

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 RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

JOHN xi.

ALTHOUGH in this gospel our blessed Lord's rejection is assumed from the outset (chap. i. 10, 11), we are yet permitted to see the growing enmity of His enemies, which culminated in His crucifixion. It was all over with the Jews indeed at the end of chapter x. In answer to the declaration of the glory of His person in the words, "I and My Father are one," they "took up stones again to stone Him"; and thus in spirit and intention they were already His murderers. Still further, unable to answer His words, "they sought again to take Him"; but He "went away from out" (not "*escaped* out of") their hand. Man had now fully manifested himself: the light had shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. Not only was his guilt demonstrated by refusing the sent One from the Father, but his state of spiritual death was also shown by the absence of any, even the slightest, response to the presence of God before their eyes in the person of His beloved Son. They had both seen and hated both Him and His Father. (Chap. xv. 24.)

God's answer to man's rejection of Christ begins in chapter xi. He testifies to Him as His beloved Son; and in chapter xii. He continues His testimony, but

there as the anointed King of Israel, and as the Son of man. The two chapters together therefore contain the divine threefold witness to Christ in these characters; but we confine ourselves now to the testimony of chapter xi. The key to it is found in verse 4: "When Jesus heard [the message from Mary and Martha that Lazarus was sick], He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." How little had the sisters of Lazarus entered into any such thought concerning the sickness of their brother! and yet we are permitted to see that it was all divinely arranged—the sickness, the death, and the issue—to bring about an undeniable testimony to the precious truth that Jesus was the Son of God; and, moreover, that it was for the glory of God to produce such a testimony. We thus learn that God has a purpose in the smallest matters of our daily life; and also that whatever tends to exalt His beloved Son brings glory to Himself. Truly then our only concern should be to be in communion with the mind of God as to His purposes with us.

Bearing in mind then the subject of the chapter, we may pursue the narrative. It may seem strange at first sight that Jesus, having heard that Lazarus was sick, abode two days still in the same place where He was; and the more so, in that it comes immediately after the statement that He loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. But herein lies the blessed secret of the Lord's position in all the gospel. He had come to do the Father's will; and hence we see Him here waiting upon that will, governed wholly by it, and not

by His own affections, pure and perfect as they were. Albeit, therefore, He had received the touching appeal—an appeal to His heart: “Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick”—He would not move until the time appointed by the Father had arrived. Alas! how differently we often act; for would it not be enough for most of us to hear that our presence was claimed by someone in need, to whom we were bound by intimate ties? Let us then learn that there is a higher region than even the dictates of the tenderest affection; that, in a word, the will of God is the Christian’s only law.

At the end of the two days Jesus said to His disciples, “Let us go into Judæa again.” In perfect communion with the Father’s will in remaining where He was, He is also in communion with it in departing. In ignorance of this, His disciples thought only of the possible danger of exposing Himself again to the hatred of the Jews. But—as the Lord graciously explained to them—to walk in obedience to God’s will is to walk in the light of the day, and in that path there is no stumbling. He revealed to them, moreover, the object of His journey, and told them plainly that Lazarus was dead, adding that He was glad for their sakes that He was not there, “to the intent ye may believe.” The sickness was for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby; but in it all He thought of the need of His disciples, as He desired them to perceive the glory of His divine person. What a heart is Thine, blest Lord, thus at such a moment, when also Thine own death was in prospect, to express Thy love for Thy poor disciples!

And Thou art ever the same—the same to us as to them; so that we may ever confidently repose upon the immutable love of Thine infinite heart. He went, therefore, accompanied by His disciples, to the scene of sorrow and death to which now He had been both called and sent.

The Spirit of God invites our especial attention to the fact, that when Jesus came Lazarus had been in the grave four days already. The certainty of his death, therefore, had been clearly demonstrated. This was provided for in the wisdom of God; for while the same power was required to open the eyes of a blind man as to raise the dead, it was now a question of Christ being the resurrection and the life. Man, moreover, could not dispute the testimony afforded by raising the dead: he might deny the fact, but if the fact were established he could not refuse its significance, except in wilful enmity. Witnesses of the power of Jesus were also provided through the death of Lazarus. Jerusalem was nigh to Bethany, "and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother." God never surrenders His government—and this is the solace of the faithful heart—and He thus orders everything according to the counsels of His own will, whatever may be the thoughts and the activities of men. He glorifies Himself even through the seemingly trivial circumstances of human affections.

Martha, still Martha, notwithstanding the Lord's tender warning and reproof on another occasion, was

the first to go and meet Him. And no sooner had she come into His presence than she ventured to utter what was almost a reproach: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Mary, it is true, uses the same language afterwards, but with what different tones and attitude! But the fact that both greeted the Lord with the same words reveals surely the exercises which had been occasioned by the Lord's delay. And cannot our hearts understand that they might have been tempted to say, "If the Lord loved Lazarus, if He loved us, would He tarry so long?" Martha did add—what, alas! only showed how little she had comprehended of the truth of His person—"But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Was Jesus then only a prophet, like Elisha for example? The Lord saw down to the bottom of her heart, with all its *conflict of contending emotions*; and, pitying His poor servant, He at once announced the antidote to all the sorrow of death in the coming resurrection: "Thy brother shall rise again." Ah! yes, her unbelief replied, "in the resurrection at the last day"—in this not going beyond the common belief of every orthodox Jew.

Yet it was to Martha, and to Martha in this state of hopeless sorrow, though in the midst of it she clung to the Lord as her only refuge, that He made the wondrous proclamation: "I am the resurrection and the life"—I, Jesus, am this, in my own Person. "The Lord speaks here as already present to accomplish the great results of His power, still hidden in His Person, but of which He was going to give the proof in the

resurrection of Lazarus. When He shall exercise this power, he that believeth in Him, though he were dead, shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die. Power is in His person: the present proof of it was found in the resurrection of Lazarus; the accomplishment of it will be when He shall come back to exercise this power in its fulness. In the meantime the thing is realized according to the place Christ has taken. He raised up Lazarus for life in this world where He was." Death is the end of human life and hope; resurrection is the end of death, and the introduction of the raised one (we do not now speak of Lazarus) into a world where death shall be no more. Christ died and rose again, and it is in virtue of His glorious work that He has become for all His people the resurrection and the life. (Compare 1 Cor. xv. 20-23, 54.)

There can be little doubt that the Lord refers to the two classes of believers who will be found on His return—believers who have fallen asleep, "the dead in Christ," who will then "live," be raised, and live for ever with Him; and those who, alive on the earth, will never die, but who will be changed into His own likeness without passing through death, entering thus upon a resurrection condition in incorruptible and glorified bodies, and altogether conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Martha, it may be said, could not enter into these truths. No, but the revelation was now made, and hence the question which the Lord addressed to her—and to you, beloved reader—"Believest

thou this?" Every divine communication challenges the heart to which it is made; and the challenge may not be refused without sorrow and loss. Martha's response showed indeed that she had not understood it; but still there was real faith—faith in Christ according to Jewish hopes—for she said, "Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Her confession of faith did not go beyond the second Psalm; and yet, believing as she did in Christ, she possessed—although she knew it not—the title to all the blessing, which was bound up in, and connected with the whole truth of His glorious Person. So was it with Andrew, who, notwithstanding he had followed Jesus to the place where He dwelt, could only testify of Him as the Messiah. And so is it now with all the children of God. But blessed are those who under the power of the attractions of a glorified Christ press on, with daily increasing energy, to know Him ever more fully; and to enjoy all that He has secured for them through His death, resurrection, and His life at the right hand of God.

"THE life of a risen man is not of this world; it has no connection with it. He who possesses this life may pass through the world, and do many things that others do. He eats, works, suffers; but, as to his life and objects, he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. Christ, risen and ascended up on high, is his life. He subdues the flesh, he mortifies it, for in point of fact he is down here, but he does not live in it."

THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE.

THE service of God in this world has always been attended with difficulty and opposition.

In Old Testament times the servants sent to the Lord's vineyard all came back disappointed, beaten, or stoned; some never got back at all, but were put to death by those from whom they sought fruit for Jehovah.

In the New Testament service, the one who was chiefly used in carrying the gospel of God's glory to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile, had to feel not only the cruel opposition of the world at large—the scourge, stones, and bonds—but to lament, at the end of his course, the desertion and neglect of the greater part of those who had received the truth from him.

There would be enough to deter even an active and zealous man in such a course; and I well remember the words of an old servant of the Lord to one who was discouraged by the ingratitude of those he had endeavoured to serve: "Christianity is not shown forth in seeking anything upon earth, not even the gratitude of Christians, but in bringing into the earth power from another sphere."

The spirit of service in Christianity is *love*, and love that is willing to spend and be spent for others (as we see in the apostle quoted above), with no reward, but even ready to love the Corinthians all the more the less they loved him. (2 Cor. xii. 15.)

It must have been very trying to carry on this service to the Corinthians. There is indeed a pleasure

in working for others who show a little gratitude and interest in return for the service; but what must it have been to the heart of the devoted apostle to receive nothing but unkindness and ingratitude from those for whom he had suffered and laboured so much? If in natural things it is so much more painful to have a thankless child than to feel the serpent's tooth, what is it in spiritual things where the active care and service, the fruit of true Christian affection, is slighted?

The motive and reason for continuing thus to serve the ungrateful is found in the love itself, and not in its objects. This is exactly the character of love, the divine nature; there is nothing self-seeking in it, and if the eye be single, the most gifted servant will be quite content to be misunderstood and ill-requited in carrying out the service towards the Church of God.

We should notice the self-denying way in which the apostle met the needs of the weakest; being free from all, he made himself the servant of all, that he might gain the more: "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

The spirit of service in Paul was evidently the spirit of love; there was that true seeking the good of others, though at his own expense, and the perseverance in it that is peculiar to love.

In 1 Corinthians xiii. love is insisted upon by the apostle. The gifts are found in chapter xii., the use of them in chapter xiv., and the thirteenth chapter comes between as being the preparation for their use.

I suppose, to make a very simple illustration, a

number of tools of steel; before using them they must be tempered in oil. Gifts must be tempered in *love* to be used in the assembly of God; and at this point I would ask my reader to go through 1 Corinthians xiii. before proceeding with this paper.

* * * * *

The sedulous care, as that of a nurse with her children, the watching and praying, the warning every man with tears—all these things flow from the true spirit of service. Paul would never have used his superior knowledge to startle the weak and poor (though I have no doubt his spiritual and vigorous ministry often startled the careless), but have condescended to the youngest, most uninterested saint—as he would have borne with the most ignorant heathen who showed any sign of seeking after God.

But we have a far more glorious and touching impression of love than that which was seen in Paul. We have the perfect love of God shown forth in the service of Jesus Himself, and we must not close these few remarks without looking at Him of whom it is said: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." (Isaiah xlii. 1-3.)

No doubt this service is not yet fully accomplished, but I wish to keep to the aspect of self-denying perseverance in a path where nothing but ingratitude

from man was found, and the condescension that could come down to the feeblest objects. This is divine love.

“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” * (Isaiah l. 4.)

We shall never have fully understood what that love was, and is, that could descend from supreme glory to the place of the dependent man, who learned obedience by the things which He suffered, so as to be able to help and serve the weary and heavy laden. But it is a happy thing for us that we have the Lord Himself as the pattern and model of service.

“I am among you as He that serveth,” He said, at a time when all the sufferings of the cross were before Him, and when there was but little response from those who were the objects of His care. If we wish really to fulfil our mission we must be near Him whose blessed life here on earth was spent in perfect service to God and man, who never sought anything for Himself, but always the good of others.

I recollect it being said of one whose life was spent in serving the Church of God, that he had worked “behind the world”; that is, not as a prominent popular teacher, but rather keeping in the background whilst seeking the good of souls. And I think that love would produce this.

This might form a kind of sequel to the question of the use of gifts in our day; for the gift and

* Some prefer to read here “as those who are taught,” “as the learners.”

responsibility of using it being ascertained, I think that the true spirit of service must be known, and it is known in the persevering love of the perfect Servant who is Himself the resource, the object, the beginning and the end of all true work.

It is an interesting thing for those who desire to serve the Church of God through grace to examine all the passages in Scripture where "serve," "servant," occur; and I think that, numerous as they are, the sum of them all will be contained in *love*. • I am speaking of course of true service to the Lord and to His own.

With this there need be no fear of coming short. Difficulties disappear before love, distances are spanned, obstacles vanish. If it be true that your resources are in the Lord Himself—no matter what your gift or service may be—you shall accomplish it with a heart happy in Him, sustained by Him, in what is otherwise impossible, to the very end. Sustained, I will say, until that day when His servants shall serve Him in His own glorious sphere; when they shall see His face, and bear His name in their foreheads—for love shall never fail; no, never, through the endless ages of eternity.

E. L. B.

"ALL that belonged to the Father belonged to the Son, and all that belonged to the Son belonged to the Father. What a bond between the Father, the Son, and the disciples! They belonged to the Father, the Father had given them to the Son, and it was in them that the Son was to be glorified."

MEPHIBOSHEETH.

THE grace of God to the sinner has often been illustrated, both in preaching and in print, by the story of "the kindness of God" shown by David to Mephibosheth. And viewed in this light the illustration is certainly very beautiful, so far as it goes; for we must never stop at any illustration as though it circumscribed the extent or the fulness of the grace of God as set forth in the gospel.

Not all the types and all the illustrations found in the Old Testament, taken together, can adequately set forth the grace that God has shown to man in Christ Jesus; nor yet that blessed work wrought by Jesus on the cross, and the redemption which He has accomplished, whereby grace can "reign through righteousness unto eternal life."

It is well that this should be borne in mind when preaching from types or illustrations, however precious they may be because of their being such. One would only desire that we might meditate on them more, and value them more *as such*, and as directing our hearts and minds to Him of whom they speak, and to the exceeding riches of God's grace now revealed, of which we are to know ourselves the objects and subjects.

This, however, suggests another question of much importance, namely, What is the effect produced in the heart, and thus on the whole life and character, by the revelation of this grace of our God? And it is this side of the truth (what I may call the

subjective side) which I desire now more especially to consider, and of which we find a beautiful and valuable illustration in Mephibosheth. And when we consider this side of the truth, and of this illustration of it, have we not to own that, while the grace shown to us far surpasses in magnitude, and outshines in glory and blessedness, that of which he was the subject, yet the answer on his part to that grace, the moral effects produced in forming the affections of his heart towards David, and in affecting his whole course and character, make us conscious of the dulness and coldness of our hearts, as having been so little affected by the love of God and of Christ? Hence the little effect produced on our character here, either in separation from the course of this world, or in devotedness to Christ and His interests here, where He is rejected and while He is rejected. We do well to deal honestly and truly with ourselves as to why this should be so—to challenge our own hearts as before God, and not to put the question from us for “a more convenient season.” For] if there be a cause we do well to ascertain what it is, and we need not fear to discover it. There is a sure remedy; and, moreover, we can hide nothing, for the day is coming when the counsels of the heart will all be made manifest. (1 Cor. iv.) We have, indeed, to do with the God of all grace, who knows how to value and commend every desire of the heart after Himself and after Christ, and with] whom there is no faulty or hasty judgment, as we afterwards find with David in respect of Mephibosheth.

On the other hand, no fair appearance, no mere

profession, no pious exterior, deceives Him—"All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Nor would the upright heart that really knows His love desire it to be otherwise. It affords great comfort and rest to such that He knows and discerns everything perfectly.

We can understand what a joy it would have been to Mephibosheth, could David have known and rightly appreciated all the desires and motives of his heart instead of judging his case hastily and suspiciously. But we know that such joy could only be because there was true affection for David; there was no duplicity of heart or object, no selfish motives, no trimming his ways to suit circumstances. No, there was singleness of eye and faithfulness of heart, which were not understood by the world-loving, self-seeking Ziba, who with a deceitful heart could make "a fair show in the flesh."

But let us now enquire (for our own profit in its application to ourselves) what it was that so wrought with Mephibosheth to produce such beautiful and blessed fruit. Several things worked together to this end, and the same must work in our case if the same fruit is to be borne. Great and unmerited kindness had been shown to him by David. He belonged to the family of him who had been David's enemy and persecutor—Saul. He was, moreover, poor and helpless, *and he felt all this and owned it.* He was one of "the poor in spirit" who could be blessed. He had a deep sense of his position and condition, and hence had a deep sense of the grace shown him by David. His heart is moved and won by it. But the manner of the grace shown him must

be noticed in connection with this; for it is because the nature and extent of God's grace are not rightly understood that many are defective when it is a question of the proper effect of grace in our own day. He rightly understood the nature of the grace shown to him, and accepted the place assigned him thereby; and this brought him into personal contact with David continually. It was not merely an act of kindness shown to him, but it was the place which this grace gave him, by which his soul was attached to David. Because of the position grace placed him in, he could constantly see and know sufficient of David to grow in attachment to him, while ever remembering where and what he had once been, and hence how great had been the favour that had thus set him so near to David's person, and, so to speak, in his companionship.

In comparing this, however, with the grace of God to us I would again call to mind what I stated at the first, that all that David did and could do but faintly expresses that of which we have been the recipients. Indeed, it is *contrast* and not *comparison* we find in some respects. For what *love* did David ever express to Mephibosheth? *None*, that we are aware of. Certainly he showed a thousandfold more for his reprobate son Absalom than any expressed to Mephibosheth. True, he was at David's table "*as of the king's sons,*" but no conscious bond of relationship existed; no "*spirit of adoption*" on the one side, and no foundation of unchanging love on the other.

But again I would say that all this should put us to **shame** when we compare the effect on the heart, and the **answer** in the life, of Mephibosheth with that

produced in ourselves. And why such a feeble answer to a mighty grace and infinite love? Is it not often because the true distance we were in, and the true moral condition that was ours, have not been sufficiently apprehended *in the soul*? "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." And again, may it not be accounted for in many cases because the nature of the grace and love, and therefore the place of nearness which that love has assigned us, have not been entered into nor *accepted* by the soul? If accepted we should find ourselves in conscious nearness to Him who suffered and died for us. (David never suffered anything for Mephibosheth!)

True, if we do accept this portion we only reach it through the acceptance of His death in its application to all that ministers to "the old man." If we prefer life here we *cannot* be in the present enjoyment of "life eternal"—of that circle of blessedness which His death and resurrection have opened up for us *even now*, and into which the Holy Spirit would conduct our hearts, as sent of the Father for this object:

"Thou lead'st our hearts to that blest place
Where rest's without alloy."

I do not wish to pursue in detail the account of Mephibosheth in relation to David in the hour of David's rejection and separation from the kingdom. In a very few words the divine record tells us of that which marked a true, devoted heart to David during his absence from his "rightful place." (See 2 Samuel xix. 24.) We may well admire it, and covet a corresponding answer in our lives to the fact that our Saviour and Lord is rejected and dishonoured here.

The further brief notice of Mephibosheth when David returns, and his answer to David's hasty decision respecting the inheritance recorded in verse 30, once more speaks in no uncertain way of that unfeigned and disinterested love for David that could surrender all and everything if only *he* were exalted and honoured, and that he might have *his* company again to enjoy and delight in.

All this is beautiful to contemplate and happy to meditate on, and it is placed on record in God's word that reader and writer may do so, and profit thereby in its producing exercise of heart as to how far we have been formed and transformed by that love which "passeth knowledge," and by the enjoyed presence and company of our blessed Saviour and Lord—the Father's beloved Son—in whom He has found (and ever finds) His delight. May the language of our hearts be:

" Oh, fix our earnest gaze
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,
That with Thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see."

S. M. A.

HEARING THE WORD.

MARK iv. 24 ; LUKE viii. 18.

A VERY distinct responsibility is indicated by these scriptures for all hearers of the word of God. The servants of Christ have their responsibility in speaking; but it is altogether a different one from that of their audience. Theirs is well described by the apostle when he says, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of [or 'from'] God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2 Cor. ii. 17.) As a messenger from God

Paul owns the responsibility of speaking before God, and of delivering his message faithfully — of not corrupting or adulterating it. The hearers, on the other hand, are in the first place to take heed *what* they hear. They are under the responsibility of testing the message delivered to them, of ascertaining whether it is really a divinely-sent message for their souls. The Bereans are an example of this, in that after hearing Paul and Silas they “searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so.” (Acts xvii. 12.) It is on the same principle that it is said, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.” (1 Cor. xiv. 29.)

Were this the whole of the responsibility there might be much testing and criticising without spiritual profit, much occupation with the letter which killeth, instead of with the spirit which giveth life. It is on this account that our blessed Lord, in the second scripture, warns us to take heed *how* we hear. There is therefore a state of soul requisite for listening aright, an upright condition before God without which the plainest message may be misconceived and perverted. Cornelius, with his friends, is an example of this when he said to Peter, “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” (Acts x. 33.) To neglect the *how* is as fatal as to forget the *what*; and hence, while the hearer must ever seek to be in the right condition for the reception of the message, he must also remember that infallibility is only to be found in God’s word, and therefore that everything brought to him purporting to be from God must be tried by the perfect standard of the Scriptures.

DIVINE LOVE.

1 JOHN iv. 9-v. 3.

IN the above verses the love of God is spoken of in two distinct ways; viz. as manifested *towards* us, and as manifested *in* us. But the Spirit of God loves to dwell at length upon the former, though dwelling on the latter is necessitated, lest any false or mistaken apprehension of its true character should arise, and rob divine love in the believer of the proper intrinsic character in which it manifests itself, Godward or manward.

The verses, iv. 9-18, are, generally speaking, taken up with the manifestation of divine love towards man, and the effect of that manifestation in view of the believer's relations to God and to one another, as well as in contemplation of the day of judgment; *i.e.* the moral effect of well-known divine love in the light of that day.

Verses 9, 10, and 14 treat of love manifested in sending the Son: firstly, *vv.* 9, 10, towards believers; secondly, *v.* 14, towards the world. In the former case there are several points of deepest interest and importance to note. First, pre-eminently the measure of that love, for the sent One is God's "only begotten"; then follow the two vitally important objects, to effect which God's beloved One was specifically sent; viz. "that we might *live* through Him" (*v.* 9), and as "the propitiation for our sins" (*v.* 10), *i.e.* life and propitiation.

In the former John touches **Ephesian** truth, in the latter, **Romans**.

As dead in trespasses and sins, the first essential movement of divine love in its energy and activity is to be and is in quickening. The relationships of love must be in life. There must be living vital capacity to enter upon and enjoy all that love can introduce the believer into, in its own peculiar circle of delights, in their highest and holiest character. This the apostle announces and defines as fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. "The Father's delight is in His Son, and we have fellowship with Him in that; Christ's delight is with the Father, and we have fellowship with Him in that. So our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."* It is not for anything less than this that the heavens are opened, and that "the only begotten Son" has been sent. The Father's heart would share with His people His delight in Him whose work and Person are ever before Him, as the fragrance of frankincense, perpetual and eternal. This is the first peculiar and special manifestation of the love of God in the sent One; the second is the absolute removal of all that could hinder these unclouded relations—"to be the propitiation for our sins."

Of what avail the life, capable of sustaining such a marvellous relationship and fellowship, if the consciousness of unatoned guilt remains? "The Only Begotten" as the sent One, in His work of propitiation, meets divinely this absolute requirement; and is at once the Bearer away of sins, the Bringer of the soul to God, and the Sender of the Spirit of God, the holy witness-bearer to the fact—"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

* *Col. IV.* *vs.*, vol. xvi. p. 253.

Versè 14 widens the circle in which love divine has manifested itself, by setting forth the sent One in the character of "the Saviour of the world." As such He came, as such He suffered. He was presented by a God of measureless grace as the One in whom the hope of every individual centres—"There is *none other* name given among men whereby we must be saved." Thus the full witness of the love of God universally is displayed, although salvation is not here the subject-matter of the apostle's ministry. •

The mystery of the love of God is presented to us in v. 10. Its objects are those who in themselves are unloving and unlovable. No motive originating in those upon whom divine love has been expended was discernible or discoverable: "Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that He loved us." It reminds us of the mystery of God's love to Israel in Deut. vii. 7, 8. It was not in complacent delight, but in commiseration and compassion, that Jehovah's love was exercised towards His people. It was a love that was motiveless, save as finding its motive in its own mysterious being, that manifested itself in providing a Saviour who was no less than "the only begotten Son." But when the love of God has done its blessed work, when conscience and heart have found their rest through the possession of life and the knowledge of propitiation, how real, if confessedly feeble, the response to the apostle's exhortation, "Beloved, if God *so loved* us, we ought also to love one another"!

These two divine realities, measures, and expressions of divine love possessed and enjoyed, connecting the heart of *each individual believer* with God, could not

not without bestowing love to all similarly possessing and enjoying life and propitiation. Mutual attraction is the outcome of mutual possession of that love of which God is the source. "So loved . . . we ought to love one another."

But a further wonderful truth now comes to light. God is invisible, and no man hath seen Him at any time. Nevertheless, He who is invisible as to His being indwells the believer, and is demonstrated as so doing by the existence in him of divine love towards his fellow-believers—for "*if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is made perfect in us.*" But further, we know by the fact of the indwelling Spirit we dwell in God and He in us. The former, that is, love to one another, demonstrates what the latter—the indwelling Spirit—effectuates; for the Spirit that indwells is the Spirit of God—the spring of love and source of knowledge.

Verse 14 is apostolic testimony in its widest range, founded upon apostolic privilege: "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son (to be) the Saviour of the world." The practical fruit and result of this testimony—which, since it embraces the world, appeals to "whosoever"—is the confession "that *Jesus is the Son of God.*" He is identified in the soul's convictions, as the Son sent and the Saviour of the world, with Him who, in the form of the lowly Jesus, was disowned and crucified, but who, thus received into the heart, is personally the measure and expression of the love of God. Hence the very confession that *Jesus is the Son of God* is the witness that "God dwelleth in him, and he in God"; for as to the former, Jesus is God in manifestation; as to the latter, the

believer has found his abiding rest in Him who has perfectly expressed Himself in the gift of the Son.

It is thus through the reception and confession of *Jesus* as the Son sent and the Saviour that "we [Christians] have known and believed the love that God hath to us." But "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love [which God is, and of which Jesus is the manifestation] dwelleth in God, and God in him."

It is remarkable and characteristic in John's epistle how God and love are used as almost synonymous terms. The latter furnishes a substantive reality to that which must otherwise remain an abstract and indefinite conception. We are thus brought, through the revelation of what God is, into happy intimacy with God, dwelling in Him and He in us.

Once more in the light of that which so searchingly tests, the Christian abides in perfect undisturbed repose, for in the knowledge that "*as He is, so are we in this world, love has been perfected with us*" (New Trans.), and we have boldness in the contemplation morally of what must otherwise even in anticipation appal. Hence the knowledge of this is deliverance, doctrinally viewed. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The undelivered soul is constantly distressed by some passing shade of fear in viewing God as Judge. But that divine Person who is appointed Judge is Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. (Acts xvii. 31.) How fear-dispelling then to know that "*as He is, so are we in this world. Perfect love casteth out fear . . . He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*" But the initial movement in love was God's. "We love Him because He first loved us."

M. C. G.

(To be continued, D. V.).

"IN ME, PEACE."

"And your joy no man taketh from you."

We thank and praise Thee, Lord, for Thou,
Thou only, givest rest ;

By sovereign grace our names are now
And ever on Thy breast.

Upon the shoulders of Thy might
Thou bearest us, each one ;

Our home is where there is no night,
Where God's blest will is done.

Thy canopy is o'er us—"love" ;

The love that casts out fear :

Thy pleasures are the things above—
Our treasure is not here.

Thou carest not to give the earth

To those called out for heaven :

To children of this royal birth

Thy choicest gifts are given.

How happy they who must confide,

Lord Jesus Christ, in Thee ;

Who in Thy secret place abide,

Where they Thy beauty see.

Thou comfortest the hearts that mourn,

Thou liftest up the meek ;

The weak ones in Thy arms are borne,

They find Thee, Lord, who seek.

Who seek the Lord shall praise Him now,

Now and for evermore ;

Thou givest rest, Lord, only Thou,

Who art gone on before.

For us Thou, Lord, hast entered in,
 Forerunner in life's race ;
 And thus the songs of hope begin
 E'en from Thy glory's place.

And Thou wilt have us dwell with Thee,
 Where thou art—'t is Thy will :
 How blessed for Thine own to be
 Thus on God's holy hill !
 Thus whether, Lord, we wake or sleep,
 With Thee, to Thee, to live ;
 The Father's love so well doth keep
 Those He to Thee did give.

August 20th, 1895.

H. K. B.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

1 THESS. iv. 14-17.

It is impossible to doubt that the Old Testament saints will share in the first resurrection. The statement that "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," together with 1 Cor. xv. 23, Rev. iv. 4, etc., place this beyond question. While, however, insisting upon this, it is still true that Paul is writing only, in the above scripture, concerning Christians. It was in respect of believers in Thessalonica, who had departed to be with Christ, that a misconception had arisen, and the apostle was instructed to remove it by a special word of the Lord ; and consequently Old Testament saints are not before his mind. Those which sleep in Jesus ("have fallen asleep through Jesus") in v. 14 are the same class

as "the dead in Christ" in v. 16. As they will be awaked, called out of their graves, at the coming of the Lord, they are described as sleeping. He has "abolished" death and has brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel (2 Tim. i.), and thus death for the believer is but a transient sleep. Stephen is accordingly described as falling asleep. But as far as this world is concerned, saints, equally with sinners, are dead; but the words appended—"in Christ"—mark them off as the Christian dead. All this class, the apostle teaches, will rise first, when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and thereupon the living saints will (having been "changed" as said in 1 Cor. xv.) be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. What a blessed hope and a joyful prospect!

II.

PSALM cxl. 9, 10; ROMANS xii. 19, 20.

A comparison of these two scriptures will give the key for the interpretation of heaping coals upon an enemy's head. Let it, however, be first remarked that the verse 20 in Romans xii. is a citation from Proverbs xxv., with the omission of the words, "the Lord shall reward thee." This is interesting as showing one of the pre-intimations of grace which are scattered here and there in the Old Testament. When the Psalmist cries, "Let burning coals fall upon them," it is evident from the connection that he desires judgment upon his enemies; and this would be in entire accordance with the principles of righteous

government, inasmuch as his enemies are the enemies of Jehovah. But under the reign of grace all is changed; and hence the apostle writes, "Dearly-beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Not only so, but, while leaving an enemy in the Lord's hands, our own hearts, instead of calling down judgment, are to go out in tender compassion towards him (compare Matthew v. 43, 44); and thus the apostle continues, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." In showing him all possible kindness, in this representing the heart of God towards ourselves when we were yet enemies (see Romans v. 8), we shall cause him, with the blessing of God, to feel the effect of coals of fire on his head. Now, as we have seen in the psalm, the falling of coals of fire on the heads of enemies is a symbol of judgment—judgment, in that case, from the hands of God. In Romans, likewise, the heaping of coals of fire on the head of an enemy in the way described will retain the meaning of judgment—but of self-judgment produced in the heart, and not judgment visited upon the head, of the enemy. What we learn therefore is, that just as God's grace met us in all our enmity, melted us down, and reconciled us to Himself through the death of His Son, so the manifestation of grace and needed kindness is calculated to break down and win an enemy by begetting in him compunctions of conscience for the attitude he has assumed. But we need to be very much in the truth and power of grace to carry out this apostolic injunction.

RESTING IN HIS LOVE.

ZEPHANIAH iii.

THE difference between the earthly people (Israel) and the heavenly people (Christians) comes out in the Scriptures in every possible way. In the chapter before us, God resting in His love, and joying over the daughter of Zion with singing, are consequent upon the accomplishment of His counsels in the restoration and blessing of His ancient people. It is the goal reached through all their past sorrows and chastisements under His mighty hand. With the Christian it is entirely different, because through the death and resurrection of Christ grace now reigns ; and hence God, having Christ at His right hand as the expression of His full satisfaction with His finished work, He can already rest in His love over His redeemed. The Lord could therefore say, when addressing the Father, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." Thus the same love, the same in kind and measure, as that which rested on the Son, when down here, can now rest upon, and be made good in present enjoyment by His people, even while in this world.

A striking illustration of the same principle may be gathered from the precious stones on Aaron's breastplate, as compared with those in the glorious foundations of the new and heavenly Jerusalem. In the breastplate the jasper is the last in order ; in the

foundations of the holy city it comes first. Now we know from Rev. iv. that the jasper is an emblem of the glory of God; and consequently we learn that while for the Christian the glory, as displayed in Christ as the Glorified One at God's right hand, is at the outset, it is the last thing reached by Israel. The Psalmist thus speaks, "Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel, and 'after the glory' [as it should read] Thou wilt receive me." It is of the utmost importance to apprehend these distinctions, for we are ever in danger of surrendering the proper and heavenly character of Christianity. As before God everything is accomplished on His side, as may be learned from that wonderful chapter, Ephesians ii, where the whole church is already seen as seated in the heavenlies in Christ. And it is this fact which reveals the character of the Christian, and also his suited walk while passing through this scene.

Bearing in mind what has been said, we shall be the better able to enter upon a brief consideration of our chapter. It is exquisitely beautiful. Zephaniah prophesied in the days of that good king Josiah, and yet the burden of his message was judgment. It is very evident that, in spite of the efforts of the king, and of the reformation he set on foot, the people remained obstinately wedded to their heathen idolatries and superstitions. (See chapter i. 2-6.) God could not therefore go on with them, and hence the proclamation by the prophet that "the day of the Lord was at hand." But the Lord never gives up His people, and thus in the midst of judgment He remembers mercy: "The Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away

their captivity." (Chap. ii. 7.) This brings the oppressors of God's people before him, and the prophet is commissioned to declare their coming doom. Then, in chapter iii., he turns again to Jerusalem in her sad state and condition during the time of Josiah's reign, showing how the most debasing moral corruption could exist side by side with the professed service of Jehovah.

Let the reader carefully examine the first seven verses if he would comprehend the character of that day. The city, Jerusalem, is described as filthy and polluted, and as an oppressor: moreover, "she obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God." What a solemn indictment! Then every class of the heads of the people—princes, judges, prophets, and priests—are shown out in their moral degradation. And yet the Lord still had His dwelling-place in the midst thereof, and laboured to bring His people to a sense of their shameful condition; "but," the prophet laments, "the unjust knoweth no shame." The Lord also judged the neighbouring nations; and then, as these warnings of His coming judgments on Jerusalem were thus exhibited, He said, "Surely thou wilt fear Me; thou wilt receive instruction; but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings." Their case was hopeless notwithstanding the yearning, pleading voice of their God; and they *would* persist in their heedless, obstinate rebellion and apostasy until God's wrath should be poured out upon them, and there would be no remedy. Patience and longsuffering have their limits in God's government, and His ancient people have had to learn

it through centuries of chastisement and sorrow. And yet, blessed be His name, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; and it is this truth which is unfolded in the next part of the chapter.

For what do we now find? That God takes occasion from the state of His own people to announce His purpose to gather the nations and assemble the kingdoms, in order to pour out upon them His fierce indignation, "even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy." The prophet thus views the present state of Jerusalem as prophetic of its condition (in the days of Antichrist) immediately before the appearing of the Lord. (See Zechariah xiv.) Two things follow upon this judgment of the nations: first, the peoples (so it should be) shall all call (having had their language purified) upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent; and God's scattered people will be regathered, judged, and established in blessing. This is a very important declaration, as it affords the key wherewith to unlock the Old Testament prophecies. It teaches unmistakably the certainty of the accomplishment of God's purposes concerning Israel, notwithstanding their humiliating and complete failure under responsibility; and also that the period of blessing for this world under Messiah's reign will be introduced with judgment. It totally sets aside the prevalent idea that there will be a gradual increase of blessing on the earth until the knowledge of the Lord shall cover it as the waters cover the sea. We learn, on the other hand, that corruptions will increase and abound, until at length the Lord Himself will interpose in judgment,

and that :— He will judge the world in righteousness, and the people with His truth. The consequence will be universal blessing.

Next we have details concerning the restoration of Jehovah's people, together with the moral characteristics of the remnant who will be gladdened with His presence and favour. In one verse (v. 10) the prophet describes the regathering of scattered Israel, and then we have God's separative judgment and the blessed effect in the souls of those who bow under His mighty hand: "I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt be no more haughty [as, for example, the Pharisees were] because of My holy mountain." And now observe that what is least and most despised among men is that wherein God finds His pleasure. It is a "poor and afflicted people" who shall be left in the midst of Jerusalem—a people poor in spirit and contrite before God because of the many sorrows through which they have passed; and it is these who shall trust in the name of Jehovah, as their Rock of Ages. (See Isaiah xxvi.) This remnant of Israel shall be all righteous, they shall do no iniquity nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. (Compare Psalms xv. and xxiv. 3-6.)

Restored, and under the care of the Shepherd of Israel, who makes them to lie down in green pastures and leads them beside the still waters, the end is reached in the consummation of all their hopes and

blessing. Hence the cry, "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem." For their judgments have been taken away for ever; the enemy has been cast out; the Lord once more, and in a much more glorious way, dwells in the midst of His people, who shall therefore see evil no more. It is an exquisite picture of perfect happiness flowing from the presence of the Lord 'their God—a picture only surpassed by the description of God's own joy over His long-loved and now restored and happy people. First He is presented as the everlasting security of His chosen: the One "in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save." Then "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing." At last He can gratify the affections of His heart, His love can flow out unhinderedly, and in the joy of this He sings as it were with delight. It is the joy of God over the return of His prodigal son!

Having now found rest in His love, what will He not do for His beloved people? He will remember their past sorrows—sorrows which sprang from their fidelity to His name in an evil day; He will "undo all that afflict thee"; He will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and "I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame." Truly God is the God of all grace; and not one of His purposes will ever be frustrated. Israel's goal is full earthly blessing under Immanuel's sway; *we* look forward to the Father's house to be there with Christ for ever, but whether they or we, we shall all alike be debtors to the sovereign grace of our God.

“I WILL COME AGAIN.”

NOTHING is more prominently brought forward in the New Testament than the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first comfort of the angels to the sorrowing disciples: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” (Acts i. 11.) And if you turn to 1 Thessalonians you will find it presented in the end of every chapter as a common doctrine. It was not at all a strange thing—immediately after conversion to the living God—“to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.” Again, in Hebrews ix., we read that “once in the end of the world He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself . . . and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

In 1 Thessalonians it is presented in the way of warning as well as the object of the blessed hope of saints: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 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.” From this we see the amazing difference between the coming of Christ for this world, and for those who trust in Him. To the world He comes as a Judge of both quick and dead (see Malachi), but in this, John xiv., we find a wonderful difference in the

whole principle and spirit of a believer's expectation of Christ.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i. 7.) "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Malachi iii. 2.) Dear reader, let me ask you, Can you stand before Him at that day? Do you think that you would have confidence before Him at His coming? Could you say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him"? This is He whom I have loved and longed for? Men always judge according to what is suited to themselves. In 1 Thessalonians iv. it is said, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Now, are you suited to be ever with the Lord? Have you this confidence? If it is founded on anything good in yourself, it is a vain ground of confidence. Peter, as soon as he found himself in the presence of the Lord, felt that he was not suited for the Lord. I am too corrupt, he said. This was a true judgment of Peter; and love for the dignity of the Lord, and for holiness. If you are content that holiness should be lowered that you may get off, you do not care for holiness, though you do for getting off. The moment I have seen the holiness of the Lord, and that happiness is in holiness, there is the immediate feeling of my unfitness for that holiness, though there may be the longing for it, which the Lord will doubtless in mercy answer.

Two things are needed thus to meet the Lord. First, the conscience must be right. I may have the kindest father, yet, if my conscience is not right, I cannot be

glad to meet him; and, secondly, affections must be there—the Lord must be my portion. If my heart is on literature, or on anything else here, I shall not like to be where Jesus is. I shall rather be here for a time. If you like the world, you are fit for the world. Heaven is just the contrary, and you know it; and, therefore, you do not want to go there, because it would take you from being here in the world. There is the comfort of the gospel. It did bring down to men's consciences all that would attract God. But, alas! men no more desired the Lord's company here than they do there. The coming and rejection of Christ here is the plain proof that the world is not fit for Him, and He is not fit for them.

But now to turn to John xiv. We find persons here the opposite of all that is in the world. "Let not your heart be troubled." About what? His leaving them. Their happiness, comfort, and joy was in having Christ with them. But now, He says, I am going, but I am not going to be happy without you. There is plenty of room for you. The thing with which He at once comforts their hearts is this, "I will come again." I cannot stay down here in this vile place, I am going to prepare a place for you; but I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. The Lord reckons on this satisfying their hearts; and their consciences did not hinder. "The Father's house"! Oh, they could go there! "I will receive you unto Myself." He knew the chord that rang in their hearts: to be with Himself—the source of all blessing. Thus we get the character of these disciples; they were persons whom the absence of Jesus distressed, and whom the

presence of Jesus would comfort, not here, but with Himself.

There we find what begot this character. It was all founded on His own word. We do not care for what does not concern us. But as soon as we see a thing that concerns us, it becomes important, and then we want certainty. Now it is very blessed to have God's own word for the basis of our certainty.

For instance, I am a sinner. How, then, can I get into the Father's house? Because God has said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Well, God is true, and He will not remember them. Do you say I am presumptuous to say so? I do not say so; God says so; and again in John v. 24, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation"; and John iii. 33, "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Thus, when the power of the Spirit brings home the word, I have certainty. Faith is in the word, but it is about something. Christ is presented, and man is brought to the test. People always judge by their inclination, and not by their reasoning. Now the effect of the testimony of the Spirit of God, when Christ is revealed, is that men are not fit for Him, and their hearts do not like to be with Him.

These disciples had loved the Lord. Christ had attraction for their hearts. There at once we see the object of their heart's affections. Christ had fixed their hearts. Take Mary Magdalene, for instance; she was all wrong in her intelligence, yet Christ had attraction for her heart. So with the

rest of the disciples. They all ran away for fear, but it was love to Christ that brought them into the place of fear. Thus we see that Christ Himself was the object of their hearts. They were the companions of Christ—all fear being gone—according to His love and grace. "Ye are they," He said, "who have continued with Me in My temptations." Why, He had continued with them, but He speaks as if indebted to them for this fellowship. And being in companionship with Christ in heart, He brings them into all the joy into which He is going—nothing less than the Father's house. What attracts is found in Christ, and then it gets from Him the certain assurance that He is coming, and coming for me. Now, when the heart is on Christ, what a thing it is to know that He is coming. Am I afraid? No, I am *looking for Him*. And it is to His Father's house He is to bring me. All that makes heaven a home to Christ will make it a home to me. O, come, Lord Jesus! If I have learnt to love Christ, I have learnt to love holiness, to love God. God, in Christ, has brought down to my soul all that God is. What shall I get in heaven? Another Christ? Another God? No. It is the One we have seen and known. "*Whither I go ye know*"; I am going to the Father, and you have seen the Father in me.

Ah! but He has not given up His holiness, perhaps you reply. No, indeed He has not. But Jesus knew all that is needed for me to be with Him. And if He will make the heart to love, He will put the conscience perfectly at rest, that I may love Him. Will He do that by dulling it? No. He will do something that will enable me to stand in the presence of God, in

whose presence I am to find my joy. He reveals fully God in His holiness, and takes away the sin that would hinder my being in the presence of that holiness. And not only does He put sin away, but He purges the conscience here, so that I am enabled to enjoy God in full and free affection.

Nothing is more attractive than the death of Christ: but, besides that, it puts away the sin of which I was guilty; an act in which I had no part; an act the proof of perfect love, while it meets perfect righteousness. I had done the sins, and I could not undo them. Jesus said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." This touched Peter's heart. If you are not cleansed according to My cleansing—according to what suits God's presence—you have no part with Me. Oh, what a comfort! Instead of saying, "Depart from Me," Jesus said, "Now you are clean." And in Peter we see the proof of a good conscience. He said to the Jews, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just"; the very thing he himself had done fifty days before. Now a man will talk of every sin but what he is guilty of; he will shirk that. But here Peter was in perfect peace about the very sin he was guilty of; his conscience was perfectly purged.

The happiness of the heart that is touched is to be with Christ; and conscience is purged for being in His presence. Between the Lord's saying this, and coming for them, He had put away sin from God's sight, and from their conscience. "I will come again, and take you unto Myself," &c., and "Whither I go ye know." There is no uncertainty. We know where we are going. The soul has found fully the object that has

set it at rest, and that will satisfy it up there without fear.

Could the Lord thus address you? Could you say, "Oh, that is what I am wanting"? Or are you saying, "I've got here what I would like to enjoy"? Is that being a Christian? A Christian may vary in strength of affection; never in object. I am sure I do not love the Lord enough; but I am sure it is the Lord I love. I have no confidence in my own heart; but all confidence in Him. He has died for me; that is what I count on. He has put away my sins; that is what I need. He is coming again; that is what I am longing for.

Dear reader, let me ask you, Was it ever a trouble to you that you had not Christ? Do you know where you are going? It may be you have hope; but have you present certainty? Now we Christians have; for Christ is known, and when He is known there is perfect rest in His word. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

J. N. D.

DIVINE LOVE.

1 JOHN iv. 9-v. 3.

THE apostle now turns, in an instructional and corrective way, to deal with the question of the Christian's love, or rather of divine love in the Christian.

It is a serious thing to lay claim to loving God. It is a poor thing to be *in any way* occupied with it *at any time or for any pur-* Truly and divinely

existing, it is not claimed but expressed, according to its own intrinsic and inherent characteristics. The seed needs labelling only when the process and progress of life is checked. Under normal conditions of moisture, soil, and warmth it speedily manifests, with unerring truth, its own essential and peculiar characteristics. It is thus with divine love in the believer. Under normal spiritual conditions he does not need to label himself with the claim, "I love God." (v. 20.) God's seed within him will assuredly manifest itself, unmistakably and accurately, under the twofold characteristics of brotherly love and obedience to God. These are the divine blossoms of fragrance and beauty which delight the heart of God, but of which he who most possesses them is the least conscious; for the graces of the Christian are wisely and mysteriously veiled from himself, though God finds His pleasure and delight in the perfume of brotherly love and filial obedience.

We learn here that the essential characteristic of love in God and in the Christian is identical; viz., that both are characterized by *giving*. It is the mode or manner in which divine love invariably manifests itself. God so loved that He gave. He, the Son of God, loved me and gave, etc. Christ loved the church and gave, etc. (See 1 John iii. 16; iv. 9, 10-14 and other passages.) But the Christian manifests and expresses the love in him, too, by *giving*; viz., by giving to God obedience, and he finds his pleasure therein—to his brother love, practically expressed, which according to the high standard of divine expectation may be called to go as far as laying down his life for the brethren, after the model of love towards himself. (1 John

16.) Thus heavenward and earthward, love in the believer finds its object and its outlet, its measure and expression. It tolerates and entertains no thought of gain or advantage, spiritual or temporal. And though love answers to love, owing to its very nature in some practical way, yet the expectation of resulting advantages does not constitute one of its elements. "Charity . . . seeketh not her own."

How remarkable and how beautiful is the expression of this divine trait of love in Mephibosheth on the occasion of David's return from exile in 2 Sam. xix. 30. The grace of David's heart which had its divine source in "the kindness of God" (chap. ix. 3) had taken such full possession of Mephibosheth as to eclipse all thought of advantage. The love that had stooped to raise a "man of death" (v. 28, margin) to "eat continually at the king's table," had begotten a love that could not afford to think of itself, or to measure its gain. Rather its pure disinterestedness is seen in its response to David's words, "I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said . . . *Yea, let him take all*, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." This spirit of grace and adoption breathed in its own divine energy in these words. It was sonship's response to unmeasured love. How brightly in relief this scene stands out against the dark background of Ziba's pretentious affection, which coldly calculated upon some measured advantage to himself. *But Ziba had never passed from the relationship of servant to that of son by adoption*; indeed, had never yet been in the apprehension of the grace of David in its full measure. In the language of chap. xvi. 4 he was

yet seeking grace—"I humbly beseech thee *that I may find grace* in thy sight, my lord, O king." Never having been emancipated from the servants' status into the son's liberty, he was not above appropriating the advantages which in spirit he was never free from identifying with his own devotedness. Without a word of protest, but with silent consent, he hears David's words investing him with all Mephibosheth's possessions, "Behold, thine are all that pertained to Mephibosheth."

Scripture thus defines for us very clearly and unmistakably the distinction between a love that still bears the character of a servant-relationship, and that which is occupying the happy and blessed relationship of son.

The New Testament furnishes us further with a remarkable and most important illustration of the way in which love—real divine love—may connect itself with reflective advantage as the result of its own activity. Peter sought to be accredited with greater love to the Lord than his fellow-disciples on the ground of the strength of his affection for the Lord. He estimated that it would carry him to the point of rendering the highest testimony possible to his devotedness—"I am ready to go with Thee both to prison and to death." (Luke xxii. 33.) *But Peter had never yet learnt himself.* When that solemn but much-needed lesson was learnt, the recognition of love in himself reached its lowest ebb, and the love and grace of Christ, of God in Christ, displaced with its full divine flow the poor, paltry thing in him that he had ventured to exalt.

Up to the moment in the history of the soul when self is thoroughly learnt through experiences as

profitable if not as painful as Peter's, the believer may perhaps accredit himself with love; but having learnt that "without strength" embraces love as well as power to resist the tyranny of sin within, he discovers an unfailing spring of joy in the measureless love of which God is the source, and which has come out *towards* him. In the light and presence of this, all estimate of, and occupation with, the taper that burns so dimly in himself vanishes; and the very existence of it, with Peter, he fully acknowledges can only be discerned by omniscience—"Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." True affections are identified further with a certain position or sphere in which we are already set, as in Mephibosheth's case. As one has said whose words are still valued: "Right affections and duties flow from the place we are already in, and are never the means of getting into it."*

But to return to our portion. If love to God is measured and expressed by obedience, love to the brethren is also only divinely expressed by obedience to God: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, *and keep His commandments*. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." Love to one another is a holy thing, and is in no way allied to loose indifference as to our personal path or the path of the Lord's people. God's commandments are the expression of His love as well as of His authority; to ignore these is to fail in the essentially characteristic feature of divine love. Again, in the second epistle the apostle repeats this warning word in connection with loving one another

* *Collected Writings*, vol. x. p. 506.

(v. 5)—“And this is love, that we keep His commandments.”

How beautifully the beloved apostle answers personally to the Lord's exhortation to all His disciples, “Continue ye in My love,” veiling his own name and identity under the title, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

Though this was blessedly the common heritage of each, John was more individually sensible of it as the spring of inexhaustible delight; but he shrouded completely his love to the Lord beneath that which wholly satisfied and absorbed him; viz., Christ's love to him. John thus distanced Peter spiritually, the latter up to this period not having got beyond occupation with his love to Christ.

When divine love has made its own impression upon the heart it will speedily find its expression after its own type and character outwardly. One of old has beautifully expressed this ruling principle, that impression must precede expression in dwelling upon love's character and love's energy and jealousy: “Set me as a seal upon *Thine heart*, as a seal upon *Thine arm*: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave.” (Song of Solomon viii. 6.)

“O past and gone.

How great is God! how small am I—

A mote in the illimitable sky,

Amidst the glory deep and wide and high

Of heaven's unclouded sun.

There to forget myself for evermore,

Lost, swallowed up in love's immensity,

The sea that knows no sounding and no shore,

God only there, not I.

More near than I unto myself can be,
 Art Thou to me ;
 So have I lost myself in finding Thee,
 Have lost myself for ever, O my Sun !
 The boundless heaven of Thy eternal love
 Around me, and beneath me, and above.
 In glory of that golden day
 The former things are passed away—
 I, past and gone."

M. C. G.

PRAYER AND FASTING THE SECRET OF
 • POWER.

MATTHEW xvii.

BEFORE the Lord goes to the cross to suffer He went up to the mount to be transfigured. Peter, being an eye-witness of His glory, says, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." Moses and Elias appeared in glory with Him, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Peter, James, and John had the privilege of beholding that scene of unsurpassed brightness and glory. Moses represented those who have died in Christ, and Elias those who are alive and changed at the rapture.

Peter was so entranced with the sight, that he said to the Lord, "Let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." It was then that the Father's jealousy for the glory of His beloved Son is seen, "This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him." Moses and Elias being taken away, the disciples

saw no man any more save Jesus only. Blessed moment, and blessed sight!

When they came down from the mount what a different scene awaited them! A father had brought his son possessed with a demon to the disciples, but they were utterly powerless to meet the power of the devil. The heart-broken father came at last to the Lord with the child: "and Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour."

The disciples evidently wondered at their own powerlessness, and asked the Lord in astonishment, "Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit," He adds, "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

Enjoyment is one thing, but power is quite another. It has been truly remarked, that "enjoyment is for heaven, but power is for earth." There is no opposition in heaven: everything there is favourable to the new life we possess in the Spirit. As the Spirit leads our souls into the enjoyment of our heavenly portion in Christ, our souls are sometimes outside ourselves and seen things. But the moment we go out into the world we find ourselves in a contrary element. We find the whole array of Satan's power is against us to hinder our standing for Christ. The moment we are for Christ here, we must expect opposition. And nothing but divine power can enable us to stand against the adversary.

It is most important to see, and it needs more than ever to be pressed upon us, that if we are to stand for Christ against the whole array of spiritual wickedness, and so be overcomers, we must be in the moral state indicated by "prayer and fasting." High-sounding words will not do if the moral state is lacking. People expect us to be in some measure in the power of what we profess. If we are not, Satan will get the advantage of us, and the very words we speak, instead of coming with power and freshness to those who listen, will only be thrown back with utter contempt at ourselves.

Prayer is the expression of entire dependence on God. Fasting indicates the absolute refusal of ourselves and all human gratifications. Practically the first man is completely set aside, and we walk in simple dependence on God alone. This will mean death to myself as a man here in every way. Faith connects our souls with another scene altogether, where the first man has no place. Faith closes its eyes to all that is visible; and then, like Moses, we shall endure "as seeing Him who is invisible." At the same time it will open out a scene invisible to the natural eye: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

We have a beautiful example of prayer and fasting in 2 Chron. xx. with Jehoshaphat. In the eighteenth chapter we find he had joined in an alliance with the king of Israel, who had gone to war with Syria. God miraculously intervened, and saved the life of His poor failing servant. Afterwards God sent one of His servants to rebuke Jehoshaphat. "And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to

king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" What plain and direct speaking to the most exalted person in Judah! But God saw it was needful, and therefore He found a servant who would dare to thrust this arrow into Jehoshaphat's conscience. The effect was that he judged himself, and was humbled before the Lord, as the next chapter clearly shows. A great company came up against him, if possible to destroy him and all Judah. Instead of betaking himself to human means to effect an escape, "Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." His prayer is most touching, and indicates a broken and dependent spirit. He acknowledges God's power as supreme over all, that none was able to withstand him, and adds, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." He not only acknowledges his own utter helplessness, but his want of wisdom also to direct. He is completely shut up to God. Happy state! He is at his wits' end. It was his extremity in every sense of the word; but it was God's opportunity for displaying Himself on his behalf. God first of all delivers His people from all fear by assuring them through the lips of His servant the prophet, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you." (2 Chron. xx. 17.)

The fullest confidence in the living God was produced as the result of this message. Perfect peace and solid rest of heart were the result of confidence in God, whose power they had so humbly invoked, and on whose arm of almighty strength the victory depended. In quietness and in confidence they found their strength. They were to be still, and to know that Jehovah was God. As the result of victory being assured they were in the spirit of victors, and could sing in triumph before the victory was obtained. Man disappears, and God alone filled the vision of their souls.

How like this was to Paul and Silas in the Philippian prison where they were suffering for Christ's sake, with backs bleeding, and feet fastened to the stocks. No enviable position, surely! In the midst of all their sufferings they prayed and sang praises unto God. There was no murmuring or complaining! They had been forbidden to preach in Asia. The Spirit did not suffer them to go into Bithynia. Afterwards they are found in Troas, where Paul had a vision, to which he responded and went to Macedonia, where he found a company of praying women, to whom he spake the word. A woman followed them through Philippi, having an unclean spirit, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." Paul, being grieved, commanded the unclean spirit to come out of her. The populace was roused, and Paul and Silas thrust into prison. What deep exercise all this would be to God's servants! The very prison is lit up with glory. They did not think of themselves, but turned to God in prayer, and He filled their souls with joy and their lips with praises.

What a mighty victory was afterwards obtained! The prison walls were shaken, and the iron doors opened, the bands of the prisoners unloosed, and the gaoler and his whole household were delivered from the power of the devil, and brought into the liberty and joy of the gospel. The assembly was thus formed at Philippi, and a bright testimony for Christ was started as the result of Paul's faithfulness and uncompromising testimony for his Master. Where Paul had the greatest suffering, there he had the greatest joy. Ever afterwards the Philippian assembly was a great comfort to his heart.

If we could only be still and let God act for us, what wonders He would work in us and by us! We often forget that God has as much to do in us as by us. He is working in us for His good pleasure, that He might manifest Christ through us. If we are not prepared to accept suffering and sorrow and shame, how can Christ be seen in us? This every saint who walks with God must learn. It is most humbling, no doubt, to us, because it makes nothing of us, and very few are content to be nothing. But if the meek and lowly spirit of Christ is to be seen in us, it must be so. Nothing can please God more than to see either an individual or a company displaying the graces of Christ here.

May we learn more and more what it is to take the place of weakness and dependence, and to walk in the entire refusal of ourselves, so as to be superior to every contrary element in this world. "God is for us." "His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him."

P. W.

FAITH'S VICTORY.

“Father, glorify Thy Name.”—JOHN xii. 28.

“SOME said ‘It thundered.’ Others said
‘An angel spake to Him’”;

These written words a mourner read,

With eyes from sorrow dim :

And then the Righteous Father’s voice

Wrought in that soul with power,

For faith must thank Him, and rejoice,

Through sorrow’s darkest hour.

Not unto death He sent the grief,

The woe, faith’s strength that tried.

Are God’s “outgoings” mere “relief”?

Nay! God is glorified.*

The Son of God shall be thereby

Confessed, extolled, made known—

The Father’s Son, who came to DIE,

Who trod this earth “alone.”

“Alone, yet not alone,” for He

Dwelt in His Father’s love ;

His joy surpassed His agony—

On Him reposed God’s Dove.

He always did His Father’s will ;

He kept His Father’s trust ;

He wrought His Father’s House to fill,

And wherefore? Ah,—He “must.”†

Lord Jesus, faith must follow Thee,

And, lowly, keep Thy Word ;

Where Thou art, shall Thy servant be—

Thy sayings faith hath heard.

* Psalm lxxviii. 20.

† Luke ii. 49.

Thy Father honoureth each one
 Who fears from Thee to swerve,
 Who meekly doth as Thou hast done,
 Thee, blessed Lord, to serve.

“The work of God” is to believe
 On Him whom He hath sent;
 Out of His fulness to receive,
 Thus, truly, to “repent.”

Vain are the thoughts, the deeds, of man—
 Our God! man knows not Thee:
 He who abides by God’s great Plan,
 Shall God’s Salvation see.

H. K. B.

August 22, 1895.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

GENESIS xxii. 7, 8.

A QUESTION is asked concerning the word rendered “lamb” in this scripture. In a certain English version of the Old Testament, it is given as “sheep,” and it is submitted that this is more accurate. It may be said at once that the word is employed both for a “sheep” and a “lamb”; and hence the context must guide as to its interpretation. In this place the *Revised Version* puts “lamb,” and so does J. N. D. in his French Version; and we cannot but think that this is the mind of the Spirit of God. We come to this conclusion because we find that the same word is used, for example, in Exodus xii. 3, 4, 5, and in many passages in Leviticus, where the introduction of the term “sheep” would be manifestly unsuited. We cannot doubt therefore that “lamb” is the proper word in Genesis, as given in our Bible.

II.

HEBREWS xii. 14.

The word here rendered "holiness" is used some ten times in the epistles, and is often given as "sanctification." It indicates, as another has said, the "practical effect produced: not the quality, but the character in activity"; or, as he says in another place, "sanctification . . . the sum and measure of it, the thing as an effect, as a whole, characteristically, not *αγιωσύνη*, the quality." For simple readers the meaning will be readily apprehended, if it is compared with another scripture (1 Cor. i. 30), where the same word is employed. There we read, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification." In Hebrews we are exhorted to "follow after . . . holiness [sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord." What therefore, in the unspeakable grace of our God, Christ is made unto us, we, being *in* Him, are to follow after. The holiness in Hebrews will then signify correspondence with, or conformity to, Christ as glorified. It may further aid if another scripture is compared: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 19.) From this we gather that Christ has set Himself apart, in His new condition as glorified, as the pattern for His people, and that they will be brought into conformity to Him through the application to their souls of the truth of what He is as the glorified Man, the Leader of a new race, the Second Man out of heaven. But it may be said, Will not all saints be like Christ when they see Him (1 John iii. 2)? Why then should we be exhorted

to follow or "pursue" after holiness? Because God would have us in communion with His own mind, and our hearts set upon His own end and object. He presents Christ glorified to us as His eternal thought for man, and He would have us diligently to pursue after its realisation. The practical effect of this truth is seen in Philippians iii., where the apostle says, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Holiness, according to God's thought, is seen in Christ glorified, and we are to follow after it as thus expressed; and we are urged forward in its diligent attainment by the reminder that without it no one will ever see the Lord. Then only when we see Him, will God's eternal purposes for His people—that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love—be accomplished and realised.

III.

COLOSSIANS iii. 13.

In this case the margin is correct, and it should read "complaint" instead of "quarrel." The difference is great, for there are many against whom we think we have ground for complaint with whom we have no quarrel. This word therefore goes deeper, and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. If, then, we have a complaint against any, we are to act as Christ has acted towards us—we are to forgive. But this refers, we judge, to the state of our hearts; and then, when confession is made, the forgiveness is to be pronounced. (See Luke xvii. 3, 4.) In our own souls, should we even have ground for complaint, we are always to hold our brother as forgiven.

MEDITATION.

PSALMS civ. 34; cxix. 15, 23, 48, ETC.

WITH the ever-increasing urgency of our daily lives there is some danger of losing sight of the need of quiet in the Lord's presence. We do not speak of stated seasons for reading the Scriptures and for prayer (which all believers will seek to have), but rather of that which was seen in David when, after the Lord's gracious communication to him concerning his desire to build the temple, he went in and sat before the Lord. It is true that his heart overflowed, while in this attitude, in thanksgiving, praise, and prayer; but this, we apprehend, was the result of his meditation upon the message he had received. Sitting before the Lord, Nathan's words sank deep into the king's heart, and he comprehended, as he otherwise could not have done, the greatness of the favour which had been bestowed upon him and upon his house. It is this posture of soul which we desire to commend for the consideration of the Lord's people.

It is exemplified in the scriptures at the head of this paper in the word *meditation*. The meaning of the word in the several places-cited is "to talk to one's self" about the subject occupying the mind; and, as the matters in hand show, this would be carried on, as in David's case, in the presence of the Lord. Let another example be cited to show its value. In Psalm lxxiii. we find that Asaph was troubled in his meditations upon the prosperity of the wicked. He talked it over

with himself, and could not see any way out of his difficulty. It was a blot, he was tempted to think, upon the government of God, and he was filled with perplexity. Then he tells us, "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end." The lesson is that, if meditation is to be of value and for blessing, it must be exercised in the presence of God—in the sense of dependence upon Him and upon the ministry of His Spirit. Otherwise we should be lost in the mazes of human thoughts and speculations.

The first requisite then for it is quiet or stillness of soul. Unless we are freed from care and anxiety, and indeed at rest about ourselves, we should scarcely be in the spiritual condition for waiting on the Lord. Alas! that so many of the Lord's dear saints are so filled with unrest; *affected, it may be, by the spirit of a restless age.* Such are not happy if they are not busy with various activities, or borne up by the excitements of meetings. They are the Marthas of the church of God—and lacking in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. The next desirable thing is the opened ear, and this can only be enjoyed where there is realised dependence. This was seen even in our blessed Lord, who, speaking in the prophet Isaiah, said, "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned" (the "learner"). Thus quietly before His God, as the dependent One upon the earth, His ear was attent to catch every indication of that will which He had come into this world to do. Ah! how much *we* miss because

we are not thus quietly waiting, looking up, and meditating in the sanctuary.

From the psalms specified two subjects of meditation are expressly mentioned. The first is the Lord Himself. Let us examine the passage: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." The psalmist, as will be seen, commences with praise: he is joyful in the Lord, and he makes melody in his heart. This leads him out in contemplation of the One before whom he bows in adoration, and filled with the sense of His beauty and excellency he will "talk with himself," with exquisite enjoyment, concerning the beatific vision which thus dawns upon his soul. If any are tempted to regard this as extravagant language, let them remember that it is when we draw near to the Lord that He draws near to us, that He delights to reveal Himself to the waiting heart, and to flood it with the sense of His presence and love. Would that we knew more of it; but do not doubt that if you get into His presence in this way your meditation of Him will be sweet, and that you will be glad in the Lord.

Another thing should be added in connection with it. There will not only be enjoyment of soul, but there will also be transforming power streaming forth from His presence. For what do the apostle mean when he says: "We all, with open face beholding . . . the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the

Lord"? Surely the beholding is contemplation of, or meditation upon, His glory, and for this we must be before Him. As we read in another place, we grow "by" the knowledge of God, and this knowledge we gain from the revelation which He has been pleased to make of Himself in Christ. All His glory now shines forth from the face of the glorified Man (who is also the Son of God) at His own right hand. Meditation, therefore, is essential to growing conformity to Christ. Nor can this be too earnestly insisted upon, in a day when the acquisition of the knowledge of truth is rendered so easy. But it is the knowledge of HIMSELF we need, and in ever-increasing measures; and this is only to be gained by much meditation, leading to an ever-greater intimacy with Him. What possibilities are opened out in this direction in the wondrous words, "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father"!

In Psalm cxix. the meditation is upon the scriptures—the precepts, statutes, etc. But before we can be like the psalmist in this respect, and be found meditating upon the Word of God, another thing is requisite. We read in verse 16, "I *delight* myself in Thy statutes: I will not forget Thy word"; and again, "I *delight* in Thy law." (v. 78.) Moreover he says, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." (v. 54.) All this tells of a state of soul, a state of soul which is only reached oftentimes through much exercise and through many experiences. Sometimes it is the case, even after conversion, that we only read the Scriptures from a sense of duty; and this

will be so, more or less, where the liberty of grace is not enjoyed. Others will read their Bibles with avidity, but mainly to learn its contents, to acquire knowledge. In neither of these cases will the meditation of our psalm be possible. But when the Lord Himself becomes the absorbing object of our hearts, and we hear His well-known voice speaking to us through His Word, as really as He spake to His disciples in days of yore, we sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste. Then we shall be often lost in meditation upon His wondrous words—words which contain the blessed unfoldings of Himself, and of His love and grace.

This will be understood by every simple soul, for when once Christ is enshrined in our hearts, we shall ardently desire to please Him in every possible way; and how to do so can only be learned from His own words. The apostle Paul thus writes to the Colossians: "For this cause . . . we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," etc. (Col. i. 9, 10.) And the Lord Himself said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Desiring therefore to please Him, we shall earnestly seek out from His Word what His will is, and what His commandments are, and having ascertained, we shall dwell upon them again and again, that we may apprehend their bearing and application. We shall thus feed upon the Word and digest it, roast that which we have taken in hunting, because we have learned in

some measure that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

It must also be borne in mind that it is while we are meditating that the Holy Spirit is most active in unfolding and applying the Word. Sometimes when we are quietly before the Lord, revolving His Word in our souls, a sudden light will seem to penetrate into its very depths and reveal its hidden meanings. It is only the Spirit who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; and we therefore require to give room to His activity, and this is best done in meditation. We must beware at the same time, when the Word is thus opened out to us, that we do not fall into the mistake of supposing that we have grasped the whole of its meaning. The Word of God is divine and infinite, and hence there may be an infinity of meaning in it, as well as a variety of applications. But there can be no contradiction in the different interpretations which may rightly be drawn from it. All will be in perfect harmony, because, if all alike are the teaching of the Spirit of God, all will be the expression of the divine mind. This will be conceded by every spiritual mind; and we need only add, that the more leisure we gain for meditation, if indeed it be in realised dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the more intimate will be our knowledge of the Lord Himself, and the greater will be our understanding of His Word.

“FIRST things first”; that is, God’s interests and claims must ever have the supremacy.

DELIVERANCE FROM SATAN.

GOD has been pleased to present us with four different aspects of deliverance in the New Testament, as the grand result of the finished work of Christ, in order that His children might be before Him in peace, and have the joy of His salvation in their souls as their present and abiding portion.

Deliverance is thus from sin, from the law, from the world, and from Satan. In this paper we propose to take up the last of these as set forth in the following scripture: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

We are here called to face some solemn facts. The personality of Satan is as distinctly set forth as the power also which he possesses, which is called "the power of death." "Death," not in the sense of ceasing to breathe in a mortal body merely, but in the sense rather of a ceaseless existence, with the wrath of God abiding on those who continue in unbelief, according to John iii. 36. The very thought of it strikes terror to the guilty sinner's soul when once the conscience is convicted by the Spirit of God. Take Felix, for example, who trembled while the apostle "reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." How foolish of Felix to resist the Spirit, instead of yielding to Him, that He might use the same

servant to calm his fears by preaching peace by Jesus Christ!

The power of death which Satan exercises was gained by him in the garden of Eden, when he succeeded in leading our first parents to sin against the positive command they had received from God: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 17.) We also read, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans vi. 23.) The one that induced the guilty ones to do his work was afterwards allowed to have the power of paying the wages. And what Adam earned in the garden of Eden by his disobedience, his descendants have been righteously receiving payment for ever since, as children of disobedience in a far-off and outside place. Satan, moreover, acquired a position on earth and among men which he never had before the Fall. From that time he exercised the power of death as the just judgment of God, and none could oppose him or dispute his right until Christ came and bound the strong man, and spoiled his goods:

"Who on His cross triumphant broke
The chains of death and hell."

We are not to suppose, however, that because Christ has gained the victory over sin and Satan, the whole of the human family are free from the penalty of sin and the fear of death, and no longer subject to the judgment of God. To entertain such a thought would be simply a delusion. "Christ died for all," it is true, and salvation is proclaimed to all; but something else is needed beside the work of Christ and the Word of God before a person can be saved. For until the

truth is received by faith into the heart, the value of His sacrifice can never be known. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." "He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

In the first and last books of the Bible there are two sources revealed: the source of the ruin of man, and the source of the river of God. The former can be clearly traced to "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," and the latter to our ascended and victorious Saviour, who entered the stronghold of the enemy and overcame him in death; and therefore the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, was seen by John as "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Gen. iii.; Rev. xxii. 1.)

It is interesting to notice how readily the apostle James attributes everything that is pure and good to God, and all that is evil to Satan. He also connects everything that is good with heaven, and everything that is evil with hell, while speaking of the devil as a person in distinction from hell as a place. He thus speaks of the tongue in its unbridled state as "a fire," and then points, as it were, to the place where that fire originated. The tongue, we read, "setteth on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire of hell." (James i., iii.).

When sin entered the world the Lord God appealed to Adam, saying, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree?" To shirk his responsibility, Adam at once cast the blame on the woman. "And the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that thou hast done?" And she blamed the serpent. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent,

Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed," etc. Satan was found out, and the One that found him out was God, who afterwards "drove out the man; and placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

The following are some of the evils which Satan stands charged with in the Word of God, though the sinner's responsibility is by no means lessened:—

Satan beguiled the woman in the garden of Eden; Satan put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord to death; Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie unto the Holy Ghost (which shows that each person of the Trinity has been assailed and sinned against by the adversary).

On each of these occasions he was aided by men and women like ourselves. Also when Joshua stood in his degraded condition before the angel, Satan was at his right hand to resist him. Satan also afflicted Job, and smote him last of all with sore boils from head to foot. It was Satan, too, that sifted the apostle Peter and buffeted the apostle Paul. All these cases show that Satan uses every possible manner in his power to hinder the work of God by opposing the servants of Christ. It is important therefore that we should keep the cross of Christ in view as that which declares the complete defeat of the enemy, and as that with which the deliverance of the believer is connected. Otherwise our experience will be more like that of the Israelites when they raised the cry of distress, saying to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" They had left Egypt behind, but Pharaoh

He said, "I will pursue, I will overtake," and their fear was as long as Pharaoh lived; for although they were out of his land they were still in bondage, "through fear of death." And in order to stay their fears, God answered them, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew you this day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Exodus xiv.) This may teach us what the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished in His death by silencing Satan and securing salvation for the subjects of grace.

When the Red Sea was crossed, wherein the death and resurrection of Christ are typified, they occupied a new position from which they could view the oppressor with an experience they never had before; and instead of looking back in fear of Pharaoh, they looked at his death and burial in the same sea which had become the means of separating them for ever from his power and dominion. The promise made by the Lord God in the garden of Eden was, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. For the fulfilment of this the death of Christ was a necessity, and by means of it He both deprived Satan of the power of death, and acquired its possession Himself. The demonstration of it was afterwards given by His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. Satan had no longer a right to the power of death over believers, after Christ had paid the penalty in His own blood, for He has fully satisfied all the claims of God and glorified Him concerning the whole question of sin, and thus for ever silenced the accusations of the enemy.

And looking back by faith to the cross and forward to the glory, His saints can raise a louder note of praise than even that which burst from the lips of His people of old when they said, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."

The doom of Satan was sealed by the same Person, and by means of the same act, as the salvation of God's elect was eternally secured. Saints, therefore, can date their deliverance from sin and Satan from the time when Jesus said, "It is finished"; and the enemy will have to attribute his overthrow to the same cause.

The Christian reader may think it difficult to reconcile what has been said with respect to the overthrow of Satan, as seen in connection with the cross of Christ, with his own experience as to the present reality of the power and presence of the enemy. As a matter of fact, indeed, Satan is as active as ever; but faith recognises that he is a defeated foe, and treats him accordingly. The apostle Peter speaks of the devil as a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour, and the apostle Paul compares him to an angel of light. What strange extremes and remarkable forms he takes, both to destroy sinners and deceive, if possible, even the elect.

There was another power with which even Israelites were called to contend in the wilderness, also representing Satan, which is calculated to throw fresh light on the danger in which the Christian stands. After realising their deliverance from Pharaoh, the children of Israel had to face another foe in Amalek—the enemy of God, who dogged His people's steps through the wilderness in the hope of their destruction. But those that had found a foe in Amalek also found a

friend in Moses, who interceded for them on the hill-top while they were in conflict with the enemy below. They were also furnished with strength and refreshment for all that was before them by means of the water from the smitten rock, typical of the Spirit of God which the believer receives as the means of strength in the presence of Satan.

The Christian then, as a matter of fact, has to face a far greater foe than Amalek, and also a far greater Friend than Moses to intercede for him; One who occupies a place infinitely higher than "the hill-top" referred to. Moses was subject to weakness, and needed support himself while interceding for others. Our great High Priest and Intercessor is at the right hand of God, exercising His power, apart from all weakness, for the present blessing and for the final deliverance of His people. "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.)

May we each one know more and more of the infinite nature of the sacrifice of Christ, and learn to apprehend what has been virtually accomplished at the cross, by annulling the power of the devil, that our souls may triumph even now; and as knowing that the time is near when the enemy of God's people will be cast out of heaven, then shut out of earth by being bound for a thousand years, and afterwards cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night for ever. Let it also be remembered that whosoever is not found written in the book of life will also be cast into the lake of

THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

MARK X. 17-27.

LET us examine what the Lord here says about the state of man. The young man addressed the Lord not as Son of God, but as a rabbi, that is, as a teacher in Israel: he calls Him "Good Master." The Lord will not admit that man is good; not one righteous man can be found amongst men—no, not one. He says, "Why callest thou Me good? No one is good except One: that is God." Certainly Christ was good, but He was God, although He made Himself man in His perfect love. He was always God, and God became man without ceasing to be, or being able to cease being, God; only He had hidden His divinity in human nature (at least His glory) in order to come nigh unto us; for by faith, divine power and love are more clearly manifested than ever. But here the young man comes as to a human teacher, a rabbi; and the Lord answers him in the same manner as he asks; but He establishes this important principle, that no one amongst the sons of fallen Adam is good. It is a humiliating truth, but one of immense weight. We cannot now find a man who is good by nature. We have seen that certain qualities remain of the first creation; but that which God had created good, and declared to be good, has been corrupted by the Fall. Man goes in quest of his own pleasures, of his own interests, and not of God and His glory; he may set these things honestly or dishonestly in the quagmire of sin; but he always seeks to satisfy his own will. He has lost God, and looks after himself.

Then the Lord, after having presented to him the

of the law, in which a man has life whilst he keeps them, adds in an exhortation the command which made Paul feel what the law produced, in the state in which man was—in death. “One thing thou lackest,” says the Lord: “go, sell that thou hast, and come and follow Me.” Here we see the lust of the heart exposed, the young man’s true state laid bare by the Lord’s powerful but simple word, which knows and tries the heart. The fine flowers of the wild tree are worth nothing; the fruits are those of a heart alienated from God; the sap is the sap of a bad tree. The love of riches ruled this young man’s heart, interesting as it was as to his natural disposition: the base desire of gold lay at the bottom of his heart; it was the mainspring of his will, the true measure of his moral state. If he goes away grieved, and leaves the Lord, it is because he prefers money to God manifested in love and grace.

How solemn a thing it is to find oneself in the presence of Him who searcheth the heart! But the thing that governs the heart, its motive, is the true measure of man’s moral state, and not the qualities which he possesses by birth, however pleasing these may be. Good qualities are to be found even in animals; they are to be esteemed, but they do not at all reveal the moral state of the heart. A man who has a hard and perverse nature, who tries to control his bad disposition by grace, and to be amiable to others and pleasing to God, is more moral and better before Him than a man who, amiable naturally, seeks to enjoy himself with others in a pleasant way, but without conscience before God—that is, without thinking of Him—loved by men, but displeasing to the God whom he forgets. That which

gives moral character to a man is the object of his heart; and it is this the Lord shows here in so powerful a manner that it touches to the quick the pride of the human heart.

But the Lord goes farther. The disciples, who thought that men could do something to gain eternal life, like all the Pharisees of every age, and that man ought to gain heaven for himself, although they recognised the need of God's help, were astonished. What! a rich man of a very good disposition, who had kept the law, and who only sought to know what was the most excellent commandment from their Master in order to perform it—could such a one be far from the kingdom of God? Could it be extremely difficult for such a one to enter into it? If we do not understand that we are lost already; that we need to be saved; that it is a question of the state of the heart; that all hearts are naturally at a distance from God, and that they seek an object, the object of their own desire, far from Him; that they do not wish Him to be present, because the conscience feels that His presence would hinder the heart in following this object;—if we do not learn this truth by grace, we are altogether blind.

At the moment at which we have arrived in this passage, it was too late to keep concealed from man (at least from the disciples) the true state of his heart. This state had been manifested; man had been unwilling to receive the Son of God. Thus it had been proved that, with the best natural disposition, man, even whilst preserving outward morality, preferred to follow the object of his desire rather than the God of love present upon earth, or a master whom he had recognised as having the highest knowledge of the will

of God. Man was lost—he had shown this fact in rejecting the Son of God—and he must learn it, and that with all his most excellent qualities he cannot save himself. “Who then can be saved?” The Lord does not hide the truth: “With men it is impossible.” Solemn words, pronounced by the Lord, pronounced by Him who came to save us. He knew that man could not save himself, that he could not emerge from the state into which he had fallen without the help of God. With men it is impossible; but then God comes in His boundless love to save us, not to conceal our state and the need of this free salvation.

We must know our state. It is not a thing to be lightly esteemed, that the glorious Son of God should have made Himself of no reputation, and have died upon the cross—the only means of redeeming and saving lost man. We must know ourselves, and know that we are condemned in our hearts, in order to be able to understand that Christ has borne this condemnation in our place, and that He has accomplished the work of our salvation according to God’s glory. Let the state of condemnation and sin be proved; and let the love, the perfect righteousness, and the holiness of a God who cannot tolerate the sight of sin (however patient He may be), be brought out clearly and glorified. “With men it is impossible . . . with God all things are possible.” By the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by this work alone—a work which the angels desire to look into—all this can be done; salvation is obtained by faith—by faith, because all is accomplished. To God be the praise! The Lord is glorified as man in heaven, because this work has been done, and because God has recognised its perfection;

it is on this account that He has placed Christ at His right hand, because everything has been done. God is satisfied, glorified, in the work of Christ.

“With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” But what an immense grace which shows us what we are and what God is! “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Think of this, brethren. This means that we must expect a cross in this world. Be ready to receive the Lord’s words, to take up the cross, in order to have the true knowledge of yourselves; that is, that you are lost in sin, that salvation is purely of grace, impossible for man, but that the work of salvation is perfect and complete, and the righteousness of God is upon all men who believe in Him who has accomplished it. In no part of Scripture is the fundamental truth of the need of God’s salvation and of man’s state more clearly stated.

J. N. D.

PROMINENT PREPOSITIONS.

ROMANS iii. 19-viii. 1.

THE importance of the truths contained in Romans iii. to viii., as regards their individual application, it is impossible to overestimate. Peace, deliverance, and liberty cannot in any degree be realised or enjoyed apart from the intelligent and spiritual apprehension of the truths therein brought to light by the apostle.

The framework of truth in these chapters may be simply and distinctly traced in connection with some prepositions, which possess a remarkable and unmistakable prominence.

The object of this paper then is, under the guidance

of the Spirit of God, to link up these important successional truths one with another, as it were, by a simple chain of little words which, being in themselves insignificant, may have failed duly to impress even a constant reader with their full and distinctive importance.

Man's responsible position, whether Jew or Gentile, is first of all summed up in the little preposition, in Romans iii. 19,

"BEFORE."

"Guilty *before* God." The two streams of humanity, Jew and Gentile, privileged and unprivileged, with and without law, are here presented, exposed in their responsibly guilty state before God. Next, the full and unmistakable character of that righteousness which, being God's, alone can suit Him, comes out at least on its negative side. Law and law-righteousness have nothing to say to it, for it is declared to be

"WITHOUT"

law, *i.e.*, apart absolutely from any link of association with human righteousness with which man seeks, when first conscious of his guilty state, to cover himself, as in the first instance Adam and Eve, by a garment of their own make.

But if human effort is thus summarily put out of court, it is only that God's righteousness may be acquired

"THROUGH"

"the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 24), presented as such on the divine side; while as to appropriation on ours, it is said to be "through faith in His blood."

In accordance with the subject of this part of the

epistle, the declaration of God's righteousness by means of the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, is announced to be

“FOR”

“the remission of sins.” This little word is repeated in chapter iv. 25, “Jesus our Lord . . . was delivered *for* our offences, and raised again *for* our justification”; and in chapter v. 6-8, though the word in the original is different in the two latter cases, it is correctly translated “for” in English: “Christ died *for* the ungodly,” “Christ died *for* us.”

So far these little but leading words have been rapidly glanced over as expressing fundamental truths of immense moment; viz., man's universally guilty state; the character of God's righteousness in its aspect manward; redemption alone through Christ Jesus, ours through faith, God acting in sovereign grace for remission of sins, resurrection witnessing to the complete justification of the sinner and the ungodly.

The gospel, it is to be feared, is often summarised by, and limited to these truths. Marvellous, however, though they assuredly are in scope and character, they are far from exhausting the full measure of the work of redemption. Indeed we may say, with the light Romans v. 8-12 furnishes, that that work would be incomplete and insufficient if it reached no further than the extent to which it is applied in the earlier part up to Romans v. 11.

A little preposition now occurs, which it is not too much to say fairly studs chapter v., occurring twenty times, viz.,

“BY.”

At verse 11, however, it introduces a subject different entirely as to its character from any that precede, but

of immense moment to apprehend before deliverance and liberty can be spiritually and divinely enjoyed. Its force may be summed up in one short word, viz., *entail*.

Hitherto *responsibility* has been occupying the apostle's teaching in this epistle, and necessarily comes first, as dealing with individual relations of guilt, and the removal in righteousness of *sins* connected with that personally-responsible condition in which each separately stands before God.

In contrast to this, by *entail* is meant state or condition acquired by hereditary descent, not as the result, as here considered, of personal doings or responsibility: "by one man sin entered . . . and so death passed upon all men," etc. Hence a sinful nature—sin—is *entailed* by Adam's fall upon all Adam's descendants.* The characteristic force of the preposition "by" comes out perhaps most distinctly as entail in verse 19, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

This little word consequently, as applied to Adam and to Christ, presents us with the truth of *two distinct headships*, whose status, by virtue of what each has done, is *entailed* upon those ranged respectively under those headships. Though not so designated here, these are elsewhere termed "the first man" and "the second Man," "the first Adam" and "the last Adam." (1 Cor. xv. 45-47.)

We are now face to face with the first essential truth of immense importance to apprehend, as pre-

* As disease may be the fruit of personal responsibility, or of hereditary transmission.

paratory to the divine understanding of the truth of deliverance, which is simply the relief experienced by the soul's intelligent transfer from the headship of Adam to the headship of Christ, together with the corresponding practical and experimental deliverance from the bondage entailed by the first, into the liberty entailed by the latter.

But first, before entering upon the practical and experimental side of this important subject, the apostle states doctrinally that which is no matter of experience in itself, but upon which what is experimental is based.

It is impossible to advance a step towards apprehending and enjoying liberty under the new headship so long as indistinct thoughts of relation to the Adam headship remain; hence the absolute importance of the truth involved in the next important preposition, viz.,

“ WITH.”

This little word has a double bearing, viz., first, upon the judicial *condemnation* of that which by entail has been transmitted from Adam downwards, *i.e.*, sin, the nature: “ Our old man has been crucified WITH Him ” (*v.* 6. New Trans.); secondly, upon *the termination* of the believer's connection and identification with the first or Adam headship: “ If we *have died* WITH Christ,” etc. (*v.* 8.) Dead with another may be understood in one of two alternative ways—either representatively, as the conscript who may be held to have died if his substitute should have died, or in the sense of the death of two actually at the same time, and under the same circumstances, as in the case of Saul and Jonathan, of whom it is said, “ in death they were not divided.” It is only in the former of these two senses

that it is possible for the believer to "have died with Christ," and uniformly so, when death is applied to the believer in the historical or past sense; that is to say, it is wholly and absolutely objective. It may be well here to draw attention to what has been noted by others, viz., the change from the pronoun "we," used uniformly in verses 1 to 10, to "ye" in verse 11. That which is true of all believers, and has even become by faith the possession subjectively of some, is in verse 11 pressed hortatively, at once reducing to practice what has been, it may be, already accepted in the faith of a past accomplishment in Christ. But this practical application of Christ's death, coming in as it does under another preposition, will be treated of separately later on.

Other expressions, and as such in themselves irreconcilable with the one under consideration, are used when death is practically and experimentally connected with the believer; viz., "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" (v. 11); "Bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 10); "Mortify therefore your members," etc. (Col. iii. 5); "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," etc. (Gal. v. 24.)

Lest, however, the objective truth of the believer's having died with Christ should by any possibility be confused with the subjective exhortation to reckon ourselves dead (v. 11), it may be well to examine the proposition more carefully. Assuming then that "having died with Christ" expresses what is practically and experimentally made good or to be made good in the believer, in order to arrive at some clear view of what is meant it is necessary to ask the

simple question, What has died? for death is death, and where death has taken place someone or something has died, and here evidently not to be revived.

From Scripture we conclude that man is tripartite in his being, viz., body, soul, and spirit. In addition, at the Fall "sin entered"; but when, as we say, converted, there is beside the new birth, life, or nature. It is self-evident that death cannot, in the sense considered, refer to any of these (save possibly through misapprehension and erroneous teaching), or to sin, as this is at once exposed by a reference to the inspired exhortation, "Let not sin therefore *reign*," "have dominion," and by Paul's own acknowledgment of the "sin that *dwelleth* in me," these expressions being perfectly irreconcilable with sin having died in the believer. It is therefore absolutely impossible to apply death in its historical or past sense *subjectively* to the believer, save as the appropriation of faith. Objectively, representatively, and thus terminally and judicially, it has its full scriptural accomplishment *in Christ*, as Scripture terms plainly and unmistakably involve: believers "have died with Christ."*

Baptism confirms and illustrates the truth of the believer's having died with Christ: it is "unto CHRIST'S DEATH," the order as put being most remarkable and significant—"buried with Him by baptism *unto death*," the reversal of the ordinary course, and involving an already accomplished fact, expressively complete in burial, which precedes death in another sense, viz., practical and experimental—treated of in detail later on in the chapter.

M. C. G.

* "Now I have died with Christ, and so do not belong to the old position of a child of Adam. Death clearly closes all relationship and bond with it." (*Deliverance from the Law of Sin*. J. N. D. p. 8.)

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

1 PETER i. 1, 2.

It is quite true that all believers are strangers in this world (for they are not of it), and that they are "scattered." But Peter, it must be remembered, was the apostle of the circumcision; and as such he wrote his epistles to the believers among the Jews, and to those who were found in the various places named in the first verse. A more exact translation is "to the sojourners of the dispersion"; that is, he addressed those who were outside the limits of Palestine, and who were living in these several provinces of Asia Minor. The term "dispersion" (scattered abroad) is a technical word for their description. (See John vii. 35; James i. 1.) The meaning of "strangers" or sojourners is simply living in a strange place. In chapter ii. 11 the same word is employed with the addition of another, signifying "aliens" or "foreigners." It is rendered in our version "strangers and pilgrims"; and these terms exactly describe what these believers were, and what indeed all Christians are. We are not at home, and we are therefore strangers; we are passing through this world, and thus, as on a journey, we are pilgrims. In verse 2 we have a very striking setting forth (a contrast, we doubt not, with 1 as the earthly people) of the peculiar blessedness of these chosen ones from among the Jewish nation. They were elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father (compare Ephesians i. 4, 5), and thus the object of His eternal counsels, and to know God, not now as

Jehovah, but as their God and Father in the intimate relationship of children, doubtless in association with Christ, as in John xx. 17. The accomplishment of God's counsels was to be "through sanctification of the Spirit," for it was by His mighty power they were set apart for the glory of God. The end of their election of God the Father was—for we do not in this epistle go beyond the earth, precisely because it is addressed to sojourners—"unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Formerly they had been set apart to obey the old covenant, the ten commandments; now Christ was to be their pattern, and they were to obey as He obeyed. (See 1 John ii. 6.) They were moreover separated unto God, to be brought under all the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, to be perfected for ever, as to the conscience, by the value of His one sacrifice, that they might be free both in heart and conscience before God to run in the way of His commandments, and live by every word which proceeded out of His mouth. Happy people they surely were as placed in such a blessed position, and begotten as they were to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead unto an incorruptible and heavenly inheritance.

II.

I CORINTHIANS XV. 45-49.

If careful attention be given to the words of the apostle, a marked distinction will be perceived between the terms "the last Adam" and "the second Man," although both are applied to our blessed Lord. The first of these—used in contrast with "the first man Adam"—refers to headship—the headship of a race. After Adam fell in the garden of Eden, he became the

head of a fallen race (see Romans v. 12-14); and Christ in like manner, after His death and resurrection, became the Head of a new race; and hence it is said, As in Adam all die—all who stand in connection with him as their head—even so in Christ shall all—all who are of His race—be made alive; for the last Adam “became” a quickening Spirit. He is called the last Adam to teach us that there is, and will be, no other head. In Him, and His race, God's eternal counsels of grace will be for ever accomplished. But the terms “the first man” and “the second Man,” as may be seen from the language employed, denote the order or character—in both cases derived from their heads—of the respective races. Thus “the first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is [the Lord] from [out of] heaven.” (v. 47.) The origin of Adam was the earth, and that of Christ was heaven; and this determined the order, Adam being the earthy, and Christ the heavenly Man. Then we are told that “as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy”; that as all of Adam's race, still under him as head, partake of his own order, as he was “earthy,” so are all of his race earthy. On the other hand, “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly”; that is, all who are under the headship of Christ partake of His order, and are therefore heavenly. And so completely are the two races identified with the order or character of their heads that the apostle, speaking of those who belong to Christ, can add, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” In this he refers to the resurrection, when the dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, and when those who are living will be changed, when the bodies of humiliation—

the "earthy" bodies of the saints—will be fashioned like unto the glorified body of our blessed Lord. Let it then never be forgotten that all belong to the first or the last Adam; and in view of the solemn and far-reaching consequences as to each race, the question may be well put to everyone who reads these lines, Do you belong to Adam or to Christ?

III.

1 CORINTHIANS i. 21.

As may be seen in the note in the *New Translation*, "the foolishness of preaching" does not refer to the act of preaching, but to its subject-matter. The apostle thus says in verse 23, "We preach Christ crucified . . . unto the Greeks foolishness." To those cultured intellectual men it savoured of complete folly to proclaim salvation through One who had been ignominiously put to death on a cross. It offended their pride, because it made nothing of man, and was the means by which God made foolish the wisdom of this world. Alas! the offence of the cross has not yet ceased; and hence every effort is being made to obscure, or to undermine, the character of the work which was wrought out in the death of Christ. That He died as a martyr all will gladly concede; but that He died under the hand of God, and therefore glorified Him on account of our sin, even many of the professed advocates of Christianity absolutely refuse. But "the foolishness of God" is "wiser than men," and the divinely-taught soul rejoices to know that the only foundation on which it can peacefully repose before God is that finished work, which was accomplished on Calvary, and which was testified to by the resurrection of Christ from among the dead.

COMMUNION IN OBJECT.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 12.

WE desire to call attention to this scripture as an exemplification of entire oneness between the Lord and His servant as to the object of his calling. If we give the words of another translation this will be still more apparent: "Not that I have already obtained [the prize], or am already perfected; but I pursue, if also I may get possession [of it], seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus." Thus, as the simplest reader will perceive, the apostle's mind was energetically set upon the very end that Christ had in view in "taking possession" of His servant; and towards this goal he daily bent his diligent steps. It was, as we may say, his one business with which through grace he suffered no interference.

Let us then first ascertain what this goal was, or what was the end proposed. It is clear from verse 11 that it was conformity to Christ in glory; because the resurrection from among the dead, at which Paul by any means hoped to arrive, points out the time when this conformity will be accomplished, when even the bodies of our humiliation will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. (v. 21.) With the end Christ had before Him in apprehending Paul, agrees the purpose of God as stated by the apostle in another epistle: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He

might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) Nothing less than this was before the mind of God when He chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. And unless this be perceived, it is impossible to enter into the full truth of Christianity; as otherwise it could not be understood that the first man, who is of the earth earthy, has been entirely displaced by the Second Man who is "out" of heaven.

It should also be observed that communion with God in His purpose in our calling is the secret of all spiritual energy and growth. It was so with Paul in this chapter. He is seen as literally absorbed in his object—in the prize of his calling on high of God in Christ Jesus; and, as he says in another place, he could not see (other things) for the glory of the light which had shone into his soul. Christ glorified—his pattern and object—the One to whom he was to be conformed, possessed his soul, ravished his heart, and thus made him oblivious of every counter-attraction wherewith Satan might seek to allure him into any other path. We consequently see him as one running a race (for he is under the spell of the mighty attractions of Christ in glory), with his eyes fixed upon the prize, and every muscle of his spiritual being strained in his constant and diligent pursuit. If then we would be like Paul in this, in his concentration and devotedness to his object, it can only be so with us, in our measure, when we are on the line of God's purpose; when, that is, our hearts are set upon what He has purposed for His people. The reason of so

much defection is, indeed, simply that so many fail to perceive, or decline to accept, what God has revealed as His end in their calling.

But there are, as this chapter abundantly teaches, conditions for entering upon this blessed path. The first of these is, as may be deduced from verse 3, deliverance known and enjoyed. We gather from the context that there were teachers who opposed the heavenly calling, as there have been in every age of the Church; and against these Judaizers—"dogs"—Paul was compelled to utter a solemn note of warning. Not *they*, he reminds the Philippians, but "*we* are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." And this describes in a most striking way those who are living in the enjoyment of true deliverance—those (not to go further) who have been made free, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, from the law of sin and death. For until this is reached—and the pathway to it is exhibited in Romans vii.—these characteristics would not apply. Then, and then only, in the full sense of this scripture, are we able to worship "by" (this is probably the accurate reading) the Spirit, to make our boast in Christ Jesus, and to have no confidence in the flesh. It is the blessed heavenly circle where the glory of God and of Christ floods the scene, where everything is according to it, and where all are energised by the Holy Ghost; and into this sphere it is not possible to enter, even by faith, until deliverance has been apprehended and experimentally known in power in the soul.

Another condition, as witnessed in the apostle, is that Christ is the absorbing and exclusive object. We do not mean that God's purpose cannot be known where this condition is not fulfilled. It may be; but it is still true that there will not be communion with Him as to it where Christ does not possess the heart and dominate the affections. For be it ever remembered that it is through the affections that Christ gets in any of us His true place of absolute supremacy. He has His rights and His claims, and these in a certain way may be acknowledged; but it is not until He enshrines Himself in our hearts that we count the things which were gain to us loss for Christ; that the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord outweighs every other consideration, and surpasses every other attraction. In this connection, too, it should be remarked that this state of soul has to be maintained. It was so with Paul, for twenty-eight years have to be interposed between verses 7 and 8. We thus learn that Christ had the same (even if we might not say an enlarged) place in the apostle's heart after twenty-eight years of service and travel through the wilderness. We need therefore to keep ourselves from idols all along the path if we are to continue to have Christ as our sole and satisfying object.

We may, perhaps, also direct attention to the example of the apostle in verse 10. If it may be so presented, he ever went forward, and was daunted by no difficulties. The goal was so glorious that he had been made willing to encounter any possible suffering in order to reach it. Each clause of the verse should be much pondered; and it is very blessed to

note that it commences with—"that I may know Him." But did he not already know Him? it may be enquired. Surely he already knew Him; but the knowledge of Christ is infinite, and every bit of intimacy which He vouchsafes to us does but intensify the desire to know Him ever more fully. We shall grow in the knowledge of Himself throughout eternity. But why does "the power of His resurrection" follow? Because it is that which detaches us from this scene and brings us to His side in the place where He is, where only He can be now known. If, however, we are under the power of His resurrection we shall be willing for the fellowship of His sufferings, and even to be made conformable to His death; to die, like Stephen, as martyrs in the prospect of that glorious day when we shall, at His coming, be called out of our graves, and when we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Finally, it may be added that when the soul is thus entranced with Christ, and thus in communion with God's purpose, the back will be turned upon "those things which are behind," earthly things, and the face will be in the full light of "those things which are before," heavenly things. Moreover, the attention of the soul is concentrated upon the prize of the heavenly calling, and all its energies, inwrought by the Holy Spirit, are expressed in pressing towards the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. Herein, it is scarcely needful to remark, lies the secret of having our minds upon things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; or, to use the language of this chapter, of having our

conversation (all our interests—the interests of the spiritual life) in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: “who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” If, however, we, beloved reader, would attain to this state of soul, we must be in communion with the purpose of God for His people.

THE FATHER'S WORLD.

COLOSSIANS i. 12-19.

It would be a great mistake to suppose, as some seem to think, that the world in which we are is ordered by the Father. The language of the apostle settles this question. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” Satan indeed is the god of this world; and hence if we desire to know what the Father's world is we must look for it in such a scripture, for example, as that placed at the head of this paper. Let us then consider it, and in three ways:—

- (1) The way it is reached.
- (2) Our fitness for it.
- (3) What characterizes it.

1. Nothing surely can be of greater interest to the Christian than to know that the Father has a world outside the present order of things in which we find ourselves. This “present evil world” has rejected

the One whom the Father sent into it. But "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand," and at the present moment He adorns the Father's throne, and is the centre of the Father's world.

It must be a wonderful scene that the "Son of His love" fills; and Scripture permits us to look into it. To do so, to make it our study, and become acquainted with it, must be a great gain, while our loss will be correspondingly great should we neglect this. Depend upon it, it is impossible to be apart from the course of things here, unless we have attractions elsewhere; and what can be so attractive to the heart that knows Him as a world where He is the centre and the sun? The kingdoms of this world can have no charm for the one who knows a kingdom pervaded by the Father's glory, and all made known in the Son.

The interest in this subject must be deepened by the knowledge that we have already been translated into this kingdom—"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." The point is, How has this been attained? The answer is, By redemption. "In time past," it says, "ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.) In the words of Colossians we were under "the authority of darkness." We belonged therefore to the kingdom of Satan. To escape by any power or ingenuity of our own was an impossibility. Our sins shut us out from God and at the same time made us the hopeless captives of Satan.

It is important to see this, in order that we may learn the way of deliverance. Our sins, by separating us from God, left us the prey of the enemy of God. Satan knew well how to take advantage of the position. He whispers into man's ear, "God will have nothing to do with you because of your sins; I will be your god." And he knows well how to hold man in his power by ministering to his lust. This being so, if God can righteously forgive sins and bring man to Himself, at once a way of deliverance is opened to the sinner. He has so wrought that this has been effected. He would have been righteous in punishing the sinner for his sins, and this gave Satan his power; God can now be equally righteous in forgiving them. The precious blood of Christ enables Him to be this. The blood is the witness that He is righteous, that He is not indifferent to sin. The blood is the life. A spotless life—the life of Christ—has been given as a ransom. And the resurrection proves that God's power is greater than Satan's. The sinner may know now that God can righteously forgive his sins, and is willing to do so, the moment he believes in Christ. He sees that God has been glorified in the death of Christ, and he no longer fears Him, but sees with delight that he is through redemption for ever freed from Satan's power, and brought to the very God he had once so misunderstood: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Redemption has been wrought out in Christ, "*in whom* we have redemption." He came into man's place under death, and was raised up by the glory of the Father, and God now has man, in the person of Christ, in His own

presence. He is now before God occupying a place never occupied before, and setting forth the character of the believer's place and portion. *In* we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins; and further, we are delivered in the grace of our God from the authority of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

2. We are now prepared to consider our fitness for this position. "Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us *meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." We have been delivered from the authority of darkness, and brought to God by redemption. A new world has opened to us. And those delivered from Satan's power have their portion there.

And what is our meetness for such a scene? It can only be, it must be, Christ. The very One who fills the Father's heart is the One in whom our meetness is found. Naught of what is of ourselves could appear there. Therefore we read, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight." Thus we see how everything that characterized us as in the flesh has come to an end in death—the death of Christ—and we have put off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. All this has been accomplished in Christ's death, and we are now in Him; the best robe is upon us. *We are made meet.*

For this we give thanks unto the Father. He is the source of everything, and all is for His own satisfaction. The Son has accomplished everything, so that

one may be holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in the Father's sight. If Satan has succeeded through the unfaithfulness of man in wrecking this scene, yet the Father, through the Son, has secured to Himself a world of bliss, where we have our happy part. And everything in that world, and we in common with it, will speak to the Father of the Son of His love, who, for the glory of the Father, became obedient unto death.

We have been made meet for *the inheritance of the saints in light*. God is known in all the blessedness of His being. What a contrast to our former position "under the authority of darkness"—God utterly unknown! What a wondrous thought that the Father should give us a share in His own joy! To have our place there, where the Son is, a worthy object to draw out and concentrate in Himself all the unrestrained delight of the Father's heart. The love of the divine bosom can expend itself, and we, through grace, are called to be sharers in it.

3. Let us now see what specially characterizes the Father's world. It is the domain of the Son of His love. We must not limit our ideas of it. As wide as creation itself, it includes every realm where God will ever see fit to display Himself. The farthest star is comprised in it, and all thrones and dominions above, as well as on earth, come under its sway. Alas! this earth does not yet own it. As far as we know it is the one solitary exception in the universe.

Of course we speak of what it will be in display. In the scripture before us we are occupied more with the One to whom all belongs, and our connection with Him; and the first thing we are told of Him

is, "Who is the image of the invisible God." The meaning of this undoubtedly is that Christ is God's representative. He will take possession of everything for God; and all that can be known of Him by a defiled universe in a coming day will be known in Him. God Himself is invisible. (See 1 Tim. vi. 16.) Christ is said to be "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person." He therefore can adequately represent God.

He, "who is the image of the invisible God," is necessarily, we may say, "the firstborn of all creation." In keeping with this we read in Hebrews i. that God has appointed Him "heir of all things." The Son has been pleased to take a place in relation to created things that the Father has not. This has been used by the great adversary to try to dim the lustre of the One who became thus subject, and to deprive Him of His true and proper glory. He was doing so at Colosse; and the Spirit of God is careful to guard the saints against it. "Firstborn" here does not necessarily mean priority in point of time, but in rank.

We are then told that "all things were created by Him, and for Him." In some passages creation is attributed to God, and in others to Christ. Hebrews i. explains it. God made them by Christ: "by whom also He made the worlds." "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created"; and it has been God's pleasure to give them to Christ. "All things were created by Him, and for Him."

"And He is before all things." If He has taken a place as man in relation to creation, yet it is by

no means to be inferred that He came into being along with created things. Proverbs viii. assures us to the contrary. "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." And John i. throws still clearer light upon His person. "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." And we are further told that "by Him all things consist." How little we can comprehend it. That glorious Person—God and Man—sits upon the throne of the universe, marshalling every star, bringing in night and day, and ordering the seasons, just as once on the Galilean lake He spake to the winds and waves, and said, "Peace be still."

Such He is in regard to creation and to God, and now we come to redemption. (v. 18.) These are the two grand parts to God's display of Himself. Both were necessary. Creation sets forth His power, but it needed redemption to set forth His love. What we see here is that Christ holds the first place in regard to both. But what we also see is, that through redemption the Church is brought to share in all the glory of the Head. We may well ask ourselves, What do we think of such a position? nay, rather, What do we think of the One who at such infinite cost to Himself made it possible for us to have it? From what we know of Scripture we are justified in saying that when that scene of glory first bursts upon our view it will be redemption that will evoke the loudest note of praise.

R. E.

"NEW."

THERE are two words in the Greek Testament meaning "new." One, *neos*, is "new" in the sense of fresh, different from, taking the place of, another; the other word, *καινός*, has the meaning of young, of recent origin, not long in existence.

It is the former word which is given in the following passages: Hebrews viii. 8-13, "New covenant"; a better one than the first, which has been made old. Of this covenant, dedicated with blood—the blood of the everlasting covenant, His own blood—Christ is the Mediator. (Hebrews ix. 15.) This blood, having been shed for us, is set before us in the Lord's Supper (Mark xiv. 24), in the cup which we drink. (1 Cor. xi. 25.) Of this covenant the apostles were appointed ministers, and they who through faith receive the ministry are, as the blessed result, an epistle of Christ written on the heart. (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

The spoken words of the Lord Jesus were correctly designated by men as a "new doctrine" in Mark i. 27; so were "Jesus and the resurrection," as preached by Paul in Acts xvii. 19. And, indeed, as it was a "new tomb" wherein the body of the Lord Jesus was laid (Matt. xxix. 60; John xix. 41) (for never before or since was there a dead body such as His, or one who had died in such a way—crying with a loud voice, and expiring of His own will), so out of that new tomb there issued a "new man," created in Himself, who had, by His cross, reconciled to God both those "afar off," the Gentile, and those that were "nigh," the

Jew—a "new man," a new order of being, created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth. (Eph. ii. 15; iv. 24.)

The name of the "new man" is Christ, *i.e.*, the Lord Jesus Christ, "the First-born from among the dead," "the beginning of the creation of God," in union with all those who, having received the Spirit, are members of His body. Now, therefore, if any man be in Christ it is a "new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17), and it is "new creation" alone that stands or avails before God. (Gal. vi. 15.) It is also "new cloth," and to tack this on to that which dates from before the cross, that which is of the Spirit on to that which is of the flesh, must be to make bad worse; a strip of the new will never harmonise with the old—the material, quality, colour are all different. The enactments and ordinances, the "skins" in which the old wine was held, cannot hold the "new wine" of the strength and fulness of the Holy Spirit; for this there must be "new skins," not tables of stone, but hearts of flesh. (Mark ii. 22; Matt. ix. 17; Luke v. 30.) This "new wine" in the regeneration, when "all things" shall have been made "new," the Lord Jesus will drink with His own in the Father's kingdom, in the kingdom of God. (Matt. xxvi. 29; Mark xiv. 25; Rev. xxi. 5.)

Meanwhile, we who are His have been empowered to speak with "new tongues," not indeed, now, as at Pentecost, in foreign languages, but with grace, a manner of diction quite foreign to us when in the flesh. (Mark xvi. 17.) We are already singing the "new song" of Revelation v. 9, a higher strain than that of Revelation xiv. 3, to be sung by others hereafter. Abiding in Christ, we are also made strong to

filled with hearts stored with heavenly treasures "things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52), and our proper walk is in "newness of life" (Romans vi. 4), as we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. "Newness of spirit" (Romans vii. 6) characterises our service, the spontaneous service of love. For we have received a "new commandment," not merely to love each other, but "*as I have loved you, that ye also love one another,*" a thing true in Christ and in us now that the true light is shining: as He kept His Father's commandments and abode in His love, we have the same blessing as we abide in His commandments. (John xiii. 34; 1 John ii. 7, 8; 2 John 5.)

By thus keeping Christ's word and overcoming we are filled with the joyful hope of receiving a "new name," as a precious secret token, between Him whom we love and ourselves, of His gauge and appreciation of our devotion (Rev. ii. 17), as well as to be stamped with His "own new name," written upon us, that so we may show forth His glory throughout the eternal universe. (Rev. iii. 12.) We are citizens of the "new Jerusalem" (Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 2); as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and looking for such things as "new heavens and a new earth," wherein dwelleth righteousness, we do well to be diligent, that we may be found of our Lord in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1), purifying ourselves, even as He is pure.

In all the above places it is most encouraging and helpful to understand that the "newness" is that of 2 Corinthians v. 17, the all things having become new, because of the old things having passed away. The

"new" take the place of the "old," and differ from them in essence, duration, and accompaniments, as the work of God differs from that of man, that which has been established in the last Adam from that which was entrusted to the first.

The value of the other word, *neos*, is seen in its use in such places as 1 Corinthians v. 7; Ephesians iv. 23; Colossians iii. 10; Hebrews xii. 24. In the first of these places a "new lump" gives the sense of beginning again, after purging out the old leaven, making a new start as those who were unleavened; "renewed in the spirit of your mind" is to be freshened, renovated, made young again, so to speak, through the exchange of the first man for the second; in the expression "the new man" the point is, not as in Ephesians iv. 24, the new order of being, but that it is a life in the new bloom of youth—bright, healthy, and vigorous—a life, moreover, wherein by the *anakainosis*, the redintegration of, the complete change effected by, the Holy Ghost, fresh, entirely new realities are experienced. In Hebrews, in the passage cited, the receivers of that epistle are reminded that the covenant of which Christ is the Mediator is one that has only lately been inaugurated. To this latter sense of the word "new" we who are Christ's are being continually kept alive, as we find Jesus Christ to be the same yesterday, and to-day, and know in our hearts and in our souls that He will be so for ever. He has the bloom of His youth. There is a deep significance in the name which He bears, and in the aspect in which He is presented to us as the Lamb. Eternal freshness is always associated with Him. His presence is always fresh; weariness and repetition are impossible where He is.

And so there blend in Him the meaning of both *os* and *kainos*; for He is always the One in whom there is no change, nor shadow of turning, the "altogether lovely," His "name as ointment poured forth" *et cetera*; and how true the word *kainos* is of Him, and everything belonging to Him, the passages given above are abundant proof. He is our blessed, eternal inheritance. The riches of Christ are unsearchable. The love of Christ passes knowledge. And yet all things are ours, because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

W. C. C-B-C.

PROMINENT PREPOSITIONS.

ROMANS iii. 19-viii. 1.

(Continued from page 80.)

THE practical application of the believer's having died *with* Christ is set forth in the form of another preposition, viz.,

"TO or UNTO,"

which comes out very distinctly in verse 11, "Reckon therefore yourselves to be dead indeed *unto* sin," &c. Christ in death, and believers representatively with him, died *unto* sin, verse 10 marking definitely a relation which believers now stand to sin. Faith's apprehension of what is true *of* the believer before God, before it is made good *in* him, has undoubtedly a practical form of expression, not in actual physical death, but the *reckoning* or *accounting* himself as such *unto* sin. It is not now the historical past, but rather the continuous present—"So also ye reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Newmans.) This exceedingly important transition from

the past tense to the present furnishes a further impossibility as to any identity between the expressions "have died" and "reckon . . . dead," what is past and completed not being reconcileable with what is present and continuous, save as cause and effect. It is the relation in which the believer stands *in Christ, death to sin*, brought into the practice of the life; his attitude continuously towards the inward nature, in its dominating tendency and energy, rather than the attenuation or actual death of ANYTHING within him, and that by the simple practical means of *accounting the body dead, i.e.,* the vessel or vehicle by which sin can alone express itself, and without the active co-operation of which it is rendered impotent, or as verse 6 expresses it (New Trans.), "annulled," the true rendering of "destroyed"; lit., left unemployed.

Hence, in deliverance viewed subjectively and practically in the believer, *nothing has died or has to die* as long as he remains in the body. In this practical aspect of deliverance it may be said to be *the perpetual annulling of the energy and dominion of sin within, by the practically accounted condition of the body in the power of the Holy Ghost,* based upon the full judgment of that nature in Christ, according to Rom. vi. 6 and viii. 3*; but if past historical death with Christ is omitted or ignored, the foundation is lacking upon which practical deliverance can be made good, and the apostolic doctrine is dislocated so as to be absolutely ineffectual in its results practically.

We are not left without the clearest scriptural authority for the application of reckoning dead to the

* In this connection see Rom. viii. 13; xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 13-20; ix. 27; 2 Cor. iv. 10; 1 Thess. v. 23; Jas. iii. 26; iv. 1; Col. iii. 5.

body, for Rom. viii. 10 throws clear light upon *what* it is that in the full Christian state of liberty is practically held for dead, viz., "THE BODY is dead because of sin"—physical death having no place here. Full Christian state (the state of a Christian being quite another thing, as always short of the scriptural standard) anticipates, in a certain sense, resurrection; viz., the body, so reckoned or accounted dead as to its being vitalised by sin, that it may be free for the full energy of the Spirit of God, its only recognised legitimate life. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness," i.e., practical righteousness.

Indeed, from Rom. vi. 11-13, it is clear that *the body* is in view in connection with the exhortations, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," "Let not sin therefore reign in *your mortal body* . . . neither yield ye *your members* as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield . . . *your members* as instruments of righteousness unto God"; again, verse 19, "As ye have yielded *your members* servants, etc., . . . so now yield *your members*," etc.

Before, however, relief can be enjoyed by means of this practical deliverance, it is necessary to consider the force of another small but important preposition occurring in chaps. vi. and vii., viz.,

"UNDER."

In chapter vii. 14 we read, "I am carnal, sold *under* sin"; chap. vi. 14, we "are not *under* law," which the undelivered soul conceives itself to be. From Rom. vii. 4, 6, we learn that the believer has "*been* dead to the law by the [dead] body of Christ." The judgment, which a broken law demands, has been exhaustively borne by Christ in *His death*, but that was on the

believer's behalf; hence, by virtue of an exhausted penalty fully borne, there is freedom from the law, absolutely and permanently. And Christ's death being the believer's judicial death, it is said (r. 6), "But now we are delivered from the law, having died (New Trans.) in that in which we were held."

Sin and law are in these chapters estimated in the light of the new divine nature called, chap. vii. 22, "the inward man." By the instinct of holiness, proper to this new nature, the believer becomes conscious of sin's true character and of his bondage under its dominion. By the instinct of obedience, which also belongs to the new man, he is made aware of the holy, searching claims of the divine requirements, as yet embodied for him in law, but to which no effort of his enables him perfectly to conform himself. The spirit that would be free to live wholly to God is hampered and shackled, not yet knowing divine deliverance, by entanglement with these; but through the distress experienced three important truths are learnt—essentially deliverance.

1. That the distress proceeds from the presence of two things, as yet undistinguished—I and sin—"the inward man" and the old nature. (v. 17.)

2. "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." (v. 18)—no good.

3. "How to perform that which is good I find not." (v. 18)—no strength.

For deliverance, not self-improvement through self-effort, there is now groaning: "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (v. 24.)

This point of deepest distress reached experimentally, the light of a new *discovery* shines in: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Applying at this stage the doctrines involved in the three little words last considered, the character of deliverance "through Jesus Christ our Lord" becomes apparent.

First, Adam's status having been entailed upon those of his order *by* Adam's headship, Christ the last Adam's status is entailed upon those of His order *by* Christ's headship in resurrection.

Second, having died *with* Christ, all association with the Adam headship, as concerns the believer, has ceased for God. This brings in the relief of deliverance FOR FAITH. Faith sees it *as effected in Christ*.

Third, having died with Christ, who, in that He died, died unto sin, the believer practically and experimentally accounts himself in the power of the Holy Ghost, dead TO sin, having also *become dead* to the law by that same death. This brings in the relief of *practical* deliverance in the daily and hourly walk.

One step further, and the full truth of deliverance is made good to the believer, expressed by our last preposition, viz.,

"IN."

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are *in* Christ Jesus," where it is well known Romans viii., should end, the latter clause belonging to verse 4. The believer's full standing "IN Christ," no longer IN Adam, is now consciously reached, and with it the full conviction that condemnation, if "in Him," is impossible, hitherto unavoidably connected in the troubled mind with the domination of sin, and the pressure of law's claims. "Being now made free from

sin" has now its own special blessedness and intelligent meaning, as well as "become dead to the law by the body of Christ"; deliverance is enjoyed, and liberty now lies before the emancipated believer in all its blessed characteristics, as set forth in Romans viii. 1-17.*

In conclusion, it may be well to summarise the important truths associated with the little words which have been under review.

"Before." Man's universally guilty state, whether Jew or Gentile.

"Without." God's righteousness on behalf of the sinner, is apart from law and law-keeping.

"Through." Redemption lies wholly in the work of Christ.

"For." Propitiation effects the remission of sins absolutely, and resurrection witnesses to justification.

These four concern *sins* or responsibility.

"By." The two great headships, Adam and Christ, whose respective status is entailed upon those belonging to their respective orders.

* "My standing is in Christ, not in Adam, or flesh at all. It is not that the flesh is not in me, but it is not my standing and place before God. I am in Christ, or in the Spirit; in Christ consequent on His having died and risen and gone up beyond sin and death and judgment; or in the Spirit, which is the power of it down here.

"I have got into the new place in Christ in that I have died to the old thing—Adam—and am alive in Christ. Had I to die or to get free by my own victory I should not succeed, but I have found the need of a deliverer, as unable myself to set myself free, and have by grace found one in, by faith, having died and risen with Christ. I have not to die, I reckon myself dead, because by the Holy Ghost Christ who died is in me as my life." (*Deliverance from the Law of Sin.* J. N. D., pp. 9, 10.)

“With.” The believer having died with Christ, his connection with the Adam headship and order is, for God, thereby dissolved. Christ, viewed as raised from the dead, is head of the new order to which he belongs.

“To.” The believer accounts himself now dead to sin, to which in Christ’s death he died.

“Under.” Sin dominates the quickened soul, while law demands what cannot be rendered until deliverance is practically apprehended.

“In.” True, full Christian standing in Christ, which introduces the believer into “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free.”

These last five have to do with *sin* or entail.

These little golden links in the chain of divine truth in these chapters, leading up from guilty distance to the full Christian state of liberty and enjoyed nearness to God, are presented with a view to simplifying a line of doctrine which may have appeared perplexing to some who have been gauging their own acceptance by occupation with their state, instead of with their standing. But it is important to keep in mind that experimental knowledge of self must precede practical every-day deliverance, however clear we may be doctrinally as to the manner of it. M. C. G.

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

A BROTHER’S spirit is more edifying than his communication. We experience that every day. And let us take a hint from another, “to aim to gather knowledge more from meditation than from study, and to have it dwell in us, not as opinions, but as the food

of communion, the quickener of hope, the husbandman of divine charity, and the blessed refreshment of the kingdom of God within us." I esteem it holier to confess difficulties than to grapple with them, in either the ingenuity or the strength of intellect. And surely it is bad when some fond thought or another is made the great object. It soon works itself into the central place, and becomes the gathering point. The order of the soul is disturbed, and the real godly edifying of the saints hindered. For we have to remember that knowledge is only a small part in the wide field of our husbandry. (2 Peter i. 5-7.) An appetite for it needs to be regulated rather than gratified, and many who in their husbandry have raised far less of it than others, have more abundantly prospered in bringing forth richer fruits in service and in charity and in personal love to Jesus. May the Lord deepen in the souls of all His saints the power of His own redeeming love, and shed more and more among us the savour of His precious and honoured name.

But I desire still to add another thought. The sense of the nearness of the glory should be deeply cherished by our hearts, and we need to be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. It is taught us richly in the Word—"Whom He justified, them He also glorified," is a sentence which intimates this. It tells us of the path and title to glory. When by faith we stand justified by the blood of Christ, we are at once made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. And the path to it being thus simple the place of it is near, and its capacity to unfold and manifest itself lies in the compass of a moment, or of the twinkling of an eye, if the Lord please.—*An Extract.*

NOW—THEN.

PHIL. iii. 13 ; HEB. ii. 9 ; JUDE 24, 25.

Now with joy beholding
 Jesus on the Throne,
 We with hearts o'erflowing,
Now His Lordship own.
 Satisfied with favour,
 Blest in Him our Lord ;
 He alone is worthy,
Now to be adored.
Now with joy we enter
 Scenes of bliss above ;
Now we have a foretaste
 Of the Father's love.
 Though we tread the desert,
 Where our Lord has trod,
 He is all-sufficient :
 Our resource is God.
 Fullest, richest blessing,
Now our portion is ;
 While we sing in triumph,
 All we have is His.
 What a glorious Present !
 What a blessing *Now* !
 When with hearts surrendered,
 To His claims we bow.
 Own Him only worthy
 All we have to take :
 Spirit, soul, and body,
 His possession make.

Then when we behold Him
 Face to face above,
 How our lips will praise Him
 For His grace and love!
 At His feet with rapture
 We'll our crowns cast down,
 Worship Him for ever,
 God's beloved Son.

F. E. L. B.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

ROMANS iii. 25.

THE rendering of this passage is admittedly difficult, as may be gathered from the diverse views which have been propounded. The order of the words is as given in our translation—"A propitiation [propitiatory, or mercy-seat] through faith in His blood." But the question is whether we are to construe "in His blood" with faith, or whether "in His blood" should not be connected with propitiation, as the means indeed by which propitiation has been made. We have no hesitation whatever in adopting the latter view; for it is very evident from what took place on the day of atonement that the blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat constituted the propitiation. If this interpretation be correct, faith is the subjective means of appropriating Christ, as set forth by God as the propitiation. In other words, God sets forth Christ as a Mercy-seat, in virtue of His blood (for His blood is the testimony that He, the righteous One, laid His life down under the judgment that lay upon man),

and faith receives, or appropriates, Him in the character in which He is set forth. Thus faith (as ever) thinks the thoughts of God. Another consideration justifies the above interpretation. The object God has in setting forth Christ as a propitiation is "to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God," etc. That is, in view of the propitiation to be effected in the blood of Christ, God could righteously, in His forbearance, "pass over" the sins of the saints of old; and now He can, on the same basis, show forth that He is righteous in justifying everyone who believes in Jesus. For having been infinitely glorified in the death of Christ under man's judgment (and it is to this the blood bears witness), He can declare His righteousness in the remission of the sins that are past (the sins of Old Testament believers), and in the justification of everyone who is of the faith of Jesus.

II.

JAMES i. 2.

"TEMPTATIONS" in this passage is more what we generally understand as "trials." It is the same word in verses 13, 14, and this will help us to apprehend its use. God's "temptations" are really tests, as verse 3 shows, where the reason given for rejoicing when we fall into divers temptations is that we know that the trying (or proving) of our faith works out, in the issue, patience or endurance. It is in the same sense that we read of God tempting Abraham—that is, that He tested him by the command to offer up Isaac. But when we come to verse 13 (which again is a contrast with verse 12)

James speaks of temptation to sin ; and, as he teaches us, with this God cannot have anything to do. There is therefore the widest possible difference between the two temptations. On God's part, if He "tempt" us, it is with the object of proving us, of letting us see what is in our hearts ; and thus our blessing is the end in view. On Satan's part, for it is he who acts upon our flesh and seeks to stimulate its lusts, it is that he might destroy our testimony, even if he cannot compass our destruction. As another example of the usage of the word, reference may be made to 1 Cor. x. 13. The character of the "temptation" is not here specified ; but it is manifest that the Corinthians were assailed by trials which tested their fidelity. To encourage their hearts the apostle assures them that there was nothing extraordinary in what they were passing through, that it was only what was "common to man." Then he brings in God in the most beautiful way, God in His faithfulness, as the support of their souls, and tells them that He will not suffer them (for He was watching over them) to be tempted above that they were able ; but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that they may be able to bear it. Blessed assurance and a blessed stay for the tried and desponding heart. It will then be seen from these and similar scriptures that the temptations in which we are to rejoice are those which, meeting us in the wilderness path, test our confidence in God, and show us in how far we are depending on Him for our strength and support. Peter also speaks of these temptations, and in connection with the trial of our faith in the light of the future—at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter i. 6, 7.)

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

EPHESIANS vi. 4.

IN calling attention to this subject it will be readily perceived from the scripture placed at the head of this paper that the reference is to the responsibility of Christian parents. The importance of the subject is seen from the fact that it is enforced in the Word of God by warnings, by direct exhortations, and by examples. This will suffice, apart from every day's observation, to show that there must be a constant need for its consideration by the saints of God. The state of Christian families is indeed of great moment, as affecting the state of the assembly; and it may be averred, without hesitation, that the condition of the various gatherings of the saints is largely dependent upon the godly order (or otherwise) of the families connected with them. It is quite true that we cannot be right in our families unless we are right in the assembly; but it is also true that any disorder in our families will tell disastrously upon the assembly.

Passing by the lamentable occurrences in the families of some of the patriarchs—as, for example, in that of Isaac and Jacob—we may ponder, first of all, upon the exhortations given by Moses to Jewish fathers: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou

sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. vi. 6, 7.) The simplest can understand the teaching of this scripture, and it will suffice therefore to point out its main features. First, then, the word taught must be in the heart of the parent; he must possess and love it; for indeed none can teach anything of which they have not themselves felt the power. Secondly, the responsibility is personal, and cannot be abdicated: the parent himself must be the instructor. Thirdly, he must exercise diligence, and seize every passing opportunity, in order to impress God's word upon the hearts of his children. It is therefore not too much to say that this responsibility is paramount to any other—such as any, for example, which might affect the path and welfare of his children in this world.

When the children of Israel, moreover, had crossed the Jordan, and had encamped in Gilgal, Joshua provided, in connection with the pitching of the twelve stones taken out of the bed of the Jordan, for the instruction of the children in the divine significance of the act. It is not too much to say that the children were never lost sight of in any important act or ceremony in connection with the congregation of Israel. Examples of this may be gleaned from every part of Scripture. (See Joshua viii. 35; 2 Chronicles xx. 13, etc. etc.) And that all this was in accordance with the mind of God may be seen from a remarkable passage in one of the psalms: "For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should

make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments," etc. (Psalm lxxviii. 5-7.) These citations will be enough to make it plain that God placed the responsibility upon the Jewish parent of instructing his children in the knowledge of His word, His work, and His ways, to the end that the children's hope might also be in God. They were thus to teach with the confident expectation of the blessing of God upon their labours, as knowing that it was not His will that one of their little ones should perish.

A few of the warnings of Scripture will but fortify the above conclusions. The most solemn one is perhaps that of Eli; and it is all the more solemn from the fact that personally he was such a pious and devoted man. In all Scripture a more godly man than Eli could scarcely be discovered. The Lord, and the Lord's things, had the chief place in his heart; and yet, alas! weak in his affections, he utterly failed to maintain his parental (as well also as his priestly) authority. "His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not"; and his failure, all the greater from the position he occupied as the high-priest, brought down upon him the sure and swift judgment of God. Samuel seems to have failed in the same way, for the complaint of the children of Israel was that his sons did not walk in his ways, and the Spirit of God records that they did not. (1 Samuel viii. 3.) But this, it may be said,

was due to their own perversity. True that they were perverse ; still the Scripture says, "Train up a child in the way he shall go ; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." If, therefore, the children of godly parents do not follow them in their walk, it is because they have not been trained up in the way they should go, whatever diligent efforts may have been put forth to this end. There could not be failure on God's side.

Passing over the disorders which sprang up in David's family, disorders which constitute a very solemn warning for all parents, we come now to the positive exhortation given to fathers by the apostle. It is remarkable that, both in Ephesians and Colossians, he should begin by urging them not to provoke their children to anger.* From this we learn, in the first place, the tender solicitude of God for the children of His people. He would have their parents to remember and to consider their weakness, the quickness and impatience of the flesh, and thus to avoid vexing and irritating restrictions and directions which might indispose them to listen to godly teaching and counsel. For it should never be forgotten that children, as well as saints, even if in another way, need to be in a collected and calm state of mind to receive divine instructions. This will help us to understand that the conduct of parents, even in the maintenance of authority in their household, should be governed by their responsibility to bring them up for the Lord. What dependence, what wisdom, and what watchful

* Some read "vex" in Colossians instead of "provoke."

care are thus required: For, indeed, the family is the vineyard which Christian parents have to keep, and which they dare not, if they would be faithful to God, neglect in order to attend to any other vineyard.

Heeding, then, the first part of the injunction, we are prepared to weigh its positive side, which, for the sake of simplicity, we give in another translation: "But bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord." To enter into the spirit and meaning of these words it is necessary, above all, to observe the term *Lord*. This, indeed, is the foundation of the precept, and it unmistakably teaches that our children should be distinctly placed, and be taught that they have been placed, under the authority of Christ as Lord. Another thing clearly follows—that the authority which a Christian parent exercises is not his own natural authority, but that of the Lord. The father is therefore, as the head of his household and family, the deputy of Christ, and holds his position in responsibility to Him, and to maintain and enforce His precepts. To perceive this is of the highest importance, inasmuch as it makes the government of a family a spiritual thing, in that it consists in the supremacy of the will of the Lord over its head, and over every one of its members. Natural inclinations and partialities are thus entirely excluded, as well as the weakness of the natural affections, so often displayed in allowing the self-will of children—the only end being to please the Lord by the establishment of His authority over all the members of the household.

All this, indeed, lies in the words, "the discipline of the Lord." The primary meaning of the word is "training, teaching, or education," but it is the *Lord's* training and teaching which have to be administered. The simple statement of the fact throws a new light upon the families of Christians. What earnestness and zeal are often manifested to provide for a child's vocation in this world, and the anxiety for the child's success is often a burden upon many a parent's heart. And it is quite admitted that our children must be trained for some calling to enable them to pass through this world; *but the chief end of a parent's stewardship is to train them up for the Lord.* If the Lord be thus exalted in the education of the children, His favour will rest both upon them and upon their parents, and He will be with the parents to sustain them in their object, and to subdue the hearts of the children to His blessed will. But, as with the Jewish parent so with the Christian, there must be diligence in this work. Every opportunity must be employed—"When thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"—to impress upon them the blessed character of their relationship to the Lord, and of their subjection to His gracious government and authority.

Then, moreover, there is also the "admonition" of the Lord. Two or three thoughts lie in this word: it includes reminding, warning, and perhaps advising. We all know how prone children (and we ourselves also) are to forget what is due to the Lord. A seasonable reminder will often in such a case check the beginning of a course of disobedience; and then, if

there be the least sign of stubbornness, warning will find its proper place, coupled with earnest advice. But it must ever be recollected that the reminder, the warning, and the advice must not spring from human counsels of prudence, but from the Lord. It is His admonition. His word, therefore, must be often in requisition for such an education, and hence, also, the children will need to be constantly under the parents' supervision and care. The temptation may be to say that such a standard is too high; but it cannot be, if it is the Lord's own standard. That many of us may have to own our failures as we read these lines is more than probable; yet let us not doubt that if we humbly own it, and seek grace from the Lord Himself, He will strengthen us for our responsibility, sustain us daily in meeting it, and bless His discipline and admonition to the eternal welfare of our children.

A word may be added in conclusion upon "bringing them up," because we are thus taught to begin at the earliest possible moment to train our children for the Lord. No greater mistake can be made than to permit the first few years to pass along in self-pleasing before commencing the Lord's discipline. The mothers in Israel brought their "little children" to Jesus that He should touch them, and He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. (Mark x.) Let us also bring our little children to Him in His own appointed way, as early as possible, that, recognising them as His, we may be found in obedience to the exhortation not to provoke them, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that He may put His hands upon them and bestow also His blessing.

TWO OLD LETTERS.*

I.

4, LLOYD STREET,

October 28th, 1841.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

It is blessed to have joy in the sense of giving joy to Him who loved us and gave His Son to the death for us, and blessed is it also to be able to stand by and share in that twofold joy. I feel this while writing to acknowledge the safe arrival of your letter. To give and to receive money seem little things to the mind of man, but not so when the Lord is in the gift or the reception—then it is an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. Strong words, dear brother, but true and leading into rich blessing, “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

I have not many refreshments **from** the saints' walk here below (though I know my labour is not in vain in the Lord), yet my soul has been greatly refreshed, and so have the souls of many others, in the care and love shown towards the poor saints of London by our brethren, both in the Isle of Wight and in Marlboro', and I can assure you it has lifted up my heart in praise.

* These two letters were recently found among the papers of a brother who has departed to be with Christ.—Ed,

I desire to come and see you soon if the Lord will grant me that favour. I now merely write in the way of business to acknowledge the safe arrival of the money sent.

With much affection,

Your brother and fellow,

G. V. WIGRAM.

II.

11, PARON STREET,

June 1st, 1842.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have written to our sister, but the case is one which seems to me that the Lord alone can compass. The great thing will be to endeavour to get her soul into communion and dependence upon God, so that she may be able to judge anything in her own character which, though not seen by man, may have been the cause of her doing this or that thing to grieve the Lord. Often in such cases a feeling of "*the rights of the case,*" instead of "*what is consistent with grace,*" and a sense of one's "**OWN COMPETENCY FOR BUSINESS,**" instead of one's "**HEAVENLY, PILGRIM, NAZARITE CHARACTER,**" leads us to take steps which lead to things which become the corrective of the very character in us, which the Spirit of the Lord saw to be unlike that of Jesus.

I know so little of the case in detail that I find myself quite unable to form any satisfactory judgment upon it; but I am sure that if she will turn to the Lord and Him only in the matter, and make Him her burden-bearer, and ask for grace to be contented to

have *His will* performed and not her own, she will find present rest and future blessing.

Deuteronomy i. is a very interesting chapter to me in connection with such cases. Of course if she comes to town she will let me see her. Our kind love to — and to all the saints.

Your brother,

G. V. W.

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN.

THERE scarcely could be anything more gloomy to dwell upon than the subject of "Sin." Neither is anything so calculated to humble us, if our hearts are at all honest, as the fact of our having inherited a nature from Adam which in every way is opposed to God. But deliverance *from* sin is that with which the glory of redemption is connected; and the knowledge of this dispels the gloom, and it gladdens the hearts of the children of God through the application of His word to our souls. The apostle thus writes: "But now having got your freedom from sin, and having become bondsmen to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Rom. vi. 22, *New Translation*.)

Every unconverted person is characterized and controlled by an evil nature, which Scripture calls "sin," and which is nothing less than "a will with a way," ever acting contrary to God.

"Sin" in its nature, and the "sins" which we practise, are clearly distinguished in the Word of God. Forgiveness of *sins* is obtained as soon as the heart

gives reception by faith to the blessed truth that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," and freedom from *sin* is obtained by seeing our identification with Christ in His death, and entering into what is taught in the following verses: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of *sin* might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve *sin*. For he that is dead is justified from *sin*." (Rom. vi. 6, 7.)

Scripture frequently speaks of pardon for *sins*, but *sin* is neither pardonable nor improvable. It is folly to excuse *sin* when God has exposed it, or to seek to improve it now that He has condemned it. Both the exposure and condemnation of *sin* are seen in the cross—exposed in all its hatefulness in the light of God's holiness, and condemned in the sacrifice of His own Son. "God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for *sin*, condemned *sin* in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.)

When a person has been born again the knowledge of deliverance from *sin* becomes a necessity for the soul's enjoyment of settled peace with God, and in order to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and besides this, the Spirit of God leads us to see the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ by assuring us from the Word of God that not only have our *sins* been atoned for, but that *sin* in the flesh has been condemned.

No man can form a true estimate of what he is in himself without first seeing what *sin* is in the sight of God, and nothing so clearly declares it as the cross of Christ. If I accept the judgment of God according to His Word, I shall be forced to say,

like Job, "I abhor myself," and if on the other hand I reject His judgment and form one of my own, instead of saying, "I am vile," I shall think I am as good as other people. Where is the man that naturally cares to condemn himself? If he were to do so it would only be in part, for the worst man living likes to boast of his good qualities; and even when we appear to be "crying ourselves down," as we say, we may be puffed up with pride at the very time without being conscious of it. A fallen creature with a deceitful heart and sinful nature is not capable of forming a judgment as to what he is in the sight of God; but the prayer of the upright is, "Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence," and the language of faith is, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (Ps. xvii. 2; Rom. iii. 4.)

King Saul, let us remember, formed a judgment with respect to the Amalekites, and when the prophet demanded of Saul an explanation, he excused himself by saying the people had spared the *best* of the cattle to offer in sacrifice unto God. Everything in connection with Amalek was under condemnation, according to God's estimation, and therefore Saul's choicest selection from that source if offered to God would be an abomination to Him. (1 Sam. xv.)

Each heart has its own reserve, and every one of us more or less of self-esteem, which will never allow us to give up that which we pride ourselves in most until we see death and condemnation written thereon at the cross, where the end of all flesh for faith came before God.

Job was a pattern man in his day, but he never was really at rest until he learned what a mass of

moral corruption he was in the sight of God. Satan was used to bring out the boils on his body with which he was covered from head to foot, so that his moral condition might be clearly depicted and that he might appear outwardly in the sight of man what he was inwardly in the sight of God. Great as was his disappointment as he complained of God's treatment towards him, "stripping him of his glory" and taking away his crown, having once accepted God's estimate of himself he no longer defended himself, but judged himself as one that had deceived himself in the past; and afterwards he received abundant tokens of God's favour in the form of earthly prosperity. It is a mercy, then, to be saved from self-deception in regard to sin—disclaiming any right or title whatever to anything that is good in the sight of God as those that have inherited a nature which is alienated from God. We were all slaves of sin until its dominion over us was broken by a deliverance in divine power, that "brought us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

The Jews were quite indignant when the Lord Jesus said to them, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "We are Abraham's seed," they replied, "and never were in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be free?" And Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii. 31-36.)

There are just the two positions brought before us

in this scripture—that of the slaves of sin, and that of the sons of God. The former we occupy by nature, and the latter we get through grace, and on the ground of redemption; and the Holy Spirit gives us the consciousness of our new relationship with God as Father, as we read, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. iv. 6.)

In reading the Old Testament it is most interesting to see the outflow of God’s compassion towards the poor and oppressed among His people. Take for instance the case of the runaway slave, towards whom His mercy was so blessedly extended in the responsibility put upon the person to whom he might appeal, after making his escape, for protection, and with whom also he was to dwell, without danger of being sent back to his master. (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.) Think of an ill-treated slave fleeing from a place of bondage now at liberty in the house of his newly-found protector! The escape, however, had to be effected before the slave could enjoy his deliverance and freedom.

In Romans vi. *sin* is viewed as a “master,” to whom the whole of Adam’s race are in bondage, and whose dominion extends to the end of the earth. Dungeons have been silently and suddenly deserted, prison walls have been scaled, and escapes have been effected, but where is the person that ever made his escape from the captivity of sin by his own efforts? The slave of whom we have spoken was made free by running away. But the captive of sin needs to be taken out of his lost and forlorn condition and placed in a new one. The two things which have been effected through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus

Ch: those that know their identification with Him, are: He died to take them out of the service of sin, that they might live in association with Him, and bring forth fruit unto God. "For in that He died, He died unto *sin* once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto *sin*, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans vi. 10, 11.)

If the slave referred to had died suddenly in his master's house, instead of running away, it might have been termed "a happy release," for by his death his master would have been deprived of the power to control him any longer, and the freed slave would never again have dreaded the approach of his master. As Job has described it, "The prisoners together are at ease, they hear not the voice of their taskmasters; the small and the great are there, and the bondman freed from his master." (Chap. iii. 18, 19, *New Trans.*)

It is the privilege of the believer to view himself as having died to sin in the death of Christ; and as being no longer in the flesh and under condemnation as a child of Adam, but as dead to sin and alive unto God, he is exhorted to present his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, as his reasonable service.*

H. H.

* The reader cannot be too earnestly reminded that deliverance from sin can only be reached through an experience analogous to that described in Rom. vii.—ED.

GOD has saved us, not by works—nor by means of anything that we are, but by His mercy. But then He has acted towards us according to the riches of His own grace, according to the thoughts of His own heart.

PAUL AND THE SEVEN ROMAN OFFICIALS.

WE have in the Acts of the Apostles the names of seven Roman officials more or less distinguished, each of whom had some personal dealing with the apostle Paul. This was no small privilege; but although they had an opportunity thus of hearing the truth from the lips of this honoured servant of our Lord, yet, so far as their history tells us, only one of them appears to have been savingly benefited thereby. I do not mean to say that each of them had the gospel presented to him in exactly the same way, or in equal fulness, but at any rate the path of each happened to lie providentially across that of the apostle in a way that was more or less public and responsible.

The first comes before us in chapter xiii. 6-12. It is the case of Sergius Paulus, who was deputy governor, or proconsul, of the island of Cyprus. Of him we read that he was a prudent man, "intelligent," and therefore, we may be assured, selected for his post as possessing all the necessary qualifications.

But there happened to be with this man—in what capacity we are not told—a certain false prophet, a magician, called Bar-jesus. He was, moreover, a Jew, who, finding that the proconsul had called for Barnabas and Saul to hear from them the word of God, not only withstood them, but sought to turn away the proconsul from the faith. His object was plain. Sergius Paulus was placed thus in a position of no small difficulty. He had to discriminate between rival claims and discover, if possible, where the truth lay. Each advocate was Jewish, and could appeal

equally to the Scriptures. Yet, whilst the one presented the gospel, the other endeavoured to hinder its reception. The action of the one was positive in the administration of good, that of the other was negative in the effort to prevent its acceptance. This last, in some form, is always Satan's way. God graciously seeks our blessing—the devil our curse. Here, then, we find a man desirous to hear the word of God, and Satan using one of his children—a magician—to turn him away. The moment was most critical for Sergius Paulus, lest his incipient, and no doubt divinely-created, desire should be quenched by the enemy; and the salvation of his soul hung on the issue.

But this blessing is God's work, nor will He permit even Satan to hinder it, and therefore Paul was allowed in the exercise of governmental authority to strike the tool of Satan with blindness, and thus to carry to the mind of the seeker an overwhelming evidence of the source of his mission, and of the power of God that lay behind His word; and so we read that "the deputy, when he saw what was done, *believed*, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." This first official then comes before us as a *believer*, and that as the direct result of the faithful service of the apostle. What strikes one in Sergius Paulus is his evident desire to hear. His mind was open. A clash of different doctrines did not deter him from listening to both sides, but grace enabled him to *believe* the truth. His is, alas! the only one of the seven who responded to the word of God by *believing*, and presents a vivid contrast to the case by which he is now followed.

2. It is that of Gallio. This man was proconsul of

Achaia, and was brother of the famous philosopher Seneca, who had been tutor of the Emperor Nero. His connections were therefore high, and his ability no doubt conspicuous.

Paul had been labouring for long in Corinth, where God had wrought mightily in blessing many of the inhabitants of that wicked city. Such grace displeased the Jews, envious as ever of the favour thus shown to Gentiles. They made insurrection against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat, saying that he persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law.

This charge they preferred before Gallio, who, instead of paying attention to it, dismissed them summarily, stating that had it been a matter of wrong he would have borne with them, but since it was a question of words and names, and of their law, he would be no judge of such matters. These were apparently beneath his notice, and if the Greeks should beat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, in his presence, it little mattered to him. "Gallio cared for none of those things." (See chap. xviii. 12-17.) Gallio was not the "prudent man" that Sergius Paulus was! He paid attention to the questions placed before him; Gallio, with his philosophic taint, could treat them with disdain. To him a "matter of wrong," be it never so small, was of more importance than the "worship of God," which he regarded as a "question of words and names"—a veritable trifle, unworthy of a philosophic intellect. The settlement of a seditious uprising against Caesar claimed his devotion; the adjustment of the right of the King of kings he could afford to ignore. But intellectualism as well as Judaism—the working of the mind rationalistically as well as

ritualistically—is fatal to the welfare of the soul. The Jew, sought to turn away Sergius Paulus, but failed; the wisdom of the world appears to have effectually turned away Gallio. Both forms of evil are condemned as injurious to the Church in Col. ii.; none the less they are rampant in Christendom to-day, to the ruin of the profession of Christ. The only remedy is a heart truly subject to the Word of God, one that, unlike Gallio, finds its pleasure in the worship of God as revealed in His Son, and in maintaining His rights and His glory in the world.

3. Our next case is that of Claudius Lysias, styled the "chief captain," or commander of a thousand men. To him Paul was indebted for a double rescue from the hands of the Jews (see chaps. xxi., xxii., xxiii.); first, when they drew him out of the temple, shut the doors, and went about to kill him; and second, when he stood in the midst of their council and declared that for the hope of the resurrection of the dead he was called in question.

In the first instance Lysias came with an army and delivered him, and in the second he commanded his soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them. On the first occasion Lysias understood him to be an Egyptian, who had headed a band of 4000 murderers, but on the second he knew him to be a free-born Roman citizen. He heard Paul's defence delivered in the Hebrew tongue, and did not apparently understand it. He could but witness the uncontrolled fury of the audience, and feel persuaded that such a storm must have an adequate cause. He would have examined him by scourging, but on learning that he was a Roman he desisted and loosed his bands.

A similar whirlwind of passion was let loose in the council next day; and, but for the interposition of the chief captain, Paul would have been killed. Paul was thus indebted to Claudius Lysias, and not Paul only, but ourselves and the whole Church of God! The conduct of this Roman soldier too in the matter of Paul's sister's son is very grateful.

This lad, being let into the secret of a conspiracy to slay his uncle, carried the report to Lysias, who, with a gentleness that contrasts brightly with ordinary military manners, took him by the hand, and then received his communication. That done, Lysias makes ample provision for the safeguarding of Paul from the stealth and power of his enemies, and sends him off under a strong escort to Felix, the chief governor, at Cæsarea.

To Felix he writes a letter, alleging that the only ostensible cause of such inexplicable opposition on the part of the Jews was an accusation of questions of their laws—that was the whole charge—but that he had done nothing worthy of death or even of bonds. True, but there the curtain falls on Lysias. Would that this fine, able, tender-hearted Roman soldier had looked beyond the war of words and learned the eternal truth of which Paul was at once the champion and the suffering witness; that heavenly light was breaking in upon the darkness, and the voice of God was stirring the slumbering conscience of man. To this phase of the question Lysias, alas! was blind.

(To be continued.)

CONDITION OF ENJOYMENT.

THE present government of God applies to walking in divine enjoyment, not to forgiveness and peace. We enjoy this blessed communion, dwelling in God and God in us, by the Holy Ghost given to us. If we grieve Him we are made sorry, humbled, perhaps chastened. It is always our place; but its realization and enjoyment depend on the revelations and action of the Holy Ghost in us, and these depend on our walk and state and obedience.

So in John xiv. and xv. the enjoyment of divine favour and blessedness is made to depend on the walk of the saint. It must, if it is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; for how should we be enjoying communion in love in the midst of evil or idle thoughts? The presence of the Holy Ghost depends on righteousness—Christ's presence on high. That sheds God's love abroad in our hearts. We dwell in Him and He in us. But if evil is there the flesh is at work, the Holy Ghost is grieved, communion is interrupted. It is not a question of title (that is settled; Christ is in heaven), but of enjoying the blessedness I am brought into, enjoying God. Here all our walk with God is in question, though it is by grace I do so walk aright. What I urge here is the soul's getting clear hold of the difference between forgiveness—grace applied, through Christ's work, to sin and all the fruits of the old man—and our introduction in Him in righteousness into the presence and communion of God, where no cloud or question of sin ever comes. We may get out

of this (not out of the title to it, but its enjoyment in spirit—not that peace is destroyed with God, but communion), but in it no cloud of sin can come. We are loved as Christ is loved. All depends on His work. But one is the forgiveness of that out of which we have been brought, the application of Christ's work to our responsibility as children of Adam in flesh. In the other we are not in flesh, but in Christ, in the enjoyment of that into which He is entered—our life for ever.

J. N. D.

THE CANAANITISH WOMAN.

HERE the Lord passes in the most striking manner to what is outside all the promises, to a race that was accursed according to the promises made to the people of God, to the place that the Lord quotes as an example of hardness of heart (chap. xi.); and He shows, whilst at the same time recognising the dispensations of God towards His people and His faithfulness in sending them the Messiah, what a heart comes to that is driven by its need, and by the faith which goes right to the heart of God, and what that divine heart is for the wants that faith brings to Him, what He is in Himself outside dispensational rules. The Lord goes towards Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanitish woman comes towards Him. Her daughter was tormented with a demon. She recognises the Lord as the Heir of the promises in Israel, as Son of David. This was truly faith as to His person. But what part had a Canaanitish woman with the promises made to Israel, or with the

blessings that were granted to them as the people of God? The Lord does not answer her. Deeper lessons were to be given of what man is, but also of what God is.

The disciples would have wished the Lord to grant her what she asked, in order to get rid of her; but the Lord maintains His place as Son of David. He is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The need of the poor woman rises above her formal acknowledgment as the Son of David. "Lord, help me." Her wants are simple. They are plainly declared. But the Lord wishes to put her thoroughly to the test. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs." The Lord acknowledges the dispensations of God with respect to His people, however wicked they might be, and the woman does so also; but lessons far deeper are here taught. The poor woman—man as shown in her finds his place. He is under the curse, without promise, having a right to nothing, or the power of the demon. He must own his condition, and that is what the woman does. She is a dog, but in need. Her hope is not in any right that she possesses, but in the free goodness of God. It is a need which comes face to face with God come in grace. She fully recognises what she is—a dog; but she maintains that if it be so there is sufficient goodness in God for such beings. Could God say, "No; there is not"? Could Christ represent Himself thus? Impossible! By faith want is met across all the obstacles of Jewish rights and personal unworthiness, thoroughly owning them, but placing itself outside every right in immediate contact with the goodness of God.

Such is faith. It recognises the state of ruin and of wretchedness in which we are; humble and true, it brings its need to God, but counts on what He is. Now He cannot deny Himself. Besides, it is the key to all the gospel. Jesus was the Christ, the Son of David, a Minister of the circumcision; but behind, so to speak, God was there, in all the fulness of His grace, and He passed over the strait limits of Israel and of the promises to be Himself in grace—grace which sufficed for everything. The curse might be there, complete unworthiness; but if want was there, and placed itself by faith on the ground of the grace and goodness of God, the barriers disappeared, want and God met together, and the answer was according to His sovereign goodness, the riches of His grace, and according to the faith which counted upon it. The daughter was healed, the Canaanitish woman happy, and God in Christ revealed. J. N. D.

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To the inexperienced eye of man, nature is often confounded with grace; but the intelligent consciousness of Christ as the heart's object, of His presence, of the seal of His approval when one thinks of Him, cannot be confounded with anything. . . . When He reveals Himself to our heart, and the heart communes with Him in all things, and seeks only the light of His countenance, then He is known, well known. There is none but He who thus communicates Himself to the soul when it walks in the way of His will, as expressed in the Word.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

LUKE xxiv. 39 ; 1 COR. xv. 50.

THERE is the widest possible difference between these two scriptures. In Luke our blessed Lord is opening the eyes of His doubting disciples to the reality of His resurrection body. "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." "No," He says in effect, "I am not a spirit"; and to convince them of this, He said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." The body prepared for Him, in which He came to do the will of God (Hebrews x.), was not, like ours, a mortal, but a *holy* body. He arose from the dead therefore with the same body as that in which He was crucified; and hence He showed them His hands and His feet, through which He had been nailed to the bitter tree. But while it was the same body, even though He was not yet glorified, it was in another, a resurrection, condition, a condition which He describes as "flesh and bones." Of His incarnation it is said, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same," etc., and this at once shows the difference as to His resurrection state. But we can only wonder and adore as we thus recall His infinite grace, and His tenderness in dealing with His poor timid and doubting disciples, and remind ourselves, at the same time, that in speaking of such

a subject it must be with bowed and reverent hearts. Passing on to the statement in 1 Cor. xv., it is clear that the apostle is speaking of *our* mortal bodies, teaching that these mortal and corrupt bodies, "the image of the earthy," cannot inherit the kingdom of God. For he proceeds to point out that the living saints, at the Lord's coming, will be changed, and that the dead will be raised incorruptible. Then when death is thus swallowed up in victory, as we have in our mortal bodies borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenly, and thus be suited in body, as well as in soul and spirit, for that new sphere and state into which we shall be introduced at the coming of the Lord.

II.

1 SAMUEL xiv. 21, 22.

THE change in this scripture in the use of the terms "Hebrews" and "the men of Israel" is very significant, and is easily explained. Those who had abandoned the ground of the people of God, and had identified themselves with their enemies, with the Philistines, are called Hebrews. The Spirit of God will not own them as of Israel, even though in the day of victory they turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. On the other hand, the weak and fearful ones who, remaining in their place, yet hid themselves because of the enemy, are denominated "men of Israel." A distinction is thus drawn between those who had openly allied themselves with the Philistines, and those who, being afraid of their enmity, concealed themselves for safety. God knew the frame of these feeble ones, and remembered that they were

dust. In chapter xiii. 3, 4 another lesson may be learned. Jonathan, in the energy of his faith, counting upon God as his helper, had smitten the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba. Saul, elated with the success, exalted in his own estimation by his foolish pride, and claiming the honour of the victory for himself, blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the *Hebrews* hear." Acting as a natural man, he viewed the people of God as natural men, and gave them their natural name. But the Spirit of God records that "all *Israel* heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines," etc. We may fail to remember the true place of God's people, but He will always view them as His chosen ones, unless indeed they become apostates through fear or the seduction of their adversary. It cannot, therefore, be too much insisted upon that God's thoughts of His people should ever be our thoughts.

III.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 3.

THE word translated "rejoice" in these verses is not the same. In v. 1 it is the same word as is rendered "rejoice" in chap. iv. 4, and means spiritual joy. In iii. 3 it signifies to glory, or to make our boast in—a word the apostle often uses. For example, it is found in Romans v. 2, 3, 11; 1 Cor. i. 31; Galatians vi. 14, and in many other places. The examination of the connection of these several scriptures will at once reveal its significance. In Phil. iii. 3 Paul has the Jewish teachers in his mind, who prided themselves upon their carnal rites and ordinances; and it is in contrast with all this, which only tended to exalt man,

that he says, "We are the circumcision, who . . . rejoice [make our boast in] Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." In 1 Cor. i. 31 the contrast is with human wisdom and human power, in which man naturally glories. For the Christian—man having been for ever set aside in judgment in the cross of Christ—everything is found in Christ glorified, the Man of God's counsels (v. 30), and hence it is the apostle says, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." The reader will find much profit and edification in reviewing the other examples cited. Turning again for a moment to Phil. iii. 1 and iv. 4, the lesson there is that in the Lord alone is our true spiritual joy to be found, and not only so, but also that it may always be found there, for the exhortation is, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." If we seek our joy in our experiences, or in Christian fellowship, we shall be infallibly disappointed; but, if we turn only to the Lord for it, we shall discover an overflowing fountain, the streams whereof, filling our own hearts, will run over in continual thanksgiving and praise. As another has said, "When through exercise of heart we are weaned from all other springs, His joy remains in all its purity, and our concern for others partakes of this same purity. Nothing, moreover, troubles this joy, because Christ never changes. The better we know Him, the better are we able to enjoy that which is ever enlarging through knowing Him. But He exhorts Christians to rejoice: it is a testimony to the worth of Christ, it is their true portion. Four years in prison chained to a soldier had not hindered his doing it, nor being able to exhort others more at ease than he."

COUNSELS FOR THE YOUNG.

PROVERBS iv. 20-27.

THERE was never a time when more manifest dangers beset the path of the young than at the present moment; and this is true both in respect of young believers and of the children of Christian parents. Through every avenue by which their hearts may be reached, Satan is ever seeking to pour in his allurements. As the god of this world he appeals to their eyes, their ears—to all their senses, in fact—to seduce them, if possible, to walk in his ways. Through the cultivation of the fine arts, and from the education of the tastes of the people, temptations abound on every hand. This cannot fail to impress the most careless beholder. Even the pictorial embellishments which cover the boardings of our streets are instrumentalities for the insinuation or suggestion of evil things, and thus for calling forth the flesh into activity. In view of these patent dangers, it becomes a question whether Christian teachers and parents are sufficiently careful to provide the antidotes which are to be found in the Word of God—first, in warning the young of the perils which surround their path, and then in ministering to them that which alone can satisfy their hearts, and draw them after our blessed Lord and Saviour in the path of devoted discipleship.

In the scripture which we have cited we may discover divine instruction, needed by all, but especially

by the class before our minds, which, if treasured up, will preserve from evil and afford guidance while passing through this world. For what we have in this Book of Proverbs is divine wisdom for the earthly path. In Christianity an object outside of this world, Christ glorified, is revealed, and when He possesses the heart He binds the soul to Himself, and, filling it with the enjoyment of His love, draws it away from everything which is unsuited to Himself. To know Him is everything; but it is well to listen to the divine counsels which are given as to the details of the path. These counsels suppose relationship—or *a* relationship—for they are addressed to “my son.” It is assumed, therefore, that the one addressed is numbered amongst the people of God; for you cannot enforce the precepts of God’s Word upon the unconverted—always remembering at the same time that the children of believers have an especial place before God, and hence are exhorted to obey their parents *in the Lord*.

Before pointing out the means of preservation, Solomon lays the foundation for what he is about to say in a positive state of soul. He thus commences with urging attention to the Word of God: “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.” In a recent paper upon parental responsibility, it was pointed out that the Jewish parents had to use continual diligence in sowing the seed of the Word in the hearts of their children: here the responsibility is pressed upon the children and upon young believers. It is they who are called upon to *attend* to the divine words, and to *incline their ears* unto what is said. And surely

the very form of the exhortation implies that to comply with it is a matter of the heart. How many dear young Christians would confess to the truth of this, as they confess to the serial tale, or other imaginative story, has often robbed them of the time they might have given to God's Word. If the truth indeed must be told, there has been a great increase in reading books which, in former days, would not have been found in the houses of godly families. The consequence has been not only less intelligence in the Scriptures, but also the loss of appetite for the Word of God. There is much need, therefore, to hearken to the scripture before us, and to seek grace to be diligent in the attentive study of the Bible. It is said of the righteous man—Christ—in Psalm i., "And in His law doth He meditate day and night." Can we do better than follow His blessed example?

Solomon, indeed, adds, "Let them not depart from thine eyes." The ears were to hear, and the eyes were to read—and to read constantly. Every devout reader of the Scriptures would say—and let this be a great encouragement to newly-born souls—that the more they read the more interested they become, and the more they desire to read. To get into the spirit of the Scriptures is soon to become absorbed with what they reveal, especially when it is learned that the written Word is but the unfolding of the living Word. This is undoubtedly the reason of the next exhortation, "Fix them in the midst of thine heart." That is to say, if the Word of God is continually read it will be fixed through the ears into the heart. It cannot fail to do this when read in prayerful dependence.

and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Still, this does not dispense with the necessity for diligence to guard, and to hold fast, what has thus entered the heart. The truth is that the moment we enter upon the enjoyment of any blessing Satan will seek to rob us of it, and hence we need to "keep" God's words in the midst of our hearts. Retained there they will form us morally through the power of the Holy Ghost, and we shall thus become the living expressions of the truth we have acquired. •

The reason given for obedience to this word of exhortation will explain the above sentence: "For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." As the Lord Jesus Himself said—and He was the *Word of life*—"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"; and again, "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting." (John xii. 49, 50.) Truly it is so, that those who "find" the words of God discover that they are life to their souls. It is so at the commencement of the spiritual life, and it is so all along the wilderness journey; for it is through the Word that Christ Himself is ministered to His people. There is yet another thing which, if ever true in principle, will find its exact application to the earthly people, "And health to all their flesh." At the same time let not the young Christian forget that walking in God's way, hearing His words, and thus cultivating the spiritual life, will preserve him from many a bodily snare and danger. In this sense he will

learn that keeping God's words in the midst of his heart will become health to his flesh, as then, avoiding all self-indulgence and gratifications of the flesh, and walking in subjection to the divine laws, he will be, even as to the body, in the path of life.

Having laid the foundations, the Spirit of God gives, in the next place, counsels for the maintenance of the spiritual life, and for the preservation of a holy walk. The first of these relates—and necessarily relates—to the heart, which is to be kept with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life. An unsatisfied heart is a constant source of danger, and a divided heart is the continual cause of inconsistency of walk. On the other hand, when Christ possesses and engrosses the affections we are superior to every temptation of the enemy. We have only to read what the Lord Himself says about the heart of man (Matt. xv. 19, 23), to understand what evils lurk in the flesh even of believers, and the consequent necessity for this exhortation. It should ever be remembered that if our hearts are set on one single thing on which the heart of God is not set, in so far we are out of communion. This fact will make it very evident that the issues of life proceed from the heart. (Compare Romans viii. 13.) Let every dear babe in Christ weigh this in the presence of God, for Satan well knows, even if we forget, that his most successful temptations are addressed to the affections of the young.

In the next place, the mouth and the lips are to be kept. This naturally follows upon the exhortation

just considered, because our words are the index of the heart. The Lord Jesus taught this when He said, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matt. xii. 34, 35.) Again and again did He warn those around Him of the danger arising from uncontrolled speech, and in every part of Scripture the warning is repeated. James especially deals with the subject in most solemn language (chap. iii.), and he even says that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body"; and in the Psalms prayer after prayer is found for the guard and preservation of the lips from speaking evil. The means for the attainment of this desired end is that Christ and His things should fill our hearts, and then our conversation will flow out from that with which we are occupied.

The eyes and the feet next come under consideration. Remembering that the lust of the eye is one of the avenues to our souls (1 John ii.), we shall perceive at once the force of the exhortation to let our eyes look right on, and our eyelids straight before us. Ah! how often have we been tempted through the unguarded eyes—eyes roving in every direction—while we were passing through "Vanity Fair." Some of the paths in the mountains are so narrow, and running by the side of such huge precipices, that inattention or unwatchfulness for a single moment might be the cause of

destruction. So in our scripture, immediately after the precept concerning the eyes, it is said, "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." See to it, that is, that you are in God's way, and that you may be so, consider well, and be sure that you are in it, and having this certainty, let all your ways be established in and according to it. All this will become simple when once you have taken Christ's yoke upon you, and when, with the single eye fastened upon Him, you are learning from His blessed example.

Finally it is said, "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." God's path for the believer is a straight one, so that, having found it, there is nothing now to do except to seek grace to be kept going straight on—like, for example, the apostle Paul in Philippians iii. The "evil" lies on both sides of this narrow way, and approaches to its very boundaries. We are therefore safest when we are walking in the centre, as being fully in it, and as delighting in it. Many allurements will be spread out on either side, and many a by-path which will promise greater ease and comfort; but if the eye be kept "straight on" to the glorious goal, which will be reached when Christ comes to receive us, we shall be delivered from all these snares, and guarded by divine power from every artifice of the enemy.

The Lord lead His dear young saints into the path of His own example, and fill their hearts with the sense of His presence and love, that they may become ever more and more devoted to Himself while awaiting His return.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.*

NOTES OF A LECTURE.

HEBREWS xii. 1, 2.

ANYONE who has carefully read the Epistle to the Hebrews will remark that Christ is connected with the throne in three different ways. Turn to chapter i.; it is in the end of verse 3 we read, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here sins are purged. Another phase is opened out in the eighth chapter, verse 1: "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Then we have the third phase in the scripture that I have read. I have read this that we may see what is our peculiar course here on earth; it is a race! What a character it gives us! What a style to be running a race! Looking out unto Jesus!

Now I will trace how we come to it. It is a race to heaven, no matter *what* the difficulties are. In Ephesians you are *in* heaven, but here you are racers, and you are racing *to* heaven. Plenty of difficulties along the road, but I am "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." He gives us the power to carry on the race. In chapter iv. 11 it says: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Now

* This is, as far as possible, a *verbatim* report of a lecture given by our beloved brother (who has recently departed to be with Christ) in . . . Our readers will be much interested in it at the present moment.

I have to start here ; I am out of Egypt, now *where* am I going to ? It is this which determines a great deal more than we think. The "rest" is future, of course. He was warning those Hebrew saints ; they were Jews, and he was warning them not to get frightened at the difficulties. We are like them often ; we are out of Egypt, but many of us have got as far as Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites. What stops you ? The apostle warns them of the day of temptation in the wilderness. I would not believe a man who said he did not like a nice prospect and a nice place on the earth ; but we are *going on*, and we get three great experiences along the way. The first is infirmity. Infirmity is not sin. You might be too poor, or you might be too rich, and either would be a pressure. An infirmity may lead to a sin. Sarah was afraid, and she laughed ; then she told a lie. Fear or timidity is weakness, infirmity ; telling a lie is *sin*. So we read, "whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." If you are afraid you are overcome. Infirmity is weakness, and a man is weak when he cannot rise over a thing ; a great contrast to a man who is a racer—he leaps over all the obstacles. It is *trying*, not trial. The first great hindrance is your circumstances ; the second is your health. Ill-health is a terrible pressure ; you are like a ship waterlogged. The third is sorrow ; and this is the worst of all. Now I want to point out to you how you are to *go on* in the infirmities. We are going on to heaven, and we first are met with infirmities. What will help me in them ? We have both the Word and the sympathy of the Lord. Every believer is addressed by the Word, but very few enjoy

the sympathy. The Word penetrates the motives, and I am found out. The point is actually to press you to get on the right road. There may be a hundred roads, and ninety-nine are wrong. The Lord uses the Word to bring me on to the right one. The Word has done its work when it puts me on the right road, the road to heaven. The Lord has gone that one road, and He will help *me* along that road. Every believer has a sense that the Lord has spoken to him. But does he mind His words? If Peter had minded the words of the Lord he would not have gone into danger.

Next to the Word is the sympathy of the Lord, and I find in Canticles the bride coming from the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her Beloved. I have a wonderful thing on the road; I have the *company* of the Lord, and His sympathy! *He* is out of the weakness of man, and right up from the top He can look down and say, "I went along the same path, and I never diverged from it." Now turn to John xi. for an example of sympathy. Here we have two sisters, both suffering from the same cause—the death of their brother. How differently He deals with each! Martha gets no sympathy. She gets instruction, and in a way passes Him over to Mary. And see Mary! You find the Lord walking beside her, and she can say, "Here is a heart that cares for me, and if I have lost a brother, I have someone greater than a brother." She gets the sense of *grace* in His company. The *grace* is how I bear the *trial*, the *mercy* is the relief. If I take the storm easily as He did, that is the *grace*; when He rebukes the wind, that is *mercy*. When Paul was in prison, then he had the *grace*, and *grace* made him sing in the prison; but it was the *mercy* that let

I have not only mercy in my infirmities, but having sympathy I am supported, and I turn to the Supporter. I am not occupied with the trouble, but with the *Person* who got me out of it. Turn to John xii.: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus." She is occupied now with the Supporter. I am out of my infirmity now, and I am in the company of the One who got me out of it. But that is not all. I come to how I am occupied with Him, and I turn you to Hebrews viii. 2, and x. 19. Now this is an entirely new experience. It is not getting relief from infirmity, but it is being in the company of the One who relieved me. The great thought of the Lord in getting you out of pressure is that you may be in company with Him. I am out of my infirmity, and now I am found in company with Him. Mary of Bethany was in company with the Lord. I get a fuller thing in Hebrews. The great point there is companionship. "Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions." Nothing can have the same satisfaction for a heart here on earth as the company of the Lord. You would then not be soured by infirmity and trials; you would be mellowed by them. You would feel you were so helped by Him that you would be more attracted to Him than ever.

There are three great stages in a Christian's history, Hebrews is the second. The first is before Hebrews; it is what Jonathan knew of David. He has cleared the ground, Goliath is gone, and the One who cleared the ground occupies the ground. That is the first stage. I know that my Saviour has completely removed all the darkness, He has abolished death; now every cloud

is gone! "Jonathan . . . loved him as his own soul." You cannot have a divine acquisition without a result. Your face will shine, it *must* come out. Jonathan stripped himself, and look what a sight it was! He takes off his royal habiliments and puts them on a shepherd-boy, and says he is entitled to them! He is like the woman in Luke vii.; she went home, and then she says, "I will give the very best thing I have, to make much of *Him* at my own expense." Next I find that blessed One is indispensable to me every step of the way. That blessed One I love now for *Himself*, not only for His work. Now I am like Ruth, I am so attached to Him I cannot do without Him. "Where thou goest, there I will go." Now in this new stage it is not giving your *property*, but it is giving *yourself*. Peter gave up his ship and followed Him, for *company* is better than *property*. Company with *Himself*! The Lord would rather have us follow Him than anything, therefore He says to Peter, "Follow Me." Now, how do I begin to follow Him? I have been borne over my infirmity by Him, and I have found that my heart is only bound the more to Him as He came down to me in my infirmity, so I am now with Him in the brightest spot, the holiest of all. Like Aaron's sons in a common fragrance, He has helped me out of my trouble to be in company *with Himself*. I press this, because I feel a great many are praying to the Lord to get out of the pressure, and the only object in getting out of it should be that you may be more in company with the One who brought you out. You are now so attached to Him that you cannot do without Him. You cannot understand the third stage unless you know the second. The third is *union*, and if you do not enjoy

His company, you cannot enjoy union. In Canticles you get the reciprocity of affection, in spite of fickleness of the bride, which shows what *we* are. Nothing can give me a greater idea of the blessedness of heaven than the company of the Lord. You get the taste of heaven then. You are in company with the Minister of the sanctuary. The Lord lead us to see what a wonderful thing it is to be entranced with His company. We read in the Psalms, "To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." And again in Corinthians, To God we are beside ourselves. It is being in an ecstasy! How different our meetings would be if I felt "I am coming here to be *entranced* in *His presence*." I am not thinking of myself, but I am delighted in His *company*. If you do not get to this you will never understand what union is. Mary Magdalene says, as it were, "I will never stir till I get hold of Him." John was intelligent, but *he* went home! Some have said that a woman brought in the first trouble, and a woman got the highest privilege ever given, and was the bearer of the most wonderful truth. The Lord said, as it were, "I will reward you, Mary!"

I found He was the One who could stretch out His hand to me in the darkness, and now He is *indispensable* to me. "Where thou goest will I go." Turn now to chapter xii. 1. There are two things that mark a person in a race. You are running and you are going to the same point where Jesus is! You have tasted of the spot where He is. Now for the race. Where are you racing to? To heaven, and the One who has drawn my heart up to Himself is there. But how did you reach to this? It is beautiful when you look into it. I have tasted of heaven in the sanctuary, and the man

who has had a taste of heaven likes nothing so well as the race to get there! It is not contending with infirmities, but with difficulties, and you will find plenty of them, and it is for this the eleventh of Hebrews comes in. It is misunderstood at times, it is spoken of as *examples* of faith, but I think it is the traits of faith. It is like one telling me what faith can do. The Lord is the author, the source of it; He starts with telling us that without faith it is impossible to please Him. He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him out. I have got an idea of His nature, and He will reward me if I seek Him out, if I choose Him. What marked Enoch was that he pleased God, and I can conceive of nothing higher than to be pleasing to Him. Supposing I know a great man who could do all I want—will I go to him? No, I will go to God. I count upon Him because He is the rewarder of those who seek Him out.

In Luke xi. you learn to pray; you have no back door, and you are not going to anyone else but the *One* who *can* help you. . . . "Laying aside every weight." One hindrance is *outside* you, the other *inside* you. A man says, "I am fond of music, or politics." Does it help me on the race? No! Then I lay it down. Sin is what works *in* you, and there is opposition. You will find plenty of it, but you must be well mounted to ride over the difficulties. It is like a steeplechase, and you must be well mounted. You have the author and finisher of faith, and *He* has gone to the top. May the Lord interest you with His company, and in His own house. I have His power to help me on the road as I go along; Israel left the wilderness and went on to Canaan, and in between

comes the Epistle to the Hebrews. You are not in heaven, but you are going on to get possession of it. The Holy Ghost is down here, and you are highly favoured. You must not be captivated by Him. He is not One who will not attend to your small matters. No, He comes down to the smallest thing, and helps me out that I may be in company with Him, and now I shrink from anything that would hinder my communion with Him. People say in Christendom, "When will you get acquainted with the Lord? When He comes?" No, I am acquainted with Him now, and having got the taste of heaven, then I come out in a new way to face every obstruction between me and heaven, and the only thing I dread is myself; therefore I have to lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset. I do not doubt the *power*. The Lord grant that we may be as attached to Him as Peter was. (Matt. xiv.) He left the ship, the *safe* place, and went to the most perilous place, the water, to go to Him. Peter had not the power, but *we* have, only we have not the affection. What I want to present to you is that it is no trouble to do a thing for the person I love. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned." We all know what this is. May the effect of our meditation this evening be to attract our hearts more to our blessed Lord, for His name's sake! Amen.

J. B. S.

WHEN the Lord becomes our absorbing object, this world is felt to be a dry and thirsty land where no water is. The reason is, that we have then learned that all our springs are in Him.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

JESUS presents Himself for baptism. It is His floor which is going to be purged; the granary is His; it is He who burns the chaff in the judgment. But He comes to place Himself in the midst of His people. Nothing more striking than this juxtaposition; nothing more positive than the declaration that He is Jehovah; nothing clearer than the fact that He places Himself in the midst of His people in the path where grace conducts them. Assuredly He does not join Himself with the rebellious and intractable people, but from the first step taken by those who by grace listen to the word of the testimony of God, from the first step in the good way, He is found with them in His infinite grace. The heart answers at once to the testimony of John, that He who came had no need of repentance. We know it. Quite the contrary, He was fulfilling righteousness. But for His own it was just the thing according to God. The life of God, which put forth its first breath in the atmosphere of God, but in the midst of men, took its first step in the divine way—the way toward the kingdom which was going to appear. He would not leave them there alone. He takes His place with them. Infinite grace, sweet thought, full of His love for the heart of His own!

Remark also how He abases Himself here to the level of His messenger: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." You have your part, I mine, in accomplishing the will of God. There He is already a

servant! He is baptized, and His place taken in the midst of His own—in the midst of the faithful remnant that walked under the effect of the power of God's Word. And now where is He, the Servant, He who humbled Himself, who has His place with His poor people, the poorest of His flock? Heaven is open, the Holy Spirit descends on Him, the Father owns Him as His Son, He is the model of the position He has taken for us by redemption. Never had heaven so opened before; never had there been on earth an object which He could own as making His good pleasure. Now there was. For us, too, the veil is rent, and heaven is open. We have been anointed and sealed of the Holy Spirit as Jesus was: the Father has owned us to be His beloved sons already in this world. He was such in His own proper and full right, worthy of being so in Himself. We are introduced by grace and redemption. But entered into the midst of His people He shows what is the position which in Him belongs to them; as I have just said, He is its model. What happiness! What grace! But, carefully remark, His divine Person remains always such, a difference besides which is never lost, whatever be His abasement and His grace toward us. When heaven is open for Jesus He has no object above to which He looks to fix His attention. He is Himself the object that heaven contemplates. When heaven is open for Stephen, as for us by faith, Jesus the Son of man is his object in heaven, which is open for His servant. In grace the Lord takes a place with us. He never loses His own either for the Father or for the heart of the believer. *The nearer we are to Him, the more we adore Him.*

Remark here, also, another thing altogether notable.

It is in and by the voluntary humiliation of Jesus that all the Trinity is for the first time fully revealed. The Son is there, the object specially conspicuous as man; the Holy Spirit comes and abides on Him; and the voice of the Father owns Him. Marvellous revelation associated with the position that the Son had taken! The Son is recognised as Jehovah in Psalm ii. The Holy Spirit is found everywhere in the Old Testament. But the full revelation of the three persons in the unity of God—the basis of Christianity—is reserved for the moment when the Son of God takes His place in the midst of the poor of His flock, His true place in the race in which He had His delights, the sons of men. What grace is that of Christianity! What a place is that where our hearts are found. If taught of God, we have learned to know this grace and Him in whom it is come to us! Here, then, is our position according to this grace in Christ Jesus, before God our Father, accepted in the Beloved.

J. N. D.

PAUL AND THE SEVEN ROMAN OFFICIALS.

FELIX is our fourth official: Paul recognises a man who had "been of many years a judge unto this nation," and before whom, on the occasion of his trial, he could the more cheerfully answer for himself. This he did, clearing himself of the charge of sedition which Tertullus had brought against him, and stating that his only object in going to Jerusalem at that time was that he might distribute to the poor brethren in Jerusalem the alms which he had been instrumental in collecting from the Gentiles. He denied tumult or

uproar, or anything akin to sedition, whilst in the performance of his business, in the temple, admitting only, as before, that he had "cried, standing among them," in the council, "Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day."

Here his trial ends before Felix. His accusers are silenced, though not vanquished. Felix gives Paul into the charge of a centurion who should make his imprisonment as easy as possible. The governor had, however, "more perfect knowledge of that way." He had heard of Christianity, or "the way" as then designated, and took the opportunity "the oftener" to hear from Paul "concerning the faith in Christ." This faith Paul presented in living power and personal application. It was to him no theory, no clever speculation, no unmeaning or unimportant dream. Nay, he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" before this exalted but terribly sinful man.

Felix trembled! The Word told on his conscience, but, alas! he turned aside its edge, he temporised, he pleaded for a "convenient season"; and, so far as we read, he remained an unbeliever. He left Paul bound. What a load of responsibility thus rested on the soul of Felix! It was no small privilege to enjoy such direct personal contact with this servant of Christ. What an opportunity for him! It was despised.

Again, how grandly does Paul shine here! There was no pandering to Felix, no effort to obtain, by friends or money, release from his captivity, no lessening of the afflictions of the gospel; but rather did he evince his devotedness to his Lord by a fearless exposure

of the judgment that must follow sin. The result in the case of this Roman dignitary was terror of conscience, but, alas! no turning to God.

5. *Porcius Festus* succeeds Felix in the governorship, and finds Paul a prisoner at Cæsarea. Information is given by the chief of the Jews, who desire that Paul should be sent to Jerusalem, in order that he may be killed on the way. To this desire, however, Festus does not yield, being prevented by the hand of God; but he goes down to Cæsarea from Jerusalem, taking with him Paul's accusers. To their "many and grievous complaints" Paul makes answer, admitting that, if he had committed anything worthy of death, he did not refuse to die; but otherwise he would exercise his right of appealing to Cæsar rather than be delivered to them. This appeal Festus confirmed, and in so doing frustrated the unwearied malice of the Jews. Meantime, however, King Agrippa comes to salute Festus, who in due course lays before him the case of this remarkable prisoner. Why the Jews should have condemned him Festus could not understand, for they made no accusation of such things as he had supposed, only "certain questions of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Questions, nothing but questions! Just a speculation as to the life and death of "one Jesus"! That was all that Festus could say or see.

Yet in the death and resurrection of Christ lies the only hope of man. Had He never died, there were no remission; had He not risen, there were no salvation. His precious blood alone can cleanse. His life in glory guarantees eternal bliss to the believer; just as, on the

and, His resurrection is the pledge of judgment on the sinner. The issues of an eternal future hang on a matter which Festus would regard as but a "question." How blind, alas! is the wisdom of the world; how morally dark are its princes!

This leads to the memorable "apology" of Paul before Agrippa, Festus, the chief captains, and principal men of the city. What an audience! What a moment! It was seized by Paul most profitably. A brief account of his life, and of the "heavenly vision" which presented to him the Lord Jesus in glory, opened the way for personal dealings, first with Festus, then with Agrippa, and finally with all that heard him that day.

The governor, unable to follow God's dealings with Paul, could but cry aloud, "Thou art beside thyself" (chap. xxvi. 24); "much learning doth make thee mad." To this wanton interruption Paul replied with charming Christian grace, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." But there the appeal to Festus ends, who thus comes before us as another witness to the absolute inability of world-wisdom, or rank, or earthly position, or favoured circumstances, to grasp what is of God, or to discriminate between His truth and a mere human superstition. Sovereign grace is needed for this.

Paul is sent to Rome under the charge of *Julius*, a centurion of Augustus' band, who furnishes our *sixth case*. This soldier must have seen much of the apostle during that long and stormy voyage, even as he heard from his lips words of faith in God, words that proved to be true when the voyage was safely over. (Chap. xxvii.) Julius, though at first treating Paul courteously, giving him liberty to see his friends when the ship

touched at Sidon, preferred, nevertheless, to believe the master of the ship rather than Paul when he advised not to leave Crete until the season had advanced. The counsel of the master was faulty, the vessel was overtaken by the euroclydon, driven to Malta, and wrecked on its shores.

We can notice, however, that Paul had worked himself into the esteem of the centurion, for when the sailors attempted to launch the boat, and by it make their escape from the foundering vessel, Paul said to him, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." This advice was followed at once, the ropes of the boat were cut off, and the seamen detained on board. Again, when the soldiers suggested killing the prisoners lest they should effect their escape, "Julius, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose." This was an act of consideration on the part of the centurion, for which, as in the case of Claudius Lysias, the whole Church may be thankful.

We hear no more, however, of this kindly Roman soldier. He had been brought into circumstances of very close intimacy with and high respect for the apostle; but having said that of Julius we have said all.

The last-named official is *Publius*. (Chap. xxviii.) He was the chief man of the island of Malta. "The chief man" was an official title. He had acquired it under the Roman power, and he too was brought into close contact with Paul. "The father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." And by this seemly act of praying did he bring the power and mercy of God

into the presence of this "chief" man. And surely the healing touch of divine pity might well plead that the healed should seek a saving knowledge of the blessed Healer, for it is the gifts of God that leadeth to repentance. (Rom. ii. 4.) And He who can cure the suffering body can also save the guilty soul. "God is love." And happy that servant of Christ, whether free of foot or bound of hand, who is thus allowed to speak and act for God in the sight and hearing of these men, who occupied in their day places of power and dignity! His the honour, theirs the responsibility. The result, in either case, awaits the verdict of the soon-coming day of divine award. J. W. S.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

THE preaching of Jesus announcing the kingdom, showed that the time was fulfilled, that the kingdom of God was at hand, that the people must repent and believe the gospel. We should distinguish between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of our salvation. Christ is the centre of both; but there is a great difference between the preaching of a kingdom which is drawing near, and that of an eternal redemption accomplished upon the cross. It is quite possible that the two truths should be announced together. And, indeed, we find that the apostle Paul preached the kingdom; but he certainly also proclaimed an eternal redemption accomplished for us on the cross. Christ prophesied of His death, and announced that the Son of man should give His life for the ransom of many; but He could not announce an accomplished redemption during His life. Men ought to have

received Him and not to have put Him to death: hence His testimony was about the kingdom which was drawing nigh.

The kingdom in its public power has been delayed because Christ has been rejected (see Rev. xi. 17), and this delay lasts all the time that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, until the time when He shall arise from the throne of His Father to judge. God has said, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." (Psalm cx.) It is nevertheless true that the kingdom was already come in mystery, according to Matthew xiii.; this goes on during the time that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. But when God's appointed moment shall come the Lord will arise and set up the kingdom, and with His own power will judge the living; and peace and happiness shall be established upon the earth. And we who have received Him, whilst the world has rejected Him, shall go to meet Him in the air; we shall be for ever with the Lord, and shall come with Him in glory when He shall appear before the world, and shall reign with Him; and, what is still far better, we shall be like Him, and always with Him in the heavenly places in the Father's house.

J. N. D.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

1 CORINTHIANS xi. 1-15.

IT is important to notice that the saints are not contemplated in this scripture as gathered together in assembly. This is evident, we judge, from v. 5; for if the assembly were in question we should be compelled to conclude that women had been permitted to

pray in it and to prophesy, which is contrary to the apostle's express statement in v. 16. On the other hand, it seems as certain that the presence of others is supposed in the case adduced; and hence the apostle leads us back to the headship of Christ over every man—His headship as the last Adam over all that are of His own race and order—and to the headship of the man over the woman. It is because the man is head over the woman, and because she "is the glory of the man," that she ought to have "power"—the sign of her subjection—on her head. What we understand, therefore, by the directions here given to the woman is that whenever and wherever, whether in her own house or in the houses of others, she prays or prophesies (communicates the mind of God, addressing the conscience), her head must be covered. None but members of her own family may perhaps be present; but in such circumstances even these precepts have their application. It should, however, be remarked that v. 13 appears to go even further, for, after dealing with the special place of the woman in relation to the man, the apostle proceeds to the question of comeliness before God. This should be well considered in determining the question. Offering no judgment concerning private prayer, we cannot doubt that whenever a woman prays in the presence of others, or whenever she seeks to help others spiritually, she should be covered according to the teaching of this scripture. There will be no difficulty or even perplexity in arriving at the mind of the Spirit where there is no choice or will on the subject, and where the only desire is to be well-pleasing to the Lord. Light always beams in through the single eye.

II.

1 CORINTHIANS xi. 33.

In determining the force of this exhortation attention must be given to the connection. It refers back to v. 21, where the apostle sets out the character of the abuses which had crept into the Corinthian assembly in connection with the Lord's Supper. It appears that some had gone so far as to eat their "own supper" by themselves. This, he plainly tells them, was not to eat the Lord's Supper (v. 20); and the consequence was that one was hungry and another drunken. All sense of unity and fellowship was lost in their own selfish practices and gratifications, and this led to the solemn admonition and rebuke of v. 22. Thereupon the apostle supplies the corrective of these evil habits in a re-statement of the terms and character of the Lord's Supper as he had received it from the Lord. Then he points out the consequences of eating and drinking unworthily, the need of examining oneself lest anyone should eat and drink judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body, not connecting the bread and the cup with the thing signified. Already, he reminds them, the Lord's hand was upon them because of their carelessness and levity (v. 30), and he takes occasion from this to say that, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." The next verse (33rd) gives the conclusion: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another," and do not continue to eat one before

another as you have been doing. Let there be unity, so that all may eat together in remembrance of the Lord. No doubt these words also enjoin tender consideration for one another, that even in eating the Lord's Supper we are to look upon the things of others rather than upon our own things; but what is given above is their precise connection and explanation. The enjoyment of the Lord's love, who in the same night in which He was betrayed instituted the Supper, and the active exercise of love one to another in the common bonds of our fellowship, will speedily correct all abuses and disorder.

III.

GAL. i. 13; PHILIPPIANS iii. 20; HEB. xiii. 5.

In each of these scriptures the word rendered "conversation" is different. The apostle Paul uses (if we ascribe the Epistle to the Hebrews to him) three words which are so rendered in our translation. The apostle Peter employs the same word in each case, and James has the same word, where it is so translated, as Peter. Paul likewise has this word some five or six times in different epistles; in Philippians (chaps. i. 27, iii. 20) it is another word altogether, while in Hebrews xiii. 7 *it is the general word; but in verse 5 it is a word found nowhere else (though often used) with this meaning.* It should be understood that in no case does "conversation" in Scripture mean talking with another according to its present significance. Generally speaking, it imports mode of life or conduct—as may be at once perceived if the place be examined where it occurs. For example, Paul says, "Among whom also [the children of disobedience] we all had our conversation

in times past in the lusts of our flesh," etc. (Ephes. ii. 3); that is, that we all had lived in the same manner as the children of disobedience were living. Peter also says, "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation"—in all your life and conduct. The word in Philippians is very interesting, and one which (it need hardly be said) is suited to the character of the epistle. "Our conversation is in heaven." This is sometimes explained as commonwealth or citizenship; but neither of these words would seem to convey the thought of the original, as what Paul brings before us is the fact that, though down here upon the earth, he was a heavenly man (as indeed all Christians are), and already lived in heaven. This has led to the suggestion of the word "life-associations," as expressing that all that which concerns the true life of the Christian—his objects and interests—are in heaven, because the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom he is waiting to come from thence as Saviour, is there. In other words, the Christian belongs to heaven, and his affections, if walking in the power of the Spirit, are necessarily there where his treasure (Christ) is; and all the more so, in that he is waiting for the moment when his body of humiliation will be fashioned like the glorified body of Christ, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. It is another form of the same word in chap. i. 27; and it will therefore mean, "Conduct yourselves as heavenly men, or as belonging to heaven, as it becometh the gospel of Christ." The careful reader will be much interested in tracing out the various bearings of the word which has occupied our attention.

THE SUBDUING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1 SAMUEL xix. 20-24 ; 1 CORINTHIANS xiv. 24, 25.

THE similarity of the effect of the action of the Spirit of God through prophets in these two scriptures is very remarkable. Before, however, considering this, attention may be called to the divine order which was observed or enjoined. In Samuel we read that the company of the prophets were prophesying, and that Samuel (we give the translation of the *Revised Version*) was standing as "head" over them; and in the Corinthians the apostle, after giving certain directions for the regulation of gifts in the assembly, says: "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.*" Samuel, therefore, when standing as head over the prophets, did but prefigure the Lordship of Christ, or His Headship over His saints when gathered in assembly. To teach, therefore, "for doctrines the commandments of men" will necessarily subvert God's order, ignore the authority of Christ, and produce confusion; for the very ground on which the saints are gathered supposes that man has passed away for ever under judgment, and that the saints, as a consequence, will see *no man save Jesus only.*

What, however, is to be insisted upon is that the condition for the activity of the Holy Spirit is the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ. We may learn this individually in our own spiritual experience.

When, for example, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God by any allowance of the flesh, or by any insubordination to Christ, His blessed activities in leading out our hearts in occupation with Christ and with heavenly things will immediately cease. Another character of His activity is then needed: He must occupy us with ourselves, with our own state and condition; and it is in vain for us to expect His former ministry of Christ to our souls, until He has produced self-judgment and re-established us in the enjoyment of the love of Christ, and in subjection to His rule. So also in the assembly. If there be unjudged sin, or if there be the setting aside of the place of Christ as Head, the Spirit must call attention to our state or to our insubjection to the authority of the Lord before He could lead out our hearts in worship or in "prophecy." It becomes, therefore, exceedingly important that we should challenge ourselves on this point: whether the Lord is really standing over us as Head when we are gathered together, whether we have taken our place at His feet, looking to Him to order for us, even in the smallest details, when in assembly.

We see plainly, then, that the maintenance of divine order, the subjection, that is, of the assembled saints to the Lord, is the indispensable condition for the manifestation of the Spirit's power. This is a very distinct lesson from the scene in Samuel. And remark, moreover, that the power is exercised in subduing hostility. Saul had sent messengers to take David, who had fled from the enmity of the king and taken refuge with Samuel in Ramah and Naioth. Observe also that when the messengers came no mention is made of

David. It is not as he said that he was present when the company of the prophets were prophesying. It was no longer, at least while David was at Naioth, a question between Saul and David, but one between God and Satan. The messengers truly came to take David, but being in the place where the Spirit of God dwelt (we speak of the type) and acted, they themselves were taken, subdued, and turned into the vessels of His power; for the Spirit of God was upon them. "and they also prophesied." What a rebuke to us who possess, as neither Samuel nor the prophets possessed, the indwelling Spirit, when we trust to an arm of flesh, worldly influence or means, when in conflict with the enmity and power of Satan. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world," writes the apostle John. Ah! if we had but the abiding conviction of this, how calmly we might rest before every demonstration of the power of the enemy.

In Corinthians, while the instruction is of the same kind, the case is somewhat different. There had been some disorder in this assembly, and the apostle is seeking to correct it, and to bring back those who had been magnifying the importance of their gifts into subjection to Christ as Lord. They had loved to use the gift which exalted themselves, but Paul taught them that if they would be vessels of the Holy Ghost they must speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort. (c. 3.) Then, coming to our scripture, he says: "If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convicted of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling

down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in [better 'among'] you of a truth." The case here supposed is not like that of Saul's messengers, not that of one who was animated by any hostility; on the other hand, it might be concluded that the person was under some desire to know the truth, although as yet not a believer, or he would not be found as a spectator in the place where the saints were assembled. On the other side, the saints, if in the state described by Paul, would be *in divine order, and the willing vessels of the Spirit*. Will-less themselves, and sitting before the Lord, waiting on Him, they would become the organs for the expression of His mind for the edification of the assembly. Two things indeed would mark them: subjection to the Lord and the activity of an ungrieved Spirit.

And now ponder upon the effect. It cannot be conceived that the prophets would have any thought of "being used" to the unbeliever. No! their only desire would be to express the Lord's mind for the moment: that would be, as it should be with every servant, their only object. But the power acting through them in the case supposed, travelled outside, and searched the unbeliever through and through, and, subduing him, bowed him on his face before God; and thus thoroughly exposed and judged in His presence he worships God, and testifies that God is in the midst of His gathered saints. And while we cannot forget the confusion and departure from the truth that have come in and marred the testimony of the Lord since that time, who can doubt that similar effects would follow wherever the saints are in holy separation from evil, gathered according to the Lord's mind, and controlled in their assemblies by the

Holy Spirit? That it is a day of weakness, and consequently of small things, all know; but the arm of the Lord, the power of the Holy Ghost, remains the same, and will never fail to respond to the expectation of faith. There may not be the same *displays* of power now; but the effects will be produced, however silently and unseen, wherever the conditions are fulfilled.

Surely then the question may well be asked whether sufficient attention has been given to the teaching of these scriptures. A striking illustration of the same truth may be gathered from the reign of Asa, King of Judah. Having put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord, it is said of the northern tribes that "they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, *when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.*" (2 Chron. xv. 8-9.) So now wherever there is the demonstration of the Lord's power and presence, souls will be attracted. It is not the truth in and by itself that convinces souls, but it is rather the evidence afforded in the undoubted presence of God, and in the holy lives of His people. Once accepting this, we shall cease from looking to man, or to any human influences whatever, and we shall depend alone upon the mighty power of the Spirit of God. It cannot, therefore, be too earnestly insisted upon that the enlightenment and conversion of souls is largely connected with the state of the assembly. This, in other words, is the lesson given by our blessed Lord to His disciples, when He says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

THE NEW AND LIVING WAY.

I WOULD like to make a few remarks in the hope of elucidating a passage in Hebrews x. which sometimes presents a difficulty to the minds of Christians—"A new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." It appears to me evident that the "flesh" is brought in here *instrumentally* as the means by which the way has been made. The flesh served as a "veil" in the case of Christ, hiding from men's eyes the glory of God which was present in Him, until the time came of His death, in which the love of God was fully declared. Short of the cross there was not the full declaration of God's love. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that they who are to approach still have sin in them, and are in mind naturally legal. They are not perfect in themselves. Now both these difficulties are met in the way of entering the holiest. The answer to the first is in the blood of Jesus, the witness as before God of death—the removal of the man that was unsuitable to Him through sin, in the righteous One; while the answer to the second is in the new and living way which Christ has made in the revelation to us through His death of the love of God. Legality begets fear, while perfect love casts out fear. Our way to God is dependent on a way having been made from God to us. He has approached us in love, expressed through Christ's death,

and in the apprehension of that love all difficulty in approaching Him is removed. By the body of Christ's flesh we are become dead to law, for law, as a principle of requirement, is incompatible with the love of which Christ's death is the expression; and hence the bond must become powerless when God reveals Himself.

It is striking that the flesh, which in Christ hid God, has become the means by which His love has been expressed. While, on the other hand, the man after the flesh has been removed, God has, in the removal, been fully revealed.

It should be added that we on our part have to take the way by which God has come to us—in the acceptance of the truth that our old man has been crucified with Christ, and that consequently we cannot approach God after the flesh, but only as formed by His power according to His nature, in which He has been pleased to make Himself known to us. We have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. God is Himself the standard of our cleanness.

F. E. R.

A LETTER ON GOSPEL PREACHING.*

DEAR MR. ———,—I do not know if you were at the meeting, and at any rate I can answer your questions undistracted here. Both sides of the gospel ought to be preached, and personal conviction of sin too, or repentance only founded on grace "in My Name." As regards saint and sinner, a great many saints want a clear gospel, and at any rate rejoice in it, if they

* As far as I know, this letter has not been hitherto published.

possess it. If sinners come, there ought to be a gospel for them. But a full plain gospel is good for both.

There is what I have called a teaching gospel, say, like Hebrews ix. and half x., 2 Cor. iii., and other places. The facts are generally known, and much gospel preaching must be on the worth and bearing of facts, and that on heart and conscience, but the more the facts are insisted on, the more power I believe there will be. Christ, and what He has done. Dwelling exclusively on meeting the sinner's need, though true, and revealing God's love, always sweet to the soul, lays a narrow basis for after-growth.

As regards the arrangement. If there is a desire in the assembly to have the gospel, and there is an open door, both being most heartily to be desired of the Lord—and there is no evangelistic gift in the assembly—I know nothing to hinder, without a dream, their saying "Come over and help us." The individuals being employed to seek one to come, is merely that the whole assembly cannot do it, and get one they trust to do it for them, and it is to be supposed that he does it in fellowship with the assembly; but except the moving spring of love to souls, the assembly merely furnishes the external opportunity, as I might open my house for the same purpose. He who comes to preach does it in the free exercise of his gift in his own responsibility to the Lord; for such ministry is directly from the Lord, and to be exercised in responsibility to Him.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

THE PATHWAY TO LIBERTY.

IN the eleven verses of Psalm xlii. the words "I," "me," "my" occur thirty-five times, and six times the Psalmist uses the expression "my soul." He is thoroughly *self-occupied*, but he is not *self-satisfied*—he is thirsting for God. Unhappy as such a condition may be, it is ten thousand times better than Laodicean complacency and self-satisfaction. The latter is what characterizes Christendom to-day, and it is that which we ought to dread more than anything else. *Self-sufficiency* is a veil upon the heart, which blinds it to everything that is of God.

"Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." (v. 6.) The three places here mentioned are suggestive, to my mind, of three ways in which self is reduced to nothingness in the believer: (1) By inward conflict; (2) by the testings of the wilderness; (3) by special discipline from God. We may look briefly at each of the three.

1. In the latter part of Romans vii. we find the experience of one who, through grace, delights in the law of God after the inward man, and is earnestly seeking to carry out God's holy will, but he finds a law in his members—a law of sin—to which he is in helpless captivity. He becomes painfully conscious that sin dwells in him, and eventually reaches the conclusion that in him, that is, in his flesh, there is nothing but sin—good he cannot find. It is by the law that he discovers this—by the effort to carry out God's will; so that which was ordained to life he finds to be

unto death. *He is brought down to death.* Death is that state out of which nothing comes for God, and if I am truly conscious that good does not dwell in me, I am brought down to death—the “land of Jordan.” Paul reached this point in a very short time, because he was in dead earnest. He learned in three days a lesson which it often takes a lifetime to learn. We are long on the road because we are so little in earnest about it. But all this is inward conflict and exercise; outwardly Paul’s life was most exemplary. It is not at all outward failure that others might see; it is the inward conflict in which the true character of sin-in-the-flesh is discovered.

2. The object of all the trial and testing of the wilderness was, as Deut. viii. 2 tells us, “to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no.” God leads us by a trying and rugged path (Hermon means “rugged”) that the naughtiness and pride of our hearts may be discovered. God loves us too well to allow us to be deceived as to our true character as in the flesh. He puts us in the very circumstances that bring it out. Not one of us can escape this testing and sifting. And as our true character is thus brought to light, we fret and chafe and murmur. How inexpressibly vexatious it is to always have something turning up that gives occasion to our hearts to show what is in them. If we only had a path in which we could always acquit ourselves creditably, how different it would be. If things would only go as we should like, how well and happily should we get on. Yes, and how supremely self-satisfied we should become. But God will find us out; and so He

causes us to traverse this land of the Hermonites, until our hearts in their bitterness say, "Why does God put me into such circumstances as these? Why does He not make it easier for me? Why does something always occur to overturn my efforts to be good, and to make fruitless all my desires to be holy? If God would order things differently for me, my life would not be the contemptible failure that it now is." Has your heart never uttered such language as this? Do you know what it means? Why, it is casting the blame of your sin upon God; and this is the outcome of Satanic enmity—it is the bite of the serpent. In a thousand ways you have proved the goodness and mercy of God, and yet your heart is capable of turning round upon Him and suggesting that His ordering for you is to blame for all your failure. What a discovery this is of those hidden springs of enmity against God that rise in the carnal mind.

3. The "hill Mizar" (the little hill) may represent any special discipline of God by which we are made consciously weak and small. When Paul came down from the third heaven there was given him a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him; and this, he tells us, was "lest I should be exalted above measure." It was his "hill Mizar." God allowed Satan so to act on Paul's flesh, by some form of bodily suffering, that he was conscious of nothing in himself but weakness. You may say, "That must be a miserable experience." Well, Paul was not miserable; he was supremely happy. He says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may tabernacle over me. . . . I take pleasure in weak-

nesses . . . for when I am weak, then am I strong." He was happy to have all his own strength reduced to nothingness, that he might prove instead the sufficiency of the Lord's grace and Christ's strength.

As to these three forms of self-reduction, the first two are *instructive*, while the third is rather *protective*. The inward conflict of Romans vii., and the testing of the wilderness, serve the purpose of teaching us what sin in the flesh is, and what is in our hearts; while such special discipline of God as Paul's thorn is rather to protect us from the unaltered tendencies of the flesh. The latter is *always* needed, and goes on in one form or other to the end of our course here.

It is well for us to get to the end and the bottom of ourselves, for when we really get to the bottom with God we reach deliverance. Paul no sooner reaches "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death?" than he exclaims, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The children of Israel, bitten by the serpent and brought down to death, found the way of life opened up by beholding the serpent of brass. When we truly abhor ourselves, we are prepared to rejoice in the blessed fact that our old man has been crucified with Christ, that sin in the flesh was condemned when Christ died, that our whole history, as in the flesh, closed before God in His death, and that this is our title to be free. I have now a righteous title to have done with myself because Christ has died. To prepare me for this I have to learn the necessity for death in my own experience, but *the death of Christ* is my title to be free. It is by the appropriation of His death that I reach liberty and life: that death has

severed me from all that I was as in Adam. "I am crucified with Christ." I am free from myself and free to have Christ before me, and to learn how I am associated with Him in new creation. In a word, I pass from the experience of Psalm xlii. into that of Psalm xlv.

The change is most striking. It is no longer "I," "me," "my," but "Thou," "Thee," "Thy." The soul has got a totally new object and centre; it has come to God's centre. The old astronomers found the motions of the planetary bodies quite inexplicable, because they looked upon the earth as the centre of the universe. It was not until a bold, free mind travelled forth into space, and found a new centre, that harmony and order were seen to reign where all had seemed confusion before. So long as the soul is self-centred it can make no real acquaintance with, or progress in, the thoughts and purposes of God. But when Christ gets His right place for our souls we begin to apprehend the wondrous depth and perfection of those thoughts and purposes, and then our blessings are all, as it were, glorified. We are then able to leave self altogether behind, and to enter the atmosphere of divine love. Psalm xlv. is called "a song of loves," and so completely has it this character that there is not a word in it about what the Lord *has done*; the heart is engaged with *Himself*. Love thinks more of the Giver than His gifts—more of the love than of the work which love has wrought. It is when the Person of Christ is thus before the heart that it begins to bubble over and to burn, as did those of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, when the Stranger spoke of "the

things concerning Himself." Then, verily, the heart is inditing a good matter; it is absorbed in the contemplation of the altogether lovely One. *Self* has been learned and given up as worthless, and another Person, who eclipses everything, is now before the soul.—(*An Extract.*)

C. A. C.

DELIVERANCE FROM LAW. *

THE subjects of the grace of God are not unfrequently objects of pity, when their experience corresponds to some extent with that set forth in Romans vii. It may be however remarked, on the other hand, that experiences of the deepest misery often result in solid blessing, and lead to endless happiness, even as we read, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalm xxx. 5.) The knowledge of salvation is always accompanied with peace and joy, and the misery which frequently precedes it is a proof of the manifold mercy of God, who, according to His word, "bringeth low and lifteth up."

The experiences brought before us in the chapter mentioned are those of a person whose mind has been renewed and enlightened, but who is destitute of the knowledge of deliverance from the power of indwelling sin. In his distress he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" The proof that he was born again when he uttered the above is clearly seen in that he says, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (*vv. 22, 24.*)

That which helps to hold the soul of a believer in bondage is self-occupation, and the more clearly we see what we are in ourselves, the more distressed we become. But as soon as we acquaint ourselves with the Person and work of Christ, and learn our identification with Him in death and resurrection, that which absorbed us in the past is displaced by that with which the Holy Spirit now engages our affections.

When light enters the soul, a new discovery begins, and a dreary process goes on within; and the one that diligently seeks for good in himself finds evil instead, and that which the light of God exposes to view, the law of God condemns. And although such discoveries are calculated to produce a deep sense of shame, the sooner the following conclusion is arrived at the better: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." (v. 18.) The new nature could not do otherwise than revolt against evil as well as delight in that which is good; but power is essential for the performance of the will of God. The want of it accounts for the constant failure and despairing state of the undelivered soul, and every effort to act in consistency with the holiness of God ends in disappointment and in finding himself without strength in the presence of sin. Equally incapable moreover of fulfilling the law, he has to make the mournful confession, "For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Deliverance from law can never be known until the heart gives reception to the truth contained in verse 4 of our chapter, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is

raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The preceding verse contains an illustration which the Spirit of God has supplied as a means of teaching the believer his identification with Christ in death, and consequently his deliverance from law; and the fourth verse is the application of it. The reader will thus see that the law is compared to a husband whose severity is as great as his authority, but who acts in consistency with the position he occupies, in demanding both honour and obedience. •

The law could never treat evil with indifference, or the evil-doer with tenderness and respect. Its frown falls on all those who fail to satisfy its righteous demands, and fills the soul with distress as it hears its sentence of condemnation. It would be useless after this to look for mercy from the law. We must betake ourselves to the gospel for that, where we not only hear it proclaimed, but also find it fulfilled, in what is contained in Psalm lxxxv., in connection with the cross of Christ: "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

We also learn from the above illustration that the position of the one that is in bondage to the law answers to that of a married woman, who cannot escape, if she would, from the law of her husband during his life. It is in acknowledging the claims of the law that the soul confesses, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. But I am carnal, sold under sin. . . . For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (rv. 9, 12, 14.)

We see, then, what readiness there is on the part of the one with this painful experience to assent to the

justice of God in all things, the law demands from him, while confessing his utter inability to meet its requirements. This shows the genuineness of the work of God. Soul-trouble in an undelivered state is in proportion to the sincerity in seeking to please God.

There are two husbands spoken of in the first part of this chapter, but the woman was not at liberty to be married to another while the first husband was yet living. This shows us that the bond which existed between the law of God and those that are under its rule could only be dissolved by means of death, which must of necessity take place before deliverance could be effected. The one whose life was rendered miserable for want of liberty, and whose hope of ever satisfying the demands of the holy law of God had given place to despair, had to cry: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." (v. 19.) This was going from bad to worse, and from one degree of weakness to another, until, reaching the last extremity, and ceasing from his own efforts, he despairingly cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (v. 24.)

Painful as his past experience had been, it proved profitable in the end by teaching him the important lesson: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." (v. 18.) He had come to the conclusion that he was entirely destitute of everything good in the sight of God, and this prepared him for that which God was about to reveal to him respecting the Person and work of Christ. God was leading him by the right way by bringing him to the end of himself,

and, knowing he had nothing whatever to commend him to God, what could he expect but condemnation according to righteousness? When this point is reached the soul is prepared to accept the truth of his identification with Christ in death, as that which sets him free from the bondage of sin and the law. It was this that God was teaching the soul, and although he uttered his cry of distress on the very brink of despair, he had come to the door of deliverance in an instant as soon as he cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" Then God supplied the answer which caused him to overflow with gratitude as he exclaimed, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The death and resurrection of Christ is to assure us that the marriage bond is broken between the old husband-law and the believer in our Lord Jesus Christ; and the saved one is as much at liberty, through grace, to view himself as being dead with Christ as he is to say, "He died for me."

The delivered soul in the following chapter is no longer seen as living a life of legality, in a state of despondency, but as for ever free from condemnation and in the enjoyment of liberty in Christ, in known relationship with God as Father through the Spirit, and waiting for the redemption of his body at the coming of the Lord.

H. H.

"A DIVINE Person is understood only by a divine revelation, of which Scripture is the record without, and the Holy Spirit is the illumination within."

A SONG OF THE KING.

My theme is of the King,
 The living Word is He !
 Him shall His own belovèd sing,
 His beauty see.
 His lips o'erflow with *grace*,
 Like lilies dropping myrrh ;
 The fragrance of the Holy Place
 All hearts must stir.

A Warrior, sublime
 In majesty, is He.
 By Him the chaos of all time
 Rebuked shall be.
 The Lowly One and True
 Shall triumph and prevail.
 His own right hand a work must do
 That cannot fail.

Thy throne, O God, is set
 For ever and for aye.
 Thy upright sceptre never yet
 Was turned away.
 Because Thou hatedst wrong,
 And righteousness didst love,
 Surpassing joys to Thee belong—
 All joys above !

Jehovah's "Fellow," Thou
 Couldst all endure, *alone*.
 Forsaken of Thy God, and now
 Set on His throne !

Thy garments are perfume—
 Cassia, aloes, myrrh :
 That earth for Thee contained "no room
 God doth aver.

The everlasting doors
 Flew open wide for Thee.
 The King of Glory, and His stores
 Of grace we see.
 Above Thy fellows Thou,
 Most Blessed One ! art crowned.
 Let all the earth Thy rights avow,
 Thy praises sound.

Sweet harpings fill the air
 From Thine own glory's place ;
 The trophies of Thy conquests there
 Attest Thy grace.
 Kings' daughters Thee obey,
 And, meek at Thy right hand,
 In righteousness divine for aye
 Thy Wife shall stand.

O Daughter ! hearken thou ;
 Attend, and bow thine ear :
 Forget thy birth, thy country now,
 Once counted dear.
 The King shall thus desire
 Thee in His courts to shine ;
 Thy reverence He doth require—
 This Lord is thine !

H. K. B.

THE WORK OF GOD AND OF SATAN WITHIN THE HEART.

I HAVE taken some notes of the use in the New Testament of the word from which our English term "energy" is derived. I find conveyed by that term a declaration of the sovereign and supreme grace of our God on the one hand, and on the other, of the marvellous power and malice of Satan, which is of the deepest interest, and will repay the study of the spiritual, who may quietly and at leisure digest and assimilate through grace this precious food, to the glory of Him from whom every good giving and every perfect gift alone descends. The notes are put down in simple consecutive order.

Matt. xiv. 2 and Mark vi. 14. "Works of power are displaying their force (are inworking) in him."* This was said by Herod Antipas with reference to miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus, whom he supposed to be John the Baptist risen from the dead. Herod evidently ascribed them to a power residing and operating in the person of Him who wrought them.

Rom. vii. 5. "The passions of sins which were by the law wrought (inwrought) in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." The law by its prohibitions roused into activity those passions of the heart which had otherwise lain dormant.

1 Cor. xii. 6. "There are distinctions of operations (of powers inwrought), but it is the same God who

* The word "inworking" is used in this paper. — Ed.

works (inworks) all in all." The word "operations" is equivalent to inner workings in the spirit of those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells—workings which are all in all cases set in motion and controlled by the active will of God Himself alone.

1 Cor. xii. 10. By the Spirit there are given "operations of powers" (miracles). Here the "operations" are, I think, not the inner workings of God of which miracles are the result externally, but the thought is the miracles themselves given to the man to set forth in expression.

1 Cor. xii. 11. Whatever be the distinctive gifts bestowed upon this or that servant of Christ, it is "the one and the same Spirit" who operates (inworks them), dividing to each in particular as He pleases. It has ever been so. In the days of His flesh the words and works of the Son of God were alike always those of Him who sent Him. So Paul and Apollos, and all their fellow-labourers then and now, are only ministering servants through whom the Lord Jesus works, according to the ministry and gift allotted severally to each.

1 Cor. xvi. 9. "A great door and an effectual is opened unto me," says Paul. The door now opened by God for His servant at Ephesus filled the apostle with energy proportioned to the greatness of his opportunity; his spirit was stirred within him. How God wrought also among the Ephesians by the same inworking we read in Acts xix.

2 Cor. i. 6. If Paul is in tribulation, it is "for the encouragement and salvation of the saints at Corinth wrought (inwrought in them, the sense and comfort of it effectuated within them) in the endurance of

(enabling them to endure) the same sufferings." As it is no tribulation to work out patience as a permanent result, so neither can divine encouragement and preservation be made good to us except as we are experimentally passing through the trials which call for the supply.

2 Cor. iv. 12. "Death works (is in working, at work, showing its power) in us, but life in you." The apostles were always facing death. But they had been through all continually preserved, and the abundant thanksgiving of the saints thus elicited was accompanied in the latter by an increase of spiritual vitality, even as by the apostles it was realized as abundant grace.

Gal. ii. 8. "He that wrought in (energized) Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision, wrought also in me (energized me) towards the Gentiles." Both Peter and Paul were endued with divine power and impelled by divine fervour to execute the commissions entrusted to them.

Gal. iii. 5. "He that works (inworks) powers among you." God had been making Galatian believers the subjects of His power, which had been realized by them in their souls with an accompanying outcome of miraculous results.

Gal. v. 6. "Faith working (inworking) through love." The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit draws out that faith in Christ Jesus which is alone of avail for the apprehension and enjoyment of life in Christ, or rather of Christ, who is our Life.

Eph. i. 11. "We have obtained an inheritance in the Christ, before the world was founded according to the purpose of Him who works (inworks) all things according to the counsel of His will." The mystery

of the will of God to head up all things in the Christ, as well as the inheritance of the saints in Him—our union to Him, whereof the indwelling Holy Spirit is the present earnest to us—these are matters of our present knowledge, and that experimental, for if not, neither have we the doctrine aright.

Eph. i. 19, 20. "The surpassing greatness of God's power towards us who believe, according to the working (inworking) of the might of His strength, which He wrought in the Christ, in raising Him from among the dead; and He set Him down at His right hand in the heavenlies." Of this the apostle prays that we, as those who are in the blessing of it, may have the conscious knowledge.

Eph. ii. 2. Satan, "the ruler of the authority of the air," is the spirit who now works in (energizes) the sons of disobedience. This agrees with the words of the Lord Jesus, John viii. 44, "Ye are of the devil as your father, and the lusts of your father ye desire to do." Satan works this desire in those who, by their wilful wickedness, have earned the name of "sons of disobedience."

Eph. iii. 7. The apostle Paul had "become a ministering servant of the gospel, according to the free gift of the grace of God given to him according to the working (inworking) of God's power." God had revealed His Son in Paul, that Paul might preach among the Gentiles Jesus the Son of God. God, who put Christ on his lips, was He who had first put Christ into his heart.

Eph. iii. 20. "According to the power that works in us (is inworking in us), God is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think." God works in us in

order that we may be filled unto all the fulness of God. If we are straitened, if we are, so to speak, hampered or shackled, this cramping of spiritual life and energy is in ourselves, not in God. We cannot exhaust the stores of His grace or power.

Eph. iv. 16. From Christ, the Head, "the whole body, fitted together and connected by every joint of supply according to the working (the inworking, energy) in its measure of every part, works for itself the growth of the body to its self-building up in love." We are filled full in Him. He is the unfailing source of ceaseless supply—the inworking is always going on—and He is the alone agent, whether in the body as a whole, or, severally, in each and every member thereof.

Phil. ii. 12, 13. "Work out (work out into result) your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in (is inworking in, at work in) you the willing and the working (the inworking) according to His good pleasure." Both the "willing and the working" are internal operations, the one the formation, the other the completion, of the good works which God our Father has prepared for us to walk in, and which become expressed externally through the obedience of faith in overt actions. These actions, being the works of God, are from their first inception in our hearts accomplished facts, although it may never on earth be given to us to witness the consummation.

Col. i. 29. Paul speaks of himself as "combating (agonizing) according to His working (inworking) which works in me (is working in me) in power." This is the good fight of faith, which, as a good soldier and servant of Jesus Christ, Paul sustains on behalf

of God's saints—the care of all the assemblies came upon him daily—in wrestling with the wicked spirits in heavenly places, who by their wiles or open antagonism strive to dwarf the Christian growth and thwart the Christian energy.

Col. ii. 12. "Faith of the working (inworking) of God who raised Christ from among the dead." This faith, having been divinely inwrought in the saints at Colosse, put them in actual vital association with Christ in resurrection life, as they had been formerly identified with Him in burial through Christian baptism.

W. C. B.-C.-C.

(To be continued.)

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

JOHN xvii. 16.

Two considerations will enable us to comprehend the import of our Lord's words in this scripture. They both flow from verse 6, where we learn, first, that the disciples (as also all believers) had been given to Christ "out of the world." This was doubtless accomplished on earth; but John vi. 37 makes it plain, in our judgment, that the gift is a reference to the Father's eternal counsels of grace, and hence that the full sense of the statement is that believers were given to Christ in a past eternity. (Compare Ephesians i. 3-5.) The second consideration arises from the words, "I have manifested Thy name"; for the Lord surveys

His own in this chapter from the height of His own thoughts, looking upon them, as He does, in the power and blessedness of the truth, the revelation of the Father, which He had communicated. Only as thus regarded could He have prayed, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are." They are viewed, therefore, in their new position and relationship, inasmuch as they are said to have received the words which the Lord had given to them from the Father, "and," as He said, "have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." As then in association with Christ before the Father, as being in the Son and the Son in them (chap. xiv. 20), they were not of the world, even as He was not of the world. Seen from the side of the Father's eternal gift to Christ, it might be said they were never "of the world"; but regarded as to their actual circumstances they were "of the world" until grace visited their souls, and called them out of darkness into God's marvellous light. The meaning of the phrase itself, "not of the world," is that they were not of the world as to origin and character. Their new nature and life were heavenly. Thus, in chapter viii. 23, the Lord says to the Jews, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

II.

1 PETER ii. 12.

It is a characteristic of Scripture that the meaning of any particular phrase can only be discovered from the context. That is, it does not follow because the

purport of any special words has been ascertained in one place, that you must attach the same significance to them in another. For example, the words in Luke xix. 44, "The time of thy visitation," undoubtedly mean the day of grace for Jerusalem through the presence and testimony of our blessed Lord. It was the opportunity for blessing, and hence the Lord's lament, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things [which belong] unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." When, however, we come to Peter's words, "The day of visitation," the thought is rather that of judgment, and not of grace, whatever may be the effects, gracious or otherwise, of the "visitation" upon the subjects of it. As another has written, "In the day when God would visit men, these calumniators, with their will broken and their pride subdued by the visitation of God, should be brought to confess—by means of the good works which, in spite of their calumnies, had always reached their consciences—that God had acted in these Christians, that He had been present among them." It is not a question, we apprehend, of any particular time or day; but rather any time when God might intervene and make bare His arm before the eyes of men, compelling them, in whatever way, to glorify Himself and to justify His people. The same principle is seen in the Lord's word to Philadelphia: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

ICHABOD.

1 S. EL iv.

THROUGHOUT all Scripture the brightest testimony for God is seen during periods of the greatest corruption among His people. Thus "in the days when the judges ruled" and there was a famine in the land, Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz are introduced to show that, whatever the departure, the Lord maintained His truth in the hearts of a faithful remnant. So when idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel reigned, the faithful Elijah appeared upon the scene, a man of God and mighty in intercession; and, even though he knew it not, the Lord had preserved His seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. In like manner, in the opening chapters of this book, we see God working in grace, amid the failure of the sons of Aaron, to keep the light of His candlestick burning (although they suffered it to go out in the temple; see chap. iii. 3) for the guidance and comfort of the godly, and also for the deliverance in due season of His oppressed people. This is a great encouragement to count upon the Lord in an evil day, and to expect His interposition on behalf of those who keep His word and do not deny His name.

Nothing could be sadder than the state of things at the time when Samuel was ministering unto the Lord before Eli the priest. It is all the more so from the fact that Eli was himself a godly man, and was in heart knit to the faithful ones in Israel. A quiet

pious soul, he yet failed to maintain order in the priestly house. "His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." In chapter ii., indeed, we have a detailed account of their evil practices, of their covetous ways, using their office for their own purposes in such a way that "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." And Eli heard all that his sons did to Israel and knew that they were both corrupt and corrupters, and he remonstrated with them, besides warning them of their danger. But having allowed the reins of government to fall so long out of his hands, he could not now resume them, and his sons went on in their evil ways. They were sowing to the wind, and would soon reap the whirlwind of judgment.

The reader will not fail to perceive how the Spirit of God delights to call attention to the child Samuel in contrast with Hophni and Phinehas. (See chapter ii. 11, 18, 26.) He was, indeed, a rare plant of the Lord's own raising; and planted, as he was, in the house of the Lord, he flourished "in the courts of our God." It would seem, moreover, as if, in the remarkable language used in chapter ii. 26, the Spirit of God designedly marks him out as a type of the child Jesus. It says, "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men." Luke writes of our blessed Lord, "And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him"; and again, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke ii. 40, 52.) The coincidence may be meant to teach that Samuel became in measure to the remnant in his day what the Lord did to the poor and

all people of His time, those in whom was all His delight. In any case the Lord established His servant in the position in which He had placed him; for all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, recognised that he was called to be God's vessel of testimony; and Samuel's word came to all Israel.

But in chapter iv. the scene changes. The judgment passed upon Eli's house did not slumber, and God once again used the Philistines as its executors, and also to bring out into the light the state into which His people had fallen. The Philistines were the enemies of Israel inside their own territory—enemies who could never be overcome except by the power of the Spirit of God. But Israel went out against them to battle in their own strength, and consequently were defeated. God could not suffer them to win victories through their own hand; He was not with His people, and hence they were smitten before the Philistines. Their defeat did but reveal their sad condition. "Wherefore," they enquire, "hath the Lord smitten us?" And then they went on to say, "Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, IT may save us 'out of the hand of our enemies.'" They probably had recalled the march through the wilderness, when everything was ordered according to God through Moses, and when God Himself went before His people to search out a resting-place for them, and when, as the ark went forward, Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." (Numbers x.) Alas! they made two mistakes: they thought they could command Jehovah's presence

through the symbol of the ark, and they depended upon the ark instead of upon the living God.

The Lord permitted them to carry out their intention. The ark was fetched, "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God." Poor deluded people! In their ignorance of the holiness of their God, and blind to the profanation of His name through Hophni and Phinehas, they vainly imagined that God would now interpose on their behalf; and, in confident anticipation of victory over their enemies, they shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. The Philistines were filled with fear, for they thought that the mighty God who had smitten the Egyptians had indeed come into the camp. But their fear acted as a stimulus to their courage and they fought, and, God using them as His sword of judgment, they smote Israel with a great slaughter, "and the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain." What an instruction for God's people in all ages—proclaiming to all who have ears to hear that the Lord is with them, as He said to Asa by the mouth of Azariah, only while they are "with Him." (2 Chron. xv. 1, 2.) Without the fulfilment of this condition they will be utterly powerless in the presence of the enemy, and be exposed to certain disaster.

God thus executed His threatened judgment upon the house of Eli (see chap. ii. 34), and together with this brought to light the state of His people, even

allowing the enemy to carry the holy ark into their idolatrous land. The secret of it all is revealed to us elsewhere: "They provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images" (and this in addition to the evil conduct of the divinely-appointed priests); and "when God heard this He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh . . . and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand." (Psalm lxxviii. 58-61.) So our blessed Lord, rather than allow Peter to go on making a fair show in the flesh through his self-confidence, permitted him to fall into the enemy's hand and to dishonour his Master's name. God's love to His own is unquenchable, but He often expresses it by chastisements, and He must be glorified in them that call upon Him. Thus it is that they have often to learn that their God is a consuming fire. But blessed be His name in that, if He cause them to pass through the fires of His holiness, the dross only is consumed and the gold is purified.

Going back to Shiloh, what a different scene meets the eye. The aged Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching; *for his heart trembled for the ark of God.* Great as his failure had been, his heart was true, and the ark of God—Christ in type—was everything to this faithful soul. The man of Benjamin, who had escaped from the slaughter, came in hastily and told Eli. With touching, trembling accents the aged priest said, "What is there done, my son?" Then he learned all the truth of the dark disaster that had befallen Israel—they had fled from their enemies, there had

been a great slaughter, Hophni and Phinehas were dead, and the ark of God was taken! He had great natural affection, but it was the ark that had the chief place in his soul, and the tidings of its captivity broke his heart, and falling off his seat he died. Under the hand of God as he surely was, God would not allow him to pass away without this striking testimony to His aged servant. His heart was true, notwithstanding he had failed in his responsibility as a parent and as the priest of God.

There is yet another devoted soul numbered with this pious remnant, and she was the wife of Phinehas. Though linked with a husband of such depraved habits, she maintained through grace a life of godly reverence, and cherished as beyond all price the Lord's dwelling-place in the midst of His chosen people. The tidings that the ark of God had been taken, and that Eli and her husband were dead, reached her under painful natural circumstances, and so bowed her heart in sorrow over the desolation wrought that even the birth of her son could not alleviate her anguish. No; the light of her life was extinguished, for she said, as she named her child Ichabod, "the glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband." If, however, we are allowed to know that even her husband's sin did not eradicate her love, it is yet manifest that, as also with Eli, the ark of God possessed the chief place in her heart. It is for this reason that the Spirit of God adds, "And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken." Like the godly remnant

of a later date, her chief concern was for the honour of Jehovah's name and of His dwelling-place. Like Mary Magdalene by the empty sepulchre, she felt that Israel had lost everything when the ark of God—the symbol of His presence—had fallen into the hands of the enemy. May there be many in this day of a like spirit who will cherish the presence of the Lord in the midst of those gathered to His name as their chiefest and most blessed heritage.

REVELATION, SYMPATHY, AND ASSOCIATION.

THERE are three points to which our attention has been often drawn in reading the Epistle to the Hebrews. First, the revelation which God has made to His people in the person of the Son; to this we are called to give more earnest heed. Connected with this, the system of glory purposed of God in Christ is brought to light, in that the Son, who is the effulgence of His glory and the expression of His substance, has made purification for sins and seated Himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high. To the heavenly part of this glorious system inaugurated by the Son we are called; and, to use a well-known example, it is the revelation to us of all that centres in the person of Jesus which makes us, as Peter of old, leave the ship to go to Him.

Secondly, He is not only the revelation to us of God, and of His purposes in the Son become man—a revelation brought so close to us in Him that the exercised heart responds to the revelation in the spirit

of her who said, "My Beloved is mine"—but He has in the days of His flesh so entered into the sorrows of humanity that He is able to sympathise with weak and suffering men, and yet the support thus given is according to the greatness of One who has traversed the heavens. In other words, He is so for us according to the power of divine love, that we are made conscious of what His interest in us is, and in this consciousness the heart learns further to say, "I am my Beloved's."

Thirdly, the believer, who has learnt the divine fulness and glory of the Person who has become to us the expression of God in all the outflow of His love, together with the revelation of His purpose in that Jesus as Son of man is crowned with glory and honour, and who is also able, according to the same divine fulness, to sympathise with us in our weakness here, is now led into the place of association with Him who has entered into the sanctuary as the Minister of the holy place and the great Priest over the house of God. To be in His company involves that we accept His death as that which has ended the whole order of the first man in judgment; then our highest privilege is that we are of His order, and are associated with Him in the holiest, having entrance by the new and living way which He has inaugurated for us, in that He has entered through death and resurrection into the holy place where He now ministers.

It has often been said that in the gospels we have patterns given us of those truths which are doctrinally set before us in the epistles; and in regard to the three points above mentioned as characterising the Epistle

to the Hebrews, the three occasions on which Mary of Bethany is brought before our notice in the gospels illustrate the way in which the believer apprehends the position which we may call revelation, sympathy, and association.

In Luke x. Mary is brought before us as one who gives more earnest heed to the things spoken by the Lord. Her attitude betokened her appreciation of the Person to whose words she listened. His words revealed Himself, and He was the full vessel of the grace of God here below. At His feet, and listening to Him, she possessed the good part which should not be taken from her. *He* was known to her in His words, and it is evident that her soul was held in their power. They were to her communications which detached her spirit from the sphere of Martha's anxiety, while they engaged her heart with the place to which He belonged—the sphere where His spirit lived—Himself the revelation to her of that blessed sphere. The next occasion on which Mary comes before us is in the moment of her own and Martha's sorrow. On the first occasion her heart had been drawn to the Lord by the communication of His voice; on this one she experienced that His heart bore its company in her sorrow, and felt for her in the fulness of divine love that flowed through a human heart. To Martha the Lord had spoken of *her*, "Thy brother shall rise again," while Mary experienced the outgoing of His heart in sympathy. Yes, He companied with her in her sorrow, while His heart felt for her as she wept at His feet. She must have had a deep sense that He carried her sorrow in His heart as He wept with her. Nothing

could have so assured her of His sympathy, and also of His personal interest and love. Here, then, we have the pattern of His priesthood in its exercise for her—her heart not only assured of His love, but sustained. Thus is the believer sustained in the sense that no circumstance can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Mary had still the good part that nothing could take from her—Himself known more intimately in the presence of that which has come upon man through sin, and presses heavily upon him; Himself known in the movements of divine love which flowed in Him according to the divine glory.

In John xii. Mary is the pattern of the priestly place of the Church. A woman indeed may not speak in the assembly, nor does Mary here, but she is none the less a priest as she pours the ointment on the Lord's feet. Her heart is in association with the One who is rejected here, and the Lord interprets her act as expressive of devotedness to Himself, as to One who had no place in this world. She has still the good part which cannot be taken from her. He has carried her heart with Him out of this world. In spirit she quits the scene where He is rejected, and touches the sphere where His worth is owned; it is figured by the house being filled with the odour of the ointment. She is in association with Him, and occupies in spirit the priestly place. In the accounts of this circumstance given in the Gospels by Matthew and Mark, we are shown how the testimony of the gospel was to carry with it the memorial of this priestly place of devoted nearness of heart. Here the Levite, so to speak, is under the

hand of the priest, and along with the testimony of the grace of God is borne the memorial of how His love revealed in Jesus can affect a heart and produce the response of love—a love which nothing will satisfy but worship given to Himself, and the fragrance of which fills the house where it is poured forth.

T. H. R.

A LETTER TO A BEREAVED BROTHER.*

MY DEAR JOHN,

How much I charge myself for want of joy in God; and I have just come from looking at a scripture that may be able to fix this charge still more home upon the spirit; I mean the opening of Luke. What joy among the angels there; what joy on earth in the vessels filled by the Spirit there! The same illustration, indeed the one feature of the kingdom of God, "joy in the Holy Ghost." The angels appear together, or alone, as in the person of Gabriel. Witness that fervency of heart and openness of mouth which speaks eloquently the liberty and gladness of the soul. And the style of the filled vessels, whether it be Mary or Elizabeth, Zacharias or Simeon, or the company of shepherds who had been called into the fellowship of angels, equally tells us that all were satisfied; that if in heaven, so on earth, the presence of the power of "the kingdom of God" was expressing itself in "joy."

But let us come on to the fifth chapter, and there

* The date of this letter is not known—probably it was 1865: it was found among the papers of the brother who received it, after his departure to be with Christ. The annexed lines were written by the bereaved parent.

we shall find that not only angelic heavenly hosts and filled human vessels enter into this joy, but believing sinners likewise. They show it, and in their way they express it.

Look in this chapter at Peter and his companions, at the healed palsied man, at Levi, and then at all the children of the bridechamber. Peter and his companions are at once able to rise up, leave all, and follow Jesus. The palsied man takes up his bed, and rising up before them all who stood around him goes home glorifying God. Levi at the word of power abandons what is everything to him in this world, and makes a feast, and such a feast as was exposing him to the rebuke of others; but though roughly, after the mind of his divine Master.

The children of the bridechamber could not fast; they were afresh introduced to the Person in whom the fulness of joy dwells and reigns, and they could not fast; and the Bridegroom approves their joy.

Thus were poor believing sinners, as in Acts xiii., "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." They take their place with angels and with filled vessels just to prove (it may be each in his different way) that the one feature of the kingdom of heaven is "joy in the Holy Ghost."

The poor cripple, carrying his bed with praises, is as sure and seasonable an expression of this as the angelic chorus over the fields of Bethlehem. Levi's feast tells this as distinctly as Mary's song or Simeon's oracle. All is joy after its own order and in its own way.

And this is the crowning, eternal thing: there is peace, there is entrance into grace or favour, there

is hope, but the crowning experience in the pangs of the soul is joy—"joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Romans v. 11.*)

It is joy that must account for Peter leaving his nets and Levi his receipt of custom. It is joy in the Bridegroom's presence that will give the feast in His absence. "The joy of the Lord is our strength."

You may have to watch against the tendency to mere sentiment in your soul. I have to do this very specially. Some others have a strong doctrinal tendency, if I may so speak; a rigid literal way of learning Christ. You and I and many others have to watch against the uneasiness and morbidness of mere feeling or sentiment. It may be a little of your human way or natural mind that may have expressed itself in the teaching to which you allude, and which in its measure was challenged. But surely we are entitled by the Word to speak of "delighting the divine mind." I have no doubt of it. Scripture is very bold in this way; for the apostle says, "Ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God." And again, "He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of man."

The Father is revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians as presenting the children to Himself, just as Christ, the Bridegroom, is revealed as presenting the Church to Himself (see chapters i. and v.), language which tells us the personal delight that the one takes in His family, and the other in His bride.

Surely I know the tendency of sensible, creature influences, and how much the heart surrenders itself to their authority. But the sense of inequality and the force of attraction will do much for the heart in

binding it to Christ and detaching it from what would naturally be a great hindrance. How Bartimeus by reason of the first, and Zaccheus by reason of the second, clung to Jesus, though the multitudes were tempting them to yield. In the exercises of your spirit, dear brother, and in the anxieties and cares of your heart and hand, may His comforts refresh your soul. It is a struggling scene. "Who shall roll us away the stone?" But the resurrection will anticipate or close all the trial and the difficulty, as it did in Mark xvi.

My love in the Lord to the dear brethren and to your dear wife, if returned.

Ever, dear John,

Your affectionate Brother,

J. G. BELLETT.

2, UPPER PEMBROKE STREET,

August 27th.

"Our precious child, Lord Jesus,
 We know is now with Thee;
 Nor would we wish him present,
 E'en though that wish could be.
 There in Thine arms enfolded,
 His happiness entire;
 For one we loved so dearly,
 What more could we desire?"

"There in Thy blissful presence,
 Waiting with thousands more
 The time by God appointed,
 When time shall be no more,
 When Thou shalt come to gather,
 Thy chosen ones to Thee—
 That glorious time of meeting
 We long, O Lord, to see."

THE LAST WORDS OF JACOB.

GENESIS xlix.

JACOB, purified by discipline, ended his days like a true pilgrim father.

The blessing and prophetic history given by Israel to his sons is full of the very highest interest. I do not propose now to look at the detail of the blessings to the twelve tribes, but to consider especially two immense truths clearly marked out in this prophecy.

1. Man's responsibility and his ignominious failure.
2. The purpose of God.

The first part is in connection with "the first man," the second in connection with "the second Man"; both are of great importance.

Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are the first-mentioned sons of Israel; and here we see failure in the responsibility of the first-born, and violence with corruption—the old, old story of the first man.

Reuben, the first-born, the strength and dignity of his father, was unstable* as water; and with the instability there was the wanton conduct in his father's house. If Reuben is a specimen of the corruption of man, Simeon and Levi follow close after, as using nature's force (violence) with instruments of cruelty; their fierce anger was not according to God.

* The word "unstable" means the boiling and swilling of water; the ebullition of the passion and force of nature which cannot be depended upon in the things of God. It ends here in positive evil.

I believe that we need not say much more as to this part of our prophecy. There is a complete downfall of the heads and hope of the family; it may be summed up in a few words—nature's irrepressible energy, immorality and cruelty, failure. "Cursed be their anger!"

The remaining part of Jacob's speech gives us an historical insight into all that shall take place, consequent upon the exaltation of Christ (the Man of God's counsels), after His death and resurrection.

But first of all Christ Himself is introduced typically in Judah.* God's purpose is in Him, and Judah is the one whom his brethren shall *praise*. This could not be said of Reuben; there was nothing praiseworthy in him, whatever his position at the head of the family might have been. Judah is here mentioned in connection with Messiah's first coming (verse 10); and Messiah Himself is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. God's purpose is in Judah (Psalm lxxviii. 68), and here the Christ is brought before us as the One to be praised. Let us praise Him from our very hearts!

But He has been rejected! And now this wonderful prophecy unfolds itself, giving us the present history of Israel. What is it?

Commercial prosperity and submission to the Gentiles, ending in apostasy!

Zebulun and Issachar represent the long period of Israel's patiently bearing the Gentile yoke, during which time the riches of the earth get into their hands; they are heavy-laden with wealth. But this leads us to

* Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin are all three of them types of Christ here: Joseph and Benjamin especially in His exaltation and reign.

Dan, the apostate tribe.* As a serpent by the way, he shall bite the heels and everything fall backwards; this is the tendency of the present age, ending with Dan's apostasy. (It is a sad thing to think that Christendom's apostasy shall precede it.)

But at the very time when this gross evil shall be developed, the remnant shall be formed, that well-known remnant in the Psalms, whose prophetic cry is here given to us in the form of an interjection: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah!" Compare the well-known voice of faith, "How long?" in Psalms x., xiii., xciv., as well as in other parts of Scripture.

Apostasy shall terminate the present state of things, and then, the faithful having been delivered by judgment, blessing and joy shall follow.

This we may briefly notice in Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

Gad is overcome by a troop, but overcomes at last. The prophet Daniel informs us what the final trooping together against Israel shall be (and read, too, Psalm lxxxiii.), but the earthly people of God shall be brought out of the trouble. Then Asher is blessed with abundance and good cheer; and Naphtali, like a hind that has been freed, shall give glory to Jehovah. Deliverance, consolation, and liberty.

And this brings us to Joseph, type of Him who shall dispense all blessings, from His supreme position in glory, to His restored people. The branches run over the wall, for the Gentiles shall receive of the riches of the exalted Christ. If Joseph had been shot at by the archer and sorely grieved (compare Psalm cv. 17, 18),

* I am told that any orthodox Israelite will affirm that the Antichrist shall come out of the tribe of Dan; this is remarkable.

yet his bow abode in strength, and he was made strong by the mighty One of Jacob (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel). The power and might are not those of unstable Reuben, or cruel Simeon and Levi, but the strength of Jehovah Himself, the excellent force of God manifested in the Man of His counsels.

Our hearts long for that day when the glorious Anti-type of Joseph shall reign over the universe, and when every knee shall bow before Him. If we delight *now* to have part in His rejection and sufferings, we shall rejoice above measure in the day of His glory; we desire to see *Him* honoured who went down into the pit for us!

Benjamin (verse 27) represents the power of the great King who shall break all the hostile nations to pieces like a potter's vessel.

In this short but I trust suggestive and pregnant sketch we have then Israel, as the responsible earthly man, set aside; then God's purpose in Christ seen in Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin.

At the same time a wonderful sketch of the history of God's ways, in view of His bringing the first-Begotten into the world. May we, who are not Israelites, but the co-heirs of the true Joseph called out from the Gentiles, be faithful to Him and love His appearing!

E. L. B.

"IN Joseph and Benjamin we have the crowning of all blessing in the double character of Christ, the heavenly Heir of all, and power and strength upon the earth that subdues all."

THE WORK OF GOD AND OF SATAN WITHIN THE HEART.

1 THESS. ii. 13. "God's word, which also works (inworks) in you that believe." The word of God is good seed, which, having in itself quickening and germinating power, lays hold of hearts, brings faith into exercise, and works on and on with ever-increasing and expanding life and energy which cannot be hid.

2 Thess. ii. 7. "The mystery of lawlessness is already working (inworking, at work, rising, developing)." As it was in Paul's day, so much more is it now. As the days of the Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," were the days leading up to those of Saul, the wilful king, who did that which was right in his eyes, so is the evil day in which we live rapidly heading up to the times of the lawless one, the Antichrist.

2 Thess. ii. 9. The coming of the Antichrist is "according to the working (the inworking, the working in the power) of Satan." (Read Rev. xiii.)

2 Thess. ii. 11. "Because men received not the truth in the love of it, God sends to them a working (an inworking) of error, that they should believe the lie." As faith in Christ is the free gift of God in grace, so will belief in Antichrist be His work in judgment. They who resist the one must be subjected to the other. They may resist God now, but they will not be suffered to resist Him then. He has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

Philem. 6. "So that thy participation in the faith should become operative (inworking, fraught with energy) in the acknowledgment of every good thing that is in us towards Christ." Paul prayed that his friend Philemon might find a response wrought in his heart with power in correspondence and unison with the grace working in Paul in his behalf. Both had obtained like precious faith. The chord struck by the Spirit in the heart of Paul must reverberate in that of his friend and fellow-believer.

Heb. iv. 12. "The word of God is living and operative." It works down within the spirit and soul of a man, penetrates his inmost being, and affects all the inclinations, dispositions, thoughts, and purposes of his heart and will.

James v. 16. "The fervent prayer (prayer that is at work within a man, stirring him up, absorbing his whole energy) of a righteous man has much power." The fervency with which such a one prays—and none other can pray thus—is power wrought in him by God Himself, to whom alone belong the answering consequences of blessing.

"Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give."

In the above collection of passages from the Scripture one sees how one thought, one term—*energeia*, inworking—runs like the keynote in music, the thread in a woven garment, the vein of precious ore, the essence of a fluid, through the whole. It is not only that the will of God is the cause of all things, but that that same will is also ever in operation to bring out the designed result, the glory of His Christ.

He is the glory of God. In Him God is glorified. In Him God is *seen as He is*. That is what "glory" is—God manifested. That is what Christ was—God manifested in flesh. This glory the assembly has been called to share. We have now "Christ in us, the hope of glory." When He presently shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory, His glory.

God, who wills, works also. It is not only "of Him," but "through Him," as well as "to Him," that all things are, that to Him may be glory for ever and ever. He who in the beginning said, "Let light be," and light was, is light essential. Light then shone forth. The eternal power and Godhead of the Creator were then set forth before created intelligences through the things that were made. That order of creation still remains, though it is destined to pass away as soon as it has served its purpose. Another creation has already been put forth, of which the former, however glorious, was but the shadow. That was the true, archetypal light which, coming into the world, is light to every man, namely, Jesus Christ, who, being altogether that which He spoke, said of Himself, "I am the light of the world."

The words, the works, and the ways of Jesus Christ were the manifestation of His essential Godhead. He was the tabernacle; His person, the expression of God Himself. God wrought within Him. He did nothing of or from Himself. He knew and was conscious of the power in which He lived and wrought. Although the mystery of Christ is a theme too high and holy for any but the words of the Holy Spirit to declare, yet those who have the Spirit cannot but see in Jesus

Christ the perfect correspondence of the life with the Being; so that we have to say, "Truly this is the Son of God," for no other being could have been that which by the Spirit we perceive Him to have been. In Christ was seen the life and operation of God Himself. "This is the true God and eternal life."

Now, what is true of Him when on earth before the cross is, because of the cross, blessedly true now in resurrection life, in a new condition and extension. The truth is now not in Christ alone, but in us also who are in that life with Him, because "the darkness is passing away and the true light is now shining." What God wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from among the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, He wrought and is now working in us. As He was, so are we, the vessels of grace. God was in Christ; Christ is in us, is being formed in us. Whatever the purposes of God were in the Christ He, the Head, has fulfilled them, and now from Him those counsels are being fulfilled in us—members of His body. The will and the word of God are now in activity not only for us through Christ, but in us by Christ.

Is there heart-searching, correction, recovery, reinstatement, response? It is the work of God within us. Is it prayer? All real prayer is in the Holy Ghost, and comes from God as truly as it reaches and moves God; prayer not in the Spirit is not prayer at all; real prayer is the prayer of God. (Luke vi. 12.) Is there the faith that comes by hearing, and is obedience the consequence? Both are alike the product of the in-working of God, according to the word of Isaiah xxvi. 12, "Thou also hast wrought all our works in us,"

which is the heart's response to that other word in Hosea xiv. 8, "From Me is thy fruit found." Whatever food nourishes us, whatever growth we gain, it is of the fulness of Christ that we receive it; His grace produces grace, we become strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and we grow in grace. It is He that satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with His goodness. It is not we who satisfy or fill ourselves, He is the alone doer of it all. Do we need sustainment and encouragement by the way? It is God who comforteth them that are cast down. He sends the trials that we may therein prove what else we could not know—His tender grace—and be admitted into the highest of all privileges on earth: to tread the path that Christ has trodden, to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. He uses us Himself in service and ministry for His own glory—it is "not I, but the grace of God which is with me." It is He who prepares the work and qualifies the workmen, dividing to each one severally as He wills. All gifts are in His hand, their exercise and manifestation alike. There are no miracles now, for we have the complete Word of God. We require nothing more than has been provided: He will give no more. But, still as ever, "all things are possible to him that believeth," and "I have strength for all things through Christ, who endues me with power."

The other side of the case—that of Satan's inworking in the sons of disobedience—is no less true, but it is too awfully real to dwell upon. The texts have been adduced simply to draw attention to the reality as awful as the operation of God in grace is blessed. Let it be noted, however, that Satan is no independent

agent. What he does he does only by the permission of Him who made man a responsible being, a being against whom Satan has no power save as a man yields himself to him, a servant to obey his wicked will, and has, therefore, to bear the consequences of his own sin.

W. C. C.-B.-C.

SWEET MEMORIES.

(Lines suggested by a Hymn.)

SWEET be our memories, O God,
 Of Thy beloved Son,
 In whom Thou ever didst delight—
 Thy Christ, Thy Holy One.

Mem'ries of Him who came in grace
 Thy counsels to fulfil ;
 Whose meat and drink it ever was
 To do His Father's will.

Mem'ries of Jesus, who when here
 "Went about doing good":
 Healing the sick, the halt, the maimed,
 Giving the hungry food.

Mem'ries of His most gracious ways
 With all who sought Him here,
 Lending to sorrow, grief, and pain
 Ever a willing ear.

How He the broken-hearted healed,
 The captive sad released,
 God's lowly, earth-rejected Son,
 In whom He was well-pleased.

Mem'ries of that most bitter hour
 When He our Surety stood,
 Dying, the Just for the unjust,
 To bring us back to God.

Mem'ries of that fair first-day morn,
 When Christ triumphant rose
 Victorious over death and hell,
 And all our hateful foes.

No more "a Man of sorrows" He,
 He's now the Man of joy ;
 Thou hast exalted Him, O God,
 To Thy right hand on high !

M. S. S.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

HEBREWS v. 9 ; vii. 28.

THIS is the same word really, although given in the one case as "made perfect," and in the other as "consecrated." It would be to forget WHO it was of whom the Spirit of God is speaking to allow any moral significance to be attached to the word. He was ever the perfect One ; but in order to become the "Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" it was necessary that He should pass through all the suffering which His identification with His people (see chap. ii. 10) and His undertaking their cause entailed upon Him. It was necessary for the glory of God and for His people's salvation. "Being made perfect" will therefore mean that He went through everything to qualify Himself (if we may venture the expression) to

be their Leader and Saviour. In the second passage "consecrated" might also be liable to misconception on account of the ecclesiastical ideas connected with its use. The following words explain its significance very accurately: It "is used in the Hebrew in the sense of doing all required to initiate into an office, whatever was needed to make him fit to be installed in the office. Hence the word employed is sometimes, when speaking of religious offices, translated 'consecrated.'" As applied to the Son, therefore, in this place it will mean that He had acquired, in addition to the truth of His Person, through having come into the world in the body prepared for Him to do the will of God, every requisite qualification to be the Great High Priest of His people. It is to this fitness the apostle refers when he says, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy,* harmless, undefiled, separate (separated) from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," etc. It is a remarkable statement that such a high priest became *us*: no less a One would be suited to us and to our needs, or could represent us before God. (Chap. ix. 24.) And it is He, the Son, who is the Priest of God's purpose, as shown by the word of the oath by which He was declared to be a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

II.

LUKE i. 69, 77.

A note in the New Translation may help the reader as to the meaning of the word "salvation" in this scripture. Giving it as deliverance in the text,

* This is not the word "holy" which is used of God to express what He is in Himself as to His divine nature.

the note to verse 77 says, "Or 'salvation.' Same word as in verse 69. 'Saved' in verse 74 is a different word; there the same as who 'delivers' us from the wrath to come." The difficulty in some minds has arisen from the fact that "salvation" is used by many to express all the glory connected with the accomplishment of God's purpose in conforming His people to the image of His beloved Son. It is plain, however, if the various passages be consulted in which the word "salvation" occurs, that the scriptural idea is deliverance. Take one example: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." If this passage be compared with chapter vii. 25, it will be readily perceived that salvation here signifies final and complete deliverance. The path of the believer is surrounded with difficulties and enemies, and he therefore needs deliverance every day, and for this he is dependent upon the "unchangeable priesthood" of Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost (completely). When He appears the second time He finally delivers His people by removing them from the scene of their enemies, and their "salvation" is finished. Their glorified condition is rather the consummation of God's purpose. (See Rom. viii. 30.)

III.

GENESIS xlix. 18; LAMENTATIONS iii. 26.

"Salvation" in both of these scriptures is used, we judge, in the sense of deliverance. Jacob expressly says, "That I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days," and we thus learn that the blessing which he pronounces upon his sons was largely pro-

phetic. It is not necessary to go into this now, except to explain the connection of our scripture with Dan. It is very evident that Dan marks out the apostasy of Israel in a future day. In view of this, the resource of those who will remain faithful (the remnant) is indicated. They will be brought to know that Jehovah alone will be able to deliver them; that, oppressed by "the man of the earth," and in his grip, human effort to extricate themselves will be utterly useless, and hence that they must look alone to Jehovah for succour. Faith, therefore, recognising this, says, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." In like manner, Jeremiah tells us, in circumstances that may shadow forth the same period, that it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is a lesson that we all need to learn when brought into straits, perplexities, or trials. The flesh is impatient, and, like Saul in Gilgal, cannot wait, but must do something to make a way out of difficulties, to deliver itself. But what we require is the realisation of our entire impotence, and of our dependence on the Lord, so that we may stand still and see His salvation. Jehoshaphat is a beautiful example of this in the prospect of an overpowering invasion. "We," he said to the Lord, "have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." In other words, he, together with Judah, waited on the Lord for His salvation.

"THE truth of the gospel is light that comes down in love."

BACKSLIDERS.

No one who comes closely into contact with the people of God in various places can fail to be struck with the large numbers of those who, from various causes, have fallen under the power of the enemy. There are few believers, indeed, who cannot recall the names of some with whom they once walked in happy fellowship, but who are now lost to Christ as to any testimony for Him in the world. Satan cannot, and he knows it well, destroy a child of God; but he can turn him aside, if unwatchful, from the path of obedience and service, and thus make him useless as a witness. It is on this account that, speaking morally, the bones of thousands whiten the sands of the desert through which God's pilgrim host are passing, to the triumph of the enemy, to the sorrow of God's people, and as stumbling-blocks to many young Christians.

The causes of the defection are as manifold as the failures. Some even who once preached the word of God with power and the unction of the Holy Ghost have been, through unwatchfulness, betrayed into un-girdedness; and, losing the sense of dependence upon God, they have gradually become the sport of the enemy. With a large number their fall has been effected through the temptations which abound in the world; through the desire, in many cases, to succeed in "the race of life." So much has this been the case, that the line of demarcation between Christians and the

world has been growing ever fainter. New amusements, new adornments, and new exercises, which are ever being invented by the world's devotees with startling rapidity, are almost immediately adopted by believers, to the loss of their Nazariteship. Time was when a godly Christian could be detected by his garb and demeanour, but it is scarcely so at the present day. It is freely admitted that external separation, *in and by itself*, is of no value before God; but if it be the expression of inward separation unto Him it is of great price. The consequence of approximation to the world has been the neglect of meditation upon the Word of God and of prayer, and it is in this that backsliding almost invariably originates. The moment there is the want of enjoyment of the Word of God and of prayer, the backsliding has commenced. Let us heed the warning.

There are, however, two classes of backsliders to be distinguished. There are, first, those whose backs are at present turned upon Christ; their faces are towards the world, and they desire to be left alone. Like Ephraim they have joined themselves to idols; and they are so impatient of any remonstrance or appeal that, like some of old, they are ready to slay the Lord's prophets who carry His word to them, in the effort to reach their consciences. There are, secondly, a great many who, awakened to a sense of their miserable condition, are groaning over it, and are turning again to the Lord and to His people. But the unhappy feature in their case is that they themselves, while freely owning their failure and the dishonour they have brought upon the name of their Lord, remain as they are year after

year, and do not seem to advance in the path of restoration. The way is open for their return, and yet they do not take it; and it must be sorrowfully confessed that there are few amongst the Lord's people who seem qualified to reach out a succouring hand to rescue their brethren. The question, indeed, arises whether the state of backsliders is sufficiently entered into. The sick, the bereaved, and other sorrowing saints are, as may be heard in any prayer-meeting, continually remembered before the Lord; but how seldom are backsliders the subjects of intercession!

We are, therefore, led to enquire a little into our responsibility for this numerous class. First, however, let it be remembered that the Lord never gives His people up, whatever their state or condition. When Israel seemed wholly given up to idolatry, Jeremiah cried, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you"; and, speaking through Hosea, the Lord says, "My people are bent to backsliding from Me: though they call them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together." (Chap. xi. 7, 8.) No! the Lord never forgets His people, however grievously they may have sinned. Surely the history of Peter on the sad night of his denial of his Lord proclaims this truth as with a trumpet-voice. If this, then, be so undoubted, it is very clear that all who are in communion with the Lord's heart concerning His people

will maintain His own attitude of unquenchable affection. If He does not forget backsliders, they will not forget them; if He yearns over them and pleads with them, they will do the same, if His own affections are active within their hearts. It could not be otherwise if Christ be formed in us, inasmuch as then we shall live; yet not we, but Christ liveth in us (Gal. ii. 20), and He thus will express Himself, His own heart, through us to His people.

But there is another aspect of the case which must not be overlooked. The apostle Paul says, writing to the Galatians, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Chap. vi. 1, 2.) It is not too much to say, with these words before us, that there is a direct responsibility resting upon the people of God concerning those who may have been "overtaken in a fault." It is quite true that the exhortation is limited to the "spiritual"; but it has to be recollected that every Christian should be spiritual, although it is undeniable that, unless there be the state indicated by this word, it would be useless to attempt the work of restoration. For an unspiritual man to deal with a fallen brother would be almost a mockery, because, as pointed out, what is needed for such a service is communion with the heart of Christ. On the spiritual, then, there does lie the solemn responsibility of caring for those who may have sinned. In this sense, at least, they are their

brethren's keepers. If this were but remembered it would preserve us from all hardness of heart, from all censorious depreciation of those whom the enemy has overcome, and help us in the activity of that love which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, of that love which never fails to seek the grace of being used in the backslider's restoration.

The passage, however, contains other instruction for those who would engage in this blessed work. The service must be entered upon in the spirit of meekness, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The Spirit of God thus reminds us that it is only grace that has kept any of us, that if we had been tempted in a similar way we might have ourselves fallen. This feeling, produced by the Holy Spirit, would save us from any harshness and self-righteousness in dealing with an erring brother, and beget the spirit of meekness of which the apostle speaks. It is easy, comparatively speaking, to write or to read such words; but the object of this divine communication will be lost unless we are searched by it, and unless we challenge ourselves as to whether we have been marked in the past by the spirit here enjoined, whether it be our state of soul to-day concerning those who have been led aside from God's path, and whether we are ready to humble ourselves before God if we find, in the light of His holy presence, that we have been governed by a contrary spirit. One word more should be added before passing on, as to our responsibility in restora-

tion. We do not press it, but we may put it whether the language used does not involve our *seeking* to restore the one overtaken. By this we mean that we are not to wait until the wanderer comes to us for restoration, but that rather we are to tenderly watch over him, and to use such means as are permitted to effect it. In one word, it is active grace which is enjoined.

The next verse passes into a wider region, and points out what is to characterize the whole life of the Christian: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." This will be best understood by explaining first "the law of Christ." The law of His blessed life was to be a burden-bearer; "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." By this we understand that in His grace and sympathy He went down under the sorrows of His people, and taking them, as it were, upon His own shoulders He bare them before God in order to take them away. This was in His life, but in His death He bore, not our infirmities, but our sins in His own body on the tree. Whether, therefore, in life or in death He was the great burden-bearer, and we are exhorted by the apostle to tread in this respect in His steps. This is the service to which we are called in the midst of our fellow-Christians, and, in another way indeed, as we come into contact even with sinners. But the special application here is to those who have been overtaken in a fault. We are not to pass by such on the other side of the way, like the priest and the Levite in the gospel, but in heartfelt sorrow for their condition we are, in

the power of a holy compassion through the Spirit, to go down before God under the heavy burden that lies upon the hearts of our brethren, that we may be the first to intercede for them, and then to minister to their need, and thus be used in their restoration.

We commend the whole subject most earnestly to the reader, in the hope that he, as well as the writer, may be stirred up to a sense of their responsibility for the many who can only be described as backsliders. The effect must surely be that intercession would be continually made to God on their behalf, and that His power would be manifested on every hand in their recovery and restoration. Thereby God Himself would be glorified, and the name of the Lord Jesus magnified.

THE FRESHNESS OF FAITH.

1 THESSALONIANS I.

THERE is great power of walk shown forth in the Thessalonians in this chapter. It brought persecution, but the Word had power in them. The world's hatred of them was a proof that there was testimony to the truth. There was the witness of it constantly brought before others, as well as this inward life in power and suffering. There were faith, hope, charity (or love) (v. 3), these three great elements of the power of life in exercise. They were laying hold of things unseen, which was faith. They were waiting in hope for what was to come. And there was the activity of love. They

were not going on listlessly, but divine energy was manifested in their every-day life. When patience was exercised it was the "patience of hope," and what they had to do was done in faith. How strong a link this was between them and every other Christian! When the living power was seen they were recognized as God's children; the stamp of God was upon them. We know that divine counsels and thoughts of grace were the spring of it all; but there was that which could be seen. •

The Word was in the Holy Ghost on their hearts; it was not in word only, for there was power. There must be unhesitating confidence in the things laid hold of; then there is power. If I say merely, "I suppose these things are true," this is not assurance. But they received the gospel "in much assurance." The result was complete distinctness from the world, which became their enemy. This was not the most pleasant part. They had "much affliction"; but then there was also "joy in the Holy Ghost." To the Corinthians he says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

These Thessalonians were living in another world after the Word came to them in power. There was a divine spring in them that nothing could touch. In other places they might be getting on more quietly; but there was power here, and all they did was connected with God: all was done under God. This is what we have to seek. Then the testimony went forth, they scarcely knew how; but people saw there was this link with God. They did not trouble themselves about what was said of them. "Your faith to Godward is spread abroad so that we need not

to speak any more. For they themselves shew of us," etc. That is, the world became a constant witness of what Paul's preaching was. It could be seen from the conduct of those who received it.

If we were all thoroughly faithful the world would begin to talk about it, and there would be persecution, no doubt. "Let your light so shine before men," etc.; not, let your good works shine, but "your light." "Holding forth the Word of life," etc. They saw not only what the Thessalonians were doing, but they took knowledge of the new truth Paul was preaching to them. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven."

First, there was a total break with all they were going on in before. Not only did they abandon all the wickedness the heathen were living in, but next they served "the living and true God." They had a new centre of all they did. They "turned to God," the living God. "They turned . . . from idols." The characteristic of these was something for and suited to the flesh. Men were looking to that which the flesh likes, and turning from what the flesh did not like. There was no connection with God, nor link for the conscience in having to do with idols; but a license for lust, and all that is agreeable to the flesh. There are those now who look to their idols to help them to pleasure and money; where is the moral difference between stocks and stones and what is of more refined kind now in our day? The Thessalonians turned to God, who gave perfect present blessedness. He is a true God for the conscience as well as for the heart. The world at once sees if God is the centre of a

person. The heart is not morbid, but thoroughly happy in God; it has perfect satisfaction in Him. This is what makes such a difference in life. When a man is happy—happy in that which is eternal, what he cannot be deprived of, and which prevents his desiring other things—this is the spring of all he has to do. He acts for the glory of God, whether eating or drinking, or whatever he does.

Besides this new spring and centre for the present, there is something else waited for which gives a form and character to this blessing, "waiting for His Son from heaven." A most extraordinary thing to do! Waiting for God's Son! That is, all our hopes are clean out of this world. Do not expect anything from earth, but look for something from heaven, and this God's Son Himself, "even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come." This forms a background in all the scene. There is a wrath to come to get out of. Not merely was man to be judged, but the whole scene was to be judged. When Christ returns to this earth, it will be to judge it; and they had nothing to say to the judgment. They were looking for Christ. They knew there was wrath coming, but they had nothing to say to it. Those who were looking for Christ were entirely delivered "from the wrath to come." This gives a very distinct position to the Christian.

There was of course very little depth of doctrine among the Thessalonians. They had been only just converted, and this letter was written to them directly after. But there is a great deal of the present living power of faith. "Your faith groweth exceedingly." (2 Thess. i.) Truth, when a person is walking in the spiritual joy and energy of the Holy Ghost after being

newly converted, is very different from people holding dull doctrine merely. Here is the historical fact of wrath passed. At Christ's first coming He had taken up the whole burden of wrath, and they had turned to God, who had laid all their iniquities on Another. A divine Person had taken all upon Himself—put all away entirely. All the question is totally and finally settled: sin is borne once, and He who bore it is raised from the dead. This is what proves my sin put away before God. The fact that God will judge the world by that Man whom He hath ordained in resurrection, is what gives me the consciousness of being entirely free from it, because it proves He is risen from the dead.

This sets me in perfect freedom; and it does more, because it links me up with Christ in heaven. I know He is coming. Why? Because I know Him there. This divine Person before my soul—this Christ—the Man who, infinitely interested about my sins, died for me, He is waiting in heaven.* It is now the patience of Christ. He is expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. So we are waiting. Our interests are entirely linked up with His, and thus we are waiting for Him while He is waiting to come.

There are three ways in which Christ's coming is put before our souls in Scripture. First, it is the fulfilment of our hope. We are waiting our bodies to be raised, when we are to see Him and be like Him. This gives a strong living link that takes the heart out of present things—one object before our souls, a living Man who is coming again. We are really waiting for something: for what? For the

Person who has so loved us. This is connected with two great systems, the government of God and the church of God.

Government under Christ is going to be set up. All things are to be put under His feet. This applies to the appearing of the New Testament, the day of the Lord, if you look at it as to wrath—"the brightness of His coming." I shall be happy long before that. Why then do I long for His appearing? Because Christ will then have His rights. It will be the setting up of divine power in goodness, the setting up of divine righteousness too in goodness. This will be the liberty of glory. We have the liberty of grace now, but not His glory. We wait for that. The great centre of all is Christ taking His rights. He has not these now. He has all His personal glory; but He will come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. This is the heavenly part of the government of God, but there is that on earth also which will be the manifestation of God's power to put everything in order where Christ has been crucified and cast out.

Government also applies to the church (saints). Are we not under government? To be sure we are responsible. If we know to do good and do it not, we are guilty. We are to walk even as He walked. He was the display of divine life in a man. Not merely is there in Him the perfectness of a man before God, but the perfectness of God before man: therefore His example is far more than the law for us. Another thing is the Holy Ghost given. We are responsible for gifts bestowed by the Holy Ghost (as in the parable of the talents). If I have any

service as a Christian I must do it, or I shall be ... He takes away what He has given if I do not use it. All this is connected with government. As His ... are all alike saved; liable to judgment as regards our wrong ways, but in blessedness. The "day of the Lord" will be deliverance for all those waiting for Him. There will be the display of all previously gone through. We shall appear with Him. We always find responsibility connected with the appearing.

Another, third thing, entirely distinct, is connected with the church's proper blessedness. He has taken it up and given it that same place as Himself. We are wrapped up with Christ as part of Himself—entirely outside, or rather inside, the question of His kingdom. No question of government as to that, but the outgoing of the heart of Christ—loved as Himself. It is as connected with this we are caught up to meet Him—His heart identified with mine—not a thought moving His heart that does not touch mine. This promise is given us in John xiv., "I will come and receive you." There is no thought of anything to do with the world, judgment, or government there, but one single thing, "I will come and receive you unto Myself." The secondary and inferior thing is the inheritance that we shall have.

Caught up into the Father's house first, we get "the inheritance as Christ, and with Christ." "We have borne the image of the earthy," and we "shall also bear the image of the heavenly"; no question of degrees of blessedness or rewards, but all conformed to His image—He the "first-born of many brethren." The next thing is we come into the Father's delight,

as Christ is—loved with the same love as He is (the full enjoyment in immediate presence); it is given us now in spirit—"Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." We shall enjoy this blessedness along with Christ Himself, and be with Him for ever. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv.)

There is, of course, a great inheritance, but not a word is here about that. "Comfort one another with these words." There is rest in this prospect. We cannot help resting there; and when He comes we shall come with Him. Our joy is to be with Himself. We shall be displayed, but this is not our proper joy. The church's and saints' place (I speak of the church including all the members together, and the saints individually for themselves) is associated with Him as His body, and to be with Him when all is displayed. If we have entered into the reality of His love, and of our union with Him, it is the great joy and delight of our hearts to think of being with Him.

The consequence of all this is that when He comes forth the church, as the "armies which were in heaven," come with Him. They must be with Him before they come with Him. How have they got with Him? When He rises up from His present place we shall go too. He is now hid in God, so are we. He is our life. When He shall appear we shall also appear with Him in glory. He comes out, the Rider on the white horse, and we come with Him. We have the same portion as Himself. We are still waiting, but He is coming to take things into His hands. At His appearing everything must be in order. He cannot be in a world where all is disorder and going on in wilfulness. That will be "the day"—the display of

His power, but besides and within this we have our own portion.

We love His appearing, but we love Himself better. Therefore we wait for Him to take us to Himself. If our hearts have known what Himself is, we cannot confound His taking us to Himself with His appearing. We are "members of His body." "Our life is hid with Christ." He is to take us up to the Father's house, the fulness of His own blessedness—with Christ; the blessed outshining of His Father's love connects itself with the church's position. All through there is an identity of blessedness with Christ in life, hope, object, all. If this hope is let into the heart there must be a break with the world. I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am expecting wrath; and I cannot be waiting for God's Son from heaven if I am linked up with the world. If this world is the scene where my heart is building itself up, if I have an object in this world, Christ will spoil it all.

Suppose God said, "To-night," etc., would you say, "This is what I want"? If not, there is something between your affections and Christ.

No trial can touch a person who has Christ for his all. He may have lost this or lost that, but if He has Christ he has that which he cannot lose. J. N. D.

GROWTH in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, will always express itself, in this world, in meekness and humility, and in an ever-increasing devotedness to His glory. In proportion, moreover, as we are like Christ, He will possess our hearts, and we shall be waiting for His return.

PRAYER.

THE inestimable grace of praying is the peculiar privilege of the church on earth.

We see in the beginning of the new company in Luke x. 39, xi. 1, the first trait—the Word of God and prayer—literally, what God says to us and what we say to Him. The disciples say, in chap. xi., “Lord, teach us to pray,” and the Lord figuratively sets forth in the man who went to his friend at midnight how prayer begins with the sense that my friend has what I want. It is not so much a question of what the want is, but I know my friend has what I want, and that he is my friend; and I repair to him to relieve me of my want, without taking into account the various things which might intervene. One thing is fixed in my mind—that he has what I want, and that I have nowhere else to get it; this is the first great sense of prayer—absolute dependence on God, and His infinite ability to meet what I require.

The sense so peculiar to real prayer is that the greater our need, and the more we need, the nearer we get to Him, as if the only chance and the only hope of relief is our being with Him. The circumstances we are in generally impart a character to our prayers; so you will find that if you begin with the troubles about you, and keep on praying, you are getting more free of the trouble, and really getting more occupied with Himself; just as in the parable in Luke xi. the man succeeds at last, and gets more than

in prayer—an intimation of what the Lord says in the end—"How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

If we were to hear the prayers which are uttered we should have an idea of the circumstances which gave rise to them; but the nearer we get to the Lord the more we feel dependent on Him, and the more we get occupied with Him instead of with the circumstances.

We get an interesting illustration of this in 1 Cor. xiv. 14, the man praying with his spirit. Though he does not know what he is praying for, he is in spirit impressed by the association he is found in; in spirit he speaks mysteries (1 Cor. xiv. 2), because of his nearness to the Lord. The nearer we come to the Lord the more spiritual our desires are; we can account for prayers which take in our circumstances being suggested by the circumstances, and not by our association with the Lord. Here we learn a truth of deep importance (where many wishing to be spiritual have failed, not having entered into the magnitude of the truth)—that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and we cannot be in both at the same time. If you are in the Spirit you (by the Spirit) mortify the deeds of the body; you are not only preserved from the deeds, but you are dead to the desires of the flesh. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Hence we see the great advance in the character of prayer: the more you are apart from the flesh and from the natural man, the more you are occupied exclusively with and derive from Christ Himself. Anyone may notice in a prayer-meeting the difference between the

two. The prayer that is occupied with things suits the mass, but it is a happy day when one learns that the nearer he is to Christ the less he wants anything but Christ, that though still in human circumstances he can thank God that he is not only free from the man that is contrary to God, but that he is in the Spirit, and as he walks in the Spirit he is absolutely free from the old way. When Paul was severed from Jerusalem he had to learn in the ship (Acts xxvii.) that he was not to be directed by any providence or human influence, but by God Himself, outside everything here.

Another thing has to be noted, that when prayer reaches to this, your dependence on Christ becomes more and more necessary to you, like the infant that cannot bear to leave its mother, not only because its wants are met, but she is the source of its supply. Now He so absorbs your heart that it is true of you that to God you are beside yourself, and, like the Queen of Sheba in the presence of Solomon, you have no more spirit left in you; and as to prayer, you have the double blessing—the peace of God in coming to Him as touching things here, as we read in Phil. iv. 7; and you have also what we get in 1 John v. 14, the sense of what His present will is—the sense of His will, as one in constant intimacy with a friend gets his mind without being directly instructed in it. This necessarily gives a peculiar and intense spirituality, and as union is realized it deepens, so that the one great desire of the soul is the prayer in Ephes. iii. Like Rebekah, your one desire is that you might be a comfort to Him who has brought you to Himself.

I cannot conceive anything greater to a heart that knows union with Christ than to be ever seeking to be in keeping with His pleasure, and though occupied with His glory on the earth you rise, as you see in Habakkuk iii., from "Shigionoth" (variable notes) to "Neginoth" (stringed instruments). J. B. S.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE WORLD.

THERE are three things spoken of in the Old Testament with regard to the children of Israel, the truth of which applies to us as Christians, only in a far higher sense. First, they were screened from judgment by the blood of the lamb; secondly, they were separated from Egypt by the returning waters of the Red Sea; and thirdly, they were brought to God in connection with the sanctuary, as shown in Exodus xv.

The blood they were sheltered *by*, the scene they were severed *from*, and the One they were brought *to*, form a threefold aspect of the salvation of God, which is enjoyed in virtue of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.)

When the Passover in Egypt was about to be instituted, Moses said to the Israelites, "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped." (Ex. xii. 26, 27.)

There are three things presented in this scripture, viz., salvation, judgment, and worship. Salvation for Israel, judgment for the Egyptians, and worship for God. This is seen more clearly when the Red Sea's judgment flood was passed, and the children of Israel, standing on the other side, after the final overthrow of their enemies, broke forth in a song of praise to the God of their salvation.

The Egyptians had no slain lamb, nor blood-sprinkled doorway, and consequently they had nothing to ward off the death-blow as the destroying angel approached their dwellings. They had their many sins and, may be, more or less concern; but *no* substitute, and therefore no salvation. Hence when the redeemed of the Lord were singing, the Egyptians were silent in death. In their folly they had exposed themselves to the judgment of God, and consequently they were buried beneath the waters of the Red Sea. Death and judgment were the Egyptians' due, on account of their wilful sin and rebellion in the sight of God; salvation became Israel's due, on the ground of the slain lamb and the blood-sprinkled doorposts; and worship was the Lord's due, because of what He had done, both for the glory of His great name and the blessing of His redeemed people. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." (Ps. xxix. 2.)

There is also a fourth thing to which we desire to call the reader's attention. It is illustrated to some extent by that which befell the paschal lamb in Egypt, but is exemplified more fully in "the Lamb of God," for whom it is reserved, and to whom only it is due. Israel's lamb was both slain and roasted with fire,

typical of the sufferings of Christ when bearing the wrath of God on the cross. Their lamb had death and judgment, in figure, as its portion, but nothing beyond. And is there to be no portion beyond death and judgment for the One that devoted Himself both in life and death to the will of Him that sent Him? He was seen by John in his vision in the midst of the throne as a lamb that had been slain, and the cry was raised, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 12 to end.) This (and much more besides) is reserved for the glorified Lamb of God, the glorified Man in heaven. The crowning part of His portion consists in the pearl of great price; and we also read that "God will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for His possession." In connection with this, His power and judgment will be displayed, and His name will be honoured, even by those who set Him at nought in the day of His humiliation. (Rev. xix. 7; Ps. ii.)

"By faith," we read, "the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea as by dry land," after which the waters came together and shut them off from Egypt for ever; but entering upon the wilderness they were shut in with God. The appointed way of salvation for the children of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh and the land of Egypt was through the Red Sea, in which the death of Christ is presented in type; and when once the crystal doors were closed behind them, any attempt to return to Egypt would be in vain. But what are closed doors to covetous hearts like theirs and ours?

The Israelites left Egypt on *foot*, and afterwards returned thither in *heart*; an evident proof of which was given when they said, "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely," etc., accompanying their exclamations of deep regret with sad reflections, with regard to the gifts of God, saying, "There is nothing at all besides the manna before our eyes," which signifies to us, "Jesus only."

In referring to the sin we have spoken of, and the judgments which overtook the Israelites as a consequence, the apostle Paul sent warnings to the Corinthians; and the apostle Peter exhorts us as follows: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (1 Cor. x.; 1 Peter ii. 11.)

The first chapter of 1 Peter answers somewhat to Exodus xv. The heavenly saints are viewed in the former as being on the resurrection side of the sea. Resting on the blood of the unblemished Lamb, by which they had been redeemed to God, and with their faces toward their incorruptible inheritance unto which they had been called, and as a redeemed people saved by the Lord from the hand of the enemy, they commence their journey through the wilderness with a song, saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Redemption gives the Christian the character of a pilgrim, and also changes the aspect of the world into that of a wilderness, on which he enters with girded loins and a staff for sustainment, which is nothing less than the power of God. And as the light of the future

shines on his pathway, and the joy of anticipation fills the pilgrim's heart, he can unite with others and sing:

“ We expect a bright to-morrow,
All, all in *glory*.”

The wilderness is a place of testing, and no place for the flesh to profit by, for there is nothing there to minister to its desires; and therefore, if we fail to enter by faith into the present enjoyment of what is beyond, declension of soul will follow, and our hearts will turn back again to the world. “The flesh profiteth nothing,” and therefore the Israelites had not bettered their state in the least by changing their position in leaving Egypt for Canaan. They brought with them that which the Christian is supposed to have left behind for ever, as judged and set aside in the death of Christ, as we read, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. vi. 6.)

It has often been said that the world, as answering to the wilderness, forms no part of the purpose of God in regard to His people. It is important to bear this in mind. It was acknowledged by the Israelites in their song of salvation, when they said, “Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.” (Ex. xv. 13.)

“Deliverance *from* the world,” however, forms a most important part of God's purpose, as shown when the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of as the One “who gave Himself for our sins, that He

might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 4) Deliverance from the world, as we have already seen, could only be effected for the believer through the death and resurrection of Christ. In addition to this, we find in the Epistle to the Colossians our association with the death and resurrection of Christ. It is the way God views His saints, as being dead with Christ, buried with Him, and also risen with Him, and this made good in the experience of our souls. We thus learn what deliverance is from this present evil world. In connection with the Red Sea we learn the value of His redemption work in bringing us to God, in order that we might joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ; but Jordan typifies our identification with Him as dead and risen. As we sometimes sing:

"Jesus died, and we died with Him,
 Buried in His grave we lay;
 One with Him in resurrection,
 Now in Him, in heaven's bright day."

The effect of this truth on the apostle Paul was so great that he says to the Galatians, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Chap. vi. 14.) In chapter i. 4 he taught them deliverance from this present evil world, and in chapter vi. he shows them how fully he had entered into it. It was not so with the Galatians, however. Association with Christ in death had brought the apostle to view himself as a crucified man in a crucified world; and with Christ as his Object, and

par: . . . ating in His risen life, he viewed the world from a new standpoint altogether. The heavenly vision on the way to Damascus had spoiled the apostle for the world, and the world for him; and the moral impress of the glory, which he received on his heart at the time, produced the desired effect with regard to everything under the sun, where the stamp of death is seen. The whole range of nature, and all the pomp and glory of this vain world, as typified by the lofty "cedar," the lowly "hyssop," and "scarlet," viewed in the light of Calvary, lost their attraction for the man that could say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) Such a man could no longer use the world as a parade ground, or place of display for religious flesh, for the practice of sin, or for conforming to it in any way whatever; but as being dead to it with Christ, and therefore delivered from it, he sought to be always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his mortal flesh. (2 Cor. iv. 10.)

H. H.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

COLOSSIANS iii. 9, 10.

IN general terms the "old man" is expressive of the nature we derived from Adam, the flesh dominated by sin, and the "new man" as plainly speaks of Christ. But this must be considered more particularly. It

belongs then to our Christian profession to have put off the old man and to have put on the new; and this, indeed, forms the basis of the exhortations found in verses 8, 9, and in verses 12-14. All that morally distinguishes the old man, "anger, wrath, malice," etc., is to be "put off"; and all that characterizes the new man, "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering," is to be put on. But all these features (those of verses 12, 13) were seen in our blessed Lord and Saviour. They were displayed in all their perfection in His blessed life in this world; and consequently the moral traits which He exhibited are to be reproduced in us. This will help to the understanding that the new man is Christ in moral character. Another thing may be mentioned. It has often been pointed out that the term "new" (new man) in Ephesians is different from what is employed in Colossians. In the former the word signifies what is wholly new in kind or character; in the latter it means rather what is new in commencement—what is recent, and not old. But, then, when we come to the phrase "renewed in knowledge" (v. 10), "renewed" is connected with the word found in Ephesians. We call attention to this to emphasize the fact that the "new man" is a new creation (see Ephesians ii. 15), and is thus wholly apart from—not *of*—the world, even as Christ was not of the world. A word may be added on "putting on." It need scarcely be remarked that it is putting on inwardly, and that the action, therefore, is connected with moral growth in the likeness of Christ. This may be seen from verses 10, 11. The new man is there said to be "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created

him"—and in the close of verse 11 we learn that it is Christ who is presented as the standard or the model of the new man. Christ is everything, and as such He is to fill the vision of the soul as object, being, moreover, *in all as life*, in accordance with the characteristic teaching of this epistle. This makes all plain. Christ Himself, Christ Himself glorified as Man (compare John xvii. 19), is presented as the perfect model of the new man; and then when we come to the practical putting on, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved," the details are given, the details of those blessed characteristics which, as already seen, shone out through Him when here in this world. As ever, therefore, it will be through occupation, through the enjoyment of intimacy with Himself, that the new man will be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, and that we shall put on the moral features which were seen in Him. It is in this region that man disappears ("there is neither Greek nor Jew," etc.), and that Christ Himself floods the scene with His own perfections and excellencies; and it is because He is in us that we may daily be learning to put these on to the end that Christ Himself may, in some measure, be manifested in our walk and ways. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 10.)

II.

1 SAMUEL viii. 7; x. 19.

To reject a servant who is really sent forth by the Lord, and who is doing His will, and is standing for Him, is to reject the Lord Himself. This is the lesson God taught Samuel when he was displeased with

Israel for desiring a king to judge them like the nations. Perhaps he viewed the desire as affecting his own position. Whether he did so or not, like a true man of God he prayed about it, and in answer to his prayer the Lord bade him to hearken to the voice of the people, saying, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." Samuel learned his lesson, and hence in chap. x. he boldly tells the people, "Ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto Him, Nay, but set a king over us." Samuel was now in his true place as a servant, for he lost sight altogether of himself, and considered the action of the people as it affected the Lord. In precisely the same way the Lord Jesus identified Himself with His disciples: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." (Matthew x. 40; John xiii. 20.) Blessed is that servant who, through grace, is so hidden behind his Lord that he is lost in the Lord's objects and interests, and thinks only of His honour and His claims. Such an one will understand with Samuel that if his message is refused it is God's word, and not his own, that is rejected; and, further, the state of the rejecter will only produce pity in his heart, and lead him to intercession before God on his behalf. (See 1 Samuel xii. 23.)

THE Spirit of God is our only power as against evil, and our only power for the enjoyment of heavenly things; but to avail ourselves of His power we need to be in dependence and in the activity of faith.

EATING THE BOOK.

EZEKIEL. *iii.* ; REV. *x.*

BOTH Ezekiel and John were commanded to eat the book which contained the subjects of their future testimonies; and every servant who seeks the grace of bearing testimony for Christ in this world, whether amongst His people, or before the world, will do well to weigh the significance of that which was enjoined. One difference, however, has to be noted. In Ezekiel's case we are told that when he ate the book, it was in his mouth as honey for sweetness; and also in John's, but it is added that as soon as he had eaten, his belly was bitter. This difference probably vanishes when the exact language in connection with Ezekiel is considered. He was told to cause his belly to eat, and to fill his bowels with the roll given to him; but he only lets us know the effects of its taste in his mouth. In the combination of the two cases three things are clearly indicated—eating, digesting, and the effect of digesting.

By eating, taking the act in its scriptural meaning, we understand that the Word was to be appropriated. These prophets were to make the messages they were commissioned to deliver their own. The Bible—widening the application—is not a book of information to be gleaned, and then to be repeated, but is the voice of God to the soul that reads it, and thus to be heard for oneself before what is heard can be rightly

communicated. Thus a well-known servant of the Lord once said that he never read a chapter in the Bible with a view to speaking; and, when he was asked why he read it, he replied that it was for his own profit and edification. In other words, his habit was to eat and to digest the Word before he preached it. We may all learn the lesson, especially when there is such a widespread temptation on every hand to repeat what we have heard before we have appropriated it for ourselves. If, indeed, Ezekiel and John may be taken as examples (and others might be added), we are not qualified to be the living channels of divine truth until we have made it our own.

Even eating or appropriating is not sufficient; there is also to be the digesting of what we have appropriated. There cannot be a doubt that in John vi. eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man include this, because there is manifestly there the assimilation to the death on which we feed. Most of us know from our own experience that the process of digesting the truth we have really received is often a slow operation; and also that the truth is never effective in us, or through us, until it has been digested. There is a great distinction therefore between the two things mentioned in Ezekiel, having the roll in his mouth and enjoying its sweetness, and eating it with his belly, and filling his bowels with it. For the latter we need to be alone in the presence of God, and to learn there that His Word is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner

of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is then that the mind of God is really communicated; and, *inwardly* appropriated, it so moulds and controls us, that we are morally fashioned according to the revelation made to our souls.

But in connection with this there will be the effect mentioned in the case of John. That which was sweet in his mouth was bitter in his belly. This should be easily understood by every spiritual believer. The opening out of some new truth to the soul, the perception of its character and beauty, is ever a delightful experience; but when it is accepted in the power of the Spirit it gradually brings death in upon all that we are, and then it becomes "bitter" as it discovers to us the real nature of many things which we had hitherto cherished, and, in separating us from them, produces in us a growing conformity to Christ. If it be true, as every Christian knows it is, that Christ Himself had to pass through death to secure the eternal blessing of His people, it is also true that every one of His own must also go through death in order to enjoy what He has secured. This will be acknowledged by all in regard to the future; but the important point is that it is possible for us to anticipate the joys of heaven *now* if we are willing to die morally, and to enter upon our true place of association with a risen Christ. This, however, must be a "bitter" experience naturally.

It might seem to some that the words of Jeremiah are in conflict with what has been said. He says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy

word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts." (Chap. xv. 16.) The context, however, shows that he looks back to the time when, as John, he ate the book and found it as sweet as honey in his mouth; for the supplicating cry which he raises betrays the exceeding bitterness of his soul arising from the effect of the words which at first had filled him with rejoicing. On the one hand, he was surrounded with persecutors, and he had to suffer rebuke for the sake of Him who had commissioned him to speak to His people; and, on the other, he was made to feel that the Lord's hand was upon him, as he cried, "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt Thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?" Here, therefore, as also in the other instances, we find the same unvarying order—eating, digesting, and bitterness; and we may thus conclude that this will ever be the order in every similar case. If so, there are several important lessons to be learned from the examples cited, which we shall do well to consider.

The first is, that we are never qualified to be witnesses until we have gone through the processes indicated. As it was not enough either for Ezekiel or John to hear, or even to understand the divine message they received, so it must not be sufficient for us to be attracted by the beauty of new teachings, and to find them sweeter than honey to our taste; but we must be content to wait until the truth has worked its way into our innermost being, so that, having thus received the testimony, we are enabled from our own experience to set to our seal

that God is true. There are two infallible marks of the witness who has eaten, digested, and found the bitterness of the truth in its self-application. The first is *death*. Death works in him, while life flows out through his testimony towards others. (2 Cor. iv. 12.) Self, indeed, is practically set aside, as held under the cross; and "the life of Jesus" has then its free and unimpeded course through the vessel. The second is *love*. In proportion as death ("bitterness") works in us, the divine nature is in activity; and God is love. Hence the apostle says, after speaking of the gifts which God has set in the assembly, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

But there are lessons for all believers, inasmuch as all are witnesses in their own circles, if not in a public way. Let us then all learn that we cannot study the Bible, or writings upon the Scriptures, or printed ministry, in the way that human subjects are studied. Until what we read or hear is made good in and verified by the soul, we do not really possess it. There are only two channels of testimony — the lip and the life, and the lip should be but the expression of what has first been produced in the life. Thus Paul, after speaking of the gospel which he had preached among the Thessalonians, says: "Ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." This, then, is what we should all desire, intense reality, to be possessed and controlled by the truth we profess to hold, and thus to shun the use of phrases and sentences which we have never eaten, digested, and found true in our souls.

FELLOWSHIP: ITS BOND AND POWER.*

IN such a state of things (chap. xxii. 1-6), Luke records the new fellowship, of which the Supper is the outward sign and bond, while John gives the inward and intimate link. In the moment when man gave Him up, the Lord drew closer to His own, and drew His own closer to Himself. Here in Luke it is the Lord who proposes to them to go and prepare the Passover: the record in the other Gospels begins with their asking, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?" Here, too, He speaks of His desire to eat this Passover with them before He suffers. I see in this, that at the moment of His rejection, when Satan had put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him, and He well knew the violence and wickedness that was going on in the city (Psalm lv. 9-12), and when the Passover was about to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God, how the Lord drew His own closer to Himself and drew closer to them, uttering those wonderful words of love with which He instituted the memorials of Himself in death, by which we are drawn together in the fellowship of that death!

There is not one Christian in this room that does not understand the benefits of His death; but do you understand that *He died*? As George Herbert said, "Have you not heard that my Lord Jesus died?" And when He was about to pass out of this scene as refused here, He drew them together, and gave them the bread and wine, after they had eaten the Passover Supper, which spoke to the Jew of redemption from the iron bondage of Egypt, and hence laid the basis for Jewish thoughts and associations.

* The following pages have been extracted from a little book bearing the above title.

What is the ground of our fellowship here but the great fact that the Lord Jesus died? We have the bond that linked the disciples' hearts together when the Jew, the world, would not have Him. We often eat the bread and drink the wine as a solace to our own hearts, and many a heart gets the comfort of what He did for us; but that is not the proper thought of the Supper as commemorating the death of Christ. It is the great fact that the Lord Jesus died *here*, and His death becomes the great bond that links together our hearts with Himself in the fellowship of that death. We see that when He died He passed out of all connected with Judaism, and then He links His own with Himself as about to die.

How do we look at the Lord's Supper? It would have immense force in our souls if we looked at it according to His thoughts and mind. In the Church of England the Supper is made individual, but 1 Cor. xi. teaches that it was a question of uniting them in the new fellowship of His death outside Jewish associations. There could be no other fellowship for us, for He has been refused and rejected in this world, and therefore I believe the Supper lays the basis for all our Christian fellowship, and rightly begins the week. Every meeting in the week is linked with it; we gather together at all times as those who are in the fellowship of His death. The door is thus closed on our old associations, and the Lord feeds us in new pastures. We worship and we read the Word together, we pray together, as those who are in the secret of association with Him whom the world refused, and as knowing the value and fulness of His name.

In the day in which this was instituted, Jew and

Gentile were apart, but what put them together was the death of Christ; both were reconciled to God in one body by the cross. But now I come closer home than Jew and Gentile. If there were two men in the same business, living side by side, and the customers of one leave him and go to the other, would it not create a feeling of distance between them? But supposing I am in the power of this fellowship, would it create any distance then? I speak of it to show what a little thing would hinder us, except as we own that we have nothing here, and that our living links are elsewhere. If Christ were here I would stop here very happily, but "hast thou not heard that my Lord Jesus died?" We might be wise enough not to notice it in the case I have supposed, and say "I ought not to mind it," but after all, you *do* mind it; and what will set you free? The death of Christ. He died out of this world; He is lost to us in it; we cannot have Him here. All we have here is a memorial of Him, which becomes our bond of fellowship. All here is set aside by the cross, and the ground of association is that death which severs us from all here. Christ has drawn us outside the scene here because He is outside it.

The Lord felt His rejection, the enmity of the Jew, the treachery of Judas, lover and friend failing. He had said as to Jewish associations: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" Did He not feel it? And then He gathers these disciples around Him, and draws them closer to His heart. Dear brethren, do we remember *how* we belong to the Lord, that He loved us, and gave Himself for us—that He died to redeem us from our former vain

conversation, and to unite us together in the fellowship of His death?

The Supper is more the outward character of this fellowship; not that it has not an inward power—I do not mean that at all—but it lays the basis of our new association. It was a great thing for the Lord. He would have gathered Israel if it had been possible, but every earthly association was broken, and He felt it, and therefore draws His own together in the bonds of love and gives them the memorials of His death. They are known to belong to Him now that the world has rejected Him; He has us for the comfort of His own heart. He said, "*With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.*"

Now I turn for a moment to John xiii., where the same thing comes out, only it goes further; the Lord drawing our hearts into association with Himself. Not only is there an association of believers in His death as still in a hostile world, but we are shown how He could draw us to have part with Him where He is. The Lord's Supper is *here* in a certain sense, though we eat it as those who have been brought on to heavenly ground. It is as being actually in this scene, that two might be separated by jealousy, but are drawn close together as being in the fellowship of His death, and know the love of the Lord drawing them to Himself. John xiii. mentions the same details, the Passover Supper, the betrayal; but beyond all that, Jesus knew He was about to depart to the Father; He was entering another scene.

In the Assembly Christ makes His presence known, but it is the presence of One who has left this scene and gone to the Father. In John xiii. you have the

service of love, by which He fits you for companionship with Him. In chapter xiv. He makes known the place where He is gone, and you are so drawn into His company by the service of His love, that you follow Him where He is. His great thought is to draw them to the other side by washing their feet. It is the down-stooping of love. He was going to the Father, and He stoops down to wash their feet. By the Spirit God gives us the sense of the Lord Jesus Christ stooping down to wash our feet. Why the feet? . Because it is a question of where you walk. Is it to be that your feet walk in this world, or do they carry you direct to Him where He is? It is beautiful to see the Lord in the consciousness of going to the Father, though rejected here, addressing Himself to this service of love.

People apply the washing of John xiii. to actual faults, but at that moment the disciples must have been ceremonially clean to eat the Passover, so it was not that there was any uncleanness on them, but it involved the whole character and place of their walk. They had walked in Judaism; the very fact of the Passover recalled the great privilege of Judaism; but He rises from Supper and begins to wash their feet. His death broke the links with the earthly people.

The thought of the water is, that it brings home the truth of His death to our hearts; that He has gone out of this world to the Father, and thus He takes them off Jewish ground and earthly associations. They were clean enough for earthly association, but heavenly association is another thing.

We little know how much we need to be cleansed from earthly associations. Christ is not here, He has gone out of the world. If even a worldly person

had lost a friend, a near relation, and he were asked to go to the theatre, he would say, "Oh! no. I have lost my mother, my friend." It would not be the thought of the thing being wrong, but mere outward propriety would forbid it. We do not think enough like that of the death of the Lord. How often we are entangled and held back by earthly association! We are in the fellowship of His death; the Supper perpetuates it to us, but we do not keep true to it. People do not feel that His death has cast its shadow on this scene. It ought to affect our hearts if there is love for Him. I doubt not that John was greatly affected by the washing of his feet, for we see him on the bosom of the Lord immediately after, and in the intimacy and secret of that place He is sheltered; so that, without any doubting, he can say, "Lord, who is it?" when Jesus said, "One of you shall betray Me."

Thus we have the down-stooping love which addresses itself to that with which we touch the earth, where our Lord was delivered up, and put to death, applying to us in the tenderest way the truth of His departure by death out of this world; so that our hearts might be drawn close to Him, as gone to the Father; and as we are drawn close to Him, so shall we be knit together in love. Washing one another's feet is following the Lord in the lowly place of love; for the service of love to each other must bring with it the intimacy of love.

So in 1 Cor. xiii. we have all the gracious way of love, after the outward bond of fellowship in the Supper has been given in chap. xi. Nothing can produce intimacy so much as to be served by love, and the character of this service is shown us in John xiii. May the Lord give us to respond to it! T. H. R.

FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP.

FAITH and discipleship are intimately connected, and yet are quite distinct the one from the other. Indeed, faith must necessarily precede discipleship if the latter is to be genuine. That there may be a great profession of discipleship without faith is clearly shown in the Word, and borne witness to by the history of ages. But it is worse than valueless; it is a deception and a snare—"without faith it is impossible to please Him." This is a truth of universal application, and of the deepest import. It strikes at the root of all will-worship—of all legal service—of all the inventions of man wherewith he essays to serve and to please God. But He looks for faith in the heart before everything—faith that puts man in his right place and condition before God, and gives *Him* His right place as *the alone source* of all good. It gives to the soul a true sense of what is pleasing to God according to the character of the revelation He has been pleased to make of Himself, and thus a true apprehension of the character of our calling.

Only then can the path of discipleship be really accepted and maintained, and indeed its maintenance can only be, in the energy of faith, sustained by communion with God as to all that He sets before His people—by His Word speaking to the heart, and revealing the end of the path, even coming glory.

A striking illustration of what we are considering is furnished by the incidents recorded in Matt. viii.,

where these two principles of faith and discipleship are found and set before us in their divine order.

Immediately preceding we have what is generally called "The Sermon on the Mount," which is connected with discipleship, and addressed to His disciples *as such*. Still the multitudes hear Him, and, astonished at His doctrine, follow Him; but without any true faith in His person, or any apprehension of where His path would lead. Hence we find that when the Lord afterwards declares the truth as to what was involved in following Him, who, as Son of man, had "not where to lay His head," and then enters the boat to go over unto "the other side," none but His disciples follow Him. There was no real attachment to Himself, and therefore no preparedness to face danger, or loss, or opposition, for Him and with Him. No, there was no true faith in Him; His glory and His love had never been known in their hearts, for they had never really felt their need of Him.

The poor leper and the Gentile centurion had so come to Him. True, the faith of the latter exceeded and excelled that of the former; but though Jesus appreciated and commended the bold and unhesitating faith of the centurion, He does not despise the poor leper, nor refuse to recognize and respond to his weaker faith. And what a response on the part of the blessed Lord! And the leper, thus wretched and defiled, represented the true state of Israel in their sinful and morally degraded condition; but, alas! they knew it not, and knew Him not in His glorious person and yet tender pity, that had brought Him (Jehovah the Saviour) into their midst. They were in the darkness of unbelief and spiritual pride, and were therefore not

prepared to take their true place like the leper before Him, nor yet own His true glory and power to remove the evil like the Gentile centurion; and hence no true lasting link existed between their souls and Him, by which alone true discipleship can be accepted and maintained. They follow Him ostensibly, and perhaps with apparent zeal for a while, but were not prepared to accept the cross (suffering and rejection here), nor to accompany Him to "the other side."

His disciples follow Him. They knew not what lay in the path—what opposition, what danger, what power of evil would oppose, but they knew Him—at least they knew Him sufficiently to love Him and to desire His company, and to turn to Him and call upon Him in the hour of their distress; nor did He disappoint them in any wise. No, but, as in the case of the leper, He dispels their fears while He responds to their cry, and they find in Him one who has power above all the opposition of the forces of nature—typical of all the moral forces of this world, which Satan uses to oppose and hinder those who, *in faith*, follow Jesus through this world to be with Him "on the other side."

He calms the storm; He calms their fears. A very present help in time of trouble is Jesus our Lord! True, their faith was weak, as we speak, for they might have calmly reposed in the midst of the storm, even as He was doing; but He responds to that appeal, which, after all, owned Him, and showed that He was their resource; and His divine glory is, so to speak, unveiled to them in answer to their cry, for "the winds and the sea obey Him."

There is, however, another manifestation of Satan's power presented, but, as always, only to display a still

gave power in Him, who "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (v. 17). Two men, possessed by demons, come out of their dwelling amongst the tombs to oppose their progress—the terror of the enemy's power is set forth in order that "no man might pass by that way." But now, in the person of a man, the demons recognize One who they knew was their Judge, and from whose hand they are yet to receive their final doom in the lake of fire, but who had then come to bind the strong man, to spoil his goods, to set free his captives, to undo his works—yes, to bruise his head by the cross, and lead captivity captive, and to lead over to the other side, even to eternal glory with Himself in all the joy of the Father's house, those who had trusted Him here as their Saviour, and, drawn by the cords of His love, had followed Him, confessing His blessed name, and owning Him as their Lord and Master.

Our first coming to Him must be in the spirit and *character* of the leper, finding virtue in Him to cleanse and heal; or, like the centurion, owning our own unworthiness, but confessing the glory of His person, whose grace brings Him near to us. Only then can we rise above the attractive claims of nature, or go on in face of the storm of the world's hatred, scorn, and reproach; or stand calm and unmoved in the presence of death, or all that Satan can do to terrorize the conscience or heart. Jesus is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him."

S. M. A.

THE least bit of allowed self obscures the presentation of Christ.

GOD'S ESTIMATE OF HIS PEOPLE.

It is good sometimes to see the saints, the Church and people of God, in their own beauty, as viewed of God; it elevates our thoughts, gives God's mind of what is lovely and what we ought to be, but are in God's mind, so that His affections and delight are revealed to us. Surely it will humble us as to our practical state. Thus in the parables of the treasure hid in the field, and pearl of great price, we have what they are to Christ. He sells all He has to have them, gives up His life, everything, to have them, for joy thereof—what a place to have with Him! Indeed, in a higher scene, when in the form of God, He gave up the outward glory and made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant—when He was rich for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

But doubtless the parable specially designates what He possessed as Messiah, but not excluding higher glory. So He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul, in us, and be *satisfied*. So in the parable of the pearl of great price, He was looking for what was specially lovely and beautiful—understood it, was seeking it, according to His estimate of what was beautiful, and that was according to Himself—His own mind—and found one especially lovely, and sold all to have it—the saints in whom He could delight and be satisfied—so precious to Him, He gives up all for them. How lovely they must be in His mind, for

... according to it. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it, to sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, to present it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish—a pearl of great price. Hence He will be, in the end, glorified in His Church and admired in all them that believe. How blessed, and what rest it gives the heart! But even now He says, "And I am glorified in them."

J. N. D.

"CHARITY SHALL COVER THE MULTITUDE
OF SINS."

1 PETER iv. 8.

THE above words state in the abstract what characterises Love—Divine Love, without doubt—that which God is, for "God is Love"; and represent one aspect in which God acts, and in which the believer is called to act towards his fellow-believer. But it cannot be dissociated from that to which, in the first Epistle of John, priority is given, viz., the statement that "God is Light," preceding this that "God is Love."

Viewed separately, Love *covers*, as in our verse, while Light *exposes*. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." (Eph. v. 13.)

There is much danger of the words in 1 Peter iv. 8 being misapplied, by being allowed to reach out beyond their own special domain, and thus to supersede the very positive and absolutely necessary functions of *Light*. As turned to account by natural affections, or the spirit of indifference, which insidiously creeps in

sometimes among the Lord's people, much harm may be done by passing over, under the apparent authority of a divine injunction, what Light should bring up to notice. But in such a case, the conscience of the offender being involved, it would manifestly be a flagrant misuse of these words to act upon them alone. This could only lead to encouragement of evil in its first stage, and contribute directly towards further and future indifference to its workings. The moment conscience is in question Light is called for, which, brought to bear in grace, results in maintaining and insisting upon the holiness of Love. This may, of course, be without the slightest publicity, and through grace it may be successful in manifesting the evil, or it may signally fail. Nevertheless, Love, under these circumstances, has not covered without Light exposing. Further, where the failure concerns what is purely personal, having acted accordingly to God as Light, Love may and possibly ought not to proceed further. On the other hand, should the evil be of such a nature as to seriously affect the assembly, as touching the Lord's honour, or leavening the Lord's people, or constituting a scandal without, it would be absolutely necessary, with wisdom sought from the Lord, to bring it forward, that it might be scripturally dealt with.

As examples, with what exquisite delicacy, perfect because divine, on the occasion of Peter's solemn failure against the Lord personally, Love covered what Light exposed, and in consequence Peter's complete restoration to a place of deeper and more permanent communion with the Lord was effected as the fruit. Again, in the case of the offender at Corinth, a flood of holy Light is poured by the apostle

upon the state of things; not to cover at once by "confirming love" (2 Cor. ii. 8), but for the purpose of expunging the evil from the midst of the company as intolerable to the holiness of the Lord, by putting away from among themselves that wicked person. (1 Cor. v. 2-13.) And yet, when the proper moment had arrived, viz., that of danger, "lest such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. ii. 7), the apostle encourages forgiveness, and the confirming of their love towards the now broken and repentant offender.

There is yet another case, exceptional, doubtless, but not by any means impossible, viz., the appropriation of these words of Scripture so as, if possible, to arrest all faithful remonstrance. This indicates a most unhealthy condition of soul in *shrinking from the light*, for "he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John iii. 21.) It is the poor human substitute, characterised by indifference to evil, that is made to do duty in a state of soul-estrangement from God, as Light, for divine and holy Love.

The language of the true heart as to God is, uniformly, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24); and as to fellow-believers, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Ps. cxli. 5.) Lastly, the wise man says, "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." (Prov. xxvii. 5, 6.)

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

“THERE are two ways of reading Scripture—devotional and systematic study. In the former I *listen* to what the Lord communicates, and look to Him to produce in me the suited effect of His truth by the working of His Spirit. Thus I become formed by the truth, and worship and holiness of life result. In the latter I search, compare, and examine to discover His mind, and what is taught on any given subject; and I look to Him to give me understanding by the Spirit, to preserve me from error, and to enable me to form His own judgment—to discover and to hold the truth in a divine way. Dependence is, therefore, of all importance, combined with an ungrieved Spirit.”

* * * * *

“If we do not digest what we hear we shall have light without power. To be wholly for the Lord in the power of the Holy Ghost should be our aim, and we should constantly look to the Lord to keep this end before our souls. *Christ* Himself, and the knowledge of Himself, are beyond all else. To hear, and to enjoy hearing, the truth, is a very different thing from living it out. The former often brings into favour, the latter entails the cross.”

* * * * *

“Here it will be still toil and labour, in the midst of opposition, till He comes who shall take us up to be with Him in God’s rest. If we can only glorify Him meanwhile, all is well. What else have we to do?”

MAN IN HIS NEW STATE.

JOHN xvi. 14, 15.

THE Holy Spirit, we are here told, would take of what was of Christ and show it to the disciples, and this was all that the Father possessed. Grace and truth were come in Christ into the midst of the old creation. Man refused this grace, and rejected this truth, but now God would communicate to those who should believe in Christ the new things that were in His counsels, of which Christ was the centre and the fulness.

Into what a glorious scene we are here introduced, a scene which replaces that which the disciples were losing by the death of the Messiah! All the glory which belongs to the person of the Son, whether as the One in whom all the counsels of God are concentrated, or as to what He is in Himself, is fully revealed. If in that which we have first gone through, we have found the terrible but just judgment of the world, what a glorious scene, I repeat, opens itself here in the revelations which the Holy Ghost communicates relative to this new creation, of which the second Man is the centre, He, the Son of God, who reveals the Father—another world, where all that is in the Father and of the Father is revealed.

But this involved the death and resurrection of Christ, the end of all connection with the old creation, and a new state of man for the new. Now the glory of this new creation was not yet revealed, nor even established objectively; but the state of man subjectively, a state immortal, pure, spiritual even as to the

body, was realized in the resurrection, even while the external glory was still wanting. The new and eternal thing existed in the person of Christ, and as to Him personally it was realized in that He was going to His Father, the source of all, "the Father of glory," as it is said.

Now this new state of man was familiarly manifested to the disciples during the forty days that the Lord passed upon earth after His resurrection, before He ascended to heaven. The return of the Saviour, when He shall come back in His glory, will be the moment when His dominion will be established over all things, when God will put them all under His feet, with an authority and power that He will make use of to subject them to Himself. Now that of which we speak, whether with regard to the state of man or relative to the glory, is evidently something more than the presence of the Holy Ghost, precious as that is, and it is that which now occupies the Lord. The Holy Ghost was to be given to the disciples; but more than this, He should see them again. No doubt they would see Him, when He will return in glory; but then it will be no longer a question of a testimony to render. Before that time they should see Him for a little while, for He would then go to His Father. This was the introduction of the disciples into the realization of that new state which Christ inaugurated by His resurrection, Son of God in power. They should see the second Man beyond death, and be in living communication with Him. It was not the revelation of the glorious things of the new creation by the Holy Ghost—this revelation was going to be given to them—it was Christ Himself, the Christ they had known during the days of

His flesh. "Handle me," He said, "and see that it is I, Myself." Touching and precious word! It was He whom they had known and accompanied every day and all day, He who had borne with their infirmities, sustained their faith, and encouraged their hearts; it was the same Jesus who showed Himself as familiarly with them as before, though in quite another state. "He showed Himself," said Peter, "not to all the people, but to us, who did eat and drink with Him, after that He was raised from the dead." It was the same Christ; but what is of all importance, the basis of all for us, it was Christ beyond death, the power of Satan, the judgment of God, and sin; He who had been made sin for us, He by whom our sins had been borne and put away, that God might remember them no more. We see here the link between the Jesus known in His humiliation in our midst in grace, and man in his new state, according to the counsels of God, a state in which He could no more be subjected to death, nor put to the proof.

J. N. D.

LIGHT OF A STONE MOST PRECIOUS.

2 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

"God in heaven hath a treasure,
 Riches none may count or tell;
 Hath a dear eternal pleasure,
 Christ, the Son, He loveth well.
 God hath a son which a treasure,
 None but He its price may know—
 Deep unsearchable His riches,
 Christ revealed in saints below.

“Christ, the light that fills the heavens,
 Shining forth on earth beneath,
 Through His Spirit freely given,
 Light of life 'midst shades of death;
 Down from heaven's unclouded glory
 God Himself the treasure brought,
 Closing thus His love's sweet story
 With His sweetest, deepest thought.

“God, in tongues of fire descending,
 Chosen vessels thus to fill
 With the treasure never ending,
 Ever spent—unfailing still.
 Still unwasted, undiminished,
 Though the days of dearth wear on,
 Store eternally unfinished—
 Fresh, as if but now begun.

“Earthen vessels, marred, unsightly,
 But the treasure as of old,
 Fresh from glory, gleaming brightly,
 Heaven's undimmed, unchanging gold.
 God's own hand the vessel filling
 From the glory far above,
 Longing hearts for ever stilling
 With those riches of His love.

“Thus, through earthen vessels only,
 Shining forth in ceaseless grace,
 Reaching weary hearts and lonely,
 Beams the light in Jesu's face:
 Vessels worthless, broken, bearing,
 Through the hungry ages on,
 Riches given with hand unsparing,
 God's great gift, His precious Son.”

(SELECTED.)

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

JOHN v. 21.

It can scarcely be doubted, when the whole context of this scripture is weighed, that the quickening by the Son goes on to and includes the resurrection of the body. Two very striking things are apparent: first, that the Son, become man, ever maintains entire subjection to, and dependence upon, the Father; and, secondly, that in all He did He acted in perfect communion with the Father. It could not indeed be otherwise, inasmuch as He came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him; and as He Himself said to Philip, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." So here, the Son can do nothing of (from) Himself, but what He seeth the Father do, for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. Then He adds, as bringing out the Father's complacent delight in the Son, and their perfect communion, the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. This lays the foundation of what we have in v. 21, but it will be observed that, while the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, the Son is only said to quicken whom He will. There is divine power and sovereignty in its exercise, but it is in quickening and not in resurrection. The reason of this, we apprehend,

is found in *v.* 25. During the present period the dead hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear live; but in the hour that is coming all that are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth in resurrection (*vv.* 28, 29). But then it must be remembered that the life received now through hearing His word secures, carries with it, resurrection. Thus in the next chapter it is, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Even while down here eternal life may be known and possessed, but until our bodies are "fashioned like unto His glorious body"—the glorified body of Christ—we shall not be in the condition for its full enjoyment according to the counsels of God. It is on this account that we conclude that quickening in *v.* 21 contemplates, and indeed ensures, the resurrection of the body.

II.

MATTHEW xxvi, 29; LUKE xxii. 16-18.

It would be a mistake to take these scriptures as meaning generally the same thing. The characteristic differences are most instructive, and, according to the divine wisdom of inspiration, in perfect harmony with the object of the two Gospels. It may be noted first of all that the expression "My Father's kingdom" is peculiar to Matthew (compare chap. xiii. 43); and it signifies the heavenly part of the kingdom during the thousand years, embracing as it does the glorified saints associated with Christ. This will help us to understand the Lord's words in this verse. He had taken the cup, and, after giving thanks, had given

it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament [covenant] which is shed for many for the remission of sins." It is remarkable, it may be said in passing, that the Lord thus travelled out, in this Gospel, to all the redeemed, for the "many" here could not be limited to Jewish believers. Then returning to the immediate circle of His disciples He added, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Ever a Nazarite morally while passing through this world, He was about, through His death and resurrection, to become one (compare Rom. vi. 10) actually, in departing from this world to the Father. But He comforted the hearts of His disciples by leading their thoughts onward to the time when in the kingdom of His Father He would renew His associations of joy with them in a new way. He thus showed them His "separation from all on earth" till the establishment of the kingdom. In Luke there are two things: first, that He desired to eat this last passover, before He suffered, with His disciples, "for" (He added) "I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God"; and, secondly, He would not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God should come. We gather, then, that the passover in all its blessed significance will be fulfilled in the kingdom (see Ezek. xlv. 21-25), and that then the Lord will renew His relationships of joy with His earthly people, as founded upon the efficacy of His sacrifice and death, which will ever be recalled in the celebration of the passover. The reader will notice

that the institution of the Supper follows upon the words considered; and this fact makes it all the more plain that the Lord had in view the moral import of His death for His earthly saints in *vv.* 15-18. It was thus for the Lord Himself a total break of His relationships even with His disciples as men in the flesh; and at the same time it was the revelation of the fact that He could only renew His association with them in a new way in that new order of things which, in virtue of His death and resurrection, would be established in the kingdom. To remove all difficulty it should also be observed that the Church period is not here contemplated, whatever the blessed instruction that Christians may derive from these touching words.

III.

I THESSALONIANS v. 23.

“In general the words ‘soul and spirit’ are used without making any distinction between them, for the soul of man was formed very differently from that of animals, in that God breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life, and it was thus that man became a living soul. Therefore it suffices to say *soul* as to man, and the other (spirit) is supposed. Or, in saying *spirit*, in this sense the elevated character of the soul is expressed. The animal has also its natural affections, has a living soul, attaches itself, knows the persons who do it good, devotes itself to its master, loves him, will even give its life for him; but it has not that (the spirit) which can be in relationship with God,” etc. This extract shows very plainly the difference between “soul” and “spirit.”

"THE OTHER SIDE."

MARK iv. 35-41.

THERE cannot be a question that many of the facts of the life of our blessed Lord were intended to teach us spiritual things; that, in the light thrown upon them through the presence of the Holy Spirit, they are seen to be pictures both of His ways with His people, and of their experiences under the guidance of His hand. It is only, indeed, when these facts are thus considered that their true significance can in any measure be apprehended. The immediate connection of the scripture before us may be adduced as an illustration of this point. The Lord had been teaching the multitude through similitudes; and we read that "without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples." (v. 34.) We understand this to mean—not that He made His teaching plain to the minds of the people by illustrations, as is commonly supposed—but rather that He concealed in these parables spiritual meanings from unspiritual persons. Then afterwards, when the disciples were alone with Him, He laid bare before them the inner significance of the words they had heard. But if He thus explained all things to His disciples, He would have them enter promptly into the truth they had received; and hence "the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." Not that they would understand what He was doing

with them (for the Holy Ghost had not yet come), but for us this is the instruction of the context.

Two things will make this clear. It is abundantly certain that the Lord passed through death to secure the blessing of His people, and it is as certain that His people must pass through death in order to enjoy what He has secured. This latter point is verified in the experience of every one who departs to be with Christ. Every Christian, indeed, will admit that it is *not until after death and the resurrection of our bodies* that we shall enter upon that scene of glory, which, in the purpose of God, we shall inherit in association with our blessed Lord. For "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." But there is also another thing, and that is, we may enjoy our heavenly portion now, through faith and in the power of the Holy Ghost, *if we are willing to pass through death morally*. Such, indeed, is the teaching of our Lord's well-known words, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 54.) That is, His death must be appropriated (not to go further), made our own, accepting for ourselves the judgment under which we lay, and which He bore, if we would, while here in this world, take up and enjoy eternal life. Death thus known in the soul is the only present doorway into the life of heaven, the life of the Father's house. In every possible way the Lord taught this lesson, as, for example, when He said, "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Now it is

the same lesson the Lord teaches, we apprehend, when He says to His disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side"; and it is in this light we propose to consider it.

One thing, however, has to be remembered. The disciples who were gathered round about our Lord were up to Pentecost on the ground of, and in fact were, the Jewish remnant; and hence it is that the remnant of a future day, after the church has been rapt from the earth, will find such blessed instruction in the gospels, if they are able to appropriate it. It is, however, permissible to us to read the full teaching of Christianity into these events, and thus take them to enforce the lesson already stated, that we must pass to the other side, if we are to be in liberty with, and to enjoy, Christ in the place where He now is, and if we are to expatiate at large in that home of glory of which He Himself is the expression and centre. So regarding it, we may learn much in all the details here given, and much to encourage us to make the journey. For this is what we need—encouragement to start, inasmuch as naturally we cling to life here, and are so prone to be satisfied with God's favour upon our earthly path instead of pressing on towards the mark for the prize of our calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. When once our faces are fully set towards Christ where He is, our backs will be turned towards the world, and it will be all our desire, at whatever cost, to be in His company, in the enjoyment of that unspeakable love which has made Himself ours, together with all that He has secured through His death and resurrection.

What has been already said will place the key of this narrative in the reader's hands. Still we may call attention to some of its points in order yet further to elucidate and apply it. Notice first, then, that the Lord says, "Let *us* pass over unto the other side." He vouchsafes His company to those who will make the journey, or to speak more accurately, He invites them to accompany Him. He never allows any of His own to pass through anything for His sake without bestowing upon them the sense of His presence. Or, if unbelief so prevails that His presence is not apprehended, He abides faithful. The Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos of every age loudly proclaim this truth. The disciples, little anticipating the character of the journey, readily responded to the invitation; they sent away the multitude, and took Him even as He was in the ship. Two things are here suggested: first, there must be separation from man if we are to follow Christ; and, secondly, we learn something of the ineffable grace of our blessed Lord in that He allowed His disciples to take Him even as He was in the ship. He—blessed be His name—is always at the service of His people, and thus in His condescension and grace permits them, as it were, to take Him at all seasons and according to their requirements. There were also with Him other little ships, but, alas! not one of these had Him with them. So at the present time there are many professing to cross to the other side in company with Christ, but He is not with them—they are professors, and only professors.

The next thing we gather is that all the enemy's power will be encountered by those who are passing

over unto the other side. We thus read that a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. If Satan can terrify the believer and turn him back from the path on which he has entered, he will use all the means at his disposal to accomplish his object. He even sought to prevent the blessed Lord Himself from going onward to the cross, and to this end pressed upon His holy soul the power of death when He was in Gethsemane. So it was with these poor disciples. Satan was permitted to awaken the storm that he might, if possible, deter them from following the Lord. But remark that when we are learning what death is, and what the power of Satan is in connection with it, we must be alone. Not that the Lord is not with us while passing through these painful exercises and experiences, but, as with the disciples in the boat, we may be so occupied with our circumstances as to lose sight of the fact that He Himself is conducting us through them; and with unbelief pervading and possessing our souls we shall begin, as they did, to feel that He has ceased to care for us in our trouble. He was asleep on a pillow, in the hinder part of the ship, in calm repose after His labours, and it might have seemed to the outward eye as if He had left them to battle alone with the danger. As, however, we shall see, He was caring for them even by His sleeping, for He was testing their hearts by the very dangers which aroused their fears.

It is blessed to see that, unreasoning as their unbelief was, they yet appeal to the Lord for succour.

They had no one else to turn to, and they knew it. The burden of their cry, when they awaked Him, was, "Master, carest Thou not (is it no matter of concern to Thee) that we perish?" Had they known who that divine Person was who was with them in the boat, they might have slept as calmly as He; for how could they perish when they had with them in the boat the Son of God? If HE could perish, they also might, but not otherwise; for as He taught them in a later day, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Two things may be remarked in His response to their cry: first, He demonstrated His power over the wind and the sea, so that there was a great calm; and, secondly, He pointed out that fear and unbelief were the cause of all their agitation and terror. And it will be evident to the feeblest soul that as soon as we have learned that Christ has acquired power over death and Satan, through His work on the cross, our fears will cease. He thus said to John, when he fell at the Lord's feet as dead, "Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." The disciples now feared in another manner, feared exceedingly, but it was in the presence of the divine power exhibited before their eyes; and even if they could not yet embrace the full truth of the Person of their Lord, they were yet impressed with the mystery which surrounded Him, for they said, "What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

The next statement is that "they came over unto the other side of the sea." We will not dwell upon

this can be an application to ourselves in recalling and pressing the lesson of the narrative. Let it then be repeated that in order to pass over unto "the other side," to the side of Christ, we must go through death. The Lord will ever encourage us to take this blessed journey by assuring us that He is with us in it. Still, we must always count on Satan's active enmity and opposition, and he will always seek to drive us back. But when once we have the firm conviction that He who is with us is the One who has overcome death, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us; for we have the secret of victory over both the world and Satan's power, in believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Then, lastly, we reach "the other side" in His company, in anticipation of that moment when He will come to receive us, and when we shall be for ever with Him.

"EYES AS A FLAME OF FIRE."

It is not the church, but the Person of the Lord, that we find brought out in the letter to Philadelphia. We get a chain of personal links between those He is addressing and the Lord Himself. "My" and "thy" are the things He takes notice of. (Rev. iii. 8.) They had "a little strength," yet the Lord entirely commends them as a people who had discovered and appreciated through the Holy Ghost that which Ephesus had lost. He had against those in Ephesus that they had lost their first love. Prayer-meetings and preachings might go on as much as ever, but Christ was not the spring. Love to Christ had gone down.

Here the principal characteristic of this remnant is that they have learnt in the Holy Ghost's hand to appreciate CHRIST—the Exalted Man in His Father's throne at God's right hand. They had so tested His love, so got into fellowship with His mind, that though they are still weak, He finds everything to commend, that which answers to His mind, they were faithful to Him. In Revelation i. 13 the Lord is seen in judicial glory coming to judge among the candlesticks; He is the Glorified Man who conquered death, and has authority over death and hades; but here it is—"Eyes as a flame of fire." Nothing could evade the searching power of those eyes, they know everything, every movement of the heart. All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. To see the bearing of this upon the church at Philadelphia is blessed to the soul. The same eyes of fire could see weakness, but could also see a people who had discovered *Himself*, and known *Himself*, a people who will have no other motive, who have a motive that is entirely beyond all that is around, and that is *Himself*. Those eyes of fire see through it all, see everything to commend. Blessed place! The Lord keep us in it, gathered to His name, to know Himself. What a blessed thing it is in these last days, when apostasy is running on, evil flowing in, to get a place appointed by Himself, where Christ's heart is satisfied to go with a people who are true to His name. Now, can our hearts bear those eyes of flame searching them morning, noon, and night? I am sure we shall love, as we know His tenderness, the light of His presence searching our conscience, bringing us into the con-

sciousness of union with the risen Christ. Exercises of the wilderness we shall have, but He is so near that I can bear Him to search my whole heart. I know Him as the Advocate, and as the One who ever lives to make intercession for me, to carry on His work in my soul.

We are His, members of His body, of His flesh and of His bone. Our choicest blessing is to be so in His hand that in His searching I should know His tenderest love. He introduces Himself as the One who is holy and true, and He says, "I know thy works." "Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." The church at large does not know His name. The person of the Lord is forgotten, Christ Himself not known, but the heart that knows Himself is satisfied with what *He* knows about it. It is a great point in communion with the Lord, and loving Him, knowing His love in living power, to be satisfied that *He* should know what we are about, as we shall be when the eye is single. He gives no great account of these saints, they have but "a little strength," yet it is a people who have got back to the source of blessing, and therefore they find what He is to them. They have "kept My word." "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." It is intelligence in His mind. If I love Him I am seeking to learn *how* to obey Him. My heart is in it. The new man delights to follow it to its source, that is what obedience is. It is the last days, but His eyes are specially on a feeble people, one here and another there, who have really known and loved Him who first loved them.

It is "the word of *My* patience." There is the

personal link again—"My patience," "the patience of Christ." What patience I see in that Man at God's right hand! I see Him there, who for 1800 years has been waiting to rise up and come with a shout to take up His waiting people. Patience while evil is flowing in, the world getting up in glory and power, saints going down to the dust in weakness! He is waiting, so we wait in communion with Him for Him to come. But are we keeping the word of His patience? "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." It is the trial that will come upon the world, the general state of the tribulation. But this poor people get the promise of being kept out of it; for, indeed, they will be with Christ before it takes place.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." What a word that is to us! I get the personal thing still, how remarkable it is to the overcomer: (v. 12.) To those who have a little strength He will give almighty power. Upon those who have kept His word and not denied His name He will write "the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, and My new name." Wonderful blessing for us to get into this personal kind of link of association with Christ where He is now in glory, and we have to walk as living that life. The soul that has discovered the blessedness of it comes back to Him as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls—two very distinct titles and offices. "The Shepherd" guards, feeds, lays down His life; the "Bishop" overlooks, oversees, and restores the soul.

We learn His priestly action in Hebrews iv., and that chapter brings out His sympathy with the new man. He bears up the soul, and comes in in times of sorrow, in sympathy and love, so that the soul discovers that in Christ which it never knew before; I get intercourse with Him. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." In spirit with Him, waiting for and seeing Him, not as through a glass, darkly, but face to face. May we know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that we may be filled unto all the fulness of God! G. A.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

I BELIEVE the great hindrance to divine joy in the soul arises from the imperfect way the crucifixion of the old man is apprehended. The believer at first, for full peace, believes that God has raised from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore the judgment which lay on him, so that the man that was under judgment is really gone from the eye of God in judgment. The believer is now before God, not in the man who was under judgment, but in the Man who has glorified God in bearing the judgment; and, consequently, there is not a cloud between his soul and God, because the man who caused the distance has been removed in judgment.

Often a believer, though tasting of peace with God, when he finds the working of sin in him, tries to correct it as if he could alter himself, overlooking the great and stupendous fact that God Himself has removed

the man in judgment in the death of His own Son; He has laid help upon One that is mighty—His own arm brought salvation—and if a believer is really at peace with God, it is because his old man has been crucified with Christ, and altogether set aside in judgment on the cross. If he were clear as to the fact of our old man being crucified with Christ, instead of trying to correct himself, he would look to Christ to set him free from the intrusion of the flesh: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." What becomes us now is to have Christ before us, and not the correction of the old man. The snare of trying to improve oneself is very common, and it is important to see that, however well-meaning it may be, it is really a denial that our old man has been crucified, and a revival of that which has been set aside in the cross. It is plain that if you are clear of the old man you can have no man before you but Christ. "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin"; and the more sensible you are of how ready the flesh is to intrude, the more you are cast upon Him.

It is inconceivable that one could have any just apprehension of God's grace, and yet continue to expect anything from the flesh, or in any way to deal with it. It shows how little the revelation of His grace is really accepted in its greatness; because if I know that God Himself has in the cross removed the man who offended, how gladly should I accept His grace! What fruitless sorrow has one known for months and years in the attempt to improve oneself, until wearied out we cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then

we find there is only one relief, and that is found where we ought to have sought it at first. "I thank God through *Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Nothing can be more certain for the believer than that one man is gone in judgment, and that Christ alone remains. When I have put on Christ—the best robe—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Not only does the blessed God see me on this ground—one from which He never can change or be diverted—but *I* now, by the Spirit of God, see myself on that ground, and I can say, not only "our old man is crucified," but "*I* am crucified with Christ"; and if I am crucified, how can I refer to myself in any sense? If we observe the history of Christians, we see them trying to improve themselves—their tempers and their evil tendencies—plainly showing that they do not believe in the absolute and simple revelation that "our old man is crucified with Him."

Nothing is of deeper importance at the commencement of our Christian history than that we should accept, with some apprehension of its greatness, that the man that was under judgment is removed from the eye of God in judgment. We have to ponder, in order to realize the magnitude of it, and when we do believe it as a truth, another thing of equal importance is made known to us—that not only is the old man completely removed from the eye of God, but that by the Holy Ghost we are in Christ a new creation by the power of God. If we keep these two together we have a great start; one man is gone and Another is brought in, and this is established to us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Now we enter on our new history. Properly, we are not occupied with the flesh; though the flesh is still in us, "we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit"; and our attention is largely given to walking in the Spirit. We have now a new exercise, even to sow to the Spirit, and of the Spirit to reap life everlasting. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." This shows us how intent our eye must be on Christ; we have nothing to do with the man that is gone; and the more we realize this the happier we are—judicially freed of the one, and by the Spirit of God established in Christ. Everything we do now is done with reference to Christ; and not only is the body the Lord's, but "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit"—we have to act according to His pleasure in the very management of the body, just as a slave would use his body according to the wishes of his owner.

It is remarkable that Romans xii. 2 refers to the body: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice be not conformed to this world, but be ye *transformed* by the renewing of your mind." But in 2 Cor. iii. 18, We all beholding the glory of the Lord—are *transformed*; it is the same word (transformed) as in Romans xii., and is only used twice in Scripture in reference to us—once as to the body, and secondly as to what is imparted to us—what is received from Christ; we are "transformed into the same image." This I might call the exercise of our daily life; our history here is not merely seeking to glorify Him in our bodies, but we should be growing in moral correspondence to Himself, and that by association with Himself; so that the two great truths we started

we should be commended to us more and more every day—the old man gone from the eye of God completely and for ever, and we established in Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.

J. B. S.

GOD'S DELIGHT.

If the eye of God passed, as the dove of Noah, over this earth, swept by the deluge of sin, nowhere, till Jesus was seen in it, could His eye have rested in complacency and peace; there on Him it could. Heaven, as to the expression of its satisfaction, whatever its counsels, was closed till Jesus (the second and perfect Man, the Holy One, He who offered Himself to God, coming to do His will) was on earth. The moment He presented Himself in public service heaven opened, the Holy Ghost descended to dwell in this His one resting-place here, and the Father's voice, impossible now to be withheld, declares from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Was this object (too great, too excellent, for the silence of heaven and the Father's love) to lose its excellence and its savour in the midst of a world of sin? Far otherwise. It was there its excellency was proved. If He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, the movement of every spring of His heart was consecrated to God. He walked in communion, honouring His Father in all—in His life and in His death. Jehovah found continual delight in Him, and above all, in Him in His death.

IS THE NEW JERUSALEM THE CHURCH OR ISRAEL?

A KIND correspondent has sent us a paper which seeks to prove that the holy city, new Jerusalem, is Israel; and the writer of the paper endeavours to substantiate his position by a sevenfold argument. But it is a most remarkable thing that all the passages which point to another conclusion are omitted. We propose, therefore, in a general way, to call attention to these, in the hope that our correspondent, as well as any others who may have been unsettled, may be re-established in the conviction that the subject of the glorious vision of Revelation xxi. is, after all, the church, though the church (we speak of the vision commencing with verse 10) in relation to the earth during the millennium.

(1) We will refer first of all to Ephesians v. 25-27. The writer of the paper in question makes much of the fact that in Ephesians i. the church is said to be the body of Christ, and undoubtedly this was the special aspect of the church of which Paul was minister (see Ephes. iii. 1-11; Col. i. 24-27); but it is also true that he alludes to the church as the bride of Christ. No one, indeed, could read the scripture cited (chap. v. 25-27) without perceiving that a direct comparison is instituted between marriage and the union of Christ and the church. Leave out this analogy, and this precious scripture loses its blessed force and beauty. As an additional support for this interpretation the reader may be reminded that the apostle says elsewhere, when writing to the Corinthians, "I have

“I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. xi. 2.)

(2) Let us now turn to a very direct scripture: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” (Rev. xix. 7, 8.) Now it is very plain that this scene is laid in heaven, and that it is previous to the Lord’s coming out of heaven as described in verses 11–21. In other words, the time of this scene is between the rapture and the appearing, that is, after the saints of this period have been caught up to be for ever with the Lord, and before He comes forth with His people to establish His kingdom, and to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. If this be so (and the fact is certain), the church is the wife mentioned, for Israel at this time will be yet in unbelief, and will not even be gathered, as a whole, until after the Lord has appeared in glory.

(3) Revelation xxii. 16, 17, rightly understood, makes entirely for the same conclusion. The message is not to Israel, but to the churches: “I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, [and] the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.” The 20th verse shows that the Lord has not yet come; and we are thus again confronted with the fact that Israel, at this time, will still be in unbelief, and consequently could not be represented as desiring the advent of Christ. Will the question be asked, Why is it then that the Lord

assumes here the titles of root and offspring of David? It is surely because He is the heir of all the royal rights of David, as well as David's Lord, for He is the ROOT as well as the offspring of the son of Jesse; and it is in this character that He will found His kingdom, and then, as Son of man, through Israel as the centre, He will govern the nations of the earth. (Compare 2 Timothy ii. 8.) Remark now that He is also presented as the bright and morning star, the One who will be seen by the watchers before His return shining aloft in all His heavenly beauty as the harbinger of the coming day. It is the contemplation of Christ in this character that ravishes the heart of the bride, and evokes in the power of the Spirit (for it is the Spirit and the bride) the cry, Come. The last clause, moreover, of this remarkable scripture places it beyond doubt that it is the church that is before the mind of the Spirit, because it is through her, through evangelists and others, that the proclamation is made, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is clear again, therefore, that the church is the bride of Christ.

(4) It is scarcely necessary to add more, except to remove difficulties raised by the arguments of the writer in question. That Israel is also the bride of Christ, or, to speak more accurately, Jerusalem (if Jerusalem as the expression of the people), is taught in many scriptures. The church is the heavenly bride, as Israel will be the earthly bride; and this is not dimly adumbrated by Jacob and his two wives, Leah and Rachel. Bearing this in mind, the reader will all the better understand the similarity of many expressions in Isaiah lx. to those employed of the

heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation xxi. And there will be a direct connection between the city of the great King, Mount Zion, and the new Jerusalem. The former will be the vestibule, as it were, to the latter, which will shine above the earthly city with the light of the glory of God, in which she will be displayed.

One other thing may be recalled. The fact that the twelve gates of the heavenly city have written on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and that the twelve foundations have in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, is employed to prove that the church is not signified. One word is almost enough to answer this objection. The heavenly city is the glorious metropolis of the Lord's universal kingdom, and, as may be seen from many scriptures, Israel will be the centre and the instrument of His sway. It is not, as often remarked, the Pauline aspect of the church which is here seen, but, in accordance with the character of Revelation, it is the church in relation to the earth during Messiah's kingdom; and hence it is a governmental scene—one in which the full issue and consummation of God's ways with the earth is finally reached.* Revelation xxi. 1-7 goes still further, and permits us to see the eternal fruit of the government of God.

The general conception, then, of the new Jerusalem as the church, as the bride of Christ, is, we cannot doubt, scriptural; and this could be still more firmly established, if it were needful, by dwelling upon the more positive teachings of the subject. We will, however, gladly return to it if any perplexities still remain.

* The church founded in Jerusalem at Pentecost under the government of the apostles shadows forth this aspect.

AN EDUCATIONAL WARNING.

THERE has never been a time when the path of our children was beset with greater and more subtle dangers than at the present moment. In this statement we do not allude so much to the perils which ever surround them in the world, but rather to those connected with professing Christianity. The very air is infected with doubt, rationalism, and infidelity—all too surely portending the coming apostasy of which Paul speaks in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. Popular religious periodicals and books are fast becoming—unwittingly in many cases—the channels of constant insinuations against, if not attacks upon, the inspiration and authenticity of the books of Holy Scripture; and preachers of all degrees do not hesitate, in their desire to be in the van of public opinion, to express the most “advanced” views concerning the foundations of our faith. In justification of these remarks we may refer to *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, a volume of which lies before us as we write.

This volume deals with the prophet Hosea, and is written by *Canon Cheyne*, an Oxford “Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture”; and hence the book has the impress, if not the recommendation, of both Universities. It is, therefore, much used in education, and consequently numbers of our youths are being imbued with its teaching. And yet we are bold to say that it not only undermines, but also distinctly sets aside, the plenary inspiration of this portion of the Bible. The matter is so serious that we are constrained to

give a few quotations in proof of our contention. In discussing and questioning the chronology of verse 1, the writer says :

“ We need not, however, accuse the author of the heading of an error in calculation ; the heading is probably a thoughtless combination of two distinct traditions or views which do not refer to the same amount of prophetic writing.”

And again :

“ Now it may be assumed as practically certain that the former heading (or, at any rate, the chronological part of it) was the work of a scribe during the Exile, so that this late editor probably only knew in a vague way that Isaiah and Hosea were more or less contemporary.”

Further on he draws the conclusion : “ The reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah seem therefore to be out of the question as periods for any part of Hosea.”

Speaking, moreover, of the moral state of things in the midst of which Hosea laboured, our author says :

“ If Hosea did not at once depict it in its true colours, we may conjecturally ascribe this either to the hopefulness of youth, or to the circumstance that the people of the district from which he sprang were comparatively pure in their ‘ morals,’ etc.

Once more :

“ No doubt some of Hosea’s particular predictions have been fulfilled, but we have no right to assume that the prophet himself attached more importance to these predictions than to others. The truth is that he has no fixed view respecting the future of Judah, much less of the reunion of the two kingdoms,” etc.

These extracts have been taken from the Introduction. There are many similar opinions scattered

throughout the notes on the text, together with free suggestions for emendations and alterations of words, if but a more reasonable meaning, according to the judgment of our author, might be discovered. We add one comment upon chapter x. 12 :

“If only a moral miracle could take place, Israel’s calamities might yet be averted. Nor is it entirely inconceivable, for miracles, so Hosea thinks, can be wrought by an earnest resolution.” (!)

Surely it is high time for Christian parents to awake to the character of the dangers which are invading their families and households. While they sleep the enemy is active, and numbers of young people have already accepted principles which are really in direct antagonism to revealed truth. Priding themselves upon mind and intellect, they yet fall a prey to sophisms and reasonings which will not bear a moment’s calm examination. In the very extracts we have given, who can fail to notice the recurrence of the words “probably,” “seem,” “conjecturally” ? That is to say, *Canon Cheyne* can tell us what Hosea said, or ought to have said, in his judgment ; and he would have us take his conjectural reasonings in the place of the sure Word of God. Well has it been written : “The haughtiness which excludes God, because it is incompetent to discover Him, and then talks of His work and meddles with His weapons, according to the measure of its own strength, can prove nothing but its own contemptible folly.” Jeremiah has described the whole class of rationalists in words which should never be forgotten : “The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken : *lo, they have rejected the*

word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Chap. viii. 9.) Happy are those who amidst the din and conflict of opinions have found their rest in God, as revealed in Christ Jesus, and in His infallible Word:

"ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD."

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," etc.—ROM. viii. 28, 29.

A BLOCK of hardest marble stood
Before the sculptor: where he would
He smote with hand well skilled,
And thus with blow on blow fulfilled
The vision of his mind.
At first with chisel coarse, and stroke
Unspared, the corners off he broke,
And soon the form appeared;
But then with finer tools he wrought—
And finer yet—until he brought
The perfect image forth.
So with unerring skilfulness,
With cunning hand and sure,
'Tis as the *marble* groweth less,
The *likeness* groweth more.

So God divinely works with those
He in th' eternal ages chose
To show His works of grace,
And thus with blow on blow to trace
The image of His Son.

Though sharp the blows, yet skilled the hand ;
 If we but feebly understand
 The reason of each stroke,
 How blessed to know that He, who holds
 The tools, before His eye beholds
 His own beloved One !
 The cares and troubles day by day,
 The sorrows that o'ershade the way,
 Together work for good.
 For nothing e'er by chance befalls
 The one, whom God in purpose calls,
 In whom His love is found.
 But when we have the glory gain'd,
 And Christ's full image have attain'd,
 We'll praise His sovereign grace,
 And bless the hand that dealt each blow
 Upon the marble here below
 In working out His will.

A. J. H. B.

September, 1897.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 11.

It is asked whether the contrast in this scripture between the child and the man refers to the difference between the condition of the believer now and when perfected in glory. We judge that it is rather an allusion to the infantile way in which the Corinthians were priding themselves upon the spiritual manifestations in their midst, and upon the exercise of those gifts, such as that of tongues, which tended to exalt those who had them in the eyes of others. All these

things (for at this time they did not possess the New Testament scriptures—with the exception perhaps of the epistles to the Thessalonians) marked the commencement of the assembly, and were transitory in their character. The apostle therefore sought to lead them onward to what was abiding, and to what was connected with maturity in the divine life. He thus says, "Charity [love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," etc. (*vv.* 8-10.) Thereupon he points out that beyond all this, the more excellent way is to seek to be established, to be built up, in the divine nature, and that this is greater than faith or hope. Entering into this, the connection between chaps. xii., xiii., and xiv. is very plain. In chap. xii. the relation of the various gifts to the Spirit, to the Lord, and to God is given, with the object of the bestowment of the gifts in the sovereignty of divine grace, and also the unity and the interdependence of all the saints; then in chap. xiii. we have the supreme necessity of being formed in the divine nature (love), and especially as a qualification for service; and then in chap. xiv. the assembly is seen as gathered, with the gifts in exercise. We have much need to pay attention to the instruction that we also may put away childish things.

II.

ROMANS xiv. 22.

While possessing the fullest liberty in regard to what may be eaten, the apostle yet enjoins two things: first, tender consideration for the conscientious scruples of one who is "weak in the faith"; and, secondly, that

we should follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. In the firmest way possible he lays down—he knows and is persuaded by the Lord Jesus—that there is nothing unclean of itself. As he says in another epistle, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.” (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) Still, “to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, it is unclean”; and, consequently, if such a brother ate what he deemed to be unclean, he would have a bad conscience before God. This has to be borne in mind; and hence for those who are “strong” to eat before the weak brother that which he regarded as unclean would be to put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his way. (v. 13.) It would also be a failure in love, as it would show an utter disregard for his spiritual welfare. For these reasons it is never according to God to assert our liberty where its exercise might produce a bad impression or effect upon our fellow-believers who may have less light, or not be so well instructed as ourselves. “It is good,” Paul says, “neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” (v. 21.) Must we, then, altogether surrender our liberty because of the scruples of others? By no means; and on this account the apostle proceeds, “Hast thou faith?” Do you believe that it is according to the mind of God, as expressed in His Word, that you may eat or drink that which might be a stumbling-block to others? If you are fully persuaded of this, exercise your liberty in private, but not before others. This we judge to be

the meaning of the words—"Have it [faith] to thyself before God." But it must be a matter of faith, and hence the added warnings, lest the liberty claimed should descend into licence: "Happy is he that condemneth [judgeth] not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned [condemned] if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (*vr.* 22, 23.) What a perfect rule of conduct! We are set down, on the one hand, in the presence of God, where we are to act in faith, as having His mind; and, on the other, we are to be governed, in our relationships with our brethren, by love, and love will ever lead us to avoid doing anything which might be a snare or an offence to them, and also always to seek their welfare and edification.

III.

JAMES ii. 8-12.

In this scripture there are three designations of the law—the law simply, the royal law, and the law of liberty. The apostle points out with great solemnity that if (he is writing, it will be remembered, to the twelve tribes) "ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced ['convicted'] of the law as transgressors." And the example he gives of this sin is giving the best seats, in the place of assembly, to the rich and the worst to the poor—a custom not unknown in the present day! "The law" of which he speaks as thus transgressed is really the decalogue. In the previous verse, giving the spiritual significance of the law ("for he that loveth another has fulfilled the law") in the well-known words, "Thou shalt love thy neigh-

bour as thyself," he terms it the "royal" law. The question is—Why is it thus described? Various answers have been given to this question: one is, that it is the law of the supreme King; another, that it is "the law which is the king of all laws"; and yet another, that it points to the supremacy of love, governing all, as it does, in some form or other. But it would be simpler, we judge, to interpret the expression of the kingdom of Christ, inasmuch as this royal law will be in it the standard for all, under His blessed reign, to regulate their mutual relationships. (Compare Matthew v. 43-48.) The remaining term, "the law of liberty," may be explained in the words of another: "The will of God was for Jesus a law of liberty. He came to do His Father's will, He desired nothing else. Blessed state! It was perfection in Him, a blessed example for us. The law is a law of liberty when the will, the heart of man coincides perfectly in desire with the law imposed upon him—imposed in our case by God—the law written in the heart. It is thus with the new man as with the heart of Christ. He loves obedience, and loves the will of God because it is His will, and as having a nature which answers to what His will expresses, since we partake of the divine nature; in fact, it loves that which God wills." This being the case, the law, as the expression of God's will, would of necessity be a law of liberty, and thus in entire contrast with what it was for men in the flesh, viz., a law of restraint. This accounts for its form as given to Israel, being mainly prohibitive; but, contemplating a people with the law written in their hearts, it becomes preceptive, because it would be then a law of liberty.

“THOU SHALT REMEMBER.”

DEUTERONOMY viii.

IN this book the children of Israel are seen almost at the end of their wilderness journey—in fact, on the very borders of Canaan; and occasion is taken to recall their past history, to magnify, on the one hand, God's unflinching faithfulness and love in His governmental ways, and, on the other hand, to recall the constant failure of the people. Together with this, Moses instructed them as to the conditions of enjoyment and blessing in the land which the Lord, according to His promise, was about to give them. “All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers.” (v. i.) There is therefore a certain parallel between the position of Israel at that time and the children of God at the present moment. We, too, are nearing, if we have not arrived at, the end of our pilgrimage; and we are only waiting for the advent of Him who will soon appear the second time without sin unto salvation. It may not be unprofitable, therefore, for us, like Israel, to recall the past, especially at the close of the year, that we may learn somewhat more both of what God is in His unquenchable love, and of what we ourselves are, to the end that our hearts may be filled with praise as we contemplate His inexhaustible patience and grace.

It will be noticed that nothing is to escape our recollection in God's past dealings with us; we are

to remember all the way which the Lord has led us in the wilderness, that we may discern more clearly the object He ever had in view in the various sorrows, trials, and afflictions through which we have passed. When in the circumstances which distress us it is seldom that we can estimate them aright, because we do not sufficiently connect them with the Lord's hand, nor keep His end before our souls. Hence the need of surveying the past in order to apprehend the needed lessons. The first thing Moses brought before the minds of the people was the testing God applied to them to see whether they would "keep His commandments or no." And for this it was necessary to humble and to prove them. And why? Because of the incurable character of the flesh, which ever loves to gratify its own inclinations and to exalt itself even in the presence of God. Pride, as well as the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, lurks in the heart at all times, combined with unbrokenness of will, and even where, sometimes, it is least expected. This will explain many of God's dealings with us. He puts us into trying situations, brings crosses and obstacles across our path, suffers us to have disappointments and adversities, in order that we may know what is in our hearts, and that the flesh is never subject to His word. In one word, He has been teaching us to "keep His commandments"; and to effect this our wills have had to be broken, and we have had to be humbled. Let us not forget it, for then we shall experimentally understand that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose.

Secondly, we discover, in reviewing the past, that the object which the Lord had in view was to teach us dependence. "And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." It must be carefully observed that the first step in this process is also humbling, for the reason that it is the obstinacy of our wills that so often closes our ears to the divine voice. How many years of searching and humbling have we had to go through before we began even to desire to be as clay in the hands of the potter, before we could just lie in the Lord's hand, to be used or not used as He might will! But how tenderly He has borne with us, and how patiently He has waited until we could take the place of dependence upon Him and upon His word! There are two other elements in this lesson—deprivation and secret sustainment; "He suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna." He withheld from us what we craved, and then fed us with heavenly food; and, speaking of Israel, we might add that the Lord did this in spite of their murmurings. So has it been with ourselves. Cannot we recall that even during the past year we have again and again set our hearts upon obtaining something which *we* deemed necessary? But the Lord loved us too well to allow us to succeed in our desires; but at the same time, when we turned to Him in our disappointment, He so sustained us by the revelation of Himself that we could then praise Him that He had suffered us to hunger— His name!

In such ways the Lord weans His people from their own wills and from their own efforts, and, making them willing to accept death upon themselves and upon all the objects of the natural man, He leads them on to discover that all blessedness lies in subjection to and in loving His will, and in entire dependence upon His strength to aid His people in this direction. Moses, in the next place, reminds them of the Lord's incessant care in the midst of all their discipline. First, he says, "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." Whatever their hard travel in "that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought," as well as constant enemies, divine power sustained and guarded them on every hand, in token that the eyes of the Lord were ever upon the needs of His people. And not less miraculously, if in another way, have we been provided for and preserved during the past year of our pilgrimage. Our path through the wilderness is intensely individual, and must therefore be attended with experiences personal to ourselves, and known, in their real character, only by Him who has ordered them all in His infinite wisdom and perfect love. But remembering the way by which He has led us, we can surely all testify that, according to His faithful word, He has never left or forsaken us, but that with every new day mercies without number have surrounded us on every hand. As it has been expressed indeed in the well-known lines—

" Though thy way be long and weary,
 Eagle strength He 'll still renew :
 Garments fresh and foot unwearied
 Tell how God hath brought thee through."

There is yet another reminder. Moses says, "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (v. 5.) Pondering upon our various trials and sorrows, we are to learn to connect them with the Lord's own hand, and to understand that they are His selected instrumentalities for needful discipline, that, as the apostle applies it in Hebrews xii., "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." "If you endure chastening [more exactly, "It is for chastening ye endure"], God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" He tells us, furthermore, that the end of God's chastening is that we might be partakers of His holiness; and this corresponds with the conclusion Moses draws in our chapter: "Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him." How calmly, therefore, we may leave ourselves in the Lord's hands, knowing "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose; *because* whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." To see that the light of God's love is resting upon all our pilgrim path changes the aspect of everything; and when it is perceived that it, with all its accompanying sorrows, is the chosen path towards the accomplishment of God's purpose for His people, we are both comforted and encouraged. As of Israel, it will be said of all of us, "He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."

In the rest of the chapter it is not remembrance but anticipation, and with this warnings are added. Israel was not yet in the land, and they are exhorted not to forget the source of all their blessing when they should be there, and that their only preservative would lie in obedience to God's commandments, judgments, and statutes. Otherwise the very wealth of their blessings would lead them to pride of heart, forgetfulness of the Lord God their Redeemer, and, together with this, to ascribe their prosperity to their own power and to the might of their own hand, and thus bring themselves under the sure judgment of God. Nothing so proves the perversity of our hearts as the tendency to use the blessings which God so graciously bestows upon us as a means of self-exaltation. May we heed the warning, knowing that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing, and may we ever seek to be kept in the place of nothingness, as we shall be in proportion as Christ is everything to our souls.

THINGS BEHIND AND THINGS BEFORE.

No other man could ever say, like Paul, "Be followers together of me" (Phil. iii. 17), for he was in every way the pattern man of the heavenly calling. True, he was an apostle, but it was not as such that he so wrote of himself by the Spirit of God. It is one of the special features of this epistle that he does not introduce himself as an apostle, but as a servant of Jesus Christ, and it is his experience as one who had walked and served in the light and power of the heavenly calling which is largely presented in this epistle. Hence the experience here presented, the sentiments that animated him,

the aim and object before him, are all as tests and guides for us who profess to have entered upon the path of discipleship connected with the heavenly calling.

It is therefore deeply important that we, who profess the same faith and to have the same goal before us that Paul had, should so test the manner and character of our lives. For indeed there is no other faith, no other goal; all else are but departures from the truth, and a surrender, more or less grievous, of the true nature and power of Christianity—a turning aside or turning back to the “things which are behind” (verse 13), as Paul speaks, and so the lustre and brightness of the “things which are before” lose their attraction for the heart.

But let us consider these things a little more closely, with the true desire to ascertain their bearing with respect to the tenor of our lives day by day. For while we should ever hold fast the blessed truth of being “in Christ” as to our place and acceptance before God, if so be we have truly believed on Christ risen from the dead, and so have His Spirit (for if we are in Christ it must be that He is in us as life by the Spirit dwelling in us), yet there is the responsible life down here in which the power of the life in Christ which we have by the Spirit may be displayed, and the reality of that which we profess tested. It is in this latter way, as called to pass through and overcome all the adverse circumstances and hindrances surrounding the path of the true disciple here, but with Christ in glory revealed to the soul as a present object, and likeness to Him in that glory as the goal and prize set before us, that Philipians views us.

When this is seen it is not difficult to apprehend the application of the expression, "The things behind and those before." For we are (if truly in the spirit and power of the heavenly calling) as those who have turned our backs on the world, *and all that is in it and of it*, and are being drawn on, and are pressing on, to the full realization of what is infinitely more blessed and glorious than the best and brightest things here. Hence we may say that "the things behind" consist of all that ministers to a man's greatness, honour, or even religious reputation and position after the flesh; in short, all that makes him of any account in the eyes of the world, or in his own eyes. Are these indeed the things behind with us? And if so, what, then, are those things that are before? They are things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man . . . which God hath prepared for *them that love Him*," revealed now by the Spirit to faith, and the light and reality of them known in the soul, but all to be fully reached and realized soon, when He who is the Centre and Sun of all that vast scene of blessedness and joy eternal (even He who once sat on Sychar's well, and ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and wept in sympathy with Mary, and agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, and suffered and died on the cross)—the same Jesus—will come as Saviour (to save us *out* of the world), and "change our bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like to His body of glory"; or if perchance we fall asleep before He so comes, to realize the blessedness of being with Him where He now is, "which is far better" than abiding here where He is not.

It was this blessed goal, *and nothing else* which was before this pattern disciple, whose words by the Spirit should be heard in each of our souls: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Alas! even in that day he had to add that many walked in a way the very opposite, to their shame (if they only had eyes to see and a heart to feel it) and to his grief. True, in minding earthly things it might not be that which the religious world would disapprove of, nor the moral sense of the natural man condemn. But viewed in the light of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (whose blessed name they professed), the minding earthly things was as incongruous with the heavenly calling as it was shameful for those professing Him as their Saviour and Lord, who ended His life here on a cross, and opened up a new and glorious life, and a new world suited to that life in resurrection.

Again I would say we do well to bring all this to bear upon ourselves, and to be exercised as to its application to our ways, for our lot is cast in the closing days of the same marvellous dispensation which began in Paul's day, and the true character and power and blessedness of which were exemplified in him, as well as unfolded by his ministry.

As we draw to the close of another year, we may well apply our hearts to these things, and enquire what has been the chiefly governing and animating principle or aim with us during the past year or more, and what is really before our hearts as to what men speak of as the future, that is, the rest of our lives here; for the children of this world have (or think they have) a

future here. In vain, however, they seek to peer into it, and with keen gaze to pierce through that impenetrable veil that shrouds the future *here*. What is behind them they know, and can look back upon readily enough; but such a retrospect rarely gives comfort or satisfaction. Regrets, disappointments, or what is perhaps still more saddening, the remembrance of joys and pleasures past and ended, generally fill up the past for those who are of this world. But so it should not be with the disciples of Jesus. And whether for such this is to be the case or not depends on how they have regarded the future; that is, whether "the things before" were earthly joys, schemes, prospects, hopes, plans, etc., like the world (and which are ever becoming year by year the things behind), or whether they were what he had before him who counted all that was gain to him loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus *his Lord*, and whose motto (if one may so speak) was "To me to live—Christ," as embracing all that was before him down here.

Now, I grant there is a sense in which it is right and well to look back, and I will notice this presently. This, however, is not the looking back indicated in Phil. iii., which tells of a heart that turns back with unjudged cravings and longings after those things which are opposed to our holy and heavenly calling. Many sad and sorrowful examples of this character of turning back are furnished in the Word. Israel turned back in heart to Egypt, and craved for the flesh-pots thereof. Not so was it with Moses, who esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the

pleasures of sin for a season." His eyes and heart were set upon "those things that are before, for he had respect unto the recompense."

Another solemn example of not forgetting the things behind is referred to by the blessed Lord Himself, and given by Him as a warning to all who profess His name and to have part in His kingdom, when He said, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke xvii. 32.) Yes, the Lord Himself more than once when here on earth emphasized the danger of looking or turning back, and the loss to those whose hearts still turned to things here, even declaring that "no man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

I will not, however, dwell further on this serious and dangerous character of looking back or not forgetting the things behind, when the heart and desires are allowed to go out after earthly things; for as we have already remarked, all in and of the world are the things behind to those who profess to have accepted the death of Christ as the basis of all their hopes and blessings, as well as of their deliverance from the judgment of this world, and indeed the whole course of it.

But some, through grace, are not thus turning back nor thinking with regret of the things behind, neither are the things before them the hopes of aggrandizement or prosperity, or pleasure and rest here; but their desire and aim at least are to be found in the spirit and line of this faithful servant, whose course is the bright pattern for all who follow after until the Lord shall come.

There is, however, as I have said, a way in which we may, I think, profitably look back on the past, even as

God's earthly people were exhorted and, indeed, commanded to do in their day: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness. . . . Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (Deut. viii. 2, 4, 5.)

We are also exhorted to remember that we were in times past Gentiles in the flesh, without God, without Christ, and without hope; that thus our hearts might ever be kept in the sense of that rich mercy and great love so freely bestowed upon us. (Eph. ii.) Paul never forgot his past history as a sinner and the grace that saved him. How blessed, too, was the retrospect of his life of service and discipleship when, at the end of his career, he exclaims, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy iv. 7.) This is the blessed counterpart to the sentiments expressed long before, when he said to the elders of Ephesus, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with *joy*" (Acts xx. 24); even as it is in bright contrast with one who had been his fellow-servant, and of whom he had to write, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." (2 Timothy iv. 10.) Yes, there is deep joy connected with faithfulness to our calling and to our Lord here, even as there is deep sorrow and bitterness in turning back, either in heart or ways, or in seeking our own things and "not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Philippians is the epistle where joy is prominent, for it is the experience of one who was going on in

the vision and current of the Spirit of God, and the fruit of the Spirit is love, *joy*, peace. And what perfect joy he had in the anticipation (bright and clear before his heart because undimmed by the attraction of things here) of that blessed realization of future glory and incorruptibility with Christ!

May our only looking back, then, be such as Paul's, and as remembering the goodness and mercy that have followed us up to the present and will follow us to the end.

If there be any other sense in which any may do well to look back and recall the past, it will be where there has been, in a measure, declension of soul through the attraction of things here, so that Christ has lost the place He once held in the affections of the heart; and He would then say to us, as to the beloved church at Ephesus, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent," thus bringing us to judge ourselves, in order that the heart may be recalled "to joy in all the brightness and peace" His love imparts.

S. M. A.

THE PERFECT MASTER AND THE PATTERN DISCIPLE.*

PAUL could say to the Philippians by the Spirit of God (and to us through them), "Brethren, be followers together of me." His whole course, and the tenor of his life from his conversion, was the exemplification of the reality and power of Christian life, and thus the pattern to us of true discipleship. But we must

* This part is intended to be supplementary to the foregoing ("Things Past and Things Before"), and the two, therefore, should be read in this order.—ED.

distinguish between the way in which he is to be followed *as such*, and the way in which the Lord Jesus in His life here is the Pattern and Example for His own. He could say in a way that Paul never could or would, "Follow Me."

The heading of this paper indicates the difference pretty clearly. Jesus speaks as our Lord and Master, who alone has the right to claim our allegiance and service, even as He has the power to win and draw our hearts after Himself. Not only so, but He has left "us an example that we should follow His steps," as having Himself displayed a life of perfect obedience and devotedness to God, in which "every beautiful grace" shone out most blessedly under the eye of God, and indeed

"There *only* could He fully trace
A life divine below."

It is the reproduction of this life practically in and through the believer now that is the aim and object of the Spirit of God—God (by the Spirit) working in us "the willing and the doing of His good pleasure."

Now it was because this life was so blessedly developed in Paul by the Spirit, and because in true devotedness to the Lord ("Christ Jesus my Lord," as he delighted to own Him) he followed in His steps, accepting fully the path of discipleship here, that he is a pattern for us—a pattern follower of Jesus, who is his Master and ours.

His life is thus a testimony to us that one of like passions with us, and the subject of sovereign grace like unto us who believe, could accept that path and persevere in it, triumphing over all opposition. He proved the sufficiency of Christ and His grace for

every difficulty and emergency, and found, moreover, a joy and blessedness in that path far exceeding everything of this world.

Now it is the same One who apprehended Paul who has also apprehended us, to be partakers of all that heavenly glory with Himself, and like Him there. The path to it is His own, and lies through suffering and death; not death as the judgment of God for the believer, but death as the ending of all connected with the first man as before God, and of all the former course of things, but as also the door to resurrection where glory lies.

Now Paul had the revelation given to him of this heavenly glory, and of the relationships of the believer to Christ there; and by the Spirit he communicated these wondrous revelations to the saints, and sought by his ministry and testimony to lead them to find their object and joy in Christ in glory, and by his own bright example to direct and encourage them in the corresponding path of discipleship here. In short, he desired to have Christ—Son of the Father's love, and glorified Man at God's right hand—as the undivided Object before their hearts, and in the power of this (and of His constraining love) to accept His path of rejection and suffering here, for this was the path which He trod even to death, and that "the death of the cross." He Himself, in the days of His flesh, was constantly preparing His followers for the consequences of His rejection here, in regard both to this life and that glorious resurrection-life into which He was entering. His own words, then, may be recalled to mind for our comfort and encouragement at this time: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might

have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: *but be of good cheer*; I have overcome the world."

What a blessed and perfect Master is He! May we seek grace to follow Him more closely, as Paul did, for "the little while" He leaves us here.

S. M. A.

A LETTER ON THE RELATION OF THE EVANGELIST TO THE ASSEMBLY.*

To the Editor of the "Christian Friend."

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

There has lately been much helpful teaching as to the relationship of the evangelist to the assembly, and his responsibility towards it. I am sure many will be thankful that this truth has come to the front, as the fact of the Lord's servants going out from His assembly, according to Acts xiii. 3, and coming back to it, as in Acts xiv. 26, 27, to give account of all that God had done with them, is full of significance and instruction.

But in proportion as we feel the fitness of this procedure we need to keep in view the converse of it, lest one consideration should obscure the other, and the balance of truth be lost in our souls, and, consequently, some want of harmony be found in our practice. I venture to anticipate a most important advance if, in addition to recognizing the evangelist's responsibility to the assembly, we become more deeply sensible of

* This letter is gladly printed, not as necessarily endorsing all that it contains, but as giving the opportunity for the discussion of an important subject. Further communications would be welcomed. For example, it might be profitably considered whether the fellowship of the assembly should not be sought before going out on service. — Ed.

the assembly's responsibility towards the evangelist. The Word is a two-edged sword, and cuts both ways.

I would say at once that I do not propose to discuss fellowship in this temporal, which, so far as I know, is only once presented as an assembly matter. (Phil. iv. 15.)

I believe it is felt that there is a tendency towards independence on the part of the Lord's servants, and to action apart from, and perhaps in spite of, the exercised conscience of local gatherings. I am not called upon to apologize for such a regrettable state of things, but would offer some considerations that may account for it, seeing that to remove an effect we must discover its cause.

Is it not the case that those labouring in the gospel have been very much *left to themselves* as to every detail of their service? Have local gatherings concerned themselves corporately about those in their midst who addict themselves to this ministry? Have there been united prayer and conference about the spiritual needs of the locality, either in the interest of the gospel, or the seeking after scattered sheep? If those who are specially sensible of their responsible position came together now as in Acts xiii. 2, and, ministering to the Lord, were exercised about His interests here, would that not be as agreeable to Him as at the beginning, and might He not manifest His mind in connection with the assembly as well as independently of it? Surely we must not think that "the edifying of itself" is to be the assembly's only concern, but rather that it is corporately interested in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. (Phil. i. 7.)

Those in active service have sometimes a deep sense

of *responsibility* in connection with their work ; but one fears that the feeling of the bulk of their brethren does not go beyond a voluntary *sympathy* with them, which hardly rises to the height of genuine fellowship, or partnership, in which all the parties feel equally concerned. Whether our connection with the service be at the lower end, in touch with the need, or at the higher, in fellowship with God about it, we should all be equally exercised, feeling jointly responsible ; and *then* workers would no longer serve as units, but in unity with the hearts and consciences of their brethren.

The hand cannot say to the arm, I have no need of thee ; nor the arm to the hand, Your service is no affair of mine. The scripture figure of the body helps us to understand by analogy that if there is communion in suffering there cannot be independence in service.

To give a practical character to these considerations, one might suggest that on the Saturday evening those who have some service in view for the following week should meet together, and, *with all those who feel their partnership in the work*, speak to one another and pray together about the service of each. Such an occasion would be most suitable for presenting local, and other than local, needs ; and, the open map of the harvest-fields being spread before the Lord, earnest prayer might be made that He would send forth labourers.

What blessed and far-reaching consequences might follow, one cannot venture to prophesy, but it is felt that only in some such way is there any prospect of the need being overtaken.

There may be a significance in the fact that it was *from amongst thems* ; that the Spirit sent out the Antioch prophets and teachers, and should He do the

same to-day it could hardly surprise us. So that each local gathering might not only lighten its neighbourhood, but minister, according to its measure, to the greater world beyond.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

S. E. McN.

"THE OLD MAN," "THE FLESH," AND "SIN."

THERE are certain scripture terms in common use amongst us with which most are very familiar, but to which we should, if challenged, find it perhaps difficult to attach any very distinct or definite meaning, or to clearly distinguish one from another. Such are "the old man," "sin," and "the flesh," the intimate connection between which must be evident enough to all.

I propose to enlarge on the terms a little, in the hope that the moral force of each may be more clearly apprehended. I may say, at the outset, that I am unable to realize much difference between the old man and the flesh. "Old man" may perhaps present a more complete idea than "flesh." "Old man" describes a certain order of man which can now be designated as old, because the new has appeared on the scene. I am not aware that the expressions "old" and "new man" are found save in Ephesians and Colossians, in both of which the thought of creation is introduced in connection with the new man. We find there the old and new man set strongly in contrast—the one after or according to the lusts of deceit, the other created after or according to God.

I judge that the term "man" speaks of an order of intelligence being set in certain relationships, and

endowed with affections suited to those relationships; and this is true in both the old and new man, though in the old all is marred by sin. The term "man" conveys to us the idea of what is outward and evident, an object to be apprehended by the mind or senses, and thus the new man is for the Christian the foundation of testimony.

Now, in "flesh" the point of contrast is not "the new man," but "the Spirit" or "spirit"; and the idea is thus evidently in distinction from that of "man," who can be apprehended as an object. The term plainly conveys to us the thought of what is inward or subjective—a source of thought and feeling and purpose. It is undoubtedly used in a moral sense, and hence presents more than the thought of mere animal existence or nature. A man may be "after the flesh" or "after the Spirit"—may find his springs in the one or in the other. But if in the one, he is, so to say, abstracted from the other. Now it is plain that this abstraction could not be until the Spirit was given. In Old Testament saints faith was evidently a most potent factor, and as they were helped of God there was practical righteousness; but until the cross there had not been such a setting aside of the flesh for God's glory as that the Spirit could be communicated, and consequently the saint in his experience could not be abstracted from the flesh as to his *habitual* moral state. He was even as a saint in the flesh. It was the state in which God took account of him, though, withal, helping him in it, or in spite of it.

"The flesh" is so habitually used in connection with sin and evil, that it becomes a little difficult to identify

the term with an unfallen being like Adam; and yet I think it might be said that "in the flesh" was true of Adam, though, of course, without evil. Evidently the love of God was not shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given to him, nor did he find his springs of affection, feeling, and thought in the Spirit, though as God's handiwork he was very good. Now, alas! flesh is characteristically flesh of sin.

I think that we have seen thus far that, while "old" or "new man" presents the idea of an object or order which is evident and observable, "flesh," in contrast to it, gives the idea of a moral spring which governs the mind, temper, and spirit of man, and has its issue in practice. And in this connection we may take up the subject of sin. It is clear that sin exists apart from the state of man or flesh, for the devil sins from the outset. It is a principle that has come into the world by man, and that holds man in bondage; and the Scripture has defined it as "lawlessness," *i.e.* creature will impatient of restraint. Now will, as in flesh, may be spoken of in an innocent sense—*i.e.* as mechanical—the power of volition. A man must will to lift up his hand in order to lift it up, and this is part of flesh or man's bodily condition. It is not in this sense that we are now speaking of will, but purely in a moral sense—in the sense in which, in its full development, it will be seen in Antichrist—defiant disregard of, and opposition to, God.

This is perfectly compatible with a morality (like that of Paul) which claims and obtains the respect of man. The fact is that sin, as to the principle of it, is only known in relation to God, and it is the full revelation of God in Christ that has brought out sin

in its enormity. The Lord said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin"; and the testimony of Christ brought out the fact that hatred of God is an essential and necessary element of sin—God is not only defied, but hated. But this may and does exist in the condition of flesh; hence it is, I think, simple to apprehend the distinction between "sin," "the old man," and "the flesh."

F. E. R.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

JOHN xvi. 8-11.

THERE is an acknowledged difficulty in rendering the proper force of the word given in verse 8 as "reprove." It is variously translated in different places, and hence the context must be taken into account if the mind of the Spirit of God is to be ascertained. The following note will explain, better than any words of our own, where the difficulty lies: "'Convince' (this word is often substituted for 'reprove') supposes effect in the person convinced; 'convict' would not do for righteousness or judgment. I have said 'bring demonstration,' though it supposes the action of the Spirit when come too much; but I use it in the sense that His presence and all that He does affords this demonstration." Accepting this interpretation, we may briefly consider it in connection with the three things here named—sin, righteousness, and judgment. The presence of the Holy Spirit, then, in this world, and all that He does, affords or furnishes the demonstration of the world's sin, "because," as the Lord said, "they believe

not on Me." To see the force of this it must be remembered that the crowning sin of the world was the rejection of Christ. As He said in chapter xv., "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father"; and, secondly, the Holy Spirit is in this world in consequence of the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. His being here, and His activities, proclaim, and loudly proclaim, the world's sin. This will be readily understood. The next statement is, "Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." Without denying in any way that Christ, having glorified God to the uttermost in His death on the cross, is righteously glorified, and this in the love of the Father's heart, it may yet be submitted that the righteousness here is in relation to the world. This is clear, we judge, because it is the presence of the Holy Ghost which furnishes, as before pointed out, the demonstration of it. As another has said, "The righteousness of God as against sin the cross proclaims (Romans iii. 25, 26); and equally as against a world that knows not the Father, by His (Christ) being taken out of it, to be seen by them no more." That God will judge the world by-and-bye in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, was declared by Paul when standing in the midst of Mars' hill; but we learn from these words of our blessed Lord that the righteousness of God is now against the world which has rejected His beloved Son, and that this is shown by His departure from it to the Father. Lastly, we have, "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Satan proved himself to be the prince or ruler of this world in the crucifixion of Christ,

for he succeeded in banding together every class of the people, whether Jews or Gentiles representatively, for the accomplishment of this design. But the prince of the world is the enemy of God, and in that very cross judgment was passed upon him, upon man, and the world. God in His longsuffering, and for the accomplishment of the counsels of grace, may delay the execution of the judgment; but having already passed sentence upon Satan himself, He will as certainly, when the day of grace is ended, deal in righteousness with the world that rejected Christ and accepted His adversary as its ruler. Hence it is that the activity of the Holy Ghost in this world contains for those whose ears are opened a solemn and audible warning of the coming judgment. The prince being judged, his dominion in this world must sooner or later endure the awful weight of God's judicial rod.

“JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND
TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER.”

Yesterday, on Calvary's awful tree,
Jesus shed His precious blood for me,
Died, that I might live and with Him be.

This same Jesus, glorified, *To-day*,
Caring for His people by the way,
Soon shall come and bear us hence away.

Jesus Christ the same, who changeth never,
From whose love no power His saints can sever,
Still shall be our theme of praise, *For ever*.