meaning of the psalm. There is a wonderful reality in it, and in its meaning too. You may say the Psalms do not apply to Christians, that the Christian state is beyond them; but here, at any rate, is a psalm that, if we will only consider it simply, will search our hearts in the reality of having to do with God. We have here the characteristics of a man after God's own heart, for David was such a man. But how was this true of him? What was there in him, and about him, in his life and ways, to entitle him to this distinction? A little study of this psalm will help us to understand, as we get light from God upon it, what it is to be in this world according to the heart of God.

First, then, we have here a man who had the knowledge of God, who knew Him for himself; a man chosen of God, anointed of God, preserved of Him and sustained by Him; a man who had personally the experience of God and of His ways, experience of His

goodness, His love, and His power. In order to apprehend his position here, we cannot too closely study the previous details of David's life and ways. When a mere lad, alone with God, and in dependence upon Him, he had single-handed slain the lion and the bear. Later on he had stood up alone with God against all the power of the enemy of His people, and had delivered them from the giant, thus putting all Israel to shame. He had refused the proffered armour that Saul trusted in, preferring to go forth in simple dependence upon a known and trusted God. All the enemies before him were but "uncircumcised Philistines"—they were that and that only to him. He went forth with God, and God was with him. A wonderful, and yet a simple and practical lesson for us!

But now that was all past, all gone by—surely not forgotten of God who had called him. David was now on the throne, the throne of Israel, preserved by God, brought there by Him, and established by Him, as the man of His choice, to rule over His people. It is here, upon the throne, that he learns more than he had ever learned in adversity—he learns himself, his own heart, and the evil there. You may make excuses for him, speak of the times in which he lived, the circumstances surrounding him, passions, &c., but who, that is in earnest with God, is going to make excuses for sin? Looking at these things will not help us to understand this psalm. We must look at things exactly as God presents them to us, if we are to learn of Him.

David, as we have seen, had been preserved by the hand of God; there had been nothing more wonderful for him than God's preserving power over him. And here he now was, the anointed head over God's own

people—power placed by God in his hand, and see how he used it. In the day of prosperity, the lusts of his own heart get the better of him; he learns that he is not their master, but that they ruled him. This was more than he had learned in the day of adversity, when he was hunted “as a partridge upon the mountains.” This is true of each one of us, if we know anything of experience. People nowadays say they do not believe in experience. For my part, I do so most fully—indeed souls cannot be right with God until they have had experience. But it is experience that comes to an end, or, rather, that leads to a new kind of experience—the experience of God.

2 Samuel xi. gives us the circumstances that occasioned this psalm. Led away of the lusts of his own heart, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, he falls into sin. It is a sad, an awful history; but, at the same time, it is in result beautiful and blessed. Some have said, “Oh, if I could only be like David!” Well, come and look at him now, and learn the lesson God would teach us from him. It is not only that David sins in the matter of Bathsheba, but he uses his royal, God-given power to cover up the sin. He stood before no earthly tribunal, but he has a reputation in the eyes of men, and this must be maintained at all cost. How true it is, “The way of transgressors is hard”! Lust conceives and brings forth sin; and he is hurried on by it, and by the thought of his own reputation too, to add murder to it, in the vain hope of blotting it out. He succeeds; the power is in his hand—alas! the power God had entrusted him with, and this is the use to which he puts it.

And now he rests. Uriah dead by the enemy's hand

and David's orders, Bathsheba becomes his wife, and David seeks to rest, to settle down in the state he had arranged for himself. But God is faithful, and now shows His faithfulness to him. He sends His servant to him, a special messenger from Himself, and through him he recounts in his hearing a simple record of what he had done. There is no excusing, there is no making it out worse. It is the simple record of the fact—this one ewe lamb thou hast taken. Ah, when God speaks, how brief, how simple, how heart-searching, how straightforward it is! The message came home to David's heart and conscience. One word from God and the work is done. "Thou art the man"—*the* man, the one single offender before Him, no other such sinner on the face of the earth as David. All welled up in his heart and conscience—the abuse of the power God had given him, the position God in grace had placed him in turned to hide his sin from the sight of men. So far he had succeeded in hiding it up; but there it still was before God—scarlet before Him—and there was no hiding it up there.

And now note the effect. There is no hardening, no stiffening of the neck under this message—this convicting message. Nathan says, "Thou art *the* man." David bows his head. In spirit he says, "My God, I am *the* man; I have sinned against God." Here is reality. Here I begin to learn "the man after God's own heart." He owns his sin before God. None can have a worse opinion of him than he has of himself. If you and I are children of God, it is that God has singled us out, each one specially, as special sinners, in order that He may have special mercy upon us, each one. It is not as a company, nor as with a company

here, but as individuals the soul has to do with Him, and come to this: "There is no one like me for badness, and there is no one like God for love, and goodness, and grace!"

And now let us begin this psalm; and here we come to the beautiful and blessed fruit of this awful history. Ah, what a lesson for us, each one! David comes to God not on the ground of repentance, nor of his own prayers, nor of his own tears. You may repent, and it is a blessed thing if you do. You may pray, and surely it is blessed to pray. You may weep, ay, weep bitter, bitter tears, and this is well. But none of these is the ground on which forgiveness is known; none of these is the true ground of approach to God. Forgiveness does not come from Him on the ground of what we are, but on the ground of what He is. Thus David comes to God. And listen to his words: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." I begin now indeed to learn who and what the man is that has to do with God—the man who knows God. You may say he knows his own transgressions and his own wickedness. That is true; but he also knows the only ground on which it is possible for God to have to say to him, to do with him about them, otherwise than in judgment. Further, it is the only way in which there is, or can be, uprightness with God—being before Him, and having to do with Him on the ground of what He is in Himself. "Thy tender mercies;" "Thy lovingkindness." Thus he can say, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."

Let me ask, Have you ever come to God in that way? Is that the ground upon which you stand before Him? "Thy lovingkindness," "the multitude of Thy tender mercies." Are you a child of God? Have you done wrong? You cannot say you never do wrong. But if you do wrong, what is the ground on which you come to Him? Do you come to Him as to a Father? If so, do you come saying, "I have judged the thing, repented of it, and that is how I now come?" That ground is good in its place; but it is not the ground on which you can rest in full confidence—unfailing confidence towards Him. No; the only sure, unfailing, unchanging ground is what He is in Himself—"Thy lovingkindness," "Thy tender mercies." There is nothing in the universe like "Thy tender mercies," "the multitude of Thy lovingkindnesses." There is nothing equal to them, and on that ground I seek forgiveness. He does not present a false ground to God, but the simple and plain ground on which he knows God can act towards him—"Thou art *the* man." Ah! it is in mercy and in lovingkindness He has followed me. He has called me out from this place where I had hidden myself. He is real with me, let me be real with Him.

In 1 John i. we have the difference between confession and forgiveness. Coming to God merely to seek forgiveness may or may not be accompanied with full confession. In making confession to Him, forgiveness is not the first thought of the one who thus draws near to Him. If it is merely forgiveness that is sought, circumstances and feebleness will be pleaded as excuses, in order that a ground for forgiving may be presented other than what there is in Himself. But in true con-

fession there is no question of the force of circumstances, nor of one's own feebleness. And with the Christian this goes still further; for there is consciousness that grace has been left on one side, and that there has been lack of dependence upon it, and that self-will and pride have led away from Him and His grace into the commission of that which is being confessed. There is thus no question of circumstances, nor of one's own weakness; no question of the temptations or trials surrounding one. It is a question solely of "Thy grace" and my self-will. His grace would have kept me; I refused it, thought nothing of it, and did not count upon it as needful for me. His power would have kept me, but I looked to another power, and left the place of dependence. Thus I placed myself in the temptation, and fell. I allowed it, and why? If I look upon the circumstances, and shelter myself behind them, I am taking refuge behind lies; and the one that has to do with God says ever, "Away with all refuge of lies; let me be real with God; it is with Himself alone I have to do."

We now come to a verse that is a difficulty to some: "Against Thee . . . have I sinned." There is no difficulty about that. But he says, "Against Thee only." Had he not sinned against the woman? Had he not murdered the *very* man he had sinned against? How, then, could he say, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned"? We need not go very far to find the reason. He is occupied with God, and with God only. The thought of his fellow-man would pass through his mind—"My fellow-man! Ah, yes! I have indeed sinned against him. But what is that compared to my sin against Thee?" It is sin before God, in the

sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity. The man, the woman, I have sinned against, the evil I have done my fellow-man, I would not ignore nor cover up for a moment; but it is before Thee, Thou God of glory, before Thee, Thou God of all grace, whose tender mercies, whose loving-kindness, I know. Let there be no excuses, no second causes, no refuge of lies, between me and Thee. I am before Thee alone, and on Thee alone can I count.

“That Thou mightest be justified.” I do not palliate the sin by speaking of the poor creature with whom I committed it, of my reputation before men that weighed so much with me, nor even of the man I destroyed in order to conceal my sin. I stand before Thee—bare and naked as the day I was born—in Thy sight, and now there is nought, no hope, no rest, no ground of confidence but in Thee, Thy tender mercies, Thy loving-kindnesses. Now, let me ask, is that the way you come to God? Is that the way you know Him? If so, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done This evil in Thy sight,” will be no difficulty, but a divine, a blessed reality to your soul. I may fail to make you understand it, but I am sure of this, until you do understand it experimentally in your own soul, you do not know what uprightness of heart before God is. Until you know the practical meaning of this, you have some reserve there, something you are not prepared to have searched out, something you are seeking to hold back in your heart. In short, you are not fully free with God.

(To be completed in the next number, D. V.).

EXPOSITORY.

2 TIM. iv. 9-22.

IN this closing section of the epistle there are several interesting personal references, besides an allusion to the apostle's appearance before the authorities, not elsewhere recorded. First, however, Paul desires to have Timothy with him: "*Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.*" (v. 9.) He longed for the presence of his child in the faith, one to whom he could freely unbosom his mind and thoughts, now that there were but few to attach themselves to the Lord's prisoner. Indeed, he would seem to have been alone, with the exception of Luke. (v. 11.) Timothy was thus not to delay, but to come before the storms of winter made travelling difficult, if not impossible. Besides, the apostle had just been passing through trial; "*for,*" he adds, "*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world [age], and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*" (v. 10.) The two latter, Crescens and Titus, had gone; but they had not, like Demas, forsaken Paul. They had undoubtedly gone on the Lord's service; but Demas had become cold, yielding to the influences of the age; and, caring no longer to be a "partaker of the afflictions of the gospel," or to be identified with God's vessel of testimony, now a poor despised prisoner, he had, under some pretext or other, abandoned the apostle and departed to Thessalonica. He loved this present age. What an epitaph! For he now passes out of Scripture

history, and is no more seen. Once Paul had mentioned him, conjointly with others, as a fellow-labourer; again, he sends a salutation in his name, in conjunction with "Luke, the beloved physician" (Col. iv. 14); and now he has abandoned the testimony. This is not to say that he was not a Christian; but he was one who, not only could not endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, but one also whose heart had been decoyed by the world. Alas! how many Demases the Church has seen since that day!

Then, after stating that Luke only remained with him, Paul gives a direction, which contains in it a very precious instance of restoring grace: "*Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*" (v. 11.) It will be remembered that Mark had once departed from Paul and Barnabas, from Pamphylia, "and went not with them to the work," on which account Paul did not think it good to take him with them on a subsequent journey. (Acts xv. 37, 38.) After an interval the apostle wrote: "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him)" (Col. iv. 10); and now he says, "He is 'serviceable' to me for ministry" (not "the" ministry, but ministry; that is, to Paul, as we apprehend). Mark, once unfaithful, was thus restored. Grace wrought, and it is interesting to trace the stages of his restoration. Like Demas, he is mentioned three times; but what a difference! Mark is recovered, and the Spirit of God records it; Demas becomes a backslider, unfaithful to the testimony, and disappears as such from our view.

The next notice relates to a "labourer," in whom Paul had nothing but cause for gratitude: "*And Tychicus*

have I sent to Ephesus." (v. 12.) Writing to the saints at Ephesus, he describes Tychicus as "a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord" (see also Col. iv. 7*); no mean verdict, especially when we remember that it is one inspired by the Holy Ghost. And it was a singular mercy to the aged apostle to have, at this moment, such a servant to send on his behalf to Ephesus.

The following verse contains a commission for Timothy, concerning a cloke that the apostle had left at Troas, and books and parchments. (v. 13.) In captivity these might be useful, and Timothy was to bring them with him. The apostle then refers to "Alexander the coppersmith" (v. 14); whether the same mentioned in Acts xix. 33 cannot now be ascertained. He is here stamped with the unenviable notoriety of having been an uncompromising opponent of the truth, and in particular of the apostle. "*He did me much evil,*" Paul writes; and he adds, "*The Lord reward* ["will reward" is the more accurate reading] *him according to his works.*" (v. 14.) He thus left him in the hands of his Lord, who one day will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, when every one will receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Cor. v. 10.) But he takes the occasion also to warn Timothy of the true character of this adversary; "*for,*" he says, "*he hath greatly withstood our words.*" (v. 15.) A successful disputant he may have been, and thereby he might have secured the applause of his hearers; but he was a tool of Satan to his own destruction, unless indeed he afterwards repented.

* Tychicus is also mentioned in Acts xx. 4, Titus iii. 12.

We come now to the account of the apostle's appearance before his earthly judge or judges. "*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: [I pray God] that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*" (vv. 16-18.) The reference is undoubtedly to the trial of Paul, and, as we should say, to his first hearing (for it is more accurately rendered, "my first defence"); and we learn that not one was found to accompany him to the court. All men "forsook" him, and the word "forsook" is the same as is used of Demas, showing that these, as well as he, had yielded to the power of the enemy. But if they were wrought upon by their fears, grace was still operative in the heart of Paul, and, raising him above the sense of their unfaithfulness and his own desertion, enabled him to pray that the sin might not be laid to their charge. How closely had Paul to follow in the steps of his Master! And how manifestly was he led by the same Spirit, whatever the difference in the degree of power! We thus read that, when the Lord suffered Himself to be apprehended, "all the disciples forsook Him, and fled" (Matt. xxvi. 56); and that, before His death, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) Blessed correspondence! But how few are prepared for the sufferings of such a privilege!

If, however, he was forsaken of man, yet not of the

Lord. And may we not say that it is precisely when any in the Lord's service, and for His name, have to experience the solitariness of the path of a faithful witness that the Lord comes and manifests Himself in a special way? And thus, at this moment of trial, the Lord stood by Paul and strengthened him—strengthened him inwardly (compare Phil. iv. 13)—so that the effort of the enemy might be turned into an occasion for the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles that filled the court of trial. The enemy had sought to silence this devoted witness by stirring up the public authorities against him to secure his condemnation; but the Lord came in, and used the opportunity for a testimony through Paul to Satan's instruments and slaves. In this way the machinations of the foe were exposed and defeated. The apostle tells us, moreover, that he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. Satan, indeed, had now opened his mouth, as a roaring lion, against Paul; and if Paul had been unfaithful Satan would have gained a victory. But the Lord preserved His servant, and he was delivered.*

This deliverance vouchsafed to the apostle becomes the pledge to him of continual deliverance from every evil work (compare 2 Cor. i. 9, 10), as well as the guarantee that the Lord would preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom; that is, until he departed to be with Christ (for the time of his departure was at

* It has been much discussed whether the emperor Nero may not be meant by the lion. It seems established that Nero was the emperor at this time; but if so, and if he were the moving cause of Paul's persecution, he was but the instrument of Satan, and Paul would not speak of second causes. We hold, therefore, that Satan is the lion.

hand) in heaven, ere the Lord should return for His saints, and before therefore He should appear with His saints to establish His kingdom on the earth. This will explain the term "heavenly kingdom." The thought of all the blessedness thus in prospect fills the heart of the apostle with praise; and he breaks forth with the ascription, "*To whom be glory for ever and ever*" (unto the ages of the ages). "*Amen.*" (v. 18.)

Having told of his deliverance to the Lord's praise, he concludes the epistle with a few more personal references—"Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus." (v. 19.) It will be remembered that the apostle had "abode with Prisca and Aquila, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers." (Acts xviii. 2, 3.) And he terms them elsewhere "my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down" (or hazarded) "their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." (Romans xvi. 3, 4.) Onesiphorus has already been mentioned in this epistle. (Chap. i. 16-18.) After introducing the name of Erastus (see Acts xix. 22; Romans xvi. 23, but whether the same person is not known), he says, "*Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.*" (v. 20.) "We learn here," says another, "that the miraculous power granted to the apostles was exercised in the Lord's service, and not for their private interests, nor as their personal affection might suggest." This should be borne in mind in a day when "faith-healing" is being so urgently pressed in ignorance of dispensational truth, as well as of the teaching of the scripture concerning the object of miraculous gifts.

Timothy is again exhorted to come, and to use diligence to come, to the apostle before winter. The

salutations of the other saints—Eubulus, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren—are added.*

The epistle then concludes with the beautiful benediction, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you."† What higher blessing could the apostle desire for his beloved Timothy? The presence of Him who is the Lord Jesus Christ, all that He is as expressed in these names, to be with Timothy's spirit, and also grace. May this same blessing be the portion of the beloved reader!

E. D.

SOLOMON'S SONG.

THE soul is led, I believe, in Solomon's Song, into three principal states of experience; first, the possession of blessing; then, the response of love; and lastly, association as to place. The first few verses state these subjects distinctly, and the remainder of the book develops them at length. Verse 2 presents Himself and His love—that love which is better than wine, inasmuch as the Giver is better than the choicest of His gifts. Verse 3 is the response to the revelation of that which is in Himself, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee. Draw me, we will run after Thee;" verse 4, association with the King in His chambers. The first part closes with the second

* It has been thought from references in a heathen poet, as well as from a Roman inscription discovered in England, that Pudens and Claudia can be identified. This cannot be discussed here. Still the question may be put, What would be the advantage of their identification?

† The "Amen" has been inserted without sufficient authority.

chapter. The Bride rests satisfied (ii. 6) with His shadow, His fruit, and His love. (vv. 3, 4.) This, however, does not satisfy the Bridegroom; but He allows her to rest, knowing that the time will come for re-awakening the energies of the soul. Observe here that verse 7 should read, "till *she* please,"* instead of "till he please." It is not the Bridegroom that sleeps, but the Bride.

His mind is set upon winning her out of her place into His. He therefore arouses her with the repeated call, "Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." (vv. 10, 13.) For this, however, she is not prepared; her heart is more occupied with the blessings than the Blessor, though the blessing be Himself. Her gain is in view, "My Beloved is mine," &c. Conscience tells her that something hinders the power and fruitfulness of her soul. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines" (v. 15); but she cannot persuade herself to follow Him. It is one thing to have the Saviour, and quite another to follow Him. "Not yet," as it were, she says. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains" (v. 17), but I cannot yet go with Thee.

But the Beloved is not deceived. The time of her awaking comes. She finds if love is sweet to the taste, it is imperative in its claims. She seeks "Him whom her soul loveth." First, at her ease, in an indifferent and drowsy way (iii. 1), but found Him not. Then in the energy of her own strength she rises and goes about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways.

* This rendering is doubtful. See note on chap. ii. 7 and iii. 5 in J. N. D.'s *French Translation*, also the *Revised Version*.—Ed.

She sought, but found Him not. (*v.* 2.) At length, in the power of testimony—the watchmen's testimony—she finds Him. True affection, doubtless; but how feeble the sense of the dignity and glory of His person, and what is due to Him! She brings Him into her mother's house, the place of mere nature, and rests satisfied with that. (*iii.* 4, 5.) This second part of the subject, viz., the response of love, is presented to us from chapter *iii.* to chapter *vii.* 9. It is no longer, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," but, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." (*vi.* 3.)

There is a real response in chapter *iii.*, as we have said, but no appreciation of His dignity, for she brings Him into her mother's chamber. She is satisfied with that, and He lets her rest, for He knows the time must come for her to arouse even from this. He says, "Stir not up, nor awake my love, till she please." (*iii.* 5.) It must come, though long and painful be the process of awaking; for to be satisfied with one's response, surely induces a more lethargic state than to rest in one's blessing. The mother's house, the place of nature, is not suited to Solomon in the day of his espousals. (*iii.* 6–11.) Again, therefore, in the energetic accents of affection, He addresses the bride. Repeating her words, He says, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get Me to the mountain;" but not alone. "Come with Me, from Lebanon, My spouse, with Me from Lebanon." (*iv.* 1–8.) Surely it is a difficult and dangerous path—of lions' dens, and mountains of the leopards—but it is "with Me."

How difficult to arouse the soul when content with the place of nature, wishing to have the Beloved on our own terms—as it suits us, and not as it befits Him.

Not willing to go out to Him in the wilderness, she says, "Let my Beloved come into His garden" (iv. 16), and is moreover ready to endure any rude blasts of trial in order that there may be something for Him *there*. It cannot be. Again He appeals, the demands of love are peremptory. He waits without, and has waited, through the long dark night, while slumber drew its pall around her—a living death. Deep in the heart the affections live, and recognize the traces of that hidden excellency proper to Himself. (v. 2-5.) Often we call upon the winds to blow, that there may be an answer to His grace; but what is it pleases Him? "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me;" "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." It is to follow Him, attracted by the moral glory of His person. The "myrrh," which told of His presence, was the "myrrh," sweetly-smelling, which dropped from His lips. (See *vv.* 5-13.) Through deepest exercise of heart and consciencè, and often severe discipline (*v.* 7), we learn to turn away even from those affections which the Spirit works in us, in order to be occupied solely with the excellency that is in Christ.

Once outside the house, she is able to describe Him as well known to her heart, from the highest point of glory first—"His head of the most fine gold." (*vv.* 10-16.) What more is needed then to win her for whole-hearted separation to Himself, and association with Himself in rejection and in glory? Only to hear Him tell her perfect suitability to Him, measured by the glory revealed to her—a glory which is in and of Himself. This He does; and if her heart recognized Him according to the glory of the head, He begins with her at the lowest point first: "How beautiful

are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!" This is grace—grace which makes its first care that where-with we come in contact with a defiling world. Service is sweet to love; and if He thinks first of our feet, His regard rests at last upon our lips. For whom now is our mouth to be? The Bride answers, "For my Beloved." (vii. 9.)

The work is done; she understands and accepts association now. "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." (vii. 10.) No longer "He is mine." All is on His side, and self is forgotten. No longer has He to say, "Rise up, My fair one, come away;" she invites Him. "Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field." True interchange of affection and communion are known only in the wilderness; there she rests in company with her Beloved, and from thence comes up leaning upon His arm. (vii. 11-13; viii. 1-5.)

Well may we echo the wish that concludes the book; not, as before (ii. 17), "Until the day break . . . turn, my Beloved, and be Thou . . . upon the mountains;" but, "Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou . . . upon the mountains of spices."

Applying, as it does, to Jerusalem's restoration in the coming day, through repentance and exercise of heart, the book has a very powerful and practical application to present individual exercise of soul. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." W. T. W.

As Christ is always at the right hand of God, so we are uninterruptedly before God. There is never a moment that the believer is not the righteousness of God standing in Christ.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

1 COR. x. 16.

read

THERE are two things to be clearly understood in this scripture: the meaning of the word communion, and the significance of the act of eating and drinking. As to the first, it may be pointed out that the word translated "partakers" in verse 18, and that rendered "fellowship" in verse 20, are the same as "communion" in verse 16; and herein we may discover the key for its interpretation. The word communion, then, signifies, in its simplest elements, a common participation—and, in this place, the common participation by the saints, as members of the one body, at the Lord's Table, in what is set forth by the blood, and by the body of Christ. Eating, or drinking, implies identification with the thing eaten or drunk, and thus the apostle says, "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (v. 18.) That is, by eating what was placed in sacrifice on the altar, they became identified with the sacrifices, and were thus brought in a way into fellowship with the altar. Their eating the sacrifices identified them, in a word, with both the sacrifices and the altar; just as the apostle teaches, our drinking the cup (though he only alludes to eating the loaf), and partaking of the one loaf, identify us with what these things signify, and with the Lord's Table. Applying this to the Lord's Table in the order found in this passage, we learn, first, that by our taking "the cup of blessing" we express our com-

munion one with another in the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and at the same time avow our identification with all the value of that blood before God. Secondly, when we partake of the one loaf, we express our communion one with another, as members of the one body, in the sacrifice of the body of Christ (for it is the actual body of Christ, offered through the Eternal Spirit without spot to God, to which reference is here made); and we also avow our identification, as known by faith, with all the sweet savour of that sacrifice before God. How blessed the privilege then to be gathered around, and to be identified with, the Lord's Table. And how solemn the act of partaking, both of the cup and of the loaf, proclaiming, as we are thus permitted to do, that we are before God in all the value which He attaches to the blood, and to the sacrifice as the burnt-offering of Christ. The cup, it may be added, comes here first, because the truth of the one body is involved in the one loaf; and thus to show the impossibility of any, whatever their pretensions, being members of the one body, unless they are under the value of the precious blood of Christ. For knowing the efficacy of the work of Christ, the cleansing power of His blood, is the divine condition for the reception of the indwelling Spirit, whereby we are united to Christ.

II.

PSALM cxliii. 1 ; 1 JOHN i. 9.

THE correspondence, in one aspect, between these scriptures is extremely interesting. The dispensations are entirely different, but there are divine truths which underlie both, and which indeed are eternal. In the psalm, David cries, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear

to my supplications: in Thy faithfulness answer me, and in Thy righteousness." The ground of his appeal, and rightly so in his case as it was a question of God's government on the earth, God's righteous government, is the faithfulness and righteousness of God. No Christian in similar circumstances could be led of the Spirit to take this ground in his supplications. We come boldly to the throne of grace to receive mercy, and to find grace for seasonable succour. When, however, we come to the epistle of John, we find the very words here used by the Psalmist: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just [or, righteous] to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But while this is so, we know that we could not appeal for forgiveness on the ground of God's faithfulness and righteousness, inasmuch as the forgiveness is the expression of nothing but grace. On the other hand, when we read in the next chapter, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins," etc., then we understand that God, in view of what Christ is in His presence, in virtue of His work, is faithful and righteous in forgiving the sins of His people on confession. Thus the faithfulness and righteousness of God are equally displayed in the case of the Psalmist, and of believers confessing their sins, though it would not be according to the truth, as it was for David in his day, for Christians to take that ground in their prayers and supplications.

E. D.

III.

I JOHN i. 9.

It has been a question whether the apostle speaks of first coming to the Lord, or subsequent failures. I

answer, he speaks in an abstract and absolute way. Confession brings through grace forgiveness. If it is our first coming to God, it is forgiveness; it is the full and absolute sense. I am forgiven with God; He remembers my sin no more. If it is subsequent failure, honesty of heart always confesses. Then it is forgiveness as regards the government of God, and the present condition and relationship of my soul with Him. But the apostle, as everywhere, speaks absolutely and of the principle.

J. N. D.

IV.

JAMES i. 25.

JAMES connects faith with "the law of liberty;" that is, when the nature, the new man, and the prescribed will, go together. If I command my child to go where he longs to go, and tell him the way, it is obedience; but it is the law of liberty, for he delights to tread the prescribed path. James speaks of three laws, or law in three ways. First, the law as such (chap. ii. 10), concerning which if a man offend in one point he is guilty of all. The authority of the law given has been despised in the point in which lust was active. We are, in that case, wholly guilty. Secondly, the "royal law" (chap. ii. 8) of subjective perfection: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—this is to "do well." Thirdly, "the perfect law of liberty" into which we "look;" that is, the revelation of the path of the divine nature, of which I am made partaker. Revelation shows me the perfection of it, the divine nature gives me delight in it. I am as a present thing "blessed" in it ("in his deed," that is, "being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work").

J. N. D.

PROPITIATION: WHAT IS IT, AND WHERE MADE?

THE truth of propitiation lies at the very foundation of our faith, and on this very account it is of the first importance that the teaching of the scripture respecting it should be correctly apprehended. The word is not used in the Old Testament, though the thing itself, as we shall hope to see, is clearly distinguished in the rites of the great day of atonement. It is only found some four times in the New Testament—it is twice employed by the apostle John (1 John ii. 2; iv. 10); it is once used in its verbal form in the gospel of Luke, where it is translated, “God, *be merciful* to me a sinner” (chapter xviii. 13); and lastly, it occurs in Hebrews (chapter ii. 17), where it is rendered “to make reconciliation,” instead of, as it should be, “to make propitiation.” That there might be no doubt as to the significance of the word, two other forms of it are also found—one in Romans iii. 25, the other in Hebrews ix. 5. In these cases it is *ἱλαστήριον* and not *ἱλασμός*, and is given in Romans as “propitiation,” and in Hebrews as “mercy-seat.” The latter rendering is correct; and it is important to maintain it, because the Spirit of God thereby reveals to us the connection between the mercy-seat and the propitiation, and in this way affords us the key to its proper meaning.

It is to be gathered therefore that in the Old Testament propitiation was made on the mercy-seat in the

holy of holies, and thus if we turn to the details of what took place on the great day of atonement, as described in Leviticus xvi., we shall be able to understand its import. In the rites of that solemn day we find then the manner of Aaron's entrance into the sanctuary prescribed; but we need only concern ourselves for the present purpose with the mode of his dealing with the blood of the sin-offering, whether that of the bullock, which was for himself and his house, or that of the goat, which was the sin-offering for the people. It should be noted, however, that before the blood of these offerings was dealt with Aaron was directed to "take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." (*vv.* 12, 13.) This burning incense, with the sweet and acceptable odours which it emitted when brought into contact with the holy fire, is a figure of the fragrant perfections and graces of Christ Himself to God, and is therefore a precious reminder that the person and the work of Christ can never be separated, and that indeed His perfect and finished work derives all its efficacy from what He was in Himself, that all the value and preciousness of His person to God enter into His work.

This being done, the directions concerning the blood follow—"And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times."

So also with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering. It was to be brought within the vail, and Aaron was to do with this "as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat." (*vv.* 14, 15.) Into the details of the sin-offering we need not here enter further than to remind the reader that the bodies of the animals so offered were consumed with fire without the camp—the fat having been burnt on the altar (*vv.* 25–27; compare Hebrews xiii. 11–13), as our concern is especially with the blood. This was sprinkled then upon—once upon and seven times before—the mercy-seat. A few words on each of these actions will explain the subject.

In the first place the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and it was this sprinkling that constituted propitiation; for the mercy-seat was God's throne in the midst of Israel. He dwelt between the cherubim (1 Samuel iv. 4; Psalm lxxx. 1, etc.), which represented the attributes of His government, being thus the upholders of His throne, and which consequently possessed a judicial character towards Israel, inasmuch as they were sinners. Jehovah was holy, and as such claimed holiness from His people; and He maintained His government in their midst according to what He was as thus revealed, and the law was given as the standard of His requirements. But no sooner was the law given than it was transgressed, whereby its righteous penalty of death was incurred; and this penalty must have been exacted had no way been found to satisfy the claims of a holy God upon a nation of sinners. God Himself promulgated the righteous foundation on which atonement could be made for their sins, and on which He could still dwell

in their midst and maintain towards them relationships of grace ; and this foundation was found in the blood of the sin-offering which was annually sprinkled on the great day of atonement upon the mercy-seat. The fire which consumed the body of the sin-offering without the camp told of holy judgment against sin, the fat burnt upon the altar spoke of the inward perfection and acceptability of the victim, that is, of Christ as typified by it, while the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat, representing as it did the life of the victim which had been laid down under judgment, met on behalf of the people all the holy claims of Jehovah which He had against them because of their sins. (See Lev. xvii. 11.) When therefore the eye of God rested on the sprinkled blood He was satisfied, and He could righteously pass over the sins of His people from year to year, and still dwell in their midst, and maintain the relationships which He had established.

But this early ceremony was typical, foreshadowing as it did the one perfect sacrifice of Christ. (See Heb. ix. x. ; also chap. xiii. 11-13.) The apostle John therefore tells us that Jesus Christ, the righteous, is the propitiation for our sins and also for the whole world. (1 John ii. 2 ; also chap. iv. 10.) And from this we learn that the blood of Christ has done once and for all what the blood of the sin-offering accomplished in type for the year on the day of atonement ; that is, it has made propitiation. It is true that John says that Christ Himself is the propitiation ; but we also read that God has set Him forth a propitiatory (or mercy-seat) *through faith in His blood* (Rom. iii. 25), whence we understand that the blood of Christ, deriving, as

we have before seen, all its ineffable value from what He was in Himself, has answered all the claims of God on sinful men, has glorified Him in all that He is concerning the question of sin and sins. Hence it is that God can now righteously justify everyone who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26), and that He can send forth the gospel of His grace to the whole world.

Secondly, the blood was sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat. This was the place of the high priest's approach, and which in this way represented his standing before God. The blood was sprinkled there in testimony that propitiation had been made, and seven times that it might be a perfect testimony. Once was enough for the eye of God, in token that the sacrifice had been offered, and all His claims met; but man needed, or, to speak more exactly, God vouchsafed to man, a perfect assurance that propitiation had been accomplished, and accordingly it was sprinkled before the mercy-seat seven times. Whoever, therefore, receives the testimony of God in the gospel, and thus approaches the mercy-seat (Christ), "through faith in His blood," finds in the very presence of God the perfect witness that propitiation has been made for his sins, as well as that they have been borne by another, and borne away for ever. (See Lev. xvi. 21, 22.)

Such, then, is propitiation, and we now proceed with the second branch of our enquiry, viz., *Where was it made?* In the olden economy it was clearly made in the holiest, and it has been contended that the propitiation therefore which Christ made was in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary, or otherwise the thing typified would not correspond with the type. Furthermore, it

is urged that Christ entered heaven for its accomplishment after death and before His resurrection, and the epistle to the Hebrews is appealed to in support of these contentions. Let us then examine a scripture or two from the epistle to the Hebrews on the subject.

First, let us turn to chap. ix. 24-28. We cite the whole passage, italicizing the words to which we call attention: "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: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: *but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: *so Christ was once offered* to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The allusion in all this scripture is to the rites of the great day of atonement, and it is on this very account that this scripture speaks with authority upon the points raised; and the reader will scarcely fail to note that it is a contrast, rather than a comparison, drawn between Christ and the Jewish high priest. Thus, in the first place, Christ has entered into heaven itself, and not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures (antitypes) of the true; secondly, His one sacrifice is contrasted with the annual sacrifices of the Jews; thirdly, He was once offered to bear the sins of many—an allusion to the scapegoat bearing every year the sins of Israel con-

fessed over it by the high priest; and, lastly (and this point is comparison), just as the Jewish people waited for the coming of the high priest out of the tabernacle in proof of the accomplishment of the work of atonement, so now God's people look for the appearance of Christ a second time without sin unto salvation.

We have indicated these several points to show beyond all doubt that the reference is to the day of atonement, so that we may be the better able to judge if Christ entered heaven, as the high priest did into the holiest, to make propitiation. Let us then observe the actual language employed. We are distinctly told that the high priest of old (and we know the fact also from the Old Testament scriptures) entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others; but when giving that which corresponds to this in the work of our Lord—that is, the propitiatory part of His work—the Holy Spirit says, “Once in the end of the world [consummation of the ages] hath He APPEARED [has been manifested] to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” That this is propitiation all are agreed, because it is the ground on which sin will be ultimately entirely put away (compare John i. 29); and hence, if the contention is correct, that Christ made propitiation in heaven because the high priest did in the holiest, the word “entered” would certainly have been chosen rather than “appeared.” Instead of that, the Holy Ghost turns aside to mark the contrast, and causes the word “appeared” (or “hath been manifested”) to be written, and thereby connects the work of propitiation with the presence of Christ in the world. Observe, moreover, that it says, that He “appeared to put away sin *by the sacrifice of Himself* ;” and this emphatically

links propitiation with the finished work, with the sacrifice, of Christ on the cross. The conclusion therefore is evident, from the very terms of this scripture, that while the high priest of Israel made propitiation in the earthly sanctuary, it was on the cross that Christ made propitiation. And it is not without significance that the very apostle who speaks twice of Christ as the propitiation should be one chosen to bear record that, when the soldier with a spear pierced the side of a dead Christ, there forthwith came out BLOOD and water—the blood of expiation and the water of purification ; another proof that propitiation was completed on the cross. Again, when speaking of the substitutionary part of our Lord's work, the Spirit of God says, "Once offered to bear the sins of many," thereby identifying this part of His work also with the sacrifice of Himself.*

There is yet another scripture in this same chapter of Hebrews on which the contention referred to is directly based. This must, therefore, be also passed under review. It is as follows: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (*vv.* 11–12.) According to the punctuation of this passage in the Authorized Version of the Scriptures Christ is made to enter the holy place "by His own blood," and this having been

* In support of the above statements the reader may also be referred to the fact that the veil was rent immediately upon the death of our Lord (*Matt.* xxvii. 50, 51)—another proof that propitiation was made on the Cross.

commonly accepted, many different interpretations of these words have been offered. But a closer inspection of this scripture shows that this punctuation is based upon a misconception; viz., upon a supposed correspondence between the entrance of the high priest of old into the holiest with the blood of the sin-offering, and the entrance of Christ with His own blood into heaven. And yet the very words employed might have indicated the mistake; for the phrase *διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος* (by His own blood) is peculiar, and could not be translated by either "with" or "in virtue of His own blood." The question then is whether the words "by His own blood" are necessarily connected at all with the word "entered." We unhesitatingly answer in the negative; and as confidently affirm that they are connected with the commencement of verse 11. To show this we leave out, for the moment, the intervening words, and it will then read thus: "But Christ being come . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption."* Before we point out the force of the passage, as so explained, we may cite 1 John v. 6 in confirmation. We read there, "This is He that came by water and

* It has been stated that the late J. N. D. was opposed to this rendering. It is quite true that, when touching upon the great day of atonement, or the priesthood of Christ, he often spoke in a general way of Christ entering into the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood; but the following note from the New Translation will show what his exact thought was. He says, "*δια* here is, I doubt not at all, characteristic of His coming. He came in that way, His coming being in the power of, and characterized by, these things; not the place through, nor the means by which" (*i.e.*, we may explain, not the perfect tabernacle through which as a place, nor the blood as the means by which). "See this use of *δια* with the genitive in Rom. ii. 27. In Rom. iv. 13 we see the transition to this use of it."

blood" (*δι' ὕδατος και αἵματος*), where the preposition and the case governed by it are the same; and this entirely supports the view given in the note from the New Translation, that the preposition *δια* in Heb. ix. 11, 12 is characteristic of Christ's coming, and not of His entering into heaven.

There are then three distinct points to be noted in our scripture. First, "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come;" secondly, His coming being in the power of and characterized by the "greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building," and "by His own blood" (in contrast with the earthly sanctuary, and with the blood of goats and calves); and thirdly, that Christ entered in once into the holy place, on the ground of having obtained eternal redemption.*

We find then that this scripture is in entire harmony (as of necessity it must be) with that already considered; that both alike teach, plainly and indubitably, that THE WORK OF PROPITIATION WAS MADE, COMPLETED, ON THE CROSS, and that the entrance of Christ once into the holy place was on the ground of having found an eternal redemption. There on Calvary His work of expiation was finished—finished by the sacrifice of Himself, when He, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself there without spot to God. The contention therefore that His entrance into heaven in this epistle took place after His death and before His resurrection, in order to make propitiation, is nothing but a fiction of the imagination, even as also we believe it to be, however unintentionally, a depreciation of that one perfect

* The reader will therefore perceive that the attempt to render the word *εὑράμενος* in any other way than "having found," is to contradict the plain teaching of this scripture.

and completed work wrought out on the cross, if not derogatory to the Person of Him who glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which was given Him to do. The Lord give us, in view of the serious issues involved, to contend all the more earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

For the instruction and edification of the reader a few words may be added to collect and present the effects of propitiation. In the first place, as already pointed out, God has been glorified by it, according to all that He is as now fully revealed in and through the person and cross of Christ. "The blood was presented to God, whose holy presence had been dishonoured and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His perfect obedience and love to His Father, in His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty, righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself;" *i.e.*, on the great day of atonement. Secondly, Christ was the propitiation for the sins of His people. (1 John ii. 2.) The two goats of Leviticus xvi. do but present different aspects of the one work of Christ; for the One who made propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. ii. 17) was also their substitute; and as such He was wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities, was once offered to bear the sins of many. (Isa. liii. 5; Heb. ix. 28.) Whoever, therefore, receives God's testimony concerning the death of Christ as having made propitiation, finds, when he comes into the presence of God, that Christ also, His own self, bare his sins in His own body on the tree. (1 Peter ii. 24.) Moreover, the propitiation is the ground on

which God sends out the entreating message of the gospel to the whole world. Having been fully glorified concerning sin and sins, He can satisfy His own heart by causing the mighty streams of His grace to flow out to every creature under heaven, and by issuing the proclamation, "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) He can thus be just, and the justifier of everyone who believes in Jesus. Lastly, on this same ground, the sin of the world (not the sins, but the *sin* of the world) will be entirely taken away (John i. 29; Heb. ix. 26); and God has been pleased to disclose to us the scene in which this has been accomplished—in the new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Hence it is that then "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 4.)

From this outline of the effects of propitiation the reader will perceive that it is the all-efficacious ground on which God will accomplish the whole of His counsels of grace; for thereby He Himself has been infinitely glorified, and He in response to that wondrous and perfect work has glorified His beloved Son at His own right hand, and thereby He has given the pledge that all who are His shall be glorified together with Him, that Israel now scattered shall be gathered in perfect blessing under the sway of their glorious Messiah, that all nations shall share in the blessings of that millennial reign, that creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, and that finally, as we have seen, these heavens and this earth will be displaced by a scene wherein God will be all in all. E. D.

THE PRESENT EFFECT OF WAITING FOR CHRIST.

THERE are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian, which are his strength on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. First, present communion and fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Secondly, the hope of the coming of the Lord. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them.

If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing that can separate us in the same way, from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul, nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world, if there be not this waiting for His Son from heaven.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled by the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. For we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven, without at the same time seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, seeing that the world itself is going wrong, its wise men having no wisdom—all is going on to judgment, the principles of evil are loosening all bands. The soul thus becomes oppressed, and the heart sad; but if, through grace, the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God,

because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but the Christian's heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, and this carries him far above every circumstance.

Brethren, we all want this; for to walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope. I do not believe a Christian can have his heart scripturally right, unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven; for there could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen. Moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and for all the Church. It is this which gives its character to the joy of the saint; so Christ Himself says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Where I find my delight, there shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me—for ever with the Lord.

You may think to find good or produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the last Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again there is another thing connected with

my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have not yet got the Person with me I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore, Paul says, in 2 Thess. i., "To you who are troubled, rest with us." I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way; for the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still it is not that we are to be "weary and faint in our minds;" it is not right to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! Rather let me be victorious every day, but still it is not rest to be fighting. However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself. I shall know it all better when I am in the glory, my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but it is the same kind of joy that I have now, as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints, only greater in degree.

And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world; for though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world that need the love which I enjoy and desire that they should possess (it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me on through all the conflict), so that our souls will be exercised in both the fellowship and the hope. Thus if I look for

Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on steadily and properly. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labour of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, although through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the last Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found. In 2 Cor. i. there is present blessing in the midst of trial; but in 2 Thess. i. it is tribulation, and not rest out of it till the Lord come—"That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." In 2 Cor. i. 3, 4 there is present blessing in the midst of the trial—"who comforteth us in all our tribulation"—so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there is, at the same time, the comforting of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mine! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself. I get God communicating Himself to my soul, for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, this very joy of God—God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him.

If, therefore, the expectation of Christ and His constraining love lead us out into service, in the desire

that others may share our blessing, and thereby bring us into trials or persecutions, how rich and sustaining are the consolations ministered to our hearts. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. i. 5.) May the Lord ever fill our souls with the sense of His own presence, and keep our hearts under the present power of waiting for His coming.

J. N. D.

WAITING.

PSALM xl. 1.

IT is Christ's perfect life, and sorrows at the close of it, in which He refers to the faithfulness and goodness of Jehovah, so as to lead His people to confide in it, instructing them in this in which His perfection is shown. "I waited patiently for Jehovah." Patience had its perfect work—an immense lesson for us. Flesh can wait long, but not till the Lord comes in—not in perfect submission; and confiding only in His strength and faithfulness, so as to be perfect in obedience and in the will of God. Saul waited *nearly* seven days; but the confidence of the flesh was melting away—his army. The Philistines, the proud enemies, were there. He did not wait on till the Lord came in with Samuel. Had he obeyed, and felt *he* could do nothing, and had only to obey and wait, he would have said, "I can do nothing, and I ought to do nothing, till the Lord comes by Samuel." Flesh trusted its own wisdom, and looked to its own force, though with pious forms. All was lost. It was flesh which was tried and failed. Christ was tried. He waited patiently *for Jehovah*. He was perfect and complete in all the will of God. And this is our path through grace.

J. N. D.

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

PSALM li.

IN David we have a man without reserve; everything that would come in to hinder is for him but a refuge of lies. And this he refuses, in order that there might be no impediment in God's way, nothing to hinder in His speaking to him, and judging and putting away his sin according to the resources there are in Himself. There were circumstances; but here we get back to the old Adam—"I have an evil nature, passions, lusts, &c., and they were too strong for me. The lusts of that nature ran away with me, and I was captive to sin." Supposing he had pleaded this to God, His reply would have been, "That is all true; but I cannot have mercy on you except on the ground of My loving-kindness. You are like Adam in the garden, saying he was led astray by the very mercies given him." But David stood on other ground, blessed be God. To him it was, "My sin is between Thyself and me. I hide nothing of the wrong I have done others. But it is all before Thee—I, a man of Thy gifts, Thy grace, Thy counsels, Thy love—a man who has had such experience of Thee and Thy ways. Ah, it is Thyself alone I have sinned against! I have sinned against my knowledge of Thee, against the power Thou gavest me; and my desire is, that Thou shouldest be justified in judging it." Here are the characteristics of a man after God's own heart.

You may say, "It is easy to confess thus;" but if you have ever been through it yourself, you will never say

that. If you have ever been in His presence, really before Him, about yourself and your sin, you will know it is heart-breaking, heart-searching work to be before Him on the ground of no excuse whatever. You cannot make me know your experience of it, nor can I make you know mine—being before God without any excuse, and resting solely on what is in Him, His loving-kindness, and the multitude of His tender mercies, is a personal, an individual experience; and knowledge of Himself is incommunicable, unexplainable, but will show itself in the life and ways of the one who knows it.

But he goes on: The root of it all is in myself; "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." With me it was sin from the commencement of my being; sin and iniquity are what characterize me. Loving-kindness and tender mercies are Thine, O my God! But "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts"—truth, not the semblance of it, not the profession of it, but the thing itself, the reality of it. Now if there are any unconverted here this evening, let me tell you, you do not know what that means. You may make a fair outward show perhaps, you may make a profession; but until you have to do directly with God, you do not know what "truth in the inward parts" is. You may have done good actions—what you conceive to be your duty to your neighbour, and what you conceive to be your duty to God; but these must be judged of by God, according to His estimate of them, not according to yours. You may put them all into the balances, and place upon them the very best construction you can; but the balances of the sanctuary are true, and God puts into the other scale "truth in the inward

parts," and then your side is light indeed. This is what you cannot do without, if you are to have to do with Him; what He cannot do without. You cannot be at peace, you cannot be at rest, in the enjoyment of His presence without it. You cannot be "after His own heart" without it; and if you are not that, what are you? It is no use talking about believing this, or that, or the other, if we are not walking in His presence, if we are not happy before Himself, in the conscious enjoyment of His favour. The mark of the enjoyment of His favour is "truth in the inward parts." It is truth coming and searching, truth finding a lodgment; and then, on the ground of His loving-kindness and tender mercies, he can say, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Now he says, "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." As I look upon that sin I am conscious that Thine eye is upon it too, and that is what makes it so terrible to me. Blot it out from Thy sight, according to Thy loving-kindness, and the multitude of Thy tender mercies, and then, and then only, will it be blotted out of mine.

In verse 10 he comes round to the root of the whole matter. It is a great thing for anyone to get really to the root of things. David here touches the very ground the Lord took in speaking to His disciples. It is not the things outside, that entering in, defile a man. It is a very awful truth for us. You may shut your eyes to it, harden your conscience against it, but there the truth stands in all its reality before you, in the very words of Jesus. And this is the truth about you—that, as a child of Adam, there is nothing from without that entering in can make your heart worse

than it is. Yes; thank God, this is the truth, an awful truth, but still *the* truth; and yet how widely denied and practically ignored! Children are taught from earliest infancy a denial of it—"Be a good child, and God will love you!" Let me ask you, Is it true to you? Is the heart so evil that nothing outside it can make it worse? If you say it is not true, not really so bad as that, you are trusting your own heart, and Scripture says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." You are trusting that which God says is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Let me add, as to the child of God, the natural affections of the heart will always be wrong unless regulated by the exercise of conscience. When the two go together the affections will be rightly regulated, otherwise you will make idols of the objects of your affections.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Have you got thus far, in the judgment of yourself, as to say, *That* is where the evil comes from? Do not shelter yourself behind this, "I am on Christian ground, and it would not be an intelligent thing to say." David says, "It comes from my heart; not from the beauty of the woman I gazed upon, not from the effort to sustain the tarnished reputation of the king, but from the king's own heart." It is the heart, the unclean heart, I find; and that is why I cry, "Create in me," not "Change in me," but "Create in me a clean heart." Is this the ground on which you have been in your soul with God?

Let us look for a moment at experience. If you have not had that experience, may God help you to get it! It is the reality of having to do with Him. Here is a man, honest-hearted before God, owning that

the root of iniquity is in himself. Thus he says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God . . . and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." Take not from me that which brings home to heart and conscience the sense of evil before God; the exercises of a troubled soul; the exercise of heart before Him. That is what it is. We could not, it is true, as Christians, say, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me;" for, thank God, the Holy Spirit will remain with us to the end. But there is the sense in David that he has forfeited everything—all right and title and claim—and that God's mercies and loving-kindnesses are the sole ground on which God maintains everything He had given him. Thus he says, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me;" "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;" "Uphold me with Thy free Spirit."

Now he says, "I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." See what a wonderful and blessed place is reached by him; not teaching transgressors his ways—sad and sorrowful they had been—but "Thy ways;" Thy ways of grace, of loving-kindness and tender mercy. He does not say "the righteous," but "sinners." No need to tell the righteous of such ways as these. It is sinners who will appreciate them, and turn to Him; therefore to them will I declare them. Those who are full of pride and satisfaction with themselves will not care to hear, but those who, like myself, know what it is to transgress, will hear, and turn to Thee. Here is a power, greater and more searching than any double-thonged lash, that drives and arouses rebellion. I will tell them of Thy love, Thy resistless love, Thy pity, Thy pardoning love, Thy never-failing grace, Thy tender

mercy, the multitude of Thy compassions. The sun may stand still at noonday, but Thou canst never fail ; and the result shall be that sinners shall be converted to Thee. Thou shalt have the glory. Only let me have the restoring light of Thy presence, the blessed sense of Thy present favour, and I will tell it out to those in their sins. Surely this brings afresh to us the words of our Lord Himself—"Go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Here in David we have the utterance of the same Holy Spirit, through a man after God's own heart—a man who had sinned, and who owned it fully before God. He does not say, "I will teach the law," but "I will teach transgressors Thy ways, because I have learned them for myself, and in them I have learned Thee." Those who know something of the foolishness, the wickedness, of their own hearts are the ones to whom this message is to be carried.

But we must know His ways before we can teach them to others. Do you know these ways—the ways of God with the soul? Have you learned this wonderful lesson, how God can pass His hand over the hearts of men—those hearts so full of sin, self-seeking, and wickedness—and cause heavenly music to come forth from them? For it is heavenly music indeed—praise to Himself for what He is. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." Man is alienated from Him by wicked works. His mind is enmity with God ; but God loves man, and seeks to bring man to Himself. And, as Christians, cannot we add to this tale of God's ways, this recounting of His mercies and loving-kindnesses? He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to die for sinners. Look at the cross, and you will see the greatest,

most glorious display of that loving-kindness and of that mercy that endureth for ever. Alas! alas! for rejecters of that love, that mercy, that gift!

Verse 14 is the great confession of the remnant, as to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But here David himself also speaks, and he says, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness." "Thy righteousness!" How wonderfully that comes in here! Not "Thy grace," but "Thy righteousness." Grace, true grace, reigns through righteousness. Through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God can be, and is, righteous in forgiving, justifying, receiving all who come to Him through that blessed One. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." He loves to restore the soul, but He only restores it on this one ground. He is faithful and just to Jesus, and therefore faithful and just to us. And it is only thus that we can stand before Him and make a clean breast of it.

Now, I would ask you, Can you, dare you, tell Him everything—even what you would hide from your nearest friend, the one you know best, who knows you best, even from your very self? Dare you lay it all bare before God, as David does, and, indeed, in a still deeper way, because you know the love of His heart, who gave the Son to die for you? Be sure of this, that in laying it all bare before Him, you will not, cannot, change His love one hair's breadth. But if all is not thus laid bare before Him, you cannot know and enjoy that love. All the blessed fruit of His loving-kindness and tender mercies. He will have you before Himself, as if He said, "I have uncovered My heart to

you, all My heart, and I have uncovered your heart too; now be real with Me; uncover your own heart; let all come out, and let there be no excuses." Making excuses, and having reserve of heart, is not having to do with the heart of God—that heart manifested in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, that blessed Sacrifice for sins. God says, "Here is the ground of assurance—the love of My heart, proved in the gift of Jesus—now let all come out." The devil says, "Don't be too sure. There must be something of yourself in it. You must at least be upright in heart. There must be uprightness in you." "Ah!" I say, "but where is the uprightness to come from?" The enemy says, "You would not be half a man if you had not some kind of pride of self about you, some kind of self-esteem." It is just this self-esteem that hinders the people of God more than anything. But when you have to do with God, you cannot talk to Him of self-esteem. You cannot speak of your own character, of yourself, when in His presence. When I see a man defending himself, I say, "There is a man who is not in the presence of God." When we know what we are before Him, and what He is for us, we can leave all that to Him. It is His heart, the sense of His love, His loving-kindness and tender mercies that make us upright with Him. That is where uprightness comes from, and nowhere else—let the father of lies and self-sufficient man say what they will.

So he continues: "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt-offering." I would search the world through for sacrifices, but I cannot speak of them to Thee. Thy loving-kindness sweeps them all away. The beasts upon a thousand

hills, He says, they are Mine. What then am I bringing to Him? There is no real honesty, no uprightness here, no really having to do with Him. But now One Sacrifice has been offered and accepted too. The blessed Lord was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Thus God has swept everything away, that we may have to do with Him, directly with Himself, each one, and on this blessed ground—what His Son has done for Him and for His glory, and for us and for our blessing. He gave His Son to die for us, and now He calls us to come and walk with Him on this ground—perfect openness with Him, unclouded openness, ever the unclouded light of His presence, and then you will know what true joy is.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Here it is that we learn the value of the blood as we never learned it before. When you come to the cross as a guilty sinner, you learn the value of the blood of Christ, as applied to all that you have done; here in the light you learn the value of the blood as blotting out all that you are capable of doing. It is the same blood, but viewed in a deeper, fuller way, as blotting out all that, as a child of Adam, I am capable of doing. Thus I come to be really upright with God, real and true in His presence, and only thus. May the Lord in His mercy give us to find the reality of this. It is blessed ground to be on. Thank God there is no other upon which God can permit His people to be with Him, or that brings us near to Himself after His own heart.

P. A. H.

SCRIPTURE NOTE.

PSALM xl. 7, 8; HEBREWS x. 7.

ALTHOUGH the passage in Hebrews is a citation from the psalm, there is a striking omission of a word. In the epistle it is simply, "Lo, I come . . . to do" (not, *I delight to do*) "Thy will, O God." This is the more remarkable inasmuch as the Septuagint, that is, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, from which all the quotations in the epistle to the Hebrews are taken, contains a word answering to "delight." But an explanation of the omission may be found in the character of the psalm as contrasted with Hebrews x. There is no atonement in Psalm xl. Christ comes into this scene, takes the place of a servant, pursues in patient grace the perfect path of God's will, associates Himself with the believing remnant (see *vv.* 3, 5, 16), preaches righteousness, etc., in the great congregation, does not refrain His lips, nor conceal God's loving-kindness and truth from His people, presses forward through all the trials and sorrows that come upon Him by reason of His obedience and fidelity to God, and, reaching the cross, confesses the sins of His people (*v.* 12), even though He is brought thereby into a "horrible pit" and the "miry clay." But, as the reader will notice, there is no forsaking, as in Psalm xxii, and, indeed, no actual death. It is therefore the path of the obedient One in this psalm, with all that this path involved, up to the moment of His full identification with "His own" in confessing their sins;

but it does not include His atoning death upon the cross. On this very account it is that He can say in the psalm, "I *delight* to do Thy will," even as He said when on earth, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." (John iv. 34.) When, however, we come to the epistle to the Hebrews it is different. Here it is wholly the death of Christ that is brought before our minds, and the death of Christ as atonement, as the "one sacrifice for sins" (vv. 10, 12, 14); and this involved, as we know, His being forsaken on the cross. In the contemplation of this, it was impossible for Him, being what He was, to say, "I *delight* to do Thy will;" for, indeed, while Satan was pressing the prospect of death upon His soul in the garden, He cried, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 39.) It was a part of His perfection to shrink from death, and such a death wherein all God's waves and all His billows would roll over His holy soul. Hence it is, in accord with this, that the Spirit of God has caused the word "delight" to be omitted in Hebrews x. How precious to the spiritual mind are these various indications of the perfect wisdom of our God! And how instructive to linger in meditation on these distinctions in His word!

E. D.

IN the division of the family into fathers, young men, and babes (1 John ii.), we have the characteristic expression of that Eternal Life, which all alike have received (chap. v. 13), according to their various degrees of growth and intelligence.

ETERNAL LIFE.

ETERNAL life is said to be in the Son rather than in us ; just as we should speak of the water being in the reservoir rather than in the pipes or cisterns which it supplies, and through which the water is conveyed to the houses where it is enjoyed. So we speak of life being in the plant or the tree, not in the branch or leaf, though they are alive also by virtue of their connection with the tree. But life is spoken of as being in us. (2 Cor. iv. 10-12.) Eternal life is looked at as the Word, the Son Himself. "In Him was life," "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." It has qualities and characteristics of its own: it was the Light of men shining in the darkness, and was not understood by them because they were darkness. It was seen, heard, gazed upon and handled, because manifested in flesh. All this is objective ; for we are too prone to look at life subjectively as communicated to us, and to examine it in its details in us, instead of fixing our eyes on it in its source or origin and display in the Son of God.

Two opposite dangers are before us ; that of making eternal life, which all Christians possess, a matter of attainment on the one hand, and on the other ascribing to Old Testament saints, or to souls just quickened and under the conviction of sin, or under the law, this eternal life, which is the proper portion of the Christian as such, the full revelation of the Father and the Son being known and believed.

A merely convicted soul, wrought on by the Spirit of God where there is a true sense of sin and desire after Christ, is really quickened; for pain is evidence of life, and these feelings are according to God, and produced by the effect of the Word of God in the soul. This we see in Acts ii., where the reception of the Word preached made those who received it cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They believed the truth spoken about Christ and about themselves, but did not know the value of His death for themselves, or as applicable to the guilt which they felt, and this is what the apostle Peter next presents to them. We see the same work of the Spirit in the apostle himself, when he falls at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Attraction to Christ on the one hand, and the consciousness of his own unfitness and unworthiness on the other. So in many souls in the present day (and still more before the forgiveness of sins was as fully preached as it now is) we meet with souls who feel what sin is, and look to Christ as a Mediator between God and themselves, but have no knowledge of His work as clearing them before God. They own Him as Son of man, and even as a divine Saviour, but not as the Son revealing the Father; and have still a dread of God, whom they regard at a distance, and do not know as Father. They are as the Israelites in Egypt, before they crossed the Red Sea, and had seen all their enemies dead upon the seashore, being brought through as on dry land by the hand of God Himself. Souls may, like them, know something of the value of the blood, and still look on God as a Judge, and death and Satan's power are still feared. The effect of the resurrection of Christ is not known,

nor is God known as Father, nor consequently eternal life; though there exists in the soul faith, repentance, and life, according to the measure in which the truth has been apprehended.

But eternal life is placed in Scripture in the knowledge of the Father through the Son and of the work of Christ in its full, perfect character. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God [the Father] and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Christ is *lifted up* on the cross as Son of man in order "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and he who eats His flesh and drinks His blood hath everlasting life; both passages showing that the proper knowledge or appreciation of the atoning efficacy of the work of Christ gives eternal life, and thus teaching that the possession of it is the normal state of every believer. So the babes are said to know the Father, and this can only be through the Son who reveals the Father; and "this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Again, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him *that sent Me* [the Father], hath everlasting life." In none of these verses can we make it a matter of attainment. It belongs to the babes, to all who have seen the Son, or known the Father, or have believed in the work of Christ, according to its proper value or efficacy before God. The little children also have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; and holding fast what they have heard from the beginning, they then continue *in the Son* and *in the Father*.

So in 1 John iv. the testimony is, that the Father

sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is *the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." This involves the possession of eternal life though in the power of the Holy Ghost. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost shows at the same time that all Christian privilege according to the present dispensation is included. When all the eternal life is manifested and declared, it is that fellowship *with the Father and the Son* may be known which is enjoyed by the same life communicated to the soul by the Word; for this fellowship has all the blessed elements of this life both known and participated in, and the full revelation of the Father and the Son. "We beheld His glory," says the apostle, "the glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth;" and he adds, "Out of His fulness have *all we* received, and grace for grace." This last was not apostolic, but the common property of all in the proper blessing of this dispensation.

By Christ, as the risen Corn of Wheat, this life is communicated after His resurrection when He breathed on His disciples. It could not be given before, and this shows markedly the difference between life incipient or in its first stage—or as possessed by saints when our Lord was on earth, even though quickened by Him—and the life more abundantly bestowed in resurrection power, and in the new creation, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. Speaking of this He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." In the gospel of John, save in these anticipative passages, and in John xvii., which also looks forward, we never have saints spoken of as "in Him;" whereas in the epistle of

John it is constant. "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and *eternal life*." "Which thing is true in Him and in you." "In the Son, and in the Father," etc. This life was given us in Christ Jesus, and promised before the world began (2 Tim. i. 1, 8, 9, 10; Titus i. 2); but this shows its proper sphere and range to be heavenly, both as being before time, and as brought to light *in Him* who abolished death; whereas those who enjoy divine life on earth have their names written in the book of life "*from* the foundation of the world." (Rev. xiii. 8, xvii. 8.) Their kingdom also was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. In the Old Testament this is spoken of as life for evermore. (Ps. cxxxiii.) We do not read of the revelation of the Father by the Son in the Old Testament, nor in the book of Revelation; nor are millennial saints ever spoken of as "in Christ," nor as wearing a crown of life, though we have generally the idea of sons and daughters of the living God as in Old Testament times with Israel. (Deut. xxxii. 19.)

A. C. O.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

LUKE xxii. 41-44.

THERE are elements of the profoundest interest which appear in comparing this gospel with others in this place, and elements which bring out the character of this gospel in the most striking way. In Gethsemane we have the Lord's conflict brought out more fully in Luke than elsewhere; but on the cross we have His superiority to the sufferings He was in. There is no

expression of them; He is above them. It is not, as in John, the divine side of the picture. There in Gethsemane we have no agony; but when He names Himself they go backward and fall to the ground. On the cross, no "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" but He delivers up His own spirit to God. This is not so in Luke. In Gethsemane we have the Man of sorrows—a Man feeling in all its depths what was before Him, and looking to His Father. "Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." On the cross we have One who as man has bowed to His Father's will, and is in the calmness of One who, in whatever sorrow and suffering, is above it all. He tells the weeping women to weep for themselves, not for Him, the green tree; for judgment was coming. He prays for those who were crucifying Him. He speaks peace and heavenly joy to the poor thief who was converted; He was going into paradise before the kingdom came. The same is seen specially in the fact of His death. It is not, as in John, He gave up His spirit, but, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He trusts His spirit in death, as a Man who knows and believes in God His Father, to Him whom He thus knew. In Matthew we have the forsaking of God and His sense of it. This character of the gospel, revealing Christ distinctively as perfect Man, and the perfect Man, is full of the deepest interest. He passed through His sorrows with God, and then in perfect peacefulness was above them all; His trust in His Father perfect, even in death—a path not trodden by man hitherto, and never to be trodden by the saints. If Jordan overflowed all its banks at the time of harvest, the ark in the depths of it made it a passage dryshod into the inheritance of God's people.

MERCY, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND FAITH.

I NOTICE that there are three grounds on which blessing comes from God to men.

First, there is the fountain of grace in His own blessed nature. He gives as He will even to the most undeserving. Thus "the Dayspring from on high hath visited us." And we read, "I was found of them that sought Me not." This is mercy. God falls back, so to speak, on His sovereign prerogative of mercy when the creature has utterly failed, as after the golden calf at Sinai. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." And the feeble creature can fall back on this too, be he a sinner crying, like the publican, for mercy, or the saint "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;" that is, not that we have not, as regards the soul, eternal life now, for "he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life," but we look that the grace that has visited us with salvation should rise above all our failures and demerits and land us safe in the glory.

The mercy of God is the first great ground of our blessing, and abides when every other fails; but there are other grounds on which God blesses. There is the blessing on the righteous man. "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth." Now, as regards our relation with God as children of Adam, the law proposed blessing purely on this ground, but neither man innocent nor man fallen secured blessing thus. Jesus alone can claim the

blessing of the righteous Man. Still it is the governmental law of God, and most important for us to keep constantly in mind as saints. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous." "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," &c. (1 Peter iii.)

But there is a third ground of blessing, and that is faith. Through faith they escaped the edge of the sword, quenched the violence of fire. Women received their dead raised to life again. The history of faith is extremely interesting to us who in some feeble measure are on the ground of faith. It characterizes the Christian that he walks "by faith, not by sight." You could not say this of the Jew as such. One thing that interests one is this, that while faith lasts it gets the blessing; but that when it fails, as, alas! it often does under prolonged and severe pressure, God falls back on His own prerogative of blessing the undeserving in pure mercy; so that the blessing comes, and it may be the very looked-for blessing comes, although the failure of faith may also entail some loss. This, I think, is well illustrated in the history of Moses's infancy.

Here is the story. His parents recognize that he is THE proper child. They had, it appears, the sense that he was God's man for Israel's deliverance. Faith comes in now and gives them power, perhaps to hush the child's cries, or in some way to hide him from the murderous emissaries of the king. Their faith lasted three months. While they had faith they hid him—they kept their beautiful child. At the end of three months they cast him out (Acts vii. 21); they "could not

longer hide him." (Exodus ii.) Had they not come to the end of their faith? Perhaps the child was strong and loud. At all events they put him by the brink of the dangerous river, with probably some lingering hope that, if *they* "cast him out," God would take him up. Was the proper child to be drowned in the Nile? Better that than Pharaoh's sword. What a day it must have been for the mother! Then God's hand comes in. The thing desired was the child's life. It is preserved. Protection comes from the least-expected quarter—the palace. But a home in Pharaoh's house is not presented to us as an answer to faith. I think it could not be looked at thus. One sees the desire of the heart given—the child's life; but see what the mother loses. She is a hireling—nurse to Pharaoh's daughter; and when the child is grown she loses him, and another woman names her child, and has him for her son. Looking at the mother's side, I see faith was powerful as long as faith was there; and when faith was not there God's mercy was, and was more conspicuously displayed than in the day of faith.

The same principle is displayed in David's history. For long—nine years I believe—he endured the hunting of Saul, in confidence that the anointing oil of Jehovah was on his head, and that therefore the crown would be his. In fact and for faith he was invulnerable. At the end his faith breaks down; and he, fearing he shall one day fall by the sword of Saul, falls away to the Philistines. (1 Sam. xxvii.) He joins the ranks of the open enemies of Jehovah and his people. Faith has gone. What then? We might expect some rebuke or dreadful chastisement. "But He knoweth

our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." A battle happens; and while David is yet on the side of the Philistines, but providentially and most happily far from the battle-field, Saul is slain, and the crown comes to David. This is very striking. The blessing comes in the moment of failure. It displays the infirmity of the vessel and the gracious faithfulness of God. There could not have been a greater rebuke to David's doubt, nor, I think, a greater encouragement to our faith; for faith is the expression of the amount of confidence we have in God. In Jesus this confidence was perfect. There was no question as to the *power*; so He said, "Thou wilt show Me the path of life," though the road lay through the grave. (Ps. xvi.) This is what faith wants—a greater power than all that can be against us, and that power *for* us. The pledge of both we find respectively in the resurrection and death of our Lord. "God raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope may be in God." May our hearts respond to the encouragement the Lord gives to our faith.

C. D. M.

Maynard?

NADAB AND ABIHU.

HARDLY had the echo of the shout of victory died away (Leviticus ix.) ere the elements of a spurious worship were prepared. Hardly had the divine position been assumed ere it was deliberately abandoned through neglect of the divine commandment. No sooner were those priests inaugurated than they grievously failed in the discharge of their priestly functions. And in

what did their failures consist? Were they spurious priests? Were they mere pretenders? By no means. They were genuine sons of Aaron, true members of the priestly family, duly-appointed priests. Their vessels of ministry and their priestly garments too would seem to have been all right. What then was their sin? Did they stain the curtains of the tabernacle with human blood? or pollute the sacred precincts with some crime which shocks the moral sense? We have no proof of their having done so. Their sin was this: They "offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not." Here was their sin. They departed in their worship from the plain word of Jehovah, who had fully and plainly instructed them as to the mode of their worship. We have already alluded to the divine fulness and sufficiency of the word of the Lord in reference to every branch of priestly service. There was no room left for man to introduce what he might deem desirable or expedient. "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded" was quite sufficient. It made all very plain and very simple. Nothing was needed on man's part save a spirit of implicit obedience to the divine command; but herein they failed. Man has always proved himself ill-disposed to walk in the narrow path of strict adherence to the plain word of God. The by-path has ever seemed to present resistless charms to the poor human heart. "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." (Proverbs ix. 17.) Such is the enemy's language; but the lowly, obedient heart knows full well that the path of subjection to the word of God is the only one that leads to "waters" that are really "sweet" or to "bread" that can rightly be called "pleasant." Nadab and

Abihu might have deemed one kind of "fire" as good as another, but it was not their province to decide as to that. They should have acted according to the word of the Lord, but instead of this they took their own way, and reaped the awful fruits thereof. "He knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

"And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." How deeply solemn! Jehovah was dwelling in the midst of His people to govern, to judge, and to act according to the claims of His nature. At the close of chapter ix. we read, "And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." This was Jehovah's acceptance of a true sacrifice, but in chapter x. it is His judgment upon erring priests. It is a double action of the same fire. The burnt offering went up as a sweet odour, the "strange fire" was rejected as an abomination. The Lord was glorified in the former, but it would have been a dishonour to accept the latter. Divine grace accepted and delighted in that which was a type of Christ's most precious sacrifice, divine holiness rejected that which was the fruit of man's corrupt will—a will never more hideous and abominable than when active in the things of God. _____ C. H. M.

THE way to walk in a time of difficulty is by valuing Christ, not as One to help me in temptation, though He be ever ready to do so, but for His own sake.

IF my heart is full of Christ, the things that are contrary to Him do not attract me.

EXPOSITORY.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE 1-7.

NOTHING certain is known of the writer of this epistle beyond the description here given. He contents himself with two titles—“*servant*” (bondman) “*of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.*” If the James referred to be “the Lord’s brother,” of whom Paul speaks (Gal. i. 19), rather than the apostle Judas, *not* Iscariot (John xiv. 22), who seems to have been the brother of James, the son of Alphæus (Luke vi. 16), then Jude also was, according to the flesh, a brother of the Lord. If so, what grace and humility are displayed in that he does not call attention to the fact. And what a lesson for all who take, or seek to take, a place amongst believers on the ground of human distinction or birth!

The similarity of this epistle to that of 2 Peter cannot fail to strike even the ordinary reader; but, in truth, there is a notable difference. “Peter speaks of *sin*, Jude of *apostasy*, the departure of the assembly from its primitive state before God. Departure from the holiness of faith is the subject that Jude treats. He does not speak of outward separation;” that is, of separation from the assembly, or from professing Christianity. Bearing this in mind, there are degrees of corruption to be traced through 2 Peter, Jude, and 1 John. In Peter, as pointed out, it is sin—sin working indeed in gross forms—in the bosom of the Church; in Jude it is moral apostasy, though those who are

guilty of it still retain their place inside (v. 12); while in John the apostates have gone out. "They went out from us, but they were not of us," &c. (1 John ii. 19.)

Another point should be noticed as indicative of the character of this important epistle. While Jude deals with evils already existing in his own day, these evils are taken as shadowing forth the state of things that will be found at the close; and he thus speaks of the Lord coming "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all," &c. The epistle therefore is prophetic, and as such has a special importance for those whose lot has fallen upon the last days, in which "perilous times" are to be expected.

The address of the epistle is as beautiful as it is peculiar to this writer: "*To them that are sanctified* by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus.*" (v. 1.) Jude reminds those to whom he is writing that, if they were saints, they were so through grace, by a divine and sovereign call—a call which, addressed to them in the power of the Holy Ghost through the word of God, reached their hearts and consciences, and separated them from the world, to be God's people. We cannot too often recall the fact that it was God's call that made us saints, and that we are consequently not called to be saints, but saints by divine calling. Then we have a twofold description of the called. First, sanctified, or rather "beloved, in God the Father." Jude thus sets the saints in the immediate presence of God, teaches them that they are the objects of His heart, and would have them know that as such they have been brought into the enjoyment of an intimate

* The reading now generally accepted is, "Beloved in God the Father." (See Revised Version and the New Translation.)

relationship with Him; for He is their Father, as well as God.* Secondly, they are preserved in Christ Jesus. The ground, and possibly the means, of their security are thus stated; and it should never be forgotten that if we are kept, preserved in the midst of all the dangers which surround us, and of all the snares and temptations of the evil one, it is only in and through Jesus Christ. It is God's power that guards us, but the power is exercised, displayed on our behalf in and through Him who is now seated at God's right hand. What food for meditation then—yea, what ground for praise and adoration—lies in these two words, "Beloved in God the Father;" and, "Preserved in Jesus Christ!"

The salutation differs both from those of Paul and of Peter; while it resembles those of Paul when writing to individuals in the introduction of "mercy," and those of Peter in the use of the word "peace." Jude says, "*Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.*" (v. 2.) Such was his and God's desire, as expressed through him, for these beloved saints. Mercy is the first thing (see v. 21), for in view of the circumstances in which they were found this was their primary need, mercy for their weakness (compare Heb. iv. 16); the constant outflowing of the tender compassion of God to protect, sustain, and to guard them amid the perils of their path. Also peace, not peace with God, but peace, peace absolutely, which possesses the whole soul, and in the power of which we can walk with unruffled

* The address of the epistles to the Thessalonians may be compared: "To the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father," &c. But here it is perhaps that the spiritual life of the saints had been specially developed in the filial relationship.

composure in the presence of the greatest dangers or the most malignant enemies. It is not said whether it is the peace of God (Phil. iv.) or the peace which Christ gives, His own peace, to His people (John xiv.), because indeed it is a peace which, founded on the work of redemption, the soul enjoys in relationship with the Father and the Son. Love is added—the expression of the divine nature, that holy circle and atmosphere into which the redeemed are brought, and in which they live and move and have their being. (Compare 1 John iv. 16.) And all these (and the reader will observe the order—mercy, peace as the fruit of mercy, and then love as the sphere of the soul's life) Jude desires should be multiplied unto them. For even if these blessings are possessed, they are only possessed in measure, seeing that, like the source whence they flow, they are infinite in their character. The believer can therefore never say that he has attained, and his rest must thus be, as has often been said, not in attainment, but in attaining; and he is drawn on to this by every new glimpse he gains of the boundless treasures, which are laid up for him in Christ.

The occasion of the epistle is now given. "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.*" (v. 3.) Jude, as he tells us, had been earnestly desirous to minister to the edification of the saints; but the state of things was such to render this impossible, and he had rather to stir them up to put on their armour, to gird on their weapons, and to prepare for conflict. This gives a principle of immense and

abiding importance. When Satan, through his emissaries, has found a foothold within, and is engaged in corrupting and undermining the foundations of the truth, it is idle to talk of edification; for God, at such a moment, calls to conflict, and it is by conflict alone that His work can then be done. Timid souls are ever disturbed at the least sign of controversy; they plead for peace and charity, and urge the danger to souls from warfare. But when the truth of Christianity is at stake, is it genuine love to souls that abandons the field to the adversaries? When Goliath dared the armies of Israel it was David who wrought most for the welfare of the people of God. When Peter denied, at Antioch, the truth of grace by refusing to eat with Gentile believers, it was Paul who withstood him to the face, that laboured most effectually for the blessing of the saints. If God calls to conflict, it is nothing but supreme selfishness that turns aside from the battle under the plea of desiring to shield the saints. (Compare Judges vi. 16, 17, 23.) When Nehemiah, for example, was engaged in building the walls of Jerusalem, the enemy was so active, that "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." Moreover, he adds, "he that sounded the trumpet was by me." And he commanded all classes of the people that in whatever place they should hear the sound of the trumpet they should resort thither. (Chap. iv. 17-20.) If the trumpet sounded forth its summons to conflict, the building of the wall was to be suspended, and all were to face the foe in dependence upon God. And

this is the lesson enforced by Jude. Now, he says in other words, is the time for conflict. He puts God's trumpet to his lips, and summons them to the battle, to rouse them, that they might watch, stand fast in the faith, quit themselves like men, be strong, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. "The faith," it need scarcely be observed, is the thing believed, the truth, and the conflict was to be waged to maintain it as it had been delivered to the saints. Any modifications, any developments of it, any adaptation to modern thought and feeling—all of which are, in fact, corruptions of the truth—were and are to be resisted. Delivered to us through the apostles, we are to contend for it in the very form in which it has been received.

The next verse points out the source and cause of the danger: "*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God,* and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" (v. 4.) We have, thus, the history and character of these corrupting apostates. First, they had crept into the assembly unawares, "unnoticed;" that is, their true character was not discerned when they were brought into the assembly. In a day of evil there can be no graver responsibility than that of the "porters" (see 2 Chronicles xxiii. 19); those who keep, so to speak, the gates, and whose duty

* The word "God" should be omitted. Lord God are titles under which God was known to the Jews; God and Father those He has in grace assumed in relationship with Christians. In like manner the word "God" should be left out of 1 Peter iii. 15. In neither place has the word any sufficient authority.

it is to admit only such as have an undoubted title and qualification for the privilege of entrance. There was remissness in this day when these men were allowed to steal inside; and how often is there a lamentable lack of vigilance in the same way at the present moment. The consequence, whether then or now, is confusion and corruption. While, however, the "porters" had failed, these men had been "marked out beforehand to this sentence;"* they had been foreseen by the omniscient eye of the Spirit of God, and the *ground* of their condemnation had been beforehand determined and proclaimed. In their essential character they were "ungodly" men—men who had not the fear of God before their eyes, and acted without reference to Him, shutting out God from their thoughts, acts, and ways. (Compare *v.* 15.)

Then follow their special features: they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denied the only *Master* (*δεσπότην*), and our Lord Jesus Christ. They seized upon grace as an excuse for sin; continued in sin that grace might abound (Romans vi. 1); and they rejected the authority of Christ, who was in fact their only Master. (Compare 2 Peter ii. 1.) They refused, in a word, the will of Christ, that they might be free to do their own will. It was thus the assertion of man in that sphere (the sphere of the assembly) where Christ and His authority are everything. This is the essence of all lawlessness, and was therefore true apostasy, though they yet occupied outwardly the ground of Christianity. The apostle Paul thus writes,

* The word rendered condemnation is the same as in 1 Cor. xi. 29 and means "not the act of condemnation, but the subject-matter or charge on and for which they are condemned."

“The mystery of iniquity [lawlessness] doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked [lawless one] be revealed,” etc. (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.) These men who had stolen in among the saints unobserved were thus the precursors of the open apostasy and the “revelation” of the man of sin; for the same spirit governed them as will be exhibited in him in a more public way. These ungodly men existed in Jude’s day; but let it not be forgotten that they have their representatives in every age of the church, and thus in our own time. We are therefore forewarned, and we need to be on our watch, jealous for the rights and honour of our Lord, against the slightest departure from His Word, or the smallest tendency to the abuse of grace. The seed-corn of apostasy may lie in what appears to be an insignificant act of the assertion of man’s will in opposition to that of the only Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the next place Jude cites examples to show the certainty of judgment upon all that leave the place of subjection to the Lord, or fall into sin and corruption. *“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this,* how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to*

* Many read, and with better authority, “Though ye once knew all things,” a statement which contains a sad proof of the saints’ waning state and knowledge.

fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (vv. 5-7.)

There is, we cannot doubt, a twofold reason for the citation of these widely-differing examples of judgment. First, it is to show, from the case of Israel, that the judgment will proceed on the ground of their having occupied the place of the people of God. It would moreover seem—and this will be more clearly seen further on in the epistle—that the state of these men will be characteristic, towards the close, of public Christianity. Secondly, we have in these three examples the features—the forms of sin and iniquity—exhibited in these “dreamers” of whom Jude speaks. Thus those that were destroyed of the Israelites in the wilderness (and only *two* of those who came out of Egypt were spared—Caleb and Joshua) did not believe; they were children in whom was no faith. “And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief.” (Hebrews iii. 18, 19.) The sin of the angels who kept not their first estate was rather that of disobedience; for one characteristic of those who have been preserved is that they “do His commandments.” (Psalm ciii. 20.) Lastly, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrha it was the will of the flesh, self-will in lust, “giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh.” And let the moral order be noted: first unbelief, then disobedience, and finally the licence of the flesh—an order that is continually exemplified in the word of God.

Two other things may be indicated. The fallen

angels, as we learn from this scripture, and from 2 Peter ii. 4, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. They are, therefore, a class apart from the devil and the demons of the New Testament, who are so often found engaged in their evil work upon the earth. 'It is to these fallen angels that Paul may refer in 1 Cor. vi. 3. The destruction, moreover, of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the neighbouring cities, is set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Those cities lie still under the weight of their doom, swallowed up in the judgment by which they were overtaken; and the Spirit of God appeals to this both as a warning and an example, a warning of the certainty of coming judgment, and as an example of its eternal character. Let all such, therefore, as these corrupters of God's grace, and rebels against the authority of Christ, beware!

E. D.

It is most striking to see how Christ met, according to divine perfectness, every circumstance He was in. They only drew out the perfectness. He felt them all, was governed by none, but met them, always Himself. This, which was always true, was wonderfully shown in Gethsemane. He prays with the fullest sense of what was coming upon Him—the cup He had to drink—turns and warns His disciples, and gently rebukes and excuses Peter as if, walking in Galilee, the flesh was weak, and then returns into yet deeper agony with His Father. Grace suited Him with Peter in the presence of God; and He was grace with Peter—in agony at the thought of the cup.

J. N. D.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

ISAIAH liii. 12.

It is essential for the understanding of this striking chapter—a chapter that contains such a distinct setting forth of the substitutionary death of Christ—to remember its connection in the future with repentant Israel. Like Thomas, believing when they see Him (Zechariah xii. 10), they will then confess their past unbelief, and express their present faith in the Messiah as here recorded. They had despised and rejected Him, they had seen no beauty in Him, for to the natural eye He had no form nor comeliness that they should desire Him; but now they will understand that He had borne their griefs and carried their sorrows, though at the time they had esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, that He was wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities, etc. This gives the key to the language employed in the chapter; and it will be noticed that the rejection of Christ together with the nature of His death, whether as suffering from the hand of Jehovah, bearing the sins of His people, pouring out His soul unto death, or as numbered with the transgressors, is given with every possible variety of detail, and is so presented that even the most unwilling are compelled to acknowledge that the doctrines of substitution and atonement are here plainly taught. Coming now to the end of the chapter, we find the consequences of the atoning death of the

Messiah; but it should be observed that, while some of the expressions are general, these results of His death are given as affecting Him in His relationship with His earthly people. For example, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. (v. 10. Compare Psalms xxi. 4; lxxii. 17, etc.) The next verse tells us that He Himself will be satisfied with the results of the travail of His soul; and that on the ground of His atoning death He will "justify" many.*

Lastly, we have His earthly exaltation depicted, and depicted as also flowing from His death. "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death," etc. The present exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God, as we Christians know, is in consequence of His death (Phil. ii.); and here we learn that His victory over His enemies (for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet) and the glory of His Messianic kingdom are ascribed to the same cause. The cross therefore is the foundation both of the glories of Christ, whether earthly or heavenly, and of the redemptive blessings, whether of Israel as the earthly people, or of the church as His body and bride.

* Another has written, "It is my belief that, in verse 11, the two parts of Christ's work are distinguished. By His knowledge He shall bring many to righteousness, or instruct many in righteousness, and He shall bear their iniquities." The same writer translates as follows in his French Version: "Par sa connaissance mon serviteur juste enseignera la justice à plusieurs." ("By His knowledge shall my righteous servant teach righteousness to many"—*i.e.*, as is explained in a note "to those who are in relationship with Him.")

II.

I COR. xi. 1-16.

THERE is no real difficulty in this scripture if it be borne in mind that these directions are given, not for the assembly, not for sisters when gathered together with the saints, but for their private guidance and instruction. This is certain on two grounds; first, that it is not till the 17th verse that the apostle begins to deal with order and conduct in the assembly; and, secondly, that in this very epistle he enjoins silence on women "in the churches." (Compare 1 Timothy ii. 12.) It is clear therefore that the reference is to praying or prophesying in private, or in their homes, or in places other than in the public assemblies. Nor is the praying of necessity audible prayer; for the term would undoubtedly include every act of prayer, whether the woman were the mouthpiece, or whether bowing in concert with others in the presence of God. The fact indeed that the woman's special place in relation to man, not solely the place of a wife with her husband, is introduced, would point to the inclusion of those occasions when men, such as in family prayer, or in household or private readings of the Scriptures accompanied with prayer, might be present. It should also be observed that prophesying is not preaching. We read that Philip, the evangelist, "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." (Acts xxi. 8, 9.) In those early days of the Church, before the New Testament Scriptures were written, God was pleased to send inspired communications to His people through chosen vessels, and these were termed prophets. (See

1 Cor xiv. 29-33.) But, as the scripture already cited shows, women were never so used in the assemblies, and hence the prophesying of the daughters of Philip, as well as the prophesying of the women here, must have been on other than public occasions.

The prescription then for the covered head applies in this passage to those seasons when women were praying or prophesying in the manner mentioned. And another has called attention to the fact, that "to decide this question, simply of what was decent and becoming, the apostle lays open the relationship, and the order of the relationship, subsisting between the depositories of God's glory and Himself, and brings in the angels, to whom Christians, as a spectacle set before them, should present that of order according to the mind of God." The foundation, therefore, on which the apostle directs women to pray with covered heads is the divine order which God has ordained: "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (v. 3.) Man, "forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God," and as such representing God's authority, ought not to cover his head; but the woman being the glory of man, is under authority, and, as a sign of it, is to be covered. This is distinctly stated on the introduction of the second ground of the exhortation; viz., the relationship of the woman to the man in creation (vv. 7-10); for it is then said, "For this cause ought the woman to have power" (i.e., the symbol of it, as being subject to it (authority)) "on her head, because of the angels" (v. 10), inasmuch as these, whose characteristic is obedience (Psalm ciii. 20), are the delighted spectators of submission to God's order on the part of His people. The apostle urges yet

another consideration—the teaching of nature. He says, “Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God (and these words are very absolute, seeming to include all acts of prayer) uncovered? Doth not nature itself teach you,” etc. (13, 14.)

A few remarks may be added. First, the hair, long hair, is evidently not, as it is sometimes contended, the covering indicated by the apostle; for he says in verse 6, “If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.” The covering is thus something in addition to the long hair. Secondly, the instruction is for women, not wives only, but for women, and not for children. Finally, it will be helpful to observe that this is no prescription for women’s dress, but simply and solely a direction concerning what is seemly and suited for them when they are praying.

III.

HEBREWS ix. 26.

THE exact language of this scripture must be carefully noted. It does not speak of sins, but of sin; and it does not say that Christ has put it away, but that once in the consummation of the ages hath He appeared to do it—to put away sin—by the sacrifice of Himself. The all-efficacious work is done on the ground of which it will be finally put away, but it is not yet put away. It is thus still *in* the believer as also in the world. Cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, he is without spot or stain of guilt before God; but he has, notwithstanding, sin—the flesh, the evil nature—still in him; and hence the apostle John writes, “If we say that we

have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) In the millennium it will be still existent, and accordingly, even towards the close of the blessed reign of Christ, Satan will succeed in deceiving the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth. (Rev. xx. 8.) But in the new heaven and the new earth every trace of it is removed; for then the former things will have passed away, and God will be all in all. It is only, therefore, when we reach this perfect and blessed scene that we behold the complete results of the sacrifice of Christ. Then, and not till then, on the ground of His finished work, sin will have been entirely and for ever put away. Of course faith apprehends this even now; for "if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." But in what has been said we speak of the actual abolition of the presence of sin in the universe of God. E. D.

WE never find the Lord's own sufferings preventing Him from thinking of others. On the cross He can think of the thief, just as though He were not suffering Himself. If He had not time to eat, still He had always time enough to announce the truth to the crowd which followed Him; tired at Jacob's well, His heart does not grow weary of speaking of the living water, nor of looking into the poor Samaritan woman's conscience. He was never tired of doing good; and He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

THE true way of having the highest place is to serve, to consider oneself as the slave of the wants of other disciples.

TRUE NAZARITESHIP.

LUKE xxii. 14-30.

AT the table, where the Lord in the institution of the supper was speaking to the disciples of His humiliation even unto death, they were disputing amongst themselves as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. They did not understand that the principle of the child of God, of the disciple, is to be a servant—servant of all by the power of the love of God acting in him. To be great down here is the opposite of Christian principle. In the world one erects monuments in memory of human benefactors; the only monument which the world ever raised to Christ was the cross. But in the cross I see grace. Grace blossoms in the valley of humility; it is not on mountain summits, but in valleys, that prosperity abounds.

The flesh always exalts itself; but, more than this, it is never able to meet a difficulty. It knows, as in the case of Peter, how to lead us into the thick of danger, but never how to extricate us. It makes us fall before obstacles, or else go to sleep. And yet of these very disciples Jesus says that they have continued with Him in His temptations.

As long as He is down here, the Lord shows Himself as a Jew and Messiah to the Jews; but, ascended to God's right hand, everything changes. It is important to understand that we have to do with Christ in glory, not Christ on earth. Even if Paul had known Him after the flesh, he would not afterwards have

known Him so. To confound these two things is to apply Jewish principles to the present economy. Riches, which for the Jews were a blessing, are a snare to the Christian. Ours being a heavenly vocation, the less we are tied to earth the freer we are. Glory, honour, and riches are only chains which, binding us to earth, weaken our true link with heaven.

When Christ the Creator was put on the cross, all the foundations were overthrown. This side of the cross, man is henceforth ruined and lost; salvation is his in the cross. But we must go beyond the cross. What the Jews possessed was external and earthly; rudiments of the world. Christ gave Himself for us to deliver us from this present evil age. Thus the world is judged by the cross of Christ. The world condemned itself in condemning Christ, and everything is broken between it and God. Henceforth grace alone is the principle on which God can act.

In the Lord's supper, Jesus gives a token of love to His disciples; but previously, having enjoyed with them for the last time the memorial of Jewish deliverance, He takes another character. He receives a cup, not that of the supper, and He distributes it to the disciples without Himself drinking of it, adding: "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." (*v.* 18.) He takes henceforth openly the Nazarite character—that of separation from sinners. Himself without sin, He had come amongst sinners, seeking them. Now He takes the position of separation, of holiness, to sit at God's right hand. It is in resurrection that Jesus has been declared Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. This resurrection is a public

proof of the power of the life of God, and of the holiness of Christ. (Rom. i. 4; Heb. vii. 26.) Christ is now openly separated from sinners. When He returns, He will appear "without sin" for His own, and will drive out sin from His presence; whereas on earth He was the Friend of publicans and sinners.

Numbers vi. depicts the character of the Nazarite. Wine is a sign of union and fellowship amongst guests. That is why it says, "Wine which cheereth God and man" (Judges ix. 13); but the Nazarite did not drink it. The Christian should love sinners, but be separate from sin; he is, like Jesus, a Nazarite. His holiness corresponds with the place the Lord now occupies, with Him who says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." It is by death and resurrection that Jesus has taken this place of separation with regard to the world and sinners. When the kingdom of God shall have come, we shall be all together in the joy of the Lord with Him. To be sure the Christian is joyful now, but afflicted. He cannot be joyful down here with the world which has killed his Saviour. A great deal of time has since elapsed, but time does not alter it. The character of the world remains the same. One must be converted not to belong to it. If our hearts belong to Jesus, it is impossible to be otherwise than sorrowful in the world. The world amuses itself; it dances on the tomb of our Saviour.

But on the other hand the Christian rejoices in the Lord, and in his heavenly portion of which the world is in ignorance. The joy of the Christian is a hope full of glory; but down here he is always a Nazarite, and cannot share in the glory of this world. He

invites and beseeches sinners to be converted, but he cannot have communion with them. Jesus has been rejected by the world, and received in heaven; this is also the Christian's place. Our High Priest has been made higher than the heavens. He has left us a token of His love in the breaking of bread. If He is no longer present with us on earth, it is because He gave Himself for us. His absence does not betoken indifference; for the Lord's Supper is the memorial of His perfect love to us.

Christ brings us into the heavenly kingdom by a totally new life. We are not transported into the kingdom of the Son of His love without possessing His life—that of the last Adam, who is a quickening Spirit. We are made partakers of the divine nature. Conversion is not only a change, but the communication of a life unknown to us before—a life hidden in Christ, separate from sinners, separate from the world.

J. N. D.

"YOUR OWN SALVATION."

PHIL. ii. 12.

"WORK out your own salvation with fear and trembling." It seems to me to confuse the true meaning of this exhortation to say that "we *have* this salvation, and now we have to work it out." The point here is not the salvation of the soul. If the whole passage be read, I think this will be clear to anyone. Nor does it cast any doubt on the fact of the salvation of the soul, which is the effect of faith, and is dependent on no works of ours. But at the time of writing this

epistle the apostle was in prison, and he gladly remembered the obedience of these Philippian saints. They had manifested it when he was among them. Through taking heed to his words, they had *saved* themselves from the attacks of Satan, and from his wiles. And now that he was in prison, was it safe for them to be *less* obedient? No; if possible they were to be yet more earnestly careful and watchful than they had been in his presence, and this would manifest itself in *obedience* to his words. Therefore he says, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Now it is clear that present obedience is that which the apostle inculcates and desires them to aim at, in order to their present blessing, and that blessing is what he calls “your own salvation.”* And while none, save those who possess the salvation of the soul, can thus “*work*” (because only of such could verse 13 be true), the salvation of the soul is *not* the point in the apostle’s mind. Obedience to the words of an apostle (and now to the words of *all* the apostles) goes on at the same time as the working of God, by His Spirit, within the soul. They never oppose one another. Indeed obedience is wrought by the Spirit. Nothing can be a greater proof of the possession of divine life

* The reader will weigh this interpretation. For ourselves, while entirely agreeing with the line pursued in the paper, we understand “salvation” in this passage to mean, as in chap. i. 19, complete salvation at the end—deliverance through all perils, temptations, &c., until the end of the race, at the Lord’s coming.—ED.

than this, that because God speaks in His word, *I do not question*, but I OBEY. Then it was the words of the apostle which they had *heard* (when he was with them), and which they were *reading* now again in his letter to them: "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." Obedience produces a quiet and steady walk on earth even to the end, and Phil. ii. sets *this path* before us in perfection. It was the path of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is presented in it. He "always obeyed," as the apostle desires them to do, and the result is that "God hath highly exalted Him;" and Satan's history, in opposition to the Lord in His walk of obedience, is a history of his *continuous defeat*. So should his history be in conflict with us, and this is the point, I believe, in the passage before us. The enemy was ceaseless in his efforts against them. But he says, "in nothing terrified by your adversaries." We have not only to believe, he says, "but also to suffer for His sake." The question is, How are the saints to save themselves from all the traps and snares which Satan spreads for their feet? Why, by having the "*same mind*" which marked Him who walked calmly on amid them all, *because He walked in obedience*. Here is the one grand and only remedy to meet them all—obedience. No saint (however long on the road) is safe but in the path of obedience. By it he works out "his own salvation with fear and trembling," from every trap and from every snare which Satan spreads in his path. Fear and trembling will always accompany me—not distrust of God, but distrust of myself—because I see what a poor thing I am in conflict with my wily foe, and how I *tend* to respond to the very suggestions which he makes to me on the road.

It is important also to notice that this verse (Phil. ii. 12) is one of the texts which is used by the enemies of the truth to deny that one can know that he has the salvation of the soul. They say, "Even Paul tells the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." When the context is seen this assumed difficulty disappears. It is most disastrous to take words or passages of Scripture out of their connection; for, if kept and read where God has placed them, the harmony and beauty of the whole is preserved; and what is more, the enemy is often defeated by the very text with which he sought to defeat us. No one need fear to look at the passages of Scripture he quotes.

H. C. A.

TWO LETTERS ON THE MARRIAGE OF AN EVANGELIST.

ONE of the Lord's servants, after having been devoted to the work of preaching the gospel for three years, contemplated marriage. But it was pressed upon him by some that, as he had not sufficient income to keep a wife and family, he ought, before undertaking such responsibility, to seek some secular employment. In these circumstances, although he was clear in his own mind, he asked the judgment of the two well-known and valued labourers whose letters are here given.

I.

"DEAREST BROTHER,—Not one of the passages Mrs. — quotes applies to the question. That those who have occupations, as — and others, should evangelize all they can is all very well, but that is not being given

up to the work of evangelizing where God has called us to it. Mrs. — speaks of deacons or evangelists. But deacons are not evangelists. Serving tables was set up that the apostles might not be hindered in evangelizing; and when Stephen and Philip became evangelists, they gave up their place as deacons, at any rate Philip, for he left Jerusalem.

“Next, that when a person is an aged widow, or an elderly matron, should teach young wives to be stayers at home is all well, but what it has to say to an evangelist having an occupation—I am at a loss to see.

“Providing for one’s own—though, of course, a man is bound to cherish and care for his wife—speaks of a wholly different and indeed opposite case, that the Church should not be charged with widows who had children, but that they or young members of their family should provide for them. I have gone through them all, and none apply at all, unless 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14; nor does that. Paul had no wife, and no home, and no fortune, and tells us he had no certain dwelling-place. He would not take from the Corinthians because they were fond of money, but talks of it as a wrong, and that it was an extraordinary thing (but he took from others for the gospel’s sake), and in 1 Cor. ix. he discusses the whole matter on the ground that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Peter led about a sister, a wife, and Paul insists that he and Barnabas had the same right, so did the brethren of the Lord, and the apostles. (1 Cor. ix. 5.) So that the direction of the Word is quite plain. And heaps of brethren have so done on the Continent. If they have families, no doubt they must have a house; but the Lord has taken care of them, and their families have

been educated, and get on just as other people's have. In one case there were eleven children. Of course, such cases require faith in a woman to *undertake* when in it. I have often seen them have more courage than men. My experience is wholly against him called to be an evangelist taking up a means of providing by other occupation. It is putting this world and human care before God's calling, and their spiritual work is spoiled in its very root. It is a wholly different thing, and the opposite as to faith, where those who have occupations break out of their bounds to evangelize. If a man be called of God to give himself up to evangelizing, that is another matter, but departing from the path of faith is a serious thing.

"I am thankful you were all refreshed at Lewes. It is grace from the Lord.

"Affectionately yours, dear brother in Him,

"J. N. D.

"Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

II.

"DEAREST ———, —The mission by Christ of the twelve for the time when He was still upon earth, as in Matt. x., &c., had differences introduced by Himself when He was anticipating another position for Himself than that of being on earth, as Luke xxii. 36. Himself had kept in check the power of evil when down here; when He had been rejected they were rejected in Him by man, and His flock became as sheep for the slaughter.

"As called to follow Paul as he followed Christ, it is a path of faith, and of faith only, on which I find myself. Paul saw how a wife would impede his course,

and he took none. He was above any need, through the power of grace and the Spirit, of human nature, and he left all to follow Christ. He never despises marriage, or God, who as Creator *ordained* it in Eden. But while he teaches and presses that it is right for some, if need be, to marry, he had no need; and he was above human nature's line in giving himself to the work of the Spirit. 1 Cor. vii. gives his truth to us on the subject.

"If God's word through Paul told me that I ought to marry, I hope I should do so. The Lord to whom I look for everything in this life, ever since I found that He had given me to Christ, is He to whom I did look when I was a young man upon this subject; and if He said marry, He also would say what I was to do when married, as to food and raiment, whether to be fed by Him direct, or whether to make tents. Of course, for an unmarried man to say, 'I go out and serve the Lord in His word, and care not what I get to eat, or where I sleep, it is only *myself* that will suffer,' is different from a married man doing it. But still the question is for faith to answer.

"What I sometimes say to young men is this: The first question is, Are you prepared to give up, or to keep on as having given up, time for eternity; to make service in the Word the one business of your life, contempt and poverty and difficulty notwithstanding? Have you given up 'self' for 'Christ'?

"If anyone says 'Yes,' Paul is his model of *the better* way. If Paul's letters tell me that I ought to marry, I take his doctrine as guiding me in my conduct in that. Still, though it becomes me to judge myself in taking a wife—and how far my faith will carry

me afterwards—clearly the sparrows of the air, and the beasts of the wilds, and the fish of the sea, assure me that God feeds those who have no *gagne-pain*.*

“They that preached the gospel lived of the gospel (*i.e.* evangelists) in Paul’s day, that was God’s own order; not a paid clergy, not a settled employment in business, but to be evangelists, and to look to God for food and raiment. And it is good for us saints to see those who have faith so to act, and good for us who aspire to the name of workmen to give in humbleness ensamples of trusting in the Lord, and in the Lord alone, and of enduring hardness for His name and work’s sake, if needs be.

“ Most affectionately in the Lord,

“ Yours,

—————
“ G. V. W.”

FRAGMENT.

THE semblance of love which does not maintain the truth, but accommodates itself to that which is not the truth, is not love according to God; it is taking advantage of the name of love in order to help on the seductions of Satan. In the last days the test of true love is the maintenance of the truth. God would have us love one another; but the Holy Ghost, by whose power we receive this divine nature, and who pours the love of God into our hearts, is the Spirit of truth, and His office is to glorify Christ. Therefore it is impossible that a love which can put up with a doctrine that falsifies Christ, and which is indifferent to it, can be of the Holy Ghost—still less so, if such indifference be set up as the proof of that love.

* This is a French phrase for “livelihood.”—ED.

FULNESS OF JOY.

It is suggestive that, except in the book of Job, the thought of joy is not before the mind of the Spirit of God in the Scriptures until the kingdom is in view. There was, however, the command to rejoice before the Lord, and in the feasts of the Lord; but it seems to have been realized in power only when Jehovah acted sovereignly in that which gave occasion to the establishment of these feasts; viz., on the bringing out of Egypt (Exodus xv.), and prior to the settlement in the land. (See Nehemiah viii. 17.) Hannah it is to whom the honour belongs, under the Spirit's inspiration, of first striking the note of joy, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord;" and this in distinct connection with the kingdom. "He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His anointed." (1 Sam. ii. 1-10.) It is the fruit of the true vine, the rod out of the stem of Jesse, the Branch out of his roots, that really cheers God and man.

Once in the Old Testament we find the thought of "fulness of joy;" an expression of immense scope. It is uttered by the "Holy One" in view of an absolutely adverse scene—the ungodly in this world, and beyond it death and the grave. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm xvi. 11.) It is the progress into the heavenly sanctuary; there is the path into His presence, and the place of His presence. He treads it as having

passed through death, and out of it, therefore He is become our life, and in His presence we have fulness of joy, though not yet in the place where the pleasures are. In the gospel of John, where Christ is presented as rejected from the outset, and outside all dispensations, the same thought dwells repeatedly upon His lips in view of his departure from this earthly scene. But how wonderful the grace! He speaks it not as concerning Himself, but His poor sorrowing disciples in their sojourn apart from Him down here. Do our hearts sufficiently apprehend the vast importance of the present moment in connection with the glory of Christ? He can have no higher glory, no more exalted place than now, while He is hidden within the heavens, seated upon the Father's throne. But who sees Him there? None but the Father's eye. The only public testimony to His highest glory as Man is the saints on earth, as He says, "I am glorified in them;" and again, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Even if the angels would learn the glories of redemption, it must be by the gospel preached by man; and it is through the assembly now that the heavenly principalities and authorities know the all-various wisdom of God. It is no accident or incident this passing time, though there is the wilderness meanwhile; but it is the highest glory of the exalted Man (for as Man never will He be so high again. His Father's throne is higher than His own) made known in the power of the Holy Ghost in weakest vessels, and in a scene still governed morally by the power of evil.

For Him to have this place as Man, and us associated with Him, witnesses of His glory, redemption must needs

be wrought, and the righteousness of God revealed in sovereign grace. He is—the Man at God's right hand—the magnificent and glorious display of what God is in righteousness—the glory received straightway, the due reward in answer to the agonies of the tree. And we are become God's righteousness in Him; for He was made sin for us, and we receive it on the principle of faith. Thus are we fully associated with Him in His present glory—a glory that no subsequent display can ever equal; and He would have us here meanwhile share His joy, the joy which corresponds with such supremacy. Once in His earthly pathway Jesus rejoiced in spirit. (Luke x. 21.) It was at the thought of the Father's grace giving a heavenly portion, and divine relationships to the babes. This is the higher glory of the kingdom. The joy of the disciples went no further than power on the earth over all the power of the enemy. (*vv.* 17–19.) His service and sojourn here ended, it had been His joy to abide in His Father's love, walking in a path of absolute surrender and obedience to His will. This joy He desires should be in us to fill and characterize our joy. (John xv. 11.) His command is to express His own nature as He Himself had done; for this purpose He chooses us out of the world, and identifies us with Himself. (*vv.* 12–20.)

Again He recurs to the subject (John xv. 20–24), and dates forward their joy to the day of His resurrection. Then they should ask in His name, knowing the Father in this intimacy and relationship. Thus asking and receiving in His own interests, and as occupying His place here below, our "joy is full." Remark here there is no mention of His joy—this

was rather in surrender for His Father's glory—but it is our joy that is thus full. Once more He speaks—in the world indeed—but to the Father, in the intimacy of love, as one no longer in it. The joy of obedience in which they could share has no place here; still less that joy that answers to the unmeasured grace that gives as to the beloved Son. Here Jesus speaks of the relationship of love, the Father's name which He had given Him. Never had man known or been given that name till the Son was Man, and now, leaving the world, He passes it over to His own, praying the Holy Father to keep them in its power, and speaks it in the world that that joy which was specially, peculiarly His, impossible to any being but Himself, might be fulfilled in us. (John xvii. 11-13.) That discipline is needed in our case is true—dependence, faith, and exercise of heart and conscience; but the "Name" is guaranteed, and all that it imports as given to the beloved Son Himself. It is now on earth the holy Father keeps us—now that we have communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; and, marvellous grace! not only have we the words spoken by His precious lips in His Father's ears that His joy may be fulfilled in us, but the Holy Ghost come down has revealed this fellowship to us that this joy, which is now our own, "may be full." (1 John i. 1-4.) It is no longer called His joy simply, but ours—"That your joy may be full." (v. 4.) For the "thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is passing, and the true light now shineth." (1 John ii. 8.)

The life, the joy, and the glory of the Son are already ours, because we are in Him, and He in us, and we know it by the Holy Ghost.

W. T. W.

EXPOSITORY.

II.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE 7-16.

THE writer of this epistle had interrupted his description of the "certain men who had crept in unawares" among the saints, by the introduction of three examples of divine judgment upon sinners—sinners amongst His people in the wilderness, amongst angels, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha with the neighbouring cities. He now returns and points out that these men, notwithstanding these public and notorious examples of the certainty of God's judgment against evil, followed similar courses. He says, "*Likewise also*" (better, "Yet in like manner," or, "In like manner nevertheless") "*these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.*" (v. 8.)

Such were three of the characters of evil displayed in these false professors. But first they are designated as "dreamers," for they doubtless, deluded as they were by Satan, trusted in themselves that they were righteous, while they despised others. (See v. 19.) They were indeed dreamers, walking after the imaginations of their own hearts, and thereby lulled into a false security even while the storm of judgment was already gathering over their heads. Moreover, they "defile the flesh"—a term expressive of moral and fleshly corruption. It is remarkable that everywhere in Scripture a lofty religious profession, which is without reality, is always associated with abominable sins. (See Matt. xxiii. 25-28; 2 Tim. iii. 1-5; Titus i. 15, 16, &c.)

Next, they "despise dominion." This expresses the full development of self-will in man, asserting himself and his rights, and at the same time refusing to acknowledge any superior authority. The question is not raised as to what dominion or "lordship" is meant, as it is rather the spirit, the utterly insubject spirit, of these dreamers, that is stigmatized. It is the spirit of insubordination, the growing spirit of the world to-day; and, as has long ago been remarked, the evil current in the world at any period is that which most affects the Church at the time. The cultivation of independence, the rebellion of the mind of man against God's order, the casting off of all reverence for authority, whether in the Church or the world, are here exposed in all their naked deformity as a warning to the saints of God. The fruit, lastly, of despising dominion is seen in speaking evil of dignities—speaking "railingly" against dignities. It is the full licence of the tongue of those who have no veneration for God or man, and who disown all allegiance—of those who say, in the words of the Psalmist, "With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" (xii. 4.)

Having given the portraiture of these evil men, Jude presents a contrast in the conduct of Michael the archangel. "*Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*" (v. 9.) The sole object of the introduction of this controversy between the archangel and Satan is to show the true character of the conduct of those who speak evil of the dignities. These allow themselves to "speak railingly," whereas the archangel, even when dealing with Satan, the impersonation of all

evil, and knowing his enmity against the people of God, did not permit himself to do so, "but with the gravity of one who acts according to God, appealed to the judgment of God Himself."* And in doing so he employs the same language—"the Lord rebuke thee"—as is used by the Lord Himself, when Satan was standing at His right hand to resist Jehovah's gracious interposition on behalf of Jerusalem, as represented by Joshua the high priest. (Zechariah iii. 1, 2.) Surely every child of God may find here guidance for his own conduct in his conflicts with evil, for who can appeal in vain to the Lord when His interests are at stake? How far more frequently would the efforts of the enemy be foiled if the people of God knew how to look to the Lord in this way to avenge His own cause!

Jude pursues the contrast: "*But these speak evil of (or railingly against) those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.*" v. 10.) The reader will notice the recurrence of the word railing, translated in vv. 8 and 10, to "speak evil." It will suffice to indicate its meaning if it is pointed out that the same word is used in the gospels in the phrase, "blaspheme against the Holy Ghost." (Mark iii. 29.) It is a word indeed which betrays that the will and the corruption of the heart are in deadly activity. This is seen in a twofold way

* Michael is mentioned in the book of Daniel (chap. x. 13; xii. 1) as one who "standeth for the children of thy people;" and in Rev. xii. as fighting with his angels against the dragon and his angels. Of the nature of his reasoning with the devil about the body of Moses we have absolutely no knowledge. Speculations on the subject, and especially on the basis of the mysterious statement in Deut. xxxiv. 6, have been endless, but it is one of God's secrets into which it is impossible for man to penetrate.

in the charge which Jude brings against these men. They blaspheme, speak railingly against, the things they know not, probably the spiritual things, or divine truths which were spoken of by the Christians amongst whom they moved, things which they could not comprehend, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Then as to the things which "they understand by mere nature," in these they corrupt themselves, using them as they did only for the gratification of their own appetites and passions. Such were the men who sought to cloak themselves with a profession of Christianity.

Having thus exposed their true character, torn off their mask, so to speak, Jude heaps upon them the most solemn denunciations, adding, at the same time, further distinguishing features: "*Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*" (vv. 11-13.) There is something very solemn in the pronouncement of this prophetic woe over these corrupters of the truth; a woe, which as it embodies the holy indignation of the Spirit of God, carries with it, where there is no repentance, the irrevocable sentence of judgment. "Jude then sums up three kinds or charac-

ters of the evil (as seen in these men), and of estrangement from God ; first, that of nature, the opposition of the flesh to the testimony of God, and to His true people, the impetus which this enmity gives to the will of the flesh ; in the second place, ecclesiastical evil, teaching error for reward, knowing all the while that it is contrary to the truth, and against the people of God ; thirdly, open opposition, rebellion against the authority of God in His true King and Priest." * These three forms of evil were displayed, as we are here reminded, in Cain, Balaam, and Korah ; and now we learn that, through the energy of the enemy, they are reproduced in every age of the Church ; that, in fact, they are typical expressions of the corrupt heart of man in opposition to the work of the Spirit of God. We are therefore put on our guard ; and it is not too much to say that, thus instructed, it is not difficult to detect all these corruptions in the Church of God at the present moment.

The Spirit of God, using Jude as the vehicle of His thoughts, proceeds in the next place to use a variety of figures and illustrations to indicate the worthless and deceitful character of these wolves in sheep's clothing. They are, he says, "*spots in your feasts.*" It was the practice of the early saints, in the fervour of their first love, to gather together in happy fellowship at what was termed love-feasts ; but just as at the feast, which the King made for the marriage of His Son, there was a man who had not on the wedding garment ; so at these feasts, of which Jude speaks, these "dreamers" were found—having no title whatsoever to be present. They were therefore "spots," or, as some prefer to render,

* *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. v. p. 552.

“sunken rocks,” rocks which are peculiarly the danger of the unwary mariner. In like manner these constituted a hidden peril for the saints with whom they were assembled; and yet, being what they were, they feasted “*together with them without fear, pasturing themselves.*” What a proof of hard hearts and seared consciences! For being hypocrites they yet mingled with the saints of God, professing to enjoy what they enjoyed, and were not afraid. Nay, as some of whom Paul writes, their God was their belly, for they “fed themselves,” they gloried in their shame, and minded earthly things. (Phil. iii. 18, 19.)

They are described next as “*clouds without water*”—clouds which as they rose upon the horizon promised fertilizing showers for the weary earth, but as they advanced were discovered to be “without water,” and were swept “along” by the winds; then, changing the figure, they are “*autumnal trees without fruit.*” The season had come for fruits, but these trees, when discerned by the Spirit of God, were discovered to be fruitless; for, indeed, they were “*twice dead,*” dead, as another has said, by nature, and dead by their apostasy, and as such already “rooted up,” or “*plucked up by the roots,*” done with for ever as far as this world was concerned. Two other illustrations are adduced: “*raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shames,*” not simply shame, but shames, for nothing else can proceed from the heart of man under the power of evil (see Matt. xv. 19, 20); and they were also “*wandering stars,*” stars which had left their own orbit, and were now rushing, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, to their destruction, and hence Jude adds, “*To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*”

Let the reader pause and meditate upon this solemn picture; and let him remember as he meditates, that these men, whom the Holy Spirit thus describes, were not the open and avowed enemies of the truth of God, but professing Christians, inside and not outside, mingling freely with the saints, and taking part in their meetings. It is true that they were in heart hypocrites and apostates, but only those who were led of the Spirit, and could discern with His discernment, could have penetrated through the disguise worn. How closely we need to walk with God to be preserved in such an evil day! "The Lord knoweth them that are His;" and if we abide in the secret of His presence, we shall also know them, while we recollect the responsibility resting on every one who owns Christ as Lord, to depart from iniquity.

It is a great consolation to know that the Lord has ever foreseen the devices of the enemy, as well as provided the saints with their guard and defence. Enoch had thus foretold the appearance of these instruments of Satan: "*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.*" (vv. 14, 15.) Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and, as so rapt away from the earth before the judgment of the flood, he is a type of the church—of the saints who will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, before the manifestation of the man of sin and the occurrence of the great

tribulation. And now we learn that he was a prophet, and that it was through him God announced the coming of the Lord in judgment with the "myriads" of His saints.

The significance of this striking prophecy is well shown in the following remarks: "Of old the Spirit had announced by the mouth of Enoch the judgment that should be executed. This presents a very important aspect of the instruction here given; namely, that this evil which had crept in among the Christians (in Jude's day) would continue and still be found when the Lord should return for judgment. . . There would be a continuous system of evil from the apostles' time till the Lord came. This is a solemn witness to what would go on amongst Christians."* The character of the evil to be judged should also be observed. The judgment is to be executed upon all; and then those upon whom the stroke will specially fall are distinguished. They are the "ungodly," and they will be judged for all their "ungodly" deeds, which they have "ungodly" committed, and for all their hard speeches which "ungodly" sinners have spoken against the Lord. The repetition of the word "ungodly" cannot fail to arrest the attention; and it should also be noticed, that the Lord will "convince" them of their guilt; or rather "convict," demonstrate their sin so as to bring it home to them, so that they will be left without excuse. Moreover, as for example in Romans i. ii., so here, the two grounds of judgment are works and the rejection of Christ, their own deeds, and their sin against grace in the person of Christ. Long ages have passed since Enoch prophesied, and the

* *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. v. p. 553.

proclaimed judgment still lingers; but not the less surely will it come; "for when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.)

Several more features are now added: "*These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.*" (v. 16.) Murmuring and complaining characterized Israel, and especially the mixed multitude in the wilderness (see Exodus xvi. xvii; Num. xi. xiv. xvi. xvii; 1 Cor. x. 10), and on this account, as drawing our attention to the parallel, the words are doubtless here used. The next clause goes down to the roots of the evil—walking after their own lusts. They were in fact governed by their own inclinations and desires, and not by the will of God. (Compare Ephes. ii. 3.) Lastly, they were loud and pompous talkers, using "swelling" words; and besides this, they were flatterers, paying court and homage to those out of whom they might be able to make some profit. God, as we are frequently told in the Scriptures, is no respecter of persons; but this is exactly what these "dreamers" were, with a view to their own advantage. How humbling it is to read these various traits of the corrupt heart of man! It is still more so as we remind ourselves that they are here delineated as found in actual expression among the saints of God. And above all is it humbling to remember, even while it leads us to extol the mighty grace of God which has wrought so effectually for us in Christ, that the capacity for all this evil is also found in the hearts of us all.

E. D.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

LUKE xii. 35-37.

THE returning from the wedding in verse 36 does not apply to our Lord. It is only an illustration to show, by the comparison introduced, the suited attitude for those who are awaiting the return of Christ for His people. This is clearly seen in the original. First, the Lord says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;" and then, in order to press home the exhortation, He adds, "And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their own lord, when he will" (whensoever he may) "return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately." It will thus be seen that the illustration runs on to the end of the verse; and what the Lord enjoins by its use is, that just as menservants, uncertain of the time when their master might come back from the wedding, stand waiting inside the house, with their hand as it were on the door, ready to throw it open on the first intimation of his approach, so believers should be found maintaining, while careful also that they are morally ready, the constant expectancy of the coming of their Lord. There is therefore no thought whatever of dispensational teaching through the figure of the wedding in the passage; but it goes entirely to the one point of urging preparedness for and expectancy of the Lord's return. This may be seen from verse 37; for after pronouncing the blessedness of those whom the

Lord shall find watching when He cometh, He proceeds to say, "Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." All know that the Lord took upon Him the form of a servant when He came to earth, and also that He still carries on, at the right hand of God, His service on behalf of His people; but here we learn that, after He has come for His saints, it will still be His delight, in the glory itself, to minister to His own. The heart may well be filled to overflowing with wonder and praise in the contemplation of such ineffable grace!

II.

JOHN iii. 36; 2 COR. v. 20.

THERE is no inconsistency, it need hardly be remarked, between these two scriptures. In the former, the position of the sinner is given; in the latter, the attitude of God in grace towards the sinner in that position. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." He is, in fact, condemned already ("has been already judged"), though the sentence of judgment be not yet executed. Still, he is "under" the wrath of God, which is his due; for, as we read in Romans i., the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. But the day of grace has interposed to postpone the visitation of the righteous judgment of God upon sinners; and during this period He assumes, in the gospel, the attitude of entreaty, beseeching men to be reconciled unto Him, on the ground of Christ having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Col. i.) All by nature are the children of wrath

(Ephes. ii.); but on receiving the message of the gospel, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; moreover, we are set in a totally new place before God in Christ, where there is no condemnation, and we are delivered from the wrath to come. (Romans viii.; 1 Thess. i.) Rejecting the gospel, the sinner is judged according to his works, as also for his slighting and despising grace, as presented in Christ, and he inherits the righteous doom of God's wrath for eternity. Already under it, he is now overwhelmed by it, since it falls upon him as the execution of God's pronounced judgment upon lost sinners. (Compare 2 Thess. i. 7-9.)

III.

JOHN XX. 17, 26-29.

“As to her position, Mary Magdalene represented the Jewish remnant attached to the Person of the Lord, but ignorant of the glorious counsels of God. She thought to have found Jesus again, risen no doubt, but come again into this world to take the place that was due to Him, and to satisfy the affections of those who had left everything for Him in the days of His humiliation, despised of the world, and denied by His people. But she could not have Him thus now. A glory far more excellent, of far greater extent, was in the thoughts of God, and blessing for us far more precious. In receiving Christ she could not rightly receive Him, but according to the thoughts of God with regard to the Saviour. Only her attachment to the Lord opened this blessed path to her. ‘Touch Me not,’ the Lord says; ‘for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I

ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." She could not have the Lord, even when risen, as come again as Messiah upon earth. He must first of all ascend to His Father and receive the kingdom, then return; but there was much more. A work had been accomplished that placed Him, as Man and Son always, with the Father in glory—Man in this blessed relationship; but it was a work of redemption that set His own, redeemed according to the value of that work, in the same glory and in the same relationships as Himself." It was on this very account that the Jewish remnant, represented by Mary, becomes in this message "the company of the Son, associated with Him in the power of the privileges into which He has entered, as risen from amongst the dead." The Lord therefore forbade Mary to touch Him, that He might communicate to her, and to His own through her, this far more exalted and heavenly position and relationship into which they had now been brought through His death and resurrection.

Thomas, on the other hand, is a type of the Jewish remnant *in the last days*, who will own their Messiah only when they see Him. "For they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." (Zechariah xii.) His confession, when he is convinced by seeing the risen Christ, "My Lord and my God," makes this evident. For "Lord God" are the titles by which the Jew has in the past, and the Jew will in the future, address their covenant God; whereas "God and Father," as seen in verse 17, are the names used by Christians as associated with Christ in His own relationships. It is very clear therefore that we have in this scripture a "sketch of the dispensations of God." E. D.

NOTES OF A LECTURE.

COLOSSIANS ii. 1-10.

THE leading truth of this chapter is, that we are not alive in this world. "If ye be dead with Christ . . . why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" The Lord having died, death is written on everything, because we have died with Him, and take our whole place with Christ risen from the dead.

When we come to the details, it is touching to see the interest the apostle has in all the saints, and in those he has never seen. They are on Christ's heart, and as far as we have His heart they are on ours. We are poor, feeble things at it; but the Spirit of Christ in the believer is now concerned with the love of Christ, above all, to those who are His own, though we may not have seen their face in the flesh.

"What great conflict I have for you." There we see what prayer can be (the same word as that used for the Lord agonizing in Gethsemane). It is not merely going to God with confidence as to our Father with our needs, though we cannot get on if we do not; but this is overcoming Satan. Where we have to move the power of Satan (which we have to do in all service), the word of God is the weapon; but the first thing is for the heart to be with God about it. Paul had never seen these saints, but he got exercised with the Lord about them, and the Lord was as much in one place as another. *He* was with them, though Paul was not. It is positive conflict here for the blessing of others. We find a lack

of that now. There is not that kind of interest with God, and connecting His people with Himself so as to set the heart in this conflict and exercise.

Verse 2. "Knit together in love." The presence of God, who is love, always gives that as the primary character—"that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be *able* to comprehend," etc. I cannot understand and apprehend God's mind unless I am with Him; and if I am really with Him I am with *love*. I cannot be with Him without having the spirit of love, for He is love. "To the full assurance of understanding;" that is, Christ *must* be the centre of all glory, and have everything united under Him; it cannot be otherwise. It is part of God's counsels. Taught of God, the soul enters into all this, and sees there is no possibility of its being other. The moment our relationship with God is settled, He tells us things that do not simply concern ourselves. "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." That principle is brought out fully in Eph. i. In the first seven verses you get the condition of the believer in these counsels. Then, when He has put us there, He "abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of His will . . . to gather together in one all things in Christ." It concerns us, for we are joint-heirs; but God says "You are completely at home with Me as a child, and now I am going to tell you all My plans about glorifying Christ." There the heart gets its delight. You must first have salvation; but is that all you are going to think of—yourself? You must *begin* there; but supposing God has brought us to this place, and deigns to call us friends? A friend is one to whom I go and tell what is in my heart—things that do

not concern him at all. That is what God does to us ; and do not tell me it is a matter of indifference to you. *No matter* to be treated by God as His friend ? If by Christ my heart is in that place, it won't be so ; as I walk in love and near to God, He unfolds to me what concerns the glory of Christ, and thus the Christian's heart gets an occupation that makes him grow. Every one must think of something, some more and some less ; but God introduces me into a new world, and my heart gets opened and enlarged to all the thoughts of God.

Verse 10. We are "complete in Him." Christ being the Head, the Body completes it. As God, the Divine Being, He fills all in all ; but as the exalted Man, we are members of His Body, and He is the Head—we the completeness of Him, "Christ in us, the hope of glory," makes us realize it all. That is the mystery of God—Jews and Gentiles brought together. "Mystery" does not mean something mysterious, but something into which we are only initiated by revelation. It means what we do understand ; but should not if it were not revealed. The Christian is initiated. It was hidden, but now is made known, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are there. The sphere into which the believer is brought is God's world. *This* is the fallen world of the first Adam ; *that* is God's world, a new creation altogether. My body is of the old creation, but my soul and spirit, my life as a Christian, of the new. The new is faith ; we are living outwardly in the old, with a nature that belongs to the new, and then comes exercise that we should not live according to the old but the new. "Ye are dead . . . Set your affection on things above."

Then the apostle takes up the two things of the present day: ritualism and rationalism (philosophy). A man may be very clever, but he can only spin his imaginings out of his own mind; he cannot bring out more than he has in him; he may catch flies, and does. Man in the flesh cannot get beyond man's mind, and that knows nothing about God. His conscience does, and wherever God works, it is with the conscience. If I could measure God by my thoughts I should be equal to Him, and He would not be God at all. In philosophy, if you leave God out, it is false; and if you bring Him in, it is religion and not philosophy. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" The moment I have to do with God, if He is God and I am man, my conscience must have to do with Him. In Christ I get the full and blessed revelation of all my heart can live in and by; all the affections of the heart are drawn out. If a man has a strong imagination, he goes to the poetry of ritualism; if he has a hard head, he goes to the reasonings of rationalism—all that is not after Christ.

I get a world of folly and wickedness, or philosophy; but (*v.* 9) I find the fulness of the Godhead bodily in the midst of it all—God in the midst of this world of sin. The living revelation of God Himself as a Man, one of ourselves, though perfectly sinless. "All the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What immense blessedness! He who is to be the centre of this new creation—where do I find Him? In all the glory up there? I find Him a carpenter's Son—if you take His appearance—and laid in a manger. He could not take the glory of the world, which was the vanity of man's heart; but He came in divine grace and love, that man, in his sins, wretchedness, folly, and pride,

might have God close to him, and see One who was above all the folly, and showed out the nature of God. All His life was the unceasing expression of God, who is love, in all the sorrows of man. What do philosophers say when they look at the world with its misery, hatred, and corruption? They say misery is necessary to form man's character. I would rather see a criminal in his wretchedness, than a philosopher saying that misery is necessary. *Sin* has brought it in, and after the sin God has come into the midst of it all. If I say, "I am too vile for Him to be with me," that is truth in the inward parts. He has come as light, and brought the conscience to its bearings.

When do I find a man that told me all that ever I did? When the perfect love of God has brought it to me. Perfect in love and holiness, He was carrying love through the world that there might not be an aching heart that did not know it is in God. He was "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." To one awakened to see what the world is, it is rest to see Him who is perfect grace in it. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." When I have the living God present in this world of sin, I have the key to what God is, and how the evil came in; that man departed from Him. Now instead of theorizing on what the world is, I confess what I am.

"And ye are complete in Him." He was complete before man in his sins, and those who believe are complete before God in Him. This "completeness" was manifested to man, and now what is man (who believes)? "Complete in Him." There was the completeness of God before man in sins, and now the completeness of man before God in holiness. All the

fulness of everything God could delight in is in Him, and I am in Him.

The moment Christ has come in to be my life, I say I am dead. What He has done is mine, because He is become my life, and therefore I do not own the old man ; it is not I ; I do not own it as myself. It is in me to hinder me if it can ; but I have done with it. Christ is my life. "Putting off the body of the flesh," &c. (v. 11.) In Ephesians Paul takes up the counsels of God, and does not see Christ till He is dead ; and he sees us dead in our sins before God. As to God, totally dead ; alive as to sin. Christ comes down into death, puts away the sin as He comes down, and then Christ and we are quickened together. In Romans we are seen living in sin ; not in respect to God, dead in sin. But man is guilty, for he is living in sin without God ; and there you find he has to die, or the old tree will bring forth the old fruit. In Ephesians *he is dead*.

In this chapter (Col. ii.) you get both. As dead, and as living. Both are true ; living to sin, and dead to God. (vv. 12, 13.) "Buried with Him in baptism," verse 12, is Romans. And "you, being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened together with Him," verse 13, is Ephesians. You must go to death, you must get the tree cut down ; and then he shows it has been cut down in Christ's death. Looked at as dead, I want to be made alive. In Romans you do not get the Christian risen, in Colossians you do ; but not sitting in heavenly places, as in Ephesians. Here he is in spirit and heart risen with Christ, and he is to set his affection on things above, and the apostle speaks of the hope laid up for us in heaven. In Ephesians he is sitting there by faith. In Colossians he is risen as to the spirit of

his mind ; he has died and is risen, and has to look up. I do not get the Holy Ghost here. In Ephesians it is full union—Christ and we one in heavenly places. In Romans it is merely individual, and the Spirit seals. In Colossians you get divine life ; for the man is risen. Thus for our instruction we get different aspects in the different epistles. Justification is in Romans, not in Ephesians ; for there it is a new creation, and that God cannot justify. Here the soul is going through the world with the consciousness of being risen. Are *you* passing through the world with the consciousness of being risen ? It is a question of realizing it first as a truth, and then getting our affections in it, as the effect of the blessed truth that “the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” in Christ as a Man, has been down here, and we are in Him before God. He is the Head of all principality and power. Man (Christ as Man) has been exalted to this place, to be set over all the works of His hands. He is the one God delights in, and we are complete in Him. We live in the world as those risen with Him while here, and our affections up there. How far are your hearts living in the objects Christ has brought you to ? Christ brings us to another world. Adam and sin brought us to this. Are our hearts living in that ? After such a thing as Christ Himself visiting us, and dying for us, how far is He *all* to us ?

J. N. D. (1871.)

NEITHER spiritual reasonings nor inferences, however correctly drawn, have the divine authority of Scripture over the soul. Note, in this connection, that the Lord, in His conflict with Satan, confined Himself to the very words of Scripture.

EXPOSITORY.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE 17-25.

JUDE, in the next place, directs his attention to the saints themselves, to those who were walking apart from the evils he had indicated, and fortifies their souls with needed words of wisdom and guidance, while also pointing out the means by which they might be preserved from the wiles and seductions of the enemy. And with what relief must he have turned from his solemn denunciation of these apostates to the encouragement of the beloved saints! "*But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*" (vv. 17-19.)

The reader will recall that the correct reading of verse 1 is "beloved in" God the Father. It is doubtless on this account that Jude addresses the saints here, and in verse 20, as "beloved," not only therefore as expressing his own love in the Spirit, but also as being in communion with the heart of God the Father concerning His people. And what would he have them do in respect of the evils by which they were surrounded? First and foremost, he would have them to recollect the warnings which had been given by the apostles. Not only had Enoch prophesied of these ungodly men, but the apostles of the Lord also had

foretold their appearance. The Lord indeed never leaves His people unforeshadowed of the dangers and enemies they will have to encounter. (See Matt. xxiv. ; John xv. xvi. ; 1 Tim. iv. ; 2 Tim. iii. ; Rev. ii. iii. ; &c.) And if His warnings are treasured up in their minds, they are neither surprised nor disheartened when there are fears within as well as fightings without, but they are prepared for conflict with every form of Satan's enmity. The Lord thus said to His disciples, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. *Behold, I have told you before.*" (Matt. xxiv. 24, 25.) How necessary then is it for the believer to be acquainted with these warnings of coming dangers!

To avoid all possibility of mistake in the identification of those of whom the apostles had prophesied, Jude gives more characteristic features. They would be "mockers" or "scoffers;" men utterly without reverence, and able to make sport of holy things, and led only by their own ungodly lusts. They will, notwithstanding, "separate themselves," not from evil, either moral or doctrinal, it need scarcely be said, but in a proud Pharisaical spirit, boasting of superior knowledge or intellectual progress, and affecting to despise the humble Christians who still implicitly believe and rest in the word of God; they will thus take a position apart, forming themselves, it may be, into a school of opinion. But not they who commend themselves are approved; and, in one sentence, Jude strips from these apostates their gay clothing, and exhibits them as they appear before the eye of God. They are, he tells us, nothing but "natural" men; for

such is the force of the word rendered "sensual," natural men; those who have never been born again, or cleansed in the precious blood of Christ, and hence not having the Spirit of God. Is it possible, does any one enquire, that such men should be found among, and be reckoned as, Christians? Let such an one look around and behold what exists to-day. He will soon discover that there are those who hold high places among Christians; nay, that there are some who occupy prominent places in the pulpits of Christendom, who deride the simple faith of their forefathers, who preach a so-called morality instead of Christ, and who seek, in every possible way, to undermine the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the truths of Christianity. And what are these men? They indeed are mockers, walking after their own ungodly desires—desires which shut out God; and we may know, therefore, by the very fact of their existence, and their increasing number, that we are "in the last time."

We have now the second means of safety given: "*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*" (vv. 20, 21.) This, then, is the resource of the saints, as well as the means of preservation, in troublous times. The action of Nehemiah has already been cited; and few can read the two books (Nehemiah and Jude) without being struck with the parallel. Both alike had to urge to defence and warfare, and both also encouraged the saints to build. We learn, therefore, from both that, when we have to contend earnestly with the foe in defence of the truth, it is above all necessary to build ourselves

up upon our most holy faith. Those who wield God's sword must be in a state to use it, if they would come victoriously out of the conflict.

Let us, however, examine these exhortations. The faith, "your most holy faith," as in verse 3, is the thing believed, in a word, the truth, and what Jude desired was that the saints should be well grounded in it, built up upon it, as on a sure foundation which cannot be shaken, and thus prepared for the attacks of the enemy; that they should be resting on the truth, the great truths of Christianity, as the source of strength for their own souls, being edified by it, filled with the thoughts of God, revealed by His Word, that Word by which we are sanctified, so that, reposing securely upon divine foundations, they might be strong for the conflict to which they were being called. This would involve diligence in the reading of the Scriptures; and accordingly we find that, when the Lord placed Joshua at the head of His host, and appointed him to lead Israel in their conflicts, He gave him the following charge: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Joshua i. 8.)

The word of God and prayer are constantly combined in the Scriptures; and thus the next thing enjoined is "praying in the Holy Ghost." It might almost be said that these two things cannot well be disjoined, for whenever the word of God is received into the heart it must produce prayer. Jude speaks of "praying in the Holy Ghost," for in truth no other is

real prayer. Petitions may be offered, prayers made, but the only prayer according to God is that which is the fruit of those desires begotten within us by His Spirit. Here, however, praying will rather mean the maintenance in the soul by the Holy Ghost of the constant sense of entire dependence upon God, for that is both the secret of safety and strength. (Compare Psalm xvi. 1.)

In the next place it is, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." It is to be remarked that the word "keep," as is often the case in similar exhortations, is in a past tense (the aorist), the significance of which is that we are to seek "to be in that state," and perhaps reminding us of our own powerlessness, and of our need of constant grace in order to be so kept. The love referred to is God's love to us, which is unvarying and unchanging, only Jude would have us in the sense and enjoyment of it. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. This is common Christian knowledge; but it is quite another thing to be living with the consciousness of it in our souls. This is the secret of calm and blessed enjoyment in the presence of God; and it is the portion only of such who are walking in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, while it becomes in the heart of the believer the producing cause of holy affections, whether towards God or our fellow-saints. (Compare John xv. 9-12.)

In the sense, moreover, of the love of God, we are to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." A reference to Heb. iv. 16 will explain the saint's need of mercy while passing through the wilderness. There it is mercy for our weakness, ministered to us at the throne of grace in response to

the intercession of Christ as the High Priest. Here it is the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as knowing our constant need of it, because He Himself has trodden the wilderness. In the gospels we have an exquisite exemplification of the way in which He bestows it upon His own. In Gethsemane, when, during His agony in the prospect of the cross, He found His disciples, Peter, James, and John, sleeping, He said unto Peter, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. xxvi. 40, 41.) In the tenderness of His heart He felt for them in their weakness. He was touched with a feeling of their infirmities, and He ministered to them the needed mercy. What heart like His heart? And the Spirit of God would have us count upon Him, upon His tender compassion, His mercy, all along our pathway unto eternal life. As has been written by another, "It is the mercy needed along all the path, mercy reaching to the end, and carrying us into eternal life."*

The following verses relate to the attitude and conduct of the saints towards those whom Jude has described: "*And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out*

* Some confine the mercy to the eternal life at the end, regarding eternal life as the issue and full expression of the mercy of our Lord; but we prefer the interpretation as given above. Eternal life, as also in Paul's epistles, is looked upon as future, and it is therefore viewed in its results; viz., conformity to Christ in glory. In John's doctrine it is a present possession, expressed in and through the believer, whatever his growth or intelligence. All alike possess it, and may know that they have it (1 John v. 13), though the manifestation of it may vary according as they are babes, young men, or fathers.

of the fire: hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."* (vv. 22, 23.)

The connection of these verses with the foregoing indicates a principle of much importance. Jude presses first upon the saints the acquisition of a right state of soul—urges edification, the realization of their dependence in the power of the Spirit, their need of the enjoyment of the love of God, and of counting upon the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ; and then he instructs them how to act in respect of those who, though inside, were really enemies of the truth. The lesson is, that unless we ourselves are walking before God in the power of the truths we profess to hold, we are not qualified to deal with those who have gone astray; and this lesson is one which we all need to remember at the present moment.

Another thing is to be remarked; that discernment is needed in dealing with such. "Of some," says Jude, "have compassion, making a difference." There may be leaders in the evil, corrupters of the truth, from whom we should stand entirely apart, those who are to be utterly rejected; others, those who are misled, simple souls who have been deluded by subtle speech, entangled by specious reasonings, are to be sought out and recovered. On these we are to have compassion—distinguishing their case from that of their deceivers. There are others again, occupying another position, who are to be saved with fear, "pulling them out of the fire." These have gone far in self-will and corruption, and thus it is only as in communion with God

* There is some confusion in the readings of these verses, and many emendations are offered. But as the sense, whichever may be adopted, is but little affected, we leave the text as it stands in the Authorized Translation.

about them and their deeds that their case can be reached; for, while using all energy for their deliverance, even the garment spotted with the flesh must be hated. Both priestly separation, and priestly discernment, are necessary for such warfare with the power of the enemy.

Finally, Jude concludes with an ascription of praise, in which he also directs the saints to the only source of their preservation: "*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*"* (vv. 24, 25.) The saints are thus divinely cast upon God; and it must have been an immense comfort, amid the pressure of evil on every side, to be in this way reminded that God was able to keep them from falling, then and all the way through, until they were presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. And never was it more necessary than now to remember this truth. It may be, and is, an evil day, and the enemy is both subtle and active; but it is still true that God is able to keep us from falling, however hot the fiery trial, or fierce the temptation. There is no excuse, therefore, to be offered if we fall; the fault is wholly our own, and demands unsparing self-judgment. What a foundation then is laid for our faith in these few simple words—God is able to keep us from falling! And what a different record we should have had of our past lives if we had lived in the daily and hourly recollection of it! Then our

* Most editors agree in the omission of the word "wise" before "God," and in adding after "Saviour," "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

eyes would have ever been up to Him, from whom alone our help comes, and who, when we are walking in dependence on Him, will never suffer our foot to be moved.

Jude ministers, however, not only present consolation through the mighty succour of God, but also encouragement in the glorious prospect when, all the trials past, God Himself would present the saints faultless before His glory with exceeding joy. The word "faultless" is the same as is used of the Lord Himself when it says, He "offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14. See also Ephes. i. 4; 1 Peter i. 19, etc.) Such will be the perfected condition of the saints; and of necessity so, as otherwise they could not stand before the presence of the glory of God. It is no wonder then that the words are added, "With exceeding joy;" for then they will perceive the full results of their "common salvation," and understand, as they had never understood before, that all the blessedness into which they have then been brought, full and entire conformity to Christ in glory, as well as their preservation from all the dangers attendant upon their wilderness journey, has flowed from the heart of Him before whom they now stand in eternal blessedness. And their joy will doubtless find expression in this ascription, provided for them when down here in the stress of the conflict, "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."* The songs of heaven may therefore be learnt on earth; for God is above all time, unchanging, and His praise is therefore eternal. But it is grace, and grace alone, that can open our lips to sing His praise. E. D.

* The rendering of the Revised Version.

THE POWER OF GRACE.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 1, 2.

DIVINE grace, or the free and unmerited favour of God to undeserving objects, is the source of all our blessings. We were sinners, and justly exposed to the wrath of God; we were utterly unclean, and entirely unworthy of anything but judgment. It was when we were "sinners," and "without strength," that Christ died for us. All hope then, and confidence in God, is founded on *divine grace*; not that *righteousness* could possibly be excluded; hence it is written, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace reign through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans v. 21.)

Timothy had been reminded in the first chapter of the "grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," and is here, as the Lord's servant and the apostle's child in the faith, enjoined to be "*strong in the grace* that is in Christ Jesus" as the spring of all true service. Elsewhere saints were exhorted to "be *strong in the Lord*, and in the power of His might;" but here our strength is from divine grace—"the grace that is *in* Christ Jesus."

We can never forget when first the grace of God, as expressed in the death of His Son, dawned upon our guilty, sin-stricken souls. So sweet was God's declaration of His marvellous love to us in the gospel, that, instead of being overtaken with divine wrath, and judged for our sins, we found that God, though just, was our

Saviour, and that His grace in and through Christ Jesus brought unto us eternal salvation. Nor can we fail to remember the preciousness of the first ray of hope that rose upon our desponding hearts and burdened consciences, when we found that, sinful and unclean as we were, divine love brought to us eternal salvation as the free and wholly unmerited gift of God. This was *grace* indeed!

But more than this. After dwelling on the unutterable agony, the unmingled sorrows—on what it cost the Saviour to bring us into such blessings, we became filled with wonder, love, and praise, as we drank more deeply of the grace of God, and knew that Jesus was raised again for our justification. Not only was He “delivered for *our offences*,” but “was raised again for *our justification*.” Yes, it was for *us*; for “by Him all that believe are justified from all things.” (Romans iv.; Acts xiii. 39.) What marvellous grace that could thus justify the ungodly, and reckon us righteous on the principle of faith without works! As another has said, “We believe in a God who has intervened in *power* to raise Him from among the dead, who had *borne our offences*, and who, being raised, is the eternal witness that our sins are put away.”

We are further taught by the Spirit, through the Word, that Christ, who had vindicated, satisfied, and glorified God about our sins, had thus merited as Man the highest exaltation. He was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name,” &c. And as the work of the cross was *for us*, we must be therefore *with Him* for ever. If divine righteousness set Him on the Father’s

throne, divine grace through righteousness must bring us into the Father's house; for the Saviour suffered for us, and He must see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Hence, said the Son to the Father, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them. . . . Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." (John xvii. 22, 24.)

But even now, while in a mortal body, and waiting for God's Son from heaven, we know that divine grace has brought us into new relationships, and set us in a totally new and unchanging position before God. We are thus no longer looked at as children of Adam, but children of God; not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, though we often painfully feel that the flesh is in us. We *know*, on the authority of God's word, that our old man has been crucified with Christ, that we have died with Christ; thus we have now no standing in the flesh, and our history as to the first man is for ever closed by the death and judgment of the cross. We *know* also that when we were dead in sins, God, in His rich mercy, put life into our souls. We were quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places *in* Christ Jesus; and by the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit are united to Him for ever, who is the Head of the body, the Church. Thus we are always looked at by God, where His grace and power have set us, as in Christ, complete, or filled full, in Him in whom the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells. What marvellous heights of blessing then we have been brought into by the grace of God in and through Christ Jesus!

But more than all this, blessed be God, there is grace

in Christ Jesus to care for and minister to us every step of the way. However much we are debtors to Him for grace, still He saith, "He giveth more grace." No doubt divine government works also concerning us, and "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" still, withal, God waiteth to be gracious. All His ways toward us are according to "perfect love;" and even chastisement is for our profit, and that we may be partakers of His holiness. Moreover, whatever be the humiliation, or sorrow, or suffering we may have to pass through, still the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This grace we are to reckon on for every part of the wilderness journey, and the crowning act of divine grace will be to conform us to the image of His Son. Even now, as we have seen, as to our *standing*, we are always before God—"in the Beloved," in His cloudless favour, objects of the Father's love and care as His "dear children;" we are also under the constant ministry of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, and under the unceasing oversight of the Lord Jesus, who is for us before the face of God, and ever active on our behalf according to our need. What abundance of GRACE! How true it is that the Father loves us as He loved His Son; that He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" that He is bringing "many sons to glory," and "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (John xvii. 23, 26; Eph. ii. 7.)

Divine grace meets our hearts, and establishes our confidence in God. "We love Him, because He first loved us." We may possibly have our minds well

stored with orthodox doctrines, and be filled with knowledge which puffeth up; but the truth in the love of it is another thing. We may be also taken up with ordinances, or human inventions and traditions, while the heart is barren and unfruitful toward God. We are told, therefore, that "it is a good thing that the *heart* be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein;" while we are warned against being "carried about with divers and strange doctrines." (Hebrews xiii. 9.) Divine grace makes God known in goodness, and brings present and eternal blessings to us. Thus God is made known as having come near in Christ to love, bless, and keep us for ever. Nor are these ways of grace limited toward us; for yet it is said, as we have before noticed, that "He giveth more grace," and His present throne is a "throne of grace" to which we are invited to come boldly to "obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) Is it any marvel then that another apostle should be directed by the Spirit to speak of "the *true grace of God wherein ye stand*," of "the *grace that is to be brought*" to us "at the revelation of Jesus Christ," and of God as "the *God of all grace*, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus"? (1 Peter i. 13; v. 10, 12.)

There is nothing that will enable us to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart like the enjoyment of "the grace" which is in Him; nothing so constrain us to seek His honour, and to live not unto ourselves, but to Him who died and rose again for us; nothing so separate us unto Him, and detach us from what is contrary to His mind; nothing so fortify us against

the doctrines and deceivableness of men's traditions, and enable us to bear loss and suffering for the truth's sake with cheerfulness. Apart from the sense of divine grace, we easily lose the joy of the Father's love, and the sense of His delight in us, and then gradually slide into the love of the world. If we do not abide in Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, how can we serve and honour Him ?

But there is *truth* to be preserved, as well as *grace* to do it. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Both were perfectly manifested in Him; and such as are strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus are admonished to care for the truth. "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." God's present truth as to His assembly; the gift, indwelling, and operations of the Holy Spirit here during our Lord's absence; the hope of our Lord's coming; and the walk in love, obedience, and righteousness suited to it, were at that moment in jeopardy; for all in Asia had turned away from Paul, and he expected that many would "turn away their ears from *the truth*, and shall be turned unto fables." He, therefore, urges Timothy to be courageous, and to maintain the truth at all costs, and use every true means for its continuance by committing it to faithful men. (2 Tim. ii. 2.)

Observe, it is not *useful* men here, but *faithful* men; those whose hearts are set on pleasing God, and keeping His Word. To others the truth of God is of little value; but to the faithful, walking in "the truth," and contending earnestly "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," are matters of the gravest

importance. Such do not judge the truth, but let the truth judge them. They rejoice in the divine authenticity of the written Word, and bow to its authority as final and decisive. The truth reveals Christ, and Christ is the truth. It exposes and warns us against the doctrines and traditions of men, whether they appear in a rationalistic or ritualistic garb. Nothing can be more positive than the truth. Well, then, might an aged apostle say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth." If, when the Galatian believers slipped away from grace, they had little regard for the truth of God, and walked carnally, so we may be assured that it is only by our being "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," that we shall really love "the truth," and seek to spread it for the glory of God. H. H. S.

SCRIPTURE NOTE.

TITUS i. 5.

It is abundantly clear that the apostle directed Titus, as well as Timothy, to appoint elders, and that, as guided by the Holy Spirit, he names certain qualifications to govern them in the selection of these elders or bishops. Paul himself also, together with Barnabas, "appointed elders in every church." (Acts xiv. 23.) We say "appointed," for neither here nor in Titus is there the slightest justification for the rendering "ordained." It is quite true that in ecclesiastical usage, in after years, this meaning was attached to the word in Acts xiv.; but no such thought lies in the word itself, for it simply signifies "to choose," as may be seen from

Acts x. 41, 2 Cor. viii. 19. The word in Titus is not the same, and has the meaning of constituting or establishing. The question raised, however, is, If the apostles, with Timothy and Titus, appointed elders or bishops, why may not the saints now? Two opposite usages are prevalent. First, ecclesiastics, claiming to be successors of the apostles, assert their authority to "ordain;" and, secondly, those who refuse this dogma of apostolical succession contend that the saints themselves possess the privilege of choosing their own officers. There is no scripture to warrant the practice of either the one or the other. The apostles, as inspired men, both appointed elders and delegated their authority to do so to Timothy and to Titus; but they have not in any of their epistles left any direction either for the selection of successors to themselves or for the choice of elders by the saints. On the other hand, Paul, when he warned the elders of Ephesus of coming dangers, commended them to God and to the word of His grace. (Acts xx.) The apostle Peter, in like manner, desires that the saints should turn, in their perplexities, to the written Word. (2 Peter iii. 1, 2; i. 15.) What then remains as to elders? The divinely-given qualifications for such are contained in the Scriptures; and wherever these are detected, as possessed in any measure by a brother, the saints are responsible to acknowledge such an one as fit to rule in the assembly. (See 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 17, &c.) The work of elders may therefore still be done according to God, though there be no existent authority to appoint to the office. It may be added that no such thing is found in the Scriptures as one elder or bishop presiding over or ruling in the assembly.

E. D.