

THE
Christian's Helper.

“By love serve one another.”—Gal. v. 13.

1908.
(Issued during 1907.)

LONDON :

W. H. G. BLATCHLEY, 27 LANCEFIELD STREET, QUEEN'S PARK, W.

Editor :

**H. FRIEND, 46 PEMBAR AVENUE,
WALTHAMSTOW.**

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Abide in Me.—F. W. G. ..	129
A Sleepless Night and its Results	150
An Inspired Letter.—E.R.W. ..	232
Christ's Lordship.—F. C. V.	37
Christ in the Home ..	41
Ecclesiastes.—C. E. S. ..	11, 27, 70
Gathered Thoughts on James (ch. i.)	15, 58, 92
Grace and Reward.—E.R.W.	217
Jottings	20
John iv.—J. N. D. ..	49
Letters of Interest ..	98, 113
Man's Thoughts or God's Thoughts.—J. H. ..	172
Numbers xv.—H. F.	21
Notes of Addresses to Young Christians.—D. S.	121, 141, 161, 181, 201, 221
Poetry :—	
Another Year.—J. A. O. A.	1
Arise and Shine.—J. M. G.	25
Thy Faithfulness.—J. T. ..	36
His Dealings.—A. S. ..	51
Claimed.—H. S. ..	69
His Way is Perfect.—Anon.	88
Anticipations.—H. S. ..	103
Shadows.—A. S. ..	120
For the Sick.— <i>Jane Crewdson</i>	128
Worship	231

	PAGE
Paul's Prayer, Eph. iii.—E. R. W.	110
Psalms 103.—W. K. and C. E. S.	116
Psalms 55-58 ..	230
Priesthood of Christ ..	235
Repentance and Blessing	90
Receiving the Holy Spirit.—E. R. W. ..	176
Spiritual Blessings.—J. P.	17
Sin.—F. W. G.	94
Some Practical Reflections on Eph. iv.—A. C. H.	197
The Purposes and Desire of the Heart.—W. R. ..	2
Timothy (ii. Ep.)—H. F.	5, 32, 53, 74, 84, 104, 157, 180, 212
The Cross	220
The Kings of Judah.—D. S.	61
The Old Man and the New.—E. R. W.	78
The White Stone	81
"They that Wait upon the Lord."—H. F. ..	101
The Place of the Church.— <i>Trotter</i> ..	136, 179
Two Enrolled Widows.—J. T. ..	191
Useful Notes	39, 60, 100, 117
Unity of the Spirit.—E. R. W. ..	133



ANOTHER YEAR.

Another year has passed away—

A year with goodness crowned ;
With mercies laden every day
Our ransomed souls have found.
Well may we grateful bow to Him
Who gently leads us home,
And makes our cup run o'er the brim,
While through this scene we roam.

And now upon the threshold new
Of an unknown year we stand,—
A path that's hidden yet from view,
Across the desert sand.
But though we have not passed this way
At all, yet heretofore,
Our strength shall be as is our day,
Both now and evermore.

And may He teach us God's own love
Who only knows its deeps,
And lead our hearts to live above,
While here our feet He keeps.
We'd seek to walk with Him alone,
Himself our Treasure rare,
Till rising for us from His throne,
We meet Him in the air.

Our years fly past, a tale soon told,
A vision—lost to view.
Like garments old, this world He'll fold
And fashion it anew.
But He is evermore the same,
His years shall never fail,
And glory ever crowns His name,
Which shall for aye prevail.

THE PURPOSES AND DESIRES OF THE HEART.

(*Gen. vi. 5-7.*)

THE Spirit of God has been pleased to state two grounds upon which God brought the judgment of the flood upon man. First, because of *what He had done*—"The wickedness of man was great in the earth"; and further on we read that this had assumed the twofold form of corruption and violence, those parent sins of Genesis iii. and iv., which will find their full consummation in the day of the Lord, the former in Jerusalem and the antichrist, and the latter in Babylon and the beast. Second, because of *what he was*—"Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"; or, as the margin reads, "The purposes and desires of his heart" were such.

On account of these two things, then, "it repented the Lord that He made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." How little are we impressed with the degree to which the heart of God is affected by the sin of His creatures! Now, after the flood, when man was about to get a new start on the earth, after having been sheltered for a hundred and fifty days from judgment, from Satan, and from the world, what does God say? (*Gen. viii. 21.*) Has His estimate of man risen? Has His judgment become modified? Not in the least. He utters not a word about man's conduct, for as yet no space had been given for it to be manifested under his new conditions. But, as to the deeper question, we read:—"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." He who "searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (*1 Chron. xxviii. 9*) needs no waiting for their doings;

for He knoweth what is in man, and that He cannot commit Himself to him.

But there is here a point of deepest interest, viz., that because of what He saw in man, or, if you please, in spite of it (see margin), He declares that He will not again smite the earth any more for man's sake. And why this comforting word, this assuring promise, as undeserved as it was unsought? The answer is surely obvious to every student of the Word; it was simply and solely because of the incoming between Himself and man of all that was signified in the altar and holocaust of Noah. The first erection on the typically new earth was an altar unto God, and upon this a mighty sacrifice, whole-burnt offering, ascended to Him, definitely referring God's heart to the excellency and the efficacy of Christ's person and work. He is met, as it were, on the threshold of the renewed earth by Him who is the beginning of the creation of God.

Thus, as man's entrance upon the antediluvian world (driven forth from the garden) was as carrying the *curse* by which he had inaugurated his relations to it when his former relations to God were suspended, so now his entrance upon the typically new world was marked by restored relations to God, inaugurated by *promise* and by *covenant*; so benignant, too, in their character that from that moment to the present his material condition has been substantially and continuously ameliorated. And again we ask, Why was this? Is it not evident that He who saw the end from the beginning so knew, on the one hand, that judgment would work no change in the human heart, and so found, on the other, full and deep satisfaction in what Noah's altar and sacrifice expressed, as denoted by the words, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour," or savour of rest, that He proclaimed, as it were, an amnesty to man, and

retired with profound delight to rest in the Son of His love ?

Look we on now to Christianity, and again these thoughts and imaginations of man's heart come before us (2 Cor. x. 4-5) ; for, be it as left alone in lawlessness, or under and after divine judgment, or when brought upon Christian ground, man as man is unchanged, no matter what be his dispensation or the character of his calling. But see how the Spirit of God deals in holy peremptoriness with these hidden activities of man's heart in the case of believers. Does grace give licence to the flesh and its works ? By no means. On the contrary, not satisfied with rigorously controlling all that is overt, we have here the deepest springs of fleshly activity touched in the core. The " strongholds " are to be scaled and pulled down ; the " imaginations," with every high thing in their train, are to be cast down, and " every thought " is to be brought down " into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Nothing less than this is what Christianity proposes to effect for the believer ; for you, dear reader, and for me. Is it so with us ? Has the Spirit of God achieved this noiseless and unseen conquest over what He finds in us, for the glory of Christ, as captives in His train ? How far-reaching and how deep-searching is that word— " every *thought* " subjugated to Christ !

May His grace lead us into real exercise of soul as to the purposes and desires of our hearts, that His eye may behold those hidden springs, which only He surveys, working with true fidelity to Himself under the ceaseless control of His Spirit into the joy and delight of His own heart. Says the Apostle, " I am jealous over you with godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

II. TIMOTHY (CHAPTER I.)

PAUL'S Second Epistle to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith, is a letter which informed him of the widespread departure from the truth then prevailing and the consequent confusion ensuing, leading eventually to the apostacy with which this dispensation closes. In view of that ruin, definite directions are given by which Timothy could order his steps and continue in that obedience to which every saint of God is called.

It is an epistle, then, for us to-day in a very special sense, and we do well, if we desire "to please God more and more," to pay special heed to the principles therein laid down for his, and our, guidance.

How soon the truth of God had been surrendered this letter shows. How painful to Paul's heart this corruption was comes out also; for it is scarcely possible to read through this, his last inspired communication, without perceiving the sorrow of heart which weighed heavily upon him. But, in close connection, we find notes of joy and confidence in God, the unfailing One, and assured that His Word was not bound, he laboured on in view of that *appearing* which he loved and ardently longed for, but which had evidently lost its hold upon those who had departed from the paths of righteousness.

In the opening verse the Apostle presents his credentials. Varied are the ways in which he does that, though undoubtedly there is in every case a suitability to the circumstances with which he is engaged. He was "an apostle of Jesus Christ" and that by the will of God. Called to enter the ranks of the apostles by Jesus Christ, it was in complete accordance with the supreme will, for by God he had been marked out for this very official position. Authority he

possessed, but derived from no human source whatever.

And his apostleship he here connects "with the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." This points us on, whilst also definitely revealing Christ as the source of eternal life. Does this word indicate that Paul's ministry and service were peculiarly in connection with future glory and the path of faith, linking every soul therein for blessing to that One in whom the promise and the life were ?

To Timothy his son dearly beloved, he writes—to Timothy a man like-souled with himself (Phil. ii. 20), and to whom, as his words intimate, he was bound with bonds of deepest affection. Unlike, they were, in many respects, yet one object united them, one power cemented their souls together. Disparity of age was no hindrance; difference in disposition—the one naturally fiery, impetuous, the other shrinking and timid—was no detriment. Christ was before them both, and *His things* they truly sought

The greeting is the usual Pauline salutation of grace and peace, with the addition of mercy—*grace*, that blessing might be richly his, for of that it is the source; *mercy*, to meet personal need, and the peculiar circumstances of the individual; *peace*, the condition of heart and mind that befits those who are before God on the ground of accomplished redemption, through faith in Him.

In expressing his thankfulness to God for what Timothy had been to him, and mentioning his earnest, ardent longing to see him again, and his continued supplication on his behalf, Paul states what had been characteristic of his forefathers and of himself. With pure conscience they had served God—God had been before them and His Word the ground of their conduct; as the Apostle could say of himself, Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless (Phil. iii. 6). Paul once thought that he

did *God service* in his unceasing endeavours to stamp out the name of Jesus, and in persecuting those who bore that name despised (John xvi. 2). The righteous Judge will justly apportion all things, but plainly purity of conscience (of which so much is now being wrongly made) is no justification for action contrary to the revealed mind of God. The conscience has to be enlightened, and the opening of His Word, it is, that giveth light and understanding (Ps cxix. 130).

Then he calls attention to the faith unfeigned which had characterised the two godly women mentioned, the grandmother and mother of Timothy; and that it was in his "child in the faith" also Paul was confident. Is there not here a note of encouragement to Timothy, whose spirit was perhaps oppressed and discouraged on account of the manifold difficulties and general unfaithfulness which prevailed? The energy of faith was verily needed then, and the distressing condition of the assembly called for its manifestation—was, in fact, an absolute necessity if the saint would stand fast in communion with God.

For this provision had been made, and how necessary to remember this to-day; for God's provision then is God's provision now, and in this Epistle the path for "the man of God" is marked out. It is easy—how easy we know but too well!—in the midst of trials to feel faint and weary and to consequently drop out of rank discouraged and harassed, forgetful of the portion with which God has abundantly endowed His own to meet all the exigencies of the way.

So Timothy is encouraged to "stir up," or re-ignite, the gift of God which, in a special way, had been bestowed upon him. Had he faltered, wavered, inclined to despair? A remedy against such has been provided. God has given us,

says Paul; *not* a spirit of cowardice which shrinks from every danger, and which oft exclaims "there is a lion in the way," but the very opposite—not a spirit of fear, but of *power*; not of indifference, but of love; not inability to discern things that differ, but of *wise discretion* (ver. 7). There is power to overcome obstacles, love to continue and endure; sound mind to judge aright. Thus is the saint empowered of God as these are exercised to walk in the very midst of confusion in fellowship with Him. What a voice this has for us!

True Christianity ever makes headway with difficulty in the world; but how the tension is tightened for the true servant of God when those professedly acceptors of it are found in a practical way its rejectors. The narrow path and the call to obedience which are set out can be acceptable neither to carnal nor fleshly people. The faithful servant, not giving a testimony of his own, but proclaiming "*the* testimony of the Lord," proves indeed that the disciple is not above his Master. "The testimony of the Lord" is what Scripture reveals of Him; but as this does not set off man and his doings, it is obnoxious, and involves the preachers of it in obloquy and suffering. Prominent, more or less, they may be, but popular never—as Paul put it in speaking of his own ministry, they may be "as unknown, and yet well known" (2 Cor. vi.).

The exhortation is, then, not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of Paul, the prisoner of the Lord. True Christianity, whilst it imparts untold blessing, tells also of many tribulations to be passed through, and much suffering to be endured. This we shrink from. But shall we "receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Christ was as real and as precious to Paul when a prisoner as when outside the prison wall a free man. His

heart was set on Christ, his energies directed towards Him, and never did he so interpret the truth of God as to make it revolve round himself as a centre. John Baptist with waning faith could ask, evidently in connection with his adverse circumstances, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" (Luke vii. 20); but is instructed with manifold signs of a wondrous power *that could deliver* of a blessedness attaching to those not offended in Him. That blessedness was the Apostle's, and spite of the adversity which he had passed through, his confidence was increasingly in Him in whom he had believed.

So Timothy must, and every true servant in his measure likewise, partake of the afflictions of the Gospel, the evil which accompanied the proclamation of the glad tidings, but in which they would be sustained by a power not their own—the power of God, according to which they were to endure.

That power ever abides; and though things might appear unstable and insecure, and the corrupting influences of apostacy and infidelity make rapid headway, yet His counsels—God's eternal counsels—will stand, and what He has purposed will assuredly be brought to pass. All here rests, not on the responsibility of man, in which he has ever failed, but on the Eternal One Himself—on the love and grace that are in Him. Fixed thus on a sure and solid foundation, difficulties are not to daunt nor to deter the saint, but rather to call into exercise the faith which reposes in Him, and the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind which He has given to His own.

But if there are trials and afflictions awaiting the faithful *here*, and in connection with the proclamation of God's grace, there is glory *there*, the obtaining of which depends, not upon our doings, but upon the changeless counsels of

our God (ver. 9). Here all is sure and stable! Bonds of assurance are forged for faith here! Volumes of truth lie even on the surface! He who by His power enables the servant to endure, has saved us, not simply from our sins and the consequences thereof, but for Himself, and with that glory in view to which our calling pertains. This is evident from the order.

Everything is of Him. Man and his doings are rigidly excluded. God saves; God calls; and our calling, holy in character like unto Him who gave it, embraces the whole range of blessing that pertains to us in Christ. And this is blessing that comes not according to works. His grace be magnified! Were it otherwise, what losers in every way we should be. Merit plays no part in this—it is according to His own purpose and grace given in Christ Jesus before the ages. We here get deep down into the heart and mind of God, and find out that in His great plan, we, who are the objects of His grace, figure. Surpassingly wonderful it is, in contemplating this eternity of blessing, to be brought to a point beyond which the finite mind cannot go—*His own purpose*. Here mind is baffled, and human affection can give no explanation. For it was not that He was compelled thus to act. Necessity was not laid upon Him. This the words, “His own grace,” make plain; for grace is given, not won. But to think of it! The infinite God, “who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. i. 11), is (and has been) working out His own purpose, and providing for its entire completion in saving sinful creatures and calling them with a holy calling. Set apart for Him ere the dispensations of time began to run, the grace centred in Christ, carries us on into that eternity “when time shall cease to be.”

ECCLESIASTES.

FROM two opposite points of view is life on earth generally regarded by mankind. The one half view it as a prospect opening out before them ; the other half take a retrospective survey of all they have passed through. Like the cloudless morning of a long summer's day does it appear to one just emerging out of childhood, as radiant with hope he sets forth on his journey to realize the dream of his boyhood. Like the gloomy end of a winter's day does it appear to many a one who has reached the verge of that span ordinarily allotted to man on earth, as chastened and bowed down, it may be, with the remembrance of failures, the old man travels onward to the tomb. Each has formed an estimate of what life here is, but the one speaks of what he hopes for, the other tells of that which he has found. A man's idea of a road he has not yet travelled on will often turn out to be wrong ; so youth's estimate of life is generally fallacious. Can we trust to one who has travelled the road himself to give us a just idea of what life on earth really is ? Each one can tell us of what he has found, and may seek to indoctrinate us with his own idea ; but the picture will be differently coloured, according to the trials or joys each has met with by the way. It will be but the experience of an individual after all.

Man wants something more. Where shall he find it ? The wisdom of the ancients cannot supply it ; the researches of those who have lived in our day cannot furnish us with it. It needs one gifted with real wisdom to estimate it ; it needs one able to search diligently into the things of earth to discover it. One and one only of the children of Adam has been competent for the task, and he, as competent, has undertaken to perform it. What David, the man after

God's own heart, could not have accurately delineated, that Solomon, his son, could and did; and the Book of Ecclesiastes is the utterance of the Preacher, dictated by the Spirit of God, to provide man authoritatively from God, but also experimentally by the wisest of men, with a just estimate of what life here below for a child of Adam really is. Endowed by God with a measure of wisdom surpassing all before him ("for he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol." 1 Kings iv. 31), and never equalled by any that have come after him, king in Jerusalem, possessed of wealth beyond any monarch the world has ever seen ("for silver was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon"), all that wealth could purchase, all that power could command, all that wisdom could search out, he could enjoy and understand. "What," then, "can the man do that cometh after the king?" "Who can eat, or who else can hasten (*or* enjoy) more than I?" (chap. ii. 12, 25).

This was no idle boast. A man of pleasure, a votary of science, the ruler over kings, meting out justice to his subjects, answering all the hard questions of the Queen of Sheba, fertile in invention, diligent in study, rich in all that constituted the wealth of a nomad, pastoral, or settled and highly civilised people—what source of pleasure was sealed up to him? What field of knowledge on earth was kept from him? Of all the pleasures that man can revel in, he had drunk deep, while at the same time he investigated the works of God, and learned those laws by which the life and order of the universe are regulated. And, when we speak of Solomon's wisdom, we must remember it was not mere genius as people talk of, nor the fruit of matured study and diligent attention; but God gave him wisdom and knowledge, besides riches,

wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings that had been before him, neither shall any after him have the like (2 Chron. i. 12). Such was the one appointed to depict faithfully what the life on earth of a fallen creature is, and can only be : as One and One alone who has trod this earth as man has rightly and fully exhibited what man should be. David's son describes the one ; David's Lord has set forth the other.

The Book of Ecclesiastes then is of great value, and might profitably be studied by men of the world in our day. Its writer had no reason to bear a grudge against the world ; as men would say, it had used him well, conceding him his place, paying him due honour, and rendering full homage to his marvellous wisdom. For, " king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year " (2 Chron. ix. 22-24).

Competent then surely to tell us what life is, what has he to say of it ? How does he describe it ? " Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher ; vanity of vanities : all is vanity " (ch. i. 1). Were these the words of a disappointed man, whose hopes had been cruelly crushed, and himself roughly treated by the way, none could wonder at such a commencement. But these are the words of the most prosperous, humanly speaking, of men the world has ever witnessed. " Vanity of vanities "—a mere breath, a vapour passing over the earth, short-lived in its existence, such is the recorded experience of the son of David, king in Jerusalem, and that not of some things but of all. " All is vanity, saith the Preacher." And here he takes a title

not elsewhere met with outside this book—Preacher. He would collect those about him who were desirous to hear, and instruct them, for such is the meaning of the term; So, whilst other portions of Scripture treat of the future, and the path of the righteous on earth, this addresses itself to all whose hearts are in the world, pursuing the occupations of life, and tells them what they really are, as the king's son has discovered by his own experience, and has recorded by the pen of inspiration for the instruction of all who will hearken to him.

“What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?” He takes up the diligent, well-occupied man, toiling away; the man who finds plenty to do and is happy in doing it, thoroughly engaged in the business of life. But why this cry of the Preacher, who “sought to find out acceptable words” (ch. xii. 10)? And why does he view things so mournfully? The secret comes out. “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.” The earth abides, man does not; hence the question that needs no answer, “What profit,” &c. And here we are furnished with a view of death, of which it is well for man to be reminded. Death is the wages of sin; but it is not viewed in this aspect in Ecclesiastes. It is not the reason of its entrance into the world that Solomon dilates on, but its presence here as a worm at the tree of pleasure (ii. 15; iii. 19, 20; v. 15; vi. 6; ix. 3). It mars pleasure, it chills enjoyment; for it cuts off man just when he would sit down after years of toil to reap the fruit of his labour. How different was the experience of Adam ere he fell! How different will be the experience of saints during the millennium, and of men on the new earth! But now to man feeling the consequences of the fall, death is the great mar-

plot, blasting all his hopes. What takes place after death is another matter ; other Scriptures set that forth. This book regards death from this side of the grave, and shows how it effects a severance between man and the fruits of all his labour, which he thinks he is just about to reap. And the misery of it is just this : man has laboured for years and looks naturally to enjoy what he, not others, has amassed ; but finds death comes in and takes him away, whilst he leaves all the fruits of his labour to be enjoyed by another. " There is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity : yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil " (ii. 21).

C. E. S.

(To be continued—D.V.)

GATHERED THOUGHTS ON JAMES (Ch. I.).

" THE Epistle by the title as well as by its contents proclaims its peculiarity. It addresses the twelve tribes that were in the dispersion, not the elect strangers of the dispersion, but the mass of the old people of Jehovah. Nor is this quite unexampled even in the apostle Paul's feeling and phrase ; for on the occasion of his speech before king Agrippa and Festus the Procurator of Judea, he speaks of ' our twelve tribes, earnestly serving day and night,' hoping to attain to the promise made by God unto the fathers (Acts xxvi.). There is thus, as has been remarked, a striking counterpart between the Old and New Testament in this, that one book in the New is devoted as a testimony to Israel, as one in the Old (Jonah) is

devoted similarly to the great Gentile city of that day (Ninevah), both exceptional and proving the rule."

"It is an epistle to 'the twelve tribes scattered abroad.' There is no other epistle in the New Testament which recognises Israel after this manner. In fact, we rightly think of it as in a sense foreign to Christianity to do so. We know that God has promises for Israel which will be fulfilled in a day soon to come; but in the meanwhile the branches are broken off: Israel as a nation is set aside in order that God may fulfil His purpose of taking for Himself a heavenly people out of the world, a people formed of Jews and Gentiles, brought together upon equal terms, and with higher promises than Israel's ever were."

"The doctrine of Christianity is not the subject of this epistle. It gives God His place in the conscience, and with regard to all that surrounds us. It thus girds up the loins of the Christian, presenting also the near coming of the Lord and His present discipline—a discipline with respect to which the assembly of God ought to possess intelligence, and activity founded thereon. The world also, and all that makes an appearance, is judged from God's point of view."

"James is pre-eminently a teacher of righteousness, and was used of God in Jerusalem to meet the transition state between the old state that was about to close, and the Christianity that was known more simply and fully among the Gentiles. Accordingly his teaching, though as truly inspired of God as that of Paul, does not develop redemption in itself, its source, its objects, or its effects, but connects itself with the new birth, and the life we have from God by the word of truth, as opposed to outbreaks of temper and tongue which are the workings of fallen nature."

“ Everywhere we shall find that James is holding up before us faith—that which in itself speaks of the abandonment of all confidence in self—of all mere human resources—to turn to One who is absolutely sufficient, and who is absolutely for us. How simple it should be, now that we have Christ, that this is true ! How blessed to have in His cross the judgment of man in every way that is natural to him, the setting aside of the old man altogether, in order that we may put on the new man, which is but the man in Christ : the man standing in an excellency which is not his own, and in a power which is divine—power made perfect in weakness ! How well, therefore, we may be set to learn the lesson of James’ Epistle : How profitable we shall find it just simply to recognize that ‘ if patience have her perfect work,’ we shall be ‘ perfect and entire, wanting nothing ! ’ ”

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. EPH. I.

THE spiritual blessings mentioned in Ephesians i. are perfectly compatible with the various relationships mentioned in ch. vi. “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ ” (ch. i. 3). And this was no after-thought with God ; for the next verse tells us it was “ according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before Him in love : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to

the good pleasure of His will." A holy God could choose, and so fit that souls should be "holy and without blame before Him in love." And it was the Father's good pleasure to have the children around Him—those taken into favour in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. We are to be consciously in the enjoyment of this, and to know that it is according to the riches of His grace.

How often we get "*in whom.*" Yes! it is all *in Him, in Christ*, and "according as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath chosen us in Him." (ver. 7-14).

The Apostle was unceasing in thanksgiving and prayer that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." (The desires in connection with this are found in verses 18-23). This knowledge is heart knowledge, not simply that of the head. The heart being enlightened, we may take in *the calling and the inheritance* of God the Father of glory. This He holds in the saints as Jehovah did His land in His people of old.

Then the mighty power which God wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead and setting Him down at His right hand in the heavenlies, is His power towards us who believe, and by which the dead in Christ will be raised, the living changed, and all His in person enter upon what even now in spirit is the portion of the believer. It is for us to feed upon the old corn of the land, upon One who could say, "Before Abraham was, I am," upon One who was "the root of David" (Rev. v. 5; xxii. 16). As the Lord would receive at the hand of Israel of old the first of all the fruit of the earth, so now the Lord accepts the thank-offering of the heart gladdened by His own grace, and given to appreciate in some measure His thoughts about His own Son.

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD. *Ephes. vi.*

That these spiritual blessings may be realized in spite of spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies, the whole armour of God is to be put on. The power of the devil has been annulled (Heb. ii. 14), but his *wiles* are to be guarded against (Eph. vi. 11). And for that purpose "put on the whole armour of God." "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth"—strong in the Lord, truth in the inward parts, consciously under its power. This is enjoined for journeying (see Ex. xii.), for service, or for conflict.

"Having on the breastplate of righteousness," the heart and affections are well protected; with God the strength, joy and boast of the heart, with Christ its object, hope and delight, there is rightness with God and among men. "Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." How blessed to stand or move in the power of such a gospel! Like the peace of God which passeth all understanding, it makes the soul superior to all circumstances. Then above all things the shield of faith has to be taken. Here is implied unfailing faith and unquestioning trust in the wisdom and love of God; for a quiver or a question in the heart as to this would be exposure to the fiery dart.

And to have present to the mind the knowledge and power of God's salvation—how suitable to cover and adorn the head. Then to be at home in the truth, and the Spirit free to take and apply God's word; what a weapon, and how irresistible when thus used in conscious self-insufficiency, trusting in and waiting upon God, and the heart taking in and bearing up all saints.

May we each seek to know more of all the blessedness into which we are brought in Christ, and also to know more of the practical use of this panoply of God!

JOTTINGS.

“**TRIBULATIONS** are treasures; and if we are wise, we should reckon our afflictions among our rarest jewels. The caverns of sorrow are minds of diamonds. Our earthly possessions may be silver, but temporal trials are, to the saints, invariably gold. We may grow in grace through what we enjoy, but we probably make the greatest progress through what we suffer. Soft gales may be pleasant for heaven-bound vessels, but rough winds are better. The calm is our way, but God hath His way in the whirlwind, and He rides on the wings of the wind. Saints gain more by their losses than by their profits. Health cometh out of their sicknesses, and wealth floweth out of their poverties.”

“Conflicts bring experience, and experience brings that growth in grace which is not to be attained by any other means.”
—*Spurgeon.*

“I know not what lies before me,
 What the untried year may be;
 But I know that Christ my Saviour
 Has marked it out for me.
 “It may be that ‘the valley’
 Will end before the year,
 And the light of the ‘King of Glory’
 To my waiting soul appear.”

—*Numerical Bible.*

NUMBERS XV.

WHAT place more suitable than the wilderness with its barrenness and blight to discover to a people the resources of their God. Under such conditions they must necessarily *learn Him*, proving the grace and goodness that dwell in Him. Many "Ebenezers" could Israel have raised along the winding way they traversed from the house of bondage to the land of promise—from servitude to liberty; from Egypt to Canaan. But murmuring rather than thanksgiving characterised them, as they forgot both the rigour of Egypt and the bounty of the land to which they journeyed; and He, whose heart was full of grace, was compelled to act in judgment.

But that it was His "strange work" is apparent from what is given in this chapter; for after the grievous departure recorded in the previous one, and the solemn announcements connected therewith, how very gracious on His part to give just *then* the word of instruction about what they were to do "when," as He says, "ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you."

For forty years were to elapse ere that would be true, forty years of wandering were before them, but entrance to that land for the nation was assured, for it rested on His promise. "Which I give unto you," sets that forth. Confidence God would beget in His people. Can we not say, He strives to that end?—and that is begotten surely where there is faith to profit by the word addressed.

And promise and grace are not far separated, and as, in the land, there may be the desire on the part of His people to draw near to God, He lays down instruction for them. For apart from His revealed mind no one has any just idea of what would be suitable to Him. To provide for this God spoke, and showed that a burnt-offering or free-will offering would be acceptable to Him, but in a prescribed way it must be done. Obedience, based on His law, ascends as a sweet savour to Him. To approach in any other way, however real the desire, is to defy, not honour, God, and to follow in the way of Cain.

Accompanying the sacrifice there went the meat-offering and drink-offering. Details concerning these are given. God omits nothing. And it is to be carefully noticed that the wine in the drink-offering was to be in exact proportion to the oil in the meat-offering. The joy of the saint is inseparable from Christ, and is proportionate to his apprehension of His Person in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Then grace is not limited to Israel, and so the stranger, a sojourner in the land, could draw near also, but according to this "one law and one manner" (ver. 10). But neither promise nor bestowed grace weakens the claims of God, and in acknowledgment of these a heave-offering was to be presented of the bread of the land. So surely would there thus be the recognition and owning of their deep obligation to Him, and in communion with their God they could eat.

And grace finds expression in another way also—provision is made for sins of ignorance, first in connection with the whole congregation, and then the individual. And it is instructive to see that though the sin be one committed without the knowledge of the congregation, and so one of ignorance, yet the whole assembly have assigned to them the responsibility of putting it away before the Lord. No

one was exempted, not even the priest (Lev. iv.), nor the stranger dwelling in their midst (ver. 26); for it was a question, not simply of their ignorance, but of what God was and what was due to Him.

All the congregation had to offer a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, for God would have them exercised about that disobedience which had interrupted communion. So these sacrifices were required, and in the first they are identified with the perfectness of the One of whom it spoke, as in the other their sin is put clean away. The burnt-offering, speaking of the devotedness and perfection of the Son of God's love, met the heart of God, and was to Him "a savour of rest," whilst the sin-offering satisfied the claims of His throne completely.

Righteously He could say, "It shall be forgiven all the congregation." What cheering words for them! And yet how plainly they set forth a necessity if they were to be and abide in happy accord with Him who had brought them out of the land of Egypt to be their God (ver. 41). Thus only, atonement effected for them, could interrupted communion again be enjoyed. What a sense of the enormity of sin God would beget in His people! To ignore it or to make light of it, would be ruinous. An inadvertent sin, it might be pleaded, and yet the whole assembly of Israel was collectively defiled, for all is measured according to the perfect ways of God. And the individual has likewise to bring his offering, ere his sin is effaced and forgiveness granted.

Next, sins of presumption are mentioned. Death followed the presumptuous sin; for in such there was open defiance of God shown by despising His word. So suitably the prayer ascends: "Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins" (Ps. xix., 13).

Deeply interesting are the two incidents that complete this chapter. The first one is, seemingly, a case of presumptuous sin. When it occurred we are not told beyond that it was "while the children of Israel were in the wilderness" that the man was caught gathering sticks on the Sabbath. Put in ward, inquiry is then instituted as to what should be done to him. But did the law contain no instructions about such a case? Searching for the term "gathering sticks," disappointment would follow; for there is no specific mention of such a thing. But were it therefore concluded that His word did not speak expressly about such things, then Ex. xxxi. 14-16 would show the falsity of the conclusion. Is not such a case included in the clause, "Whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people"? "*Any work*" is surely a very comprehensive term!

Solemn and instructive is this incident, and especially so as it has pleased the Holy Ghost to give the account of it immediately after the teaching about sins of ignorance and presumption. For the former there was forgiveness; death was the penalty for the latter—and that sentence is imposed upon the sabbath-breaker here.

Chapter and verse then, as people say, so often demanded with the air of deep spirituality, cannot always be given for the sin that it is sought to condemn or to bolster up; but light for His people's guidance God has most graciously given. If it be a question of conduct, then how much the word covers that we (God's people) are of the light and not of the darkness (1 Thess. v.); and very inclusive is the statement that "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John, v., 17). Neither this nor that is mentioned, but "*all* unrighteousness is sin" is condemnatory of ALL unrighteousness. Let us not be deceived. An amount of presumption may underlie the

plea, piously advocated perhaps, for chapter and verse ; but the assertion of Scripture is, however wayward our thoughts may be, that all unrighteousness *is sin*. By His Word our thoughts and ways must be regulated.

But to return. The case of the sabbath-breaker terminates in death by stoning according to the Word of Jehovah, and then follows the command about the ribbon of blue. Note the purpose it had to serve : " That ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them." They were not to be like the stick-gatherer, and seek after their own heart and their own eyes.

God's people have ever needed to be saved from this self-first policy. May the ribbon of blue in its true spiritual significance be upon our garments, that, filled with the knowledge of His will, we be verily fruitful for Him.

H.F.

ARISE AND SHINE !

" Arise, shine, for thy light is come : and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—Isa. lx. 1.

ARISE ! for many all around,
Under " the power of darkness " bound
Sigh for the light that thou hast found :
Arise and shine !

Thou knowest not how near, how far,
The limits of thine influence are ;
Then, like a heavenward guiding star,
Arise and shine !

Some that have wandered far astray
May find the "new and living Way,"
Led by thy life's inviting ray :
Arise and shine !

"Thy light is come !" why hesitate ?
The Spirit's power will penetrate
The gloom on every hand so great.
Arise and shine !

No quick'ning light canst thou afford,
Save by "the entrance of His Word" ;
Then, in "the glory of the Lord,"
Arise and shine !

Dost thou possess no talents bright ?
Think of the noiseless power of light,
And if but *silence* be thy might,
Arise and shine !

While death with deep'ning shadows rife
Enshrouds this world of sin and strife,
Let us who have the light of life,
Arise and shine !

And pour the beams of grace with all
Their healing warmth on those who fall,
Till they, constrained by love's sweet call,
Arise and shine !

Lord, let our lives reflections be
Of this "commended love" so free,
And thus as witnesses for thee,
Arise and shine !

For, as we gaze "with open face,"
Upon the glory of Thy grace,
We would, on our benighted race,
Arise and shine!

And since we'll own Thee without fear
When Thou in glory dost appear,
May we, in Thy rejection here
Arise and shine!

Though men Thy light and love deride,
Oh, let us not their glories hide,
But, "laying every weight aside,"
Arise and shine!

J. M. G.

ECCLESIASTES.

WHAT a trouble then is death, an unwelcome visitor, which none can keep out of their house. It comes unbidden, it comes at an unseasonable time in man's eyes, and strips its victim of everything; for "as he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go; and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?" (ch. v., 15, 16). And whatever his position on earth, all finally go to one place (ch. vi., 6), the rich, the poor, the wise, the fool, the righteous, the wicked are found at last with the untimely birth, which has never seen the sun. And death, the great leveller of all ranks, reduces man to a level below himself, even to

that of the beasts ; “ for that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts : even one thing befalleth them : as the one dieth, so dieth the other ; yea they have all but one breath ; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast ; for all is vanity. All go unto one place ; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again ” (ch. iii., 19, 20). With the thread of man’s life thus unrolling before him, at one end his exit from the womb, at the other his exit from the world by death, all that is seen being the transient existence of a mortal born to die, we can understand the reason of that cry, “ What profit hath a man, ” etc.

But if death deprives a man of the enjoyment of the fruits of his toil, his life and all that surrounds him speaks of a ceaseless and reiterated labour. The work begun is never perfected. Things in heaven and things on earth proclaim this. “ The sun ariseth, and the sun goeth down and hasteth to his place where he arose, going toward the south, and turning again to the north ” (thus some connect ver. 5, 6). Each day the work is done only to be repeated again the next. Each year the course it has traversed, is traversed again. “ The wind, ” too, “ whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuits. ” The rivers are ever running to the sea, “ yet the sea is not full ; unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again, ” or perhaps better, “ unto the place where the rivers go, thither they turn to go. ” “ All things are full of labour ; man cannot utter it ; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, not the ear filled with hearing. ” Thus nature would teach him, if he regarded it aright, that here, as yet, no abiding rest can be enjoyed. Life is a busy scene. What has been will be, and there is nothing new under the sun. And, to complete the picture of vanity, there is no remembrance of former things, neither shall

there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after." The obliviousness in Solomon's days of what had gone before was not a feature peculiar to his time. It has, it will characterise man in all ages. What profit, then, is there in the labour of man? What has been done will be done again, and what has been effected will be forgotten by the generations which may come after.

With this as the preface to his book, the Preacher proceeds to show that he writes, not from hearsay, nor culls the wisdom of others, but has tried for himself what life under the sun is for one of the human race (Ch. i. 12-ii. 26).

He sets himself resolutely to the task of searching out by wisdom all things that are done under the sun. In this he made good use of that wonderful gift God had bestowed on him. He beheld them all, "and behold," he writes, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Man may see the defects, be conscious of the want, but he cannot supply it. What a condition to be in! Such is man's condition on earth as one who has departed from God. He must feel keenly, if he feels at all, how bitter are the results of turning from the living and true God. He sees what is crooked, discerns what is wanting, but cannot put things straight, nor supply that which is lacking. "All the foundations of the earth are out of course" are the words of Asaph. "All is vanity and vexation of spirit" is the experience of the king's son. And this, we must remember, is not the experience of the sinner, reaping the fruit of what he has sown, but one of the old creation (though a sinner himself) feeling the ruin and disorder sin has brought on the earth.

As originally created by God, man was meant to find unalloyed delight on earth, with a nature capable of enjoy-

ment, a mind capable of instruction and expansion, and a frame capable of exertion ; and everything around him would have ministered to his pleasure, or have afforded opportunities for the full development of his faculties. Is that the case now ? Let us listen to the words of the Preacher again : “ I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem, yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly : I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief ; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow ” (ch. i. 16-18). This is human experience, yet not the experience which a man of necessity must have, but the experience of all men, who are suffering under the consequences of the fall. And however great man may be on earth, whatever be the powers of his mind or the yearnings of his heart, he cannot as a child of Adam get beyond what is here described. Like some fair ruin, with here and there traces of exquisite workmanship still remaining, by which we can contrast the evident design of the architect with the present condition of the building, so we can discern in man’s feelings and powers what he was originally capable of, whilst compelled to own he is but a wreck of that noblest of God’s works first seen on the sixth day of creation.

But whence did he acquire that experience which enabled him to pronounce such a verdict on all the pursuits of men under the sun ? He tells us : “ I said in mine heart, go to now, I will prove thee with mirth : therefore, enjoy pleasure ; and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad : and of mirth, What doeth it ? I sought in mine

heart to give myself unto wine (yet acquainting, or guiding, mine heart with wisdom), and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men which they should do under heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works ; I builded me houses : I planted me vineyards ; I made me gardens and orchards ; and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits ; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them ; I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labour ; and this was my portion of all my labour ” (Ch. ii. 1-10). Such was the wide range of pleasures intellectual and carnal that he explored. Nothing was withheld of any joy ; but whilst entering so keenly into all that he describes, he tells us his wisdom remained with him. Fully competent, then, was he from personal experience, and from the wisdom which never forsook him, to estimate aright what all this was worth. Would not such an one be satisfied with what this life afforded. If others less favoured were disappointed, he at least had his fill of everything he desired. And, having drunk deep of all that could be indulged in, he has left on record what he found it all to be. “ Behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” The value of wisdom he discerned ; “ it excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness ” ; but to the fool as well as to the wise death comes, and after death the fool and wise are forgotten, yea, the wise man dieth as the fool. Hence he hated life, and he hated all the labour which he had laboured under the sun, because he must leave it to the man which shall be after him, and who knoweth, he mournfully asks, whether he shall be a wise man or a fool ? History answers the question, and illustrates forcibly the

vanity of all things which he felt so keenly. Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men that had stood before Solomon his father, and lost by his act of folly the allegiance of the ten tribes. He forsook also the Lord after three years of his reign had elapsed, witnessed the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt, and lost the treasures Solomon had amassed. The shields of gold went to swell the coffers of Egypt, and Rehoboam had to substitute shields of brass in their stead. From speaking of himself, Solomon turns to others, and taking a survey of all things done under the sun, declares all is vanity.

(To be continued.)

C.E.S.

II. TIMOTHY.

(Chapter I.)

THE divine purpose that redeemed creatures should be found in the glory in direct association with Christ was made plain by the manifestation of Christ. Why had He come? And what was effected by His coming? His own words, recorded in the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel, answer the former question: Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (ver. 24). Much fruit there was to be through His death and resurrection. Of this it has been most truly said that "it was from man's estate that it could not righteously be otherwise before God. Death only can meet the evil, or fill the void, and His death alone. He only could save, but through His death and resurrection;

for as He would die, so He could rise, and by the infinite value of His death avail for others so as to raise them righteously. Living He even, He must abide alone ; dying, He bears much fruit in the energy of His resurrection."

Alone He was not to abide. He came that *He* might possess us eternally—came that *we* might have life in our souls, incorruptibility attaching to our bodies. He "has annulled death" and brought to light, what was but dimly apprehended before, "life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings." For it is a mistake to suppose, as some do, that these things were absolutely hidden from saints in former dispensations. "Brought to light" should correct such a thought ; and plain it is from Heb. xi., for instance, that God's elect in former days had thoughts of resurrection and of heaven.

But what then was dimly perceived is now the grand theme of the evangelist. What triumphs Christ's death speaks of ! We look not for death, but for Him. Death still exists, but by dying *for us* its title, its claim, is abrogated for all His own. "He has annulled death." A saint may still find it the portal that leads to His presence, and sweet are the words in this connection, "Fallen asleep through Jesus" (1 Thess. iv. 14). For us no longer the governmental brand that it was, its sting has been taken away (1 Cor. xv. 55), its terror removed (Heb. ii. 15), and all is now in subjection to Him who said, "I have the keys of death and hades" (Rev. i. 18).

And for the spread of the *glad tidings*, Paul had been "appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. An exalted position, surely ! And yet one that brought suffering with it. He was a prisoner ; and, speaking of his services, he says, "For which cause I also suffer these things." How often it happens in the things

of God that suffering accompanies the blessing He bestows. A profitable line of study this, to follow out. Abel acted upon a revelation from God and earned the hatred of his brother ; Joseph had his future unfolded by God in dreams given him, and he became an outcast from his father's house because of his brothers' envy ; David, the Lord's anointed, waxed valiant through faith, and taunted by Eliab, is presently persecuted by Saul.

And so the list could be extended, bringing us down to Paul, " the prisoner of the Lord." He suffered, but there was no confusion of face. His confidence was in the Unchangeable One. " Nevertheless, I am not ashamed." Let men deride, let it appear as though the cause he championed was a losing one, yet to him not more sure was the throne of the Eternal than the Blessed One he knew. " For I know whom I have believed " breathes unmixed confidence. Fully, unreservedly, his trust was reposed in Him upon whom he had gazed in the glory. " *I know* " is the language of absolute certainty. His Saviour and Lord he was well acquainted with, and deeply rooted was the conviction that his soul, his happiness, his all, were safe laid up with Him in whom His faith reposed. Do we " *know Him* " after this fashion ? Was not this the secret of Paul's stability ? And does not Laodicean lukewarmness arise from neglect and disparagement of Christ ? Oh, to have all confidence in Him !

Ability to keep there was : " He is able," Paul declares, " to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day " (ver. 12). An earthly custodian oft fails to safely secure the treasures put in his charge. The thief breaks through and steals. But Christ is able, and that means willing. No suspicion of mistrust crossed the mind of Paul. He knew that Blessed Person in whom his every

joy centred and that was sufficient ; and “ *that day* ”—the day of the manifestation-seat (2 Cor. v.)—will bring with it the revelation that Paul was not deceived in what he had done.

And yet another exhortation is given. “ Hold fast the form of sound words.” Here the Word of God, as given through the Apostles, is before us. “ Which thou hast heard of me ” brings forward Paul as the instrument used of God. From him Timothy had received the truth, and “ in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus ” he was to hold it. “ *In faith* ” would make it a living, operative word ; “ *in love* ” would necessitate that it be held in the joy and power of communion with Christ, not simply as a matter of knowledge.

And the truth as a whole, the good thing which was committed to him, he had to keep in the power of the “ Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” Wondrous fact ! how little realised ! that in us each dwells God’s Holy Spirit, by whose power we can alone be maintained in the path of faith. No fleshly energy would enable Timothy to keep this treasure. No human power will preserve us. “ *Keep* ” is the authoritative word, but “ by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” May we, dear reader, be led to meditate on these words addressed to Paul’s son in the faith, that in this day of declining piety the importance of having the Word of God, the responsibility of having the Word of God, might be more fully realised by us.

Continuing, the Apostle reminds Timothy of what was common knowledge : All in Asia had turned away from him—not, be it remembered, had renounced Christianity, but had stumbled at its reproach. A more popular path was desired. Of Paul’s chain they were ashamed. Two, presumably leaders, are definitely mentioned. Not to their

honour are their names found on the page of inspiration. Their unfaithfulness brought it about, and down through the years the record has come. Faithfulness and unfaithfulness are both noticed by Him who is above all. "Remember Lot's wife"; for where the treasure is the heart will be also. And when the world has made inroads on our affections how easily we fall a prey to its deceptions. Onesiphorous receives honourable mention, and mercy for him is desired "in that day." The faithful Lord will not forget the services rendered to His tried servant and will grant an abundant reward. Surely all is of mercy—mercy we need constantly here, as we shall prove mercy's "full weight" when in glory before Him.

H. F.

(To be continued—D.V.)

THY FAITHFULNESS.

WHEN tides of sorrow strew the shores
 With fragments of our shipwrecked dream ;
 When all around us darkness lowers,
 And all our hopes o'erwhelmèd seem ;
 Lord help us then, in storm and stress,
 To repose in Thy faithfulness.

Life's sunny seas, that smiled awhile,
 No more with glimmering gladness glow ;
 No more their music can beguile—
 Their tone is changed to voice of woe ;
 Then help us in our sore distress,
 To repose in Thy faithfulness.

A land there be where is no sea,
 Ne'er heard the beat of stormy wave ;
 But calm and rest and peace there be,
 Where change is past, beyond the grave ;
 But help us here, 'midst storm and stress,
 To repose in Thy faithfulness.

And even now, 'midst changing scenes,
 A portion's ours no change can see ;
 Learning in wreck of might-have-beens,
 To trust in what shall ever be ;
 So teach us Lord through storm and stress,
 To repose in Thy faithfulness.

J. T.

CHRIST'S LORDSHIP .

My Dear Brother,

I have recently found a rich field of thought in the truth of the Lordship of Christ, and it was really this upon my heart which induced the idea of writing to you.

There is a contrast of great strength between the compulsory bowing of the knee to the name of Jesus, and that obedience which is the outcome of obligation. There is a day coming when "every knee shall bow" because He will be absolute in power. But, blessed be God, to-day the knee may bow for quite another reason: we gladly own Him Lord, because the one who serves us most has the greatest right to be our Lord and Master.

In the day to come all *must* own Him Lord and bow the knee. Now, it is *our delight* to do so. So Christ's

Lordship to us is vastly different to the Lordship that will be owned in that day. This thought gives a motive ; in earthly things the person who serves us the most is the person we wish for a leader ; we follow the one who serves us best, it is to our advantage, of course, to do so. Thus to the person who best serves us we own lordship. To own lordship means that we follow the leader—we follow the one from whom we receive the greatest amount of good. To do otherwise would be against our own interests.

Now Jesus has served us best of all, we therefore own Him Lord —gladly. How has He served us ? What has He done that we should have Him for our Lord ? Mention *one* thing : He has died for us. In our awful need He did the best thing for us ; He served us better than we, poor creatures, could ever hope for, therefore we own Him as our Champion, our Leader, our Lord ; for He has served us best. The language of our hearts should be, “Thou, Lord, I follow.” It means following Him out of this world, for “He is not of this world.” But He is our Lord. Conscience challenges our hearts to follow, and the blessed Object is enthroned in our affections. If it is not so our Christianity is a mere philosophy.

When we think of how He has brought us to God we may well say “wonderful ;” But that is His name “Wonderful.” When we say that in our darkness we needed counsel, we hear His other name “Counsellor.” When we know our weakness and look for strength we find Him “The mighty God.” When in this poor discordant world we look for peace and find none, due to the work of Satan, we see Him “The Prince of Peace,” the One who excels all others in peace-making.

If you or I had the supreme control of our neighbourhood our hearts might take advantage of that power to crush our

enemies. But when Jesus had all power given to Him He blessed His most active enemy, His most powerful persecutor, Paul. How different from us ; He is indeed the Prince of Peace. Surely our hearts may own Him Lord seeing He has served us to the very uttermost. God grant that we may "lay aside every weight," so as to freely run and follow our great and gracious *Leader*.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

F.C.V.

USEFUL NOTES.

" BUT it was too late. God bade Moses stretch his hand over the sea, and as he obeyed, the sea rushed back in its strength. 'When the morning appeared,' and the king and host of Egypt found themselves in the midst of the waters, they turned, and endeavoured to regain the shore, but it was in vain. The waters covered them ; not one was left. The children of Israel from the opposite shore saw this strange and awful vindication of the power of the Almighty.

" Egyptian records contain no account of this terrible catastrophe ; they record only victories, but there is one testimony, silent, but plainly to be understood. The coffin of Pharaoh Meneptah is empty. Of all his dynasty his mummy only is wanting. The case is empty."

" Scripture itself is in fact one of the very greatest 'portents and wonders' to those who will give it that patient

and reverent examination which its claim demands. And for this it offers itself, not merely to the trained man of science, or to the man with abundant means and leisure to investigate. Its gospel is preached to the poor. Like the light which is its emblem, it shines as directly down upon the rustic as on the philosopher. 'Light is come into the world,' says He who brought it. And the conviction of light is something simple and immediate for those who have eyes to see. It is not the result of a long process of reasoning, where the chain is no stronger than its weakest link, but of a true verification, by the illumination of what it shines on : 'that which doth *make manifest* is light' (Eph. v. 13)."

Gen. i.-ii. 3.—“ Whatever particulars might properly be called creating within the six days, the comprehensive term which embraced the whole is expressly “ made ” in contradistinction to the equally proper term ‘ created ’ in chap. i. Can any nicety of speech more manifestly confirm the interpretation of the days in Genesis as meant exclusively in their ordinary and historical sense ? The six days are God’s work in view of man ; on the seventh is His rest, the pledge of a better and enduring one, based on the redemption of the Second man, and issuing in glory for heaven and earth, and above all for those who by grace believe.

CHRIST IN THE HOME, AND WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE HIM THERE.

Luke x., 38-42.

TAKING Luke as the great moralist among the evangelists, the one who continually arranges his material so as to present the Lord in His moral glory, as the perfect Man, the great Teacher, whose purpose in general therefore is to elucidate from both incident and spoken word leading principles of truth, taking him thus, as I think we are justified in doing, this short section of his gospel lying between verse 38 of our chapter and verse 13 of the next, has special teaching for us. Of a matter of great importance we are here instructed by the Lord Himself—the way and means of blessing for us as children of God. These means are in number two, first the word of God ; second, prayer. Do we desire to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Then as new-born babes, we must desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. There is no growth without it. There is no life without it. It is by the incorruptible seed of the word of God that we have been born again, and for any progress in divine things, for any increase in the knowledge of God, it is only to that we can look. The truth of God, ministered to us through the Lord Jesus, at whose feet we still may sit, like Mary, hearing His word, is one of the two great agencies of blessing to us.

The other, prayer, forms the subject of the opening verses of chapter xi. Of Christian exercises this is one of the

sweetest, most important, most indispensable. In the attitude of dependence it implies, the Lord Himself is seen by His disciples. In answer to the request of one of them—"Teach us to pray"—the privilege of freedom of communion with God as Father is declared now to be theirs also, words suited to their peculiar position dispensationally being provided for them. Of the perseverance that being in earnest involves He also speaks, and gives assurance of timely answer to the seeking soul. On two grounds is such assurance definitely based, on the one hand of the fact of their Heavenly Father's relationship to them, and on the other His positive goodness, that, in giving good gifts to His children, could not be behind the beneficence of a mere earthly father, who by contrast is evil. The place and value of prayer we surely all have proved, as well as the blessing for our souls that lies in its constant practice and observance. Enjoined upon us in many places throughout the New Testament, it is in this passage, then, placed alongside the Word, as one of the two great essentials for Christian blessing.

The subject our verses deal with here has been given the title of "Christ in the home," and what has been before us is not in any wise out of keeping with that title, for where but in the home, in the home of course where Christ has been received, can these two means of cultivating His acquaintance, hearing His word, and communing in prayer with Him, be better practised.

"Home," it has been said, "Home—in that one simple little word what a multiplicity of delightful ideas arise within the mind; what a variety of pleasing associations; what a field of lovely fancies; what a world of heavenly feeling." There is truth in the statement, for around that little word there cluster recollections and memories the most

tender and the sweetest we have. It is a significant fact that we, none of us, the most reserved, the most secluded, go right through life entirely alone. There is an application of the text, "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself," to our social surroundings in our respective stations in life. There is no such thing as absolute individualism in our world as it is constituted. For the most part we may say we are each of us the centre, or at least a small part of the circumference of various circles in human society, circles of loving union, of companionship, or of influence, and each of us contributes our part to its life and action. Now one of the most potent, one of the most significant, as it is the most primitive of these links of association, in all of which Christ claims a place, is the home. How important then, how supremely important, that He be given His rightful position there. A home without Christ lacks its brightest attraction, its best comfort, its most pleasant memory.

Now here is a home to which we are introduced in our passage, into which Christ at this time entered. It is a family circle to which readers of the gospels, especially John's, need not be strangers, for we have it much spoken of by the latter. Of His love for each of its inmates, Martha, Mary, and possibly Lazarus, John tells us. His intimacy with the family, and the freedom with which He moved amongst them, he also relates. He alone of all the evangelists gives the touching account of the death of Lazarus, the loved brother, and the grief resulting to the bereaved sisters, a sorrow He shared with them to such extent that it is recounted in plain, yet wonderful words, "Jesus wept." Of the putting forth of His divine power in raising Lazarus from the dead John also tells, as also of his restoration to the family circle, whose hospitality Christ was again to

share on that memorable occasion, when, Martha still serving, Mary is again found at His feet, this time with her ointment, pouring out, in the greatness of her affection, her costly testimony to His excellence and worth. And John has shown us also that Martha's house was, throughout His ministry, a favourite resort of our blessed Lord's. A short distance from Jerusalem, about two miles probably, close to the Mount of Olives, the home at Bethany was without doubt a resting place for Him on many occasions when in Jerusalem, or on the way thither. In its familiar surroundings He passed the last few days of peace and quiet before He passed on to the cross, and under its hospitable roof some of His last nights on earth were probably spent. For many reasons this is a domestic circle to be remembered by us with peculiar interest.

When He first was received into Martha's house we do not know. There is little evidence that this was the first time. Everything rather points the other way. The familiar manner in which Martha addressed Him, and the posture that her sister Mary assumed immediately upon His entrance do not comply with the thought that this was the first time they had entertained Him. It is rather in the attitude of a frequent and welcome guest, who had often before graced Martha's table with His presence, and often ere this regaled Mary's heart with His blessed and heavenly teaching that He here appears.

Thus to have Christ in the home means for one thing that His is a presence that is well-known there, a welcome presence, one of which we are constantly reminded, and in the thought of which we regulate all affairs. Do we love Him enough thus to receive Him into our homes, to keep Him there, to grant Him as it were a place in our domestic circle? What a privilege it is to have Him there! the high

and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, who dwells in the high and holy place, yet with Him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit. Does it not seem all too wonderful, too good to be true, yet that is simply one of the particulars in which we may, if we will, prove the fulfilment of His promise to us—"If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Is not that what we should desire, not merely that He should visit, but that He should abide. As one has said—

"Be not to me my God,
As one that turned aside
To tarry for a night, then trod,
His onward way—Abide."

But when Christ comes into the home, things there, as elsewhere, order themselves accordingly. If there is one place above another where the presence of Christ tells, it is in the home. Like some great magnet, the presence of Christ has its field of influence accompanying it wherever it goes. Some surroundings there are more manifestly susceptible to it than others; but in no sphere does it meet with material more sensitive than in the home. The place of all others on earth where human affections, in normal circumstances, first find root and nourishment, where else should we look for a congenial spot for Divine Love to operate in? The magnetic field should encounter here an association peculiarly fitted for the manifestation of its power of attraction and arrangement. The re-arrangement we must remember, however, which ensues when Christ is received into the home, is not all effected by attraction, for sadly true it is that, sin being in the world and in man himself, its presence is felt in and vitiates the best of His

associations. In many cases unbelief and rejection of the Saviour is shown, and the disturbing element manifests itself in such sort that a man's foes are those of his own household. Even thus is apparent the result of His reception, the power of His presence in the home. Introduce Christ and see how everything and everyone there take up characteristic attitude towards Him.

In the best of ways, see how it is in this home. Since Christ has entered, each inmate of it finds her place. Martha, with her active energetic temperament, finds in service an outlet for her love to her Master. Mary's ardent affectionate nature seeks repose rather in passive contemplation of Him. Martha is cumbered about much serving. She busies herself in ministering to the wants of the One she loves. Was Martha wrong in this? We may be mistaken if we suppose so. Was the spirit of service out of place, or her service itself unacceptable? Her fault, we shall see, lay in another direction. Service is right. We are called on to serve, for His servants we surely are. We must never forget that, for Him who has done so much for us, we are privileged with the opportunity of doing service. In how many ways can we minister to Him! Even in the home, in how many things can we minister to His pleasure! Each has his or her place to fill, and, in the various humble duties of the hour, Christ can be served as truly as in great actions, or on striking occasions.

But Mary occupies a place here entirely different, and it is upon her action and attitude towards Christ that the interest of the narrative mainly centres. Unlike her active sister, she does not at this time occupy herself with the business of the house or the duties of the table. She sits at Jesus' feet and hears His word. An opportunity of receiving from Christ light and leading, benefit and blessing for

her soul had come within her reach, and, with the characteristic eagerness of her affectionate nature, she grasps it. Intercourse with her Lord she esteems of greater account than even service to Him, and is it not the case that upon this estimate of what is most suitable to His presence Christ puts the stamp of His approval, when He declares that Mary has chosen "the good part"?

We must either, with Martha, put Christ in the place of a *receiver*, or, with Mary, of a *giver*, and, of the two, He all along has shown a preference for the latter. On His own authority we have it that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And who better able to give an instance of the truth than the Giver of every good and perfect gift. He found a supreme pleasure in being able to communicate to needy souls the blessed truth He had come to proclaim. It was meat to eat that we know not of. Remember the woman of Samaria. It was as a receiver that He proposed to introduce Himself to her. "Give me to drink." We never read that He got that drink of water. But before the interview was over, Christ was the Giver and the woman the receiver of living water, and in the communicating of that precious gift of God to this poor thirsty one, His own wants were satisfied.

And so it was in this that Mary chose well. That she could give in return we have evidence of, when the vase of ointment very costly was broken and poured out on His feet. Had she not here sat at His feet, and profited by His teaching, she would not on that later occasion have had the intelligence of love, in which that ever memorable action had its origin. Do we not learn then that he serves best who loves best, and he loves best who learns best. Sitting at His feet, hearing His word, let that be the portion we choose.

We have it in our choice, and the Saviour Himself

declares that it shall not be taken away from us. This again was virtually what Martha attempted, and therein lay Martha's mistake. Cumbered about much serving, she could not understand her sister's seeming inactivity, and would desire her assistance in the many things she considered necessary to the Lord's entertainment. Yet who had required this of her? "But one thing is needful" is the Lord's declaration, and Mary's attitude provides it more truly than Martha's. And in particular Martha was entirely out of tune with the Master in her expressed desire that He should bid Mary leave her place at His feet, and all the blessing it meant to her to be there, to help her in her well-meant activity. "It shall not be taken from her," not by the Master, not even by Martha. In His gentle rebuke, Jesus puts everything in its proper place. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Opportunity for serving Christ, in an exactly similar fashion to Martha's ministering to the wants of a visibly present Messiah, would shortly pass away; but, that in which Mary sought her occupation should be an abiding portion; for, even when withdrawn from sense and sight, and known after the flesh no more, in the truer, deeper, higher realm of faith, sweet intercourse with the Lord would still be the portion of those who sought to learn of Him. Do we covet this place? It is open to us. It does not imply the seclusion of the monk's solitary cell, nor material separation from the world of life and service around us. It does, however, mean the isolation of spirit, and heart, and affections, from a vain and sinful world, that occupation with the One it has rejected produces. Are we prepared to pay that price for sweet communion with Him, such as

Mary enjoyed? Only then can we truly and acceptably serve Him. For the ideal Christian life combines the two characteristics of Martha and Mary, active service and peaceful communion. But that which is here emphasised as the good part is the portion of Mary's choice. It shall never be taken away from us. Never through life can we be driven from that sweet retreat. And, even in the glory, in some sense it shall still be ours, for communion with Him then, far from ceasing, only enters on its highest and holiest phase, where, in a scene such as no earthly home could compare with,

The Son's divine affections flow
Throughout its depth and height,
And full response the Father gives,
To fill with joy the heart—
No cloud is there to dim the scene,
Or shadow to impart.

JOHN IV.

Now the Lord shows in John iv. that conscience is the inlet to intelligence in divine things! and thus the heart becomes engaged. Rejected and driven out from Judæa, He sat weary on the well of Sychar. A woman, lonely (it was not the hour when women go forth to draw water) and weary with sin, evidently a strong and ardent nature that had sought happiness with eager pursuit, and sank through it into sin, and not found rest to her spirit (how many such are there in the world?) dragged on a life of toil, and, in the midst of it, thought sometimes on Gerizim and Jerusalem, and knew there was a Messiah to come. There might be happiness and rest somewhere: she had none. Toil and

weariness she had, and the last evidently in spirit as well as body. Jesus had toil and weariness too, but through love, not through sin, save the sin of others, and this could not weary love, and He knew where rest was—He was it. The Son of God, the Judge of all, had, humanly speaking, put Himself in a position where he was debtor to this woman for a drink of cold water. But He soon draws her out ; He speaks of the gift of God, of a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. All was dark in the Samaritan woman's mind. She moved in the circle of her own weariness—this she felt, the fruit of her sin and toil after happiness. And (with all the movings within that predominated and filled her mind, for, in fact, what had she else ?) what does the Lord do ? “ Go, call thy husband, and come hither.” “ I have no husband.” “ Thou hast well said,” replied the Lord, “ I have no husband ; thou hast had five husbands ; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that speakest thou truly.”

Now a ray of light breaks in. “ Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” The word of God by the Lord has divine authority in her heart, because it has reached her conscience. She has found a man who has told her all that ever she did. Who knew that ? The prophet's word has divine authority. Yet she does not yet get to wells of water. The divine communications made to her were quite unintelligible ; but much was done.

He who knew all her life, all her sin, had been sitting in grace by her, willing to be helped by her. Grace was there as well as truth. She had found the Christ, and leaves her water-pot, and her care with it, and become a messenger of that which is good news for all. Gerizim and Jerusalem are all alike, and alike nothing. *The Father* is seeking worshippers in spirit and in truth.

Now here we find a picture of the opening of a soul to understanding, and the reception of divine things. The presenting of divine things of the highest character in grace does not do it. The natural heart remains closed. Even when there are moral wants and cravings, divine things are not understood at all. God makes His way through the conscience. Then the word is received. At the moment the heart does not get farther than its *present* capacity. Still, what has been spoken of, has been spoken of for it; and grace makes all its own. Jesus in grace has been with it. Oh, what a difference—man's speculations, and God seeing the field white for harvest! The Lord refreshing His spirit when rejected by the pride of man, not with the water of the well, but with love finding its bliss in hearts filled with wretchedness, drinking of the one refreshing well-spring that has visited this world! He had meat to eat His disciples knew not of. What a place for this poor Samaritan, what a place for us; to refresh stupid creatures that we are—the heart of Jesus, because He is love! Nothing brighter, nothing more genuine, than the effect of her new-found joy, which makes this poor woman the messenger of God's visiting this world to the self-satisfied inhabitants of Sychar. She was just the one that suited the Lord.

J.N.D.

HIS DEALINGS.

“What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

REST in the Lord, beloved,
 Hush thee, and in Him rest,
 Whose ways we may not see,
 But know are best.

What tho' thy feet be called
To walk dark paths to-day,
Himself goes on before
Leading the way.

A way once long ago
He trod alone for thee ;
No path as dark as His
Could ever be.

Rest thee, beloved, in Him,
And His unchanging love,
Its preciousness He now
Would have thee prove.

E'en in affliction's hour,
When His hand presseth sore,
Ah ! then He'd have thee learn
His love the more.

He puts thee now as gold
In the midst of the fire,
Watching o'er thee with love
That will not tire—

Temp'ring the furnace heat
With His own blessed hands,
As none but He could do
Who understands.

Purging away the dross,
Until His eye shall see
Clearly His likeness shine
Reflected in thee.

Training thy voice to sing
In the dark hours of night,
A wonderous new song
In morning light.

Trust thou that all-wise love,
That ne'er doth make mistakes ;
That, should all others fail,
Never forsakes.

That mighty love that now
Enfolds and wraps thee round
Close to His heart, how deep
The rest there found !

Rest then, beloved, in Him
Till yonder in His home,
Where, safely penned, His sheep
No more shall roam.

There we shall understand
All His most perfect ways ;
And thro' the endless years
Shall sing His praise !

A. S.

2 TIMOTHY.

(Chapter ii.).

SIGNS of degeneracy, then, were manifest in Paul's day. Self-set-up men, in contrast with the Apostles who were appointed by divine authority, were leading saints away from Christ and the narrow path of righteousness set forth in the Scriptures of truth. Tradition and fable, the vain

imaginings of men's minds, were turned to ; and what was then in its infancy is seen to-day almost full-blown in the rank unbelief and infidelity of the Higher Criticism and kindred activities.

So the instruction vouchsafed to Timothy becomes of first importance to us. What were the preservatives to which he was pointed ? The grace of God in Christ Jesus and the Word of truth. And this might serve to remind us of that word which acquaints us with the fact that " grace *and truth* came by Jesus Christ " (John i. 17)—things so inseparably connected that the plural subject requires but a singular predicate. *Grace*—who can do without it ? Peter, in view of the increasing difficulties and vicissitudes of the path of pilgrimage, wrote " grace and peace *be multiplied.*"

The exhortation here is " Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The supply is abundant ; the channel through which it is to reach us is perfect, for Christ is the channel through which every blessing comes to us. Resorting constantly to this provision of God, we shall prove the sustaining power of His grace, and shall be kept from being overwhelmed with the abounding evils of perilous times.

" Thou, therefore, my son (or child)," the exhortation commences, carrying us back to the unfoldings of chapter i., and the departure there mentioned. To attempt to stand in other than " strength divine " would but demonstrate the utter incapacity of the saint to overcome the ever-rising tide of evil. Without grace, only despair would be before us ; but fortified with grace we can stand in an evil day, assured that, after all, " The way of the Lord is perfect," and that all that He has purposed will come to pass.

Grace in Christ is the source of strength, and reminded of this, the information is next given of the result that

should follow. Hence the repetition of the opening words, "*Thou therefore,*" but now connected with the grace mentioned—"the grace that is in Christ Jesus." An arduous and difficult campaign is before every true Christian. "Through much tribulation we enter the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). But, equipped for that, hardness has to be endured "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Such a soldier stands firm, and is not found with his back to the foe at the first engagement. He endures; for, loving his Commander, who was first his Saviour, he finds pleasure in rendering obedience, the prime characteristic of a *good soldier*. Other virtues are very secondary compared with obedience. To hold on, to endure, he knows to be his business, guided by the orders from headquarters. "Faint yet pursuing," such an one holds on until victory is completely won. So the many dangers encountered, the numerous difficulties ever cropping up, the distresses generally prevailing, would all tend to test the strength of love, and provide suitable opportunities for its display, individual faithfulness conspicuously shining against the dark background set up by corporate failure.

Answering love Christ's love surely demands; and if it be that "all seek their own things," then it is the day of golden opportunities for the individual saint, a day in which each can show the reality of the desire to please Him. In earthly matters we learn that it can be said of a warrior that "he entangleth not himself with the affairs of this life," and for the weighty reason that he might please the one who has called him to be a soldier. Renouncing worldly politics and schemes of self-aggrandisement as fetters that hinder the love of obedience from fully displaying itself, the warrior seeks to please the one who has put signal honour on him by calling him to be a soldier.

And applying this, we have to please our Lord and Master. How can we truly do this unless we know His wishes and desires? Love displays itself in obedience, and the proof He thus accepts of love is set forth in the memorable words, "If any man love Me, he will keep My commandments." How weighty the sentence, demanding the serious consideration of every saint. Self deception comes easily to us. We unconsciously oftentimes savour of man's things even whilst pressing the truth of *God first*; and in our professed zeal for Him and His cause, forget entirely that "*His commandments*" mark out the path He would have us tread, the service He would have us perform, and the way He desires we should act.

To walk, then, in a self-chosen path, and to act according to self-imposed directions, is to set aside the "rules" laid down by the Master. To strive for masteries is right, but the crown is given by the one who sets out the rules of the game; and non-observance of these means forfeiture of the crown, though triumphantly reaching the goal. "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully." Too often in service the sole consideration seems to be the results, the anticipated results that seem to set a seal upon the labourers efforts. The light of His countenance is far better; and confidence in His Word and obedience to His will produce results that, though unseen now, yet abide for eternity to His glory who will then "rest in His love," and to the eternal joy of the servant.

Diligence, then, must be put forth in striving for masteries; but the rules must be obeyed. Let us not think of work for Him apart from His will. It is little realised how intensely solemn it is to intrude our own thoughts when the Lord has expressed His. The crowning glory of leading God's people into the promised land was lost by Moses, who

smote the flinty rock when told to speak to it. The water flowing from the rock for the thirsty thousands of Israel set no mark of distinction upon the way the servant acted, but rather manifested God's wondrous sovereignty. The disobedience of the servant rendered him unfruitful in that "good work." Truly we are called to obedience, and must therefore do as we are bid. Our God is sovereign, and can act where and how He pleases.

But reward is sure, and it follows labouring. So as there is the necessity for the latter there is likewise certainty of the former. Of that we are next instructed. "The husbandman, labouring first, must be partaker of the fruits." Patient toil will not go unrequited. And how much of the husbandman's work tends to make him patient. Immediate results he cannot see. And in this how like the Lord's labourer. There has to be the sowing, and watering, and tending, and pruning, ere the ingathering comes, but the time of fruitage arrives, and the joy of harvest is experienced. The husbandman must be partaker—so runs the word.

This brief portion then supplies us with this, that there is grace to strengthen, and the Word to direct. Hardness has to be endured, answering love to be shown, obedience to be followed, and service to be patiently waited upon. The injunction to consider, and the plea for understanding follows: "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." To such a consideration may we direct our energies and demonstrate our wisdom by heeding the instruction given us.

H. F.

(To be continued—D.V.)

GATHERED THOUGHTS ON JAMES.*(Chapter i.).*

VER. 2.—A new line of truth is presented to the “tribes scattered abroad.” The fuller revelation of richer blessing than temporal mercies crowning the way is accompanied with teaching about varied trial besetting the saint, and counting it joy when they come. Not simply on account of the trials, but because of the patience they are designed to produce.

Ver. 2.—The epistle then begins with an exhortation to rejoice in trial, as a means of producing patience. This subject in the main continues to the end of ver. 20, where the idea turns towards the necessity of curbing everything that opposes itself to patience, and towards the true character of one who stands in the presence of God.

Ver. 2.—It is joy, when between the millstones crushed like an olive, to yield nothing but the oil of thankfulness; when bruised beneath the flail of tribulation, still to lose nothing but the chaff, and to yield to God the precious grain of entire submissiveness. Why this is a little heaven upon earth. To glory in tribulations also, this is a high degree of up-climbing towards the likeness of our Lord. “Christ learned obedience through the things which he suffered” (Heb. v. 8).

Ver. 2.—In this world of sin and ruin, God not only works in grace, but carries on a discipline of souls, and turns trials of all sorts into an occasion of blessing for all that own Him and seek His guidance. Self-will hardens itself against each trial, or yields to discouragement, or even despair. Faith recognises the love that never changes, and judges the self that resists His will, or despises His

Word, and, as faith bows submissively, it reaps profit, and grows by the knowledge of Him.

Ver. 3.—The varied trials are for the testing of faith, and in every such test there is a gracious design—the working of patience. *Knowing* infers the possession of spiritual intelligence; and when this is exercised and the object is perceived, then, and only then, the saint boasts in tribulation also. Quaintly it has been put that “When one’s flesh and bones are full of aches and pains, it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or for a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose. But nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth? The disciples of a patient Saviour should be patient themselves. Grin and bear it is the old-fashioned advice, but sing and bear it is a great deal better.”

Ver. 3.—All is under His hand who has made us His for glory, and meanwhile puts our faith to the test in this present evil age, habituating us not only to patience, but to endurance. So it was that Christ walked here below, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.

Ver. 3.—Patience is the negation of self-will. It implies subjection—in things Divine, a will subject to the will of God.

Ver. 4.—Patience then must have its perfect work; thus self-will is subdued, and the whole of God’s will is accepted; consequently, nothing is wanting to the practical life of the soul. The believer may suffer; but he patiently waits on the Lord. This Christ did; it was His perfection. He waited for the will of God, and never did His own will: thus obedience was perfect.

USEFUL NOTES.

An invalid wrote :—

“ This is my 35th year of dear paralysis, and 32nd of everlasting life.

“ A shattered wreck am I
 Enjoying now ‘ a chair,’
 And full of life I sit and sing
 To Him who placed me there.
 Content thus paralysed to be
 Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee !

Nought have I else to do
 But sing the whole day long,
 And He whom most I love to please
 Doth listen to my song ;
 He caught and clipt my wandering wing,
 And now He stoops to hear me sing !

Oh, it is good to soar
 These palsied limbs above,
 To Him whose purpose I adore
 Whose very act is love,
 And is His blessed will to find
 Such sweet repose for heart and mind ! ”

C. G. E.

GROWTH.—“ Side by side with a deepening humility, will come the requisite grace of simplicity. Simple (in the sense of real) thoughts about truth, simple views of Christ, simple language about religion, simple manners, simple dress, simple conduct. The fine, and the showy, and the effective all belong to infancy.”

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

HEZEKIAH

2 *Kings* xviii.—xx., 2 *Chron.* xxi.—xxxii.

Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix.

HEZEKIAH came to the throne of Judah in sad days. The house of God was in great desolation. The doors were shut and the lamps were put out, and no incense nor burnt offering was offered in the holy place (2 *Chron.* xxix. 7). The father of Hezekiah, Ahaz by name, had completely apostatised from the God of Israel, and had sacrificed to the gods of Damascus.

Hezekiah at once set himself to repair the doors of the house, and to cleanse the house of the Lord, and the vessels, which king Ahaz had cast away, were prepared and sanctified.

He exhorted the priests and Levites to bestir themselves as to the service the Lord had appointed them to, and they went to work so that they were able to come to the king and tell him that what he had desired of them had been done. God had wrought a revival among His people, and praise and worship again sounded in Jehovah's ears. The burnt offering being offered as ordered was the reason of this. Thus it was at the beginning, and when evil days set in upon the people, and the service of God was neglected, the only hope was in getting back to the point of departure. Revival is found in returning to the ways of God which have been abandoned. As to outward manifestation the marks of failure and sin remain, but Divine principles abide and claim to rule the conscience and heart of the child

of God. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Jehovah, for ever!" (Psalm xciii, 5).

There is one thing that stands out in great prominence in the history of Hezekiah. He has in his heart the whole nation of Israel. Atonement must be for *all Israel* (2 Chron. xxix. 24). On account of the sin of Solomon, Jehovah rent the kingdom of Israel and gave ten tribes to Jeroboam, and Judah and Benjamin to Rehoboam (1 Kings xi.). But Faith thinks with God, and the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel. *Faith* has no thoughts but those which have Divine origin. In a later day it was the same. We read that in Ezra's day the returned captives offered at the dedication of the house of God a *sin offering* for all Israel—*twelve* he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. Hezekiah sent to *all Israel and Judah*, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel (chap. xxx. 1). Through the sin of the people, their day of full blessing had been put far off, and a greater fall was in store for the few who rejected the Lord. Yet the promises of Jehovah remained, and do still remain, and *Faith* can and does still say, "All Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26).

The church has fallen—long since come under the judgment of her Lord—but the *counsel* of God remains untouched, and Christ will present it to Himself, a glorious church, without a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. i. 4, v. 15-29). The word holds out no expectation of recovery to Pentecostal times, but He will not forget one member of His body, but will nourish and cherish it until He comes to call His saints around Himself in the air.

It should be carefully noticed that the Levites first sanctified themselves, and then came to do the work of cleansing the house of the Lord. As a fruit of the word of the Lord having effect in their conscience, they must judge sin by God's judgment having place in their own souls. Many seem to be ignorant of this. Sin is taking our own ways in lawlessness (1 John iii. 4 R. V.). Holiness is seeking God's will and following it. To-day how little is it the one sufficient thing to know what God has written in order to our obedience.

Hezekiah set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of Jehovah by the prophet. Hezekiah then commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. This service at the altar had always the same voice. There could be no blemish in the offering. This was a necessity. Nothing but what was perfect could be burnt as a sweet savour on Jehovah's altar. How precious and worthy of constant remembrance, that when the burnt offering began the song of Jehovah began (27). The burnt offering and the meat offering are the two elements of praise and worship. Here in this Scripture we are among types and shadows. But that which is perfect has come. To be in fellowship with that which has been on the altar we must have Christ as the theme of our song. True it is that we are often not wound up to reach the key-note taken from such a lofty strain as the burnt offering, which has been accepted as having for ever glorified God, but let us see to it that our ways in the sight of God are clean—if so, we shall find the Spirit of God ready to lead and sustain us in praising the One who was slain, but who lives for ever and ever.

The Lord Jesus praising in the midst of His people gives the true perfect note of worship for the ransomed—it will be abidingly so by and by, and is now in some measure when in *faith* we are assembled in His name to “remember Him” and “announce His death until He come.”

Again, we read at ver. 28, “All the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.” There is no service going on now at the brazen altar (the cross), but the sweet savour of all that which rose to God as the Son of His love offered Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour will in all time and to all eternity remain. Therefore, the ground and the substance of worship always remain. As we learn Christ and ponder over Him in His life and death, we get fresh themes for wonder and praise.

Hezekiah then invited the congregation to bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord. The people responded and brought sacrifices and thank offerings, *and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings* (ver. 31). A sentence this last to be ever in remembrance—a blessed possession of grace. The heart of the worshipper in this condition is at rest. Christ is his full answer to every question. Questions have to be raised and settled between the soul and God. *Christ in death* is the only settlement. *Christ raised from the dead* is the divine proof—is the testimony to us that the settlement is complete. The reception of God’s testimony that as Christ is so are we in this world carries the soul into perfect rest (1 John iv. 17). Christ by His death has perfected us for ever. Now we are at liberty in heart and conscience to think of God’s delight in His Son, and praise Him with gladsome voice. The burnt offering was all burned on the altar—all went up as

sweet savour. It spoke of Him who was divinely perfect. The priest who offered the burnt offering, who stood at the altar, represented the priestly family of to-day, *i.e.*, all God's children. They have title to draw near and partake in the joy of the Father in His beloved Son. What is before us as the sons of God on our way to glory, under the care of the Captain of our salvation (Heb. ii.-10), is wonderful! What will it be to hear Him sing *to* the Father in the midst of the assembly (Heb. ii. 12), the key-note the glory of His Father, founded on His own sacrifice as the Lamb of God provided by Jehovah Himself (Gen. xxii. 8).

Chap. xxxi. goes on to tell us of the energy of the people in removing idols out of the land, and various ordinances in connection with the priesthood and Levite orders were recalled and attended to.

The prosperous state of the kingdom under Hezekiah attracted the attention of Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, for we read, "After these things and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself" (cxxxii.). Hezekiah, discerning this, took counsel with his princes and his mighty men, and they stopped the waters of the fountains which were without the city, and built up the wall that was broken, and another wall without, and repaired Millo, in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. They looked that their fighting condition was not lacking of the provision made for such times. Our enemy, too (the same one who was working against Judah and stirring up a foreign power), seizes the opportunity for attack on the people of God if any reviving comes amongst us to-day. He finds us often "off guard," at such times—finds us deficient in the safe conditions mentioned in

Eph. vi. 10-19. They are then exhorted by the king to be strong and courageous. Jehovah God was with them to help them and to fight their battles (8). We read, the people leaned themselves upon the words of Hezekiah.

Sennacherib persists in his efforts, and appeals to the folly of trusting to their God to deliver them. No god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hand, how much less shall your God deliver out of my hand (15). The Assyrian king railed on Jehovah, God of Israel, and his servants followed in the same course. But Judah's God was the living God, and He heard all this vain boast. We read in 2 Kings xix. 20 the word by Isaiah, the son of Amos, sent to Hezekiah: "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, *I have heard!*" Hezekiah had gone up into the house of Jehovah and spread there the letter containing the wild boast of the heathen monarch before God, and said, "Jehovah, bow down thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes and see and hear the words sent to reproach the living God." What assuring words in this answer of God that all was in the hands of the living God! He declares, "*I have heard,*"—enough to quiet every fear, and the same Spirit teaches us in 1 John v. 14, and this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. What encouragement to seek acquaintance with the Word where His will is made known and have it deepened, so that our prayers may reach His ear. "I have heard" is enough, and soon that almighty arm of Jehovah is manifested, and 185,000 of the Assyrian army are all dead corpses (35). "Thus Jehovah saved Hezekiah

and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all, and guided them on every side " (22).

Chap. xxxii. 20 furnishes us with a fine instance of two agreeing together to pray. Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos prayed and cried to heaven, and the Lord sent His angel and granted a great deliverance. Thus the truth set before us in Matth. xviii. 19 was anticipated, and is recorded and preserved for the stay of faith in the present time.

The next event in the life of Hezekiah is the sickness that came upon him. We are told " He was sick nigh unto death " (Isaiah xxxviii.). He is in great distress at the thought he must die, and he entreats Jehovah to show him mercy. The king wept sore, and the Lord heard him, and added 15 years to his life. But the mercy granted to him did not result to the glory of God, and consequently was not to the king's profit. The king of Babylon—Merodach-baladan—heard that Hezekiah had been sick and had recovered, and sent ambassadors with letters and a present to congratulate him on his recovery. We read Hezekiah was glad and showed them all his treasures. This action displeased Jehovah, and Isaiah is sent with a message to him that his forgetfulness of the true character of the king of Babylon would cost his nation dear. Flattery often succeeds when all other weapons to injure fail. We are warned against the flatterer by the statement in Prov. xxvi. 28, " A flattering mouth worketh ruin." Often the enemy succeeds through unwatchfulness and forgetfulness of the word " that the friendship of the world is enmity with God " (James iv. 4). When a person calls, " We must be courteous, and it was very kind, and we did not like to say anything that would give cause for offence."

So we reason and seek to justify the wrong step to ourselves and others. But the truth is, we are often ashamed of separation from the world, and do not take up the cross daily and follow the Master. It was this, no doubt, or something of the kind, that overcame king Hezekiah. God's eye followed the ways of the king of Judah, and He disapproved of the course he had taken, and sent the prophet to tell him what disasters would follow. The Babylonish messengers surveyed all with a view to take possession of everything, and of the people at a time not far distant. How little dependence on God is seen in these last days of Hezekiah! When a mighty king surrounds with his armies Jerusalem and its strongholds, then we find the king of Judah and Isaiah the prophet on their faces. But in this case the king seeks no counsel from the prophet, but thoughtlessly acts and lays the train for a sad calamity. Pride got the victory in Hezekiah's soul, and he fell!

What are we? What weakness we are in, and how disastrous are the consequences when we are not cast upon God. Weakness that brings us low before God is our safety, but weakness that does not seek and occupy the place of weakness shuts us out from the strength of Him who teaches us that "His strength is perfected in our weakness." Let us beware of the flatterer. He comes in many ways. Nothing but the word of Christ dwelling in us richly can be our safeguard. Whoso hearkeneth unto the voice of wisdom shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil (Prov. i. 33).

We must not forget to notice what God says regarding Hezekiah, that "After him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him" (2 Kings xviii. 5); and in the matter of the ambassadors

of the Babylonish king, God left him to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart. May the people of God read what has been written in the Scriptures concerning this good king, and profit, as it is intended for our learning.

D. S.

CLAIMED.

Fear not, for I have redeemed thee ; I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine.—ISAIAH xliiii. 1.

MINE in purpose when I saw thee
 Ere creation's work was done,
 I beheld thee then and willed thee
 For the glory of My Son.
 Thou art mine.

Mine ! The price of thy redemption
 From the bold usurper's thrall,
 Price beyond thy best conception
 He has paid, yes ! paid it all.
 Thou art mine.

Mine since then, when I passed by thee,
 Helpless, hopeless in thy sin,
 When I whispered how I loved thee,
 Sought by love thy heart to win.
 Thou art mine.

When I laid my hand upon thee,
 Hand of love that holds thee fast ;
 Thence no foe shall ever pluck thee,
 While eternity shall last.
 Thou art mine.

And mine eye hath never left thee,
 Crooked ways and wanderings wide—
 Though thou often dost forget Me—
 Watching all that doth betide.
 Thou art mine.

Oh, my Father ! how I thank Thee !
 Thou hast told me I am Thine,
 And I've learnt as Thou hast spoken
 To this conquered heart of mine
 To call Thee mine.

H. S.

ECCLESIASTES.

OF wealth he speaks. It has its use. Money is a defence (ch. vii. 12), it is God's gift ; yet how often do men feel the vanity of it all ? Coveted, toiled after as the one great good, the man acquires wealth, fills his coffers, and yet is unsatisfied. If childless, we may desire offspring, but children are God's gift, not to be purchased by money. If he loves silver, he will not be satisfied with it (ch. v. 10). How can things of earth really satisfy an immortal spirit ? If he feasts his eyes with his money to-day, it may vanish away shortly, and he be left with an heir—his own child—born to inherit beggary (ver. 13, 14). Again, if he has prospered to the last, and his riches have not fled away, he must leave them ; for as he entered the world so must he leave it. Death summons him, but not his goods with him. All that he has remains behind him, whilst he, naked as he entered the world, passes out of it by the portal of death. Riches cannot satisfy the soul, they cannot buy off death, nor can their owner insure their retention for the

morrow. So Solomon admonishes his fellow-creatures, "What profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?"

Again the Preacher speaks and discourses about wisdom. He acknowledged its value, for none were more competent to speak of it than he was. It strengthened the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city. It is better than strength he could say; and better than weapons of war (ch. vii. 11-19; ix. 16, 18). But here also the vanity of all things done under the sun made itself felt; for when he applied his heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on the earth, as he turned to behold the works of God, he found a limit to the prosecution of his researches; and as he surveyed the works of men, he was only made more painfully conscious of the wretchedness and ruin brought in by sin.

Of the works of creation he had learned a great deal, as is elsewhere recorded; but man is but a finite being, unable to fathom the infinite. This Solomon discovered. "I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it" (ch. viii. 17). There are fields of knowledge beyond man's capacity to explore, or even reach. He may, like Solomon, arrive at this point, to learn from all he knows how little he knows; how knowledge acquired is the mother of many a question which the student is unable to answer; and how incompetent he is to understand even all that he sees around him. Such must ever be his condition here. By the light of revelation we can look onward to a day when we shall, but not down here, "know as we are known."

Turning to investigate the actions of men, he may learn

the evils that are done under the sun ; the crying injustice, the lawlessness, the frauds, and many acts of oppression that are constantly practised amongst men, to find, whilst he sees them, his powerlessness to hinder them (ch. iii. 16 ; viii. 14). Another arm is alone able to restrain the lawless ; another mind than any of Adam's fallen descendants can alone devise the remedy. The day of the Son of Man must dawn ere One will be found on earth competent to put things straight. How often is justice now perverted ? The righteous suffer, and the guilty go free. Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in a low place. Servants ride on horses, and princes walk as servants on earth (ch. x. 6, 7). And the wise man, courted for his help in time of pressing need, is forgotten when the hour of distress has passed away (ch. ix. 1, 5). Thus wisdom may disclose to its possessor what is wrong, and make him feel the bitterness of it, sensible all the time of his powerlessness to correct it. To know good and evil was the bait held out by the serpent, to be just like God. The wise man sees clearly the evil, knows what ought to be, and learns he cannot do it. And woman, originally God's provision for man, his suited help, is found to become, when a tool of the enemy, an instrument for his everlasting ruin (ch. vii. 26-29).

After this, we may be prepared for the picture represented at the close of the book. Man, created originally in the image of God, not subject to death, is depicted as travelling onwards to the tomb ; learning as he goes along, as we have seen, that all around of things done under the sun are vanity ; and, at the close of his life, giving in his own death a most convincing proof of the accuracy of the Preacher's statement, "All is vanity." Beautiful is the poetry of the description, but sad are the features of it. Whilst

others may love to describe what man might have been, Solomon tells us what he is ; but he speaks not of his greatness, his powers of mind or body ; he writes of decay. Created to be lord of God's creatures on earth, manifesting the power of mind over matter ; a pigmy by the side of the everlasting hills, yet able to accomplish gigantic works, which seem almost to defy the ravages of time ; far inferior to many of the animals in brute strength, yet able to subdue them, and to make the forces of nature subservient to his will ; what might he not have been had sin not entered the world ? A worn-out vessel, his strength decayed, his knees tottering, his hands trembling, his sight failing, his ears dull of hearing ; all that once charmed him able to charm him no longer ; a mere wreck of what he was, awaiting the hour of his departure to his long home ; such is he as described by Solomon. Who will wonder that the burden with which he began is the burden with which he ends : " Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity " (ch. i. 2, xii. 8).

But amid all that spoke of vanity there was another subject he touched on, for, being wise, he taught the people. He had spoken at length about man and his works ; he speaks briefly about God and what He does. And what he says about God (for the name Jehovah does not occur in the book) only brings out in higher relief the ruined condition of man. Man abideth not, his thoughts perish, his works crumble to dust, his name is forgotten. Created originally not for death, he is now born to die : but God abides. " I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it " (ch. iii. 14). Here in the midst of what is transient is something permanent. This he has found and desired to impress on others (ch. v. 1-7, xi. 9, xii. 1). He would tell

the creature of the Creator. It is not grace that he is charged to proclaim ; it is not salvation he is empowered here to offer ; but to God's creatures, responsible to Him who made them, he would speak. The Creator will take cognisance of, and make judicial inquiry into, the actions of His creatures. This none an escape, and of this all need to be reminded. And now that he has exposed the vanity of all things that are done under the sun, he opens out the only word for man to follow : " Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : fear God and keep His commandments : for this is the whole duty of man " (ch. xii. 13). The fuller light that we possess confirms all that Solomon said of man, and tells us likewise more about God ; but the principle here enunciated is true for all time—the creature should own the authority of God, and yield implicit obedience to all He is pleased to enjoin. " For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

C. E. S.

2 TIMOTHY, ii. 7.

To a consideration of what the Apostle had unfolded to him Timothy is directed ; and thinking upon those things, he is assured of understanding from the Lord. Labour and diligence is thus demanded of him, but dependence upon the Lord is implied also. Mere mental effort is of itself insufficient ; Divine teaching must be imparted, and to the *seeker* the joy of finding is granted.

Remembrance is also enjoined upon him, remembrance of the central facts connected with the Gospel as unfolded through Paul—" according to my gospel," he says. And

according to that " Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead." Thus His person, His work, His resurrection are brought forward. As the " seed of David " He is here referred to, though He was both " the root and the offspring of David " (Rev. xxii. 16),—*the root*, and so the One from whom David sprang, David's Lord indeed ; *the offspring*, and so David's Son. Verily Divine, He was yet most truly a man, as the words " seed of David " aver. This was the enigma presented by the Lord to His critics in Matth. xxii. 42-45—how the Christ, being David's Lord, could be His Son, and little as they realised it, yet that twofold truth constituted their only hope nationally and individually, for the name of the Son given was—how wondrously deep the mystery here !—" The mighty God, the everlasting Father " (Isa. ix. 6).

David's seed, raised from the dead : here the faithfulness of God shines out, for in Him the sure mercies of David are secured ; and by Christ's resurrection God's definite approval of His person and work is made plain. " This Jesus," declared Peter, " hath God raised up." Spurned by those to whom He came, rejected and crucified, yet raised and exalted " by the right hand of God," manifestly God's seal was set upon Him. Hence God's unfailing faithfulness is implied in this reference to Him who was of David's seed, as the resurrection would attest the power that was superior to all put forth by man. Permitted to nail Him to the tree, and set a watch about His tomb, it was yet beyond man's power to keep Him there. " God raised Him up and gave Him glory," and His intervention thus testifies eloquently of His delight and appreciation. " Remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead." Important to Timothy in his day and circumstances, how important must this remembrance be to the saint now when the buds of

Timothy's time are almost full blown,—departure from the truth then commencing is about to terminate in open apostacy. *Consider—remember*—are watch-words here.

Of the “afflictions of the Gospel” Paul has already spoken, exhorting his son to be partaker thereof (ch. i. 9). Truly marvellous it is that the proclamation of *glad tidings from God* should arouse an hostile feeling in the human breast, and that the proclaimers of His Gospel should suffer as evil-doers. The Apostle's experience lay that way; but suffering was indicated in the call he received from the Lord. A chosen vessel, he was, and the Lord's words were, “I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake” (Acts 9, 16). Bonds awaited *him*, but there was deep joy in the remembrance that “*the word of God is not bound*” (ver. 9). Man may bind the servant, but cannot bind the message. One here and another there may be silenced by the malice of man and Satan combined, but still the work goes forward—“The word of God is not bound.”

Who can over-ride the sovereignty of God? And that sovereignty of grace and power is clearly indicated in the continuance of God to invite sinners to His feast, and to draw them there. His word wings its way to the hearts of men. His word unbound tells that the springs of His grace are not dried up. It was joy to the Lord to say of His own, “I have given them Thy word” (John xvii. 14). It was joy to the servant, “the prisoner of the Lord,” to write, “The word of God is not bound.”

With that assurance Paul could labour on—could “endure all things for the elect's sake,” as though the very accomplishment of God's counsels depended upon his not giving way. What a sense of responsibility,¹ but what devotedness! How near the heart of his Master the servant must have

been for such love to thus well up and overflow in service towards those upon whom the love of God was set—God's elect. So he unfalteringly set forth that which told of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus," and "the eternal glory" associated therewith.

And such was "a faithful saying" for the counsels of God must all stand. But associated with this is the unchanging character of God. Blessing comes not at the expense of what *He is*. Nothing of that is surrendered. But greatest blessing and highest privilege go hand in hand with deepest responsibility. Identification with Christ in death means association in life with Him, as the Apostle says, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." Suffering for Him is answered with glory—"we shall reign with Him." To deny Him means being denied by Him. Nor does lack of faith on the part of any destroy the faithfulness of the Lord—"He abideth faithful"—does not renounce His own character because of the distrust and doubt of man—He cannot deny Himself. He must abide what He is, and cannot accommodate Himself to any standard that men, in unfaithfulness to His revealed mind may set up. "He abideth faithful"—blessed consideration for any who amidst prevailing confusion are endeavouring to think His thoughts and walk His paths! "He cannot deny Himself"—solemn consideration for those who claim to have the Lord's approval for ways contrary to His word, and steps taken in paths of unrighteousness!

H. F.

What virtue can there be in him whose principle in life is disregard of his Maker, and disbelief in his Saviour? He is an avowed rebel, and yet would be commended by the Lord he rejects. How can it be?

THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN.

BOTH the above terms are found in the writings of the Apostle Paul, and nowhere else. It is important to understand what he meant by them, for a mistake as to his meaning introduces confusion into the various truths with which they are associated. The old man—What is it? Is it a person? Is it the human race? We believe it is neither. The first time we read of the old man is in Rom. vi. 6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (or annulled), that henceforth we should not serve sin." It is not, then, our persons; but is plainly distinguished from them. It is a something that has been judicially dealt with, so that the believer may not serve sin. It is annulled that the believer may know now deliverance from its domination. Once we were the servants of sin, but now we are that no longer. We have died with Christ to it; not, be it observed, that sin has died, or the old man. No, the believer has become dead to it. Sin in the flesh has been condemned. Our old man has been crucified with Him. We believe that a little careful thought and attention to Scripture will lead to the conclusion that the old man is the evil nature, or, as it is sometimes termed, the flesh; and by contrast we conclude that the new man in Eph. iv. 22, and in Col. iii. 10, is the new nature.

We all understand from John iii. that the new birth is not that of a man's entire person. That was really Nicodemus' difficulty. There is no change in a man's person at the new birth. His body, soul, and spirit remain the same; yet did the Lord Jesus say: "Except *a man* be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In John's 1st Epistle, what proves a man has been the subject of the new birth,

according to ch. ii. 29, is the practice of righteousness. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him." Again, in chap. iii. 14, it is love of the brethren—"We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." In verse 9 we read, "*Whosoever* is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (R.V.). A person is said to be born of God, and always so stated, we believe, with one exception: 1st John v. 4—"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith is not the product of fallen man. It is of divine begetting. It is the gift of God. Verse 5 asks the question, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" A person overcomes the world. A person is born of God. Yet not a feature in the face is changed, nor the colour of a hair is altered, nor a wrinkle on the forehead is removed. What then? The person, the man, overcomes the world, but he does so by faith. He practises righteousness, for he partakes of the divine nature. That nature is new in him, for he never had it until it was communicated to him at the new birth. It sways the man. It changes his actions, his thoughts, affections, desires, hopes—all are changed. He loves God, and of necessity loves those who are born of Him. It is quite natural for him to do so, as begotten of God.

Before conversion a man is the servant of sin. The evil nature dominated him. That which rules the man and gives him his character morally may well be termed our old man, and so that which rules and dominates and gives a fresh moral character to the converted man may well be termed the new man.

Believers are said to have put off the old man, and to have put on the new man. Now it is clear that we could not put off our persons, nor could we expel from our persons the evil nature, but in the sense of having a mastering, controlling nature, the old man, we have put that off and have done with our former way of living, and have indeed put on the new man, who is said to be renewed in "knowledge after the image of Him that created him." The former manner of life is done with. Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ," but he immediately guards against a wrong construction being put upon his words, and adds: "Nevertheless I live. Yet not I . . ." No, it is not the I dominated by sin; but what is it then? "Christ, lives in me." Yes, Christ was in Him. Christ was his life, and Christ is our life, and the life he lived in the flesh (or in the body) he lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave Himself for him.

Paul, as a man, physically, was the same; yet was Christ now the spring and power of his life. Spirit, soul, and body were all consecrated to His service. The old way of living was past; the new was present.

I can think of a man as a being with a spirit, soul, and body. I can speak of the outward man; meaning by that the body. I can think of the inward man: meaning by that the new nature. Paul wrote, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man"; and, again, "If our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day." The outward is corporeal; the inward is spiritual. I can think and speak of the old man, which is, I believe, the old nature; and I can think of the new man, which is, I believe, the new nature, which is in every true believer.

“THE WHITE STONE.”

(Rev. II. 17.)

THE “white stone” seems to mark the individual approbation of Christ; the “new name,” peculiar intercourse between Christ and the individual, different from that which all shall share alike, different from the public joy. There is a public joy. All saints will together enjoy the comforts of Christ’s love, will enter into the “joy of their Lord,” and with one heart and one voice will sound His praise. There will also be joy in seeing the fruit of our labours, as it is said, “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” And again there will be another joy in seeing the company of the redeemed, all according to Christ’s heart in holiness and glory. But besides this public joy, there will be Christ’s peculiar private individual recognition and approval,—the “white stone” and the “new name which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.”

Our souls must value this personal approval of Christ, as well as think of the public approval. The latter will be great blessedness; but there is no peculiar affection in it, nothing that stamps peculiar love on the individual. Glory will be common to all, but glory is not affection. This “new name” is a different thing; it is the proof of Christ’s value for a person who has been faithful in difficult and trying circumstances, for one who has acted on the knowledge of His mind, and overcome through communion with Him.

There is the public joy and approval in various ways, and the manifestation of our being loved by the Father as Jesus is loved. But this is not all that is given for our encouragement in individual conduct through trial, failure, and difficulty ; there is also this special, private joy of love.

When the common course of the Church is not straight, not in the full energy of the Holy Ghost, though there may be a great deal of faithfulness, yet there is danger of disorder. We find that the Lord then applies Himself more to the walk of individual saints, and suits His promises to the peculiar state in which they are. This takes out of all fancied walking (the especial danger which belongs to such a state of things)—each according to his own will, chalking out a path for himself because of the unfaithfulness and disobedient walk of the professing body. What faith has to do in such circumstances is to lay hold intelligently, soberly, and solemnly on the Lord's mind, and to walk according to it, strengthened by the promises which He has attached to such a path as He can own.

What a comfort it is, beloved friends, how full of encouragement to the feeblest saint, to have thus the guidance of the Lord, and the promise of His own peculiar approbation ! so peculiar, that it is known only to him who receives it, when the course of the Church is such that one is thrown greatly on individual responsibility of conduct. But then, whilst it gives us strength for walk, it puts the soul in direct responsibility to the Lord, and breaks down human will. When the professing Church has become mingled with the world, "eating and drinking with the drunken," those who seek to be faithful must often have to walk alone, incurring the charge of folly and self-will (and that, too, even from their brethren), because they refuse to follow the beaten path.

And, indeed, it is quite a real danger, a natural consequence that, when the common course is broken up, individual will should work. The natural tendency would ever be towards self-will. Our only safety is in having the soul brought under the sense of direct responsibility to God, though at the same time we may be obliged to act independently of all around. It should be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love, to find that He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves, who received the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or, at least, that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us?—even in the Church to be thought nothing of?—that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it?" Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh, think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favour, but seeks honour (as we do) one of another instead? I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer—the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private, individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, "the latter." Both will be ours, if faithful, but we shall value this most, and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

2 TIMOTHY, ii. 14-26.

CONTINUING our study, we find that Timothy is next charged to put the saints "in remembrance of these things"—the unchanging principles of God and His word just before mentioned by the Apostle. Surely they are calculated to produce reality, sobriety, and discretion.

Taking the saints, in spirit, into the presence of the Lord, he has thus solemnly to impress upon them the necessity of abstaining from unprofitable questionings, strife about words. Such questions (and many can always be raised) are perplexing, not edifying; subverting instead of building up. Therefore are they to be avoided. They give rein to the mind and imagination, and beginning with "*my opinion*," they end with "*my opinion*"—gaining in vehemence and fleshliness as the controversy is prolonged. Human opinion, not divine revelation, is at the bottom of all such speculations and strife about words. How unseemly that wrangling should proceed and the souls of the hearers get damage and hurt. How far removed is this from making straight paths for the feet! It may be important that I should give my opinion and raise a discussion, but it is far more important that God's people be edified. The first savours of carnality, but this of true spirituality. Thus is followed the more excellent way.

It is an old question, and one that continues to this day, and the Lord's servant surely requires to give heed to these things if he would have his conduct in accord with the mind of God thus revealed. In the former epistle Timothy is warned against giving heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions—bring them to the lips instantly—rather than godly edifying (ch. i. 4). Here he has to charge others not to strive about words.

Rather the opposite of this was to characterise him that he be "approved unto God." Earnest diligence to that end is indicated in the word "study." And, that rightly dividing the word of truth and strife about words are far asunder, is clearly shown. The former is to be the aim of God's workman; the latter has to be avoided. To cut the word in a straight line—to note the divine design in this portion and that; to place each part in its proper dispensational setting; to remark the prophetic element here and there, and the application to certain present circumstances, is obviously important. How else can the saints be truly built up but by the truth unfolded in due proportion? Men will judge, but God's verdict is sought. Fault-finders and cavillers there will be, but gainsayers will be silenced. Approved unto God, and not put to confusion—what compensation for the faithful, diligent toiler!

"The word of truth" has then, to receive careful, prayerful consideration, but "profane and vain babblings" are to be shunned. How scathing a term, pouring contempt on the wonderful shows of learning put forth by both ancients and moderns which, whilst ministering to conceit and fleshly pretension, and making for ungodliness instead of piety, insidiously work like a canker, eating away the substance and leaving a hollow, useless, senseless form behind.

To what "vain babblings"—the vanity of the human mind finding expression in words—are God's people treated to-day; and great is their forgetfulness both of the command to shun such as profane things, and of the destructive effect of these vain imaginings. For subtle forms these often take. Two are mentioned as teaching that "the resurrection is past already." Superior discernment and spirituality were there doubtless, and the claim to see beyond Paul also, but nevertheless, *concerning the truth*

they erred. What they said seemed to elevate the saints, but it meant the renunciation of *the truth*, and savoured of the serpent, for it struck at God. Hence the twofold evil. The resurrection past, the saints would be reigning, would occupy the position of rulers instead of sufferers for Christ and for righteousness' sake. This same error has in very modern times been served out to the saints in another guise. This is the millennium, it has been taught. But *then* righteousness shall reign, and under the perfect government of Christ there will be—and only then—an adequate expression of God in government; but to teach that it is so now when evil rears its haughty head and tramples righteousness under foot, is wicked in the extreme, and reveals that there is no right conception of God, who is light and love, just and good. Such teachers commit the sin of Job's friends, for they speak not of God the thing that is right. May the Lord preserve us from adding to His words, lest we be reprovèd; and give us to truly realise that "every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him" (Prov. xxx. 5,6).

So His word can be relied upon. "Nevertheless," spite of changing opinion, and the instability of many who were forsaking the faith, "the foundation of God abideth firm." Blessed assurance surely! Stability marks this, for He has laid it, and "whatsoever He doeth shall be for ever," and "the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

And the writing upon the seal is interpreted for us—on the one side is set forth the security of the saint; on the other is shown the responsibility which devolves upon all who name the name of Christ (ver. 19). Perfect love and perfect knowledge are with our God—"the Lord knoweth them that are His." Let them be where they may, He recognises the fruit of His own grace, and in His good time

all shall be gathered out and home, eternally to declare the worth of Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose precious blood we have been redeemed to God.

In this day of confusion and general profession, God alone has the ability to discern all who are His. He knows them, and not one shall be lost. Not those who simply say, "Lord, Lord" find acceptance; but yet, "the Lord knoweth them that are His." What consolation is there for those who put their trust in Him. How quieting to the soul this precious truth!

But the other side reveals the imperative obligation that rests upon every one who acknowledges the Lordship of Christ by calling upon His name. It is incumbent upon all such that they depart from iniquity. To associate that name with unrighteousness is iniquity indeed. Shall it be made to appear as though He, the Holy and the True, sanctions what is contrary to God's word? That must not be.

To reject God's word is iniquity. To institute human arrangements in the House of God is setting aside His authority, and this is rebellion. So when evils are prevalent, and man rules where Christ should be supreme, the godly man has His word to act upon. "Depart from iniquity," not go on with it, is His plain injunction. Obedience is thus called into action, and real love, not the spurious thing, is manifested thereby, as also the place the truth of God holds in the heart and conscience.

The necessity of this word is apparent. On every hand the name of Christ is used to bolster up various movements, movements religious and worldly both, but as contrary to His word as can well be conceived. Ignorance there may be, but expressly His word enjoins separation from unrighteousness—and "*all* unrighteousness is sin."

God's provision this is, then, for days that teem with snares—on that very account are they *perilous*,—and often the feet are caught in them. Obedience rendered here works deliverance, and saves from many exercises raised on account of unrighteousness. The heart finds ease in the reflection that the Lord's are known to Him. The conscience is challenged to respond to the obligations imposed by privilege ; and as in faith His word is acted upon, so are the principles of God maintained, not set aside, nor nullified.

It has been said that we cannot have the grace of Christianity apart from the truth of it ; and when the force of this is perceived the urgent necessity of rendering obedience to the word given of God is seen ; and, brethren, it is good to be established in the present truth.

H. F.

(To be continued.—D.V.)

"HIS WAY IS PERFECT."

MANY years ago I went to my room one day in a very dejected state of mind. I had just heard that a loved brother had died in a distant land, and other trying circumstances, too, pressed sorely.

On entering my room I saw on the floor a half-sheet of notepaper. I picked it up and found written on it the following lines. I read them, and was comforted. I could *give thanks* now for *all* the way the Lord had led me, and trust Him for the future.

I showed the paper to all in the house. No one had seen the lines before, and no one knew the writing.

The window of my room was open ; could the paper have blown in ? I know not, but the words were used of God to

cheer me to “go forward,” “looking unto Jesus,” and I pass them on now, in the hope that other hearts may be cheered by the thought that there is nothing too *great* or too *small* for the Lord to undertake for us.

S. S. E.

O, let thy faith repose
In Jesus' love divine ;
The heart that all our sorrow knows
Is feeling *now* for *thine*.

Tell to His listening ear
The anxious thoughts that rise ;
He's moved by every falling tear ;
He echoes all thy sighs.

Purer than aught below
The heart that bled for thee ;
Not like the mingled love *we* show
His *perfect* sympathy.

Well may'st thou then confide
Each interest to His care ;
Since He has power and skill to guide
His loved ones everywhere.

If slow to understand
When clouds thy pathway dim,
The *way* is still in Jesus' hand,
The *end* is safe with Him.

See where He sits on high
In calm, unclouded *peace* !
Dwell there beneath His watchful eye,
And every fear shall cease.

So holy is His love,
So wise are all His ways,
That did we always dwell above
Our hearts would only praise.

REPENTANCE AND BLESSING.

(Zech. xii. 11-14.)

OUR prophet gives the general account of Jehovah's gracious action when He espouses the cause of the remnant already delivered from the inward evil, and exposed to the attacks of the nations who believe not that Messiah is with His people. And now that this mighty overthrow of the gathered Gentiles has been wrought, an immensely deepened spiritual work goes on in their souls. The word of God enters profoundly into their conscience, the effect of which is that each retires alone as it were before God. For indeed their grief of heart is such that they feel the need of having to do with Him alone ; if they could bear another's presence than His against whom they had so variously and long sinned, what could any other avail at such an hour ? No ; they must go to the Lord with it all—to the very One who is not more surely their Jehovah-Elohim than their pierced Messiah. It is not despairing remorse, but a gracious sorrow. It is self-judgment that takes to heart their own sin, that looks back at all without excusing any, that takes God's side against every evil way, and above the rest their shameless rejection of His Messiah. All, no matter how far back, own it as their own sin. So they mourn as for their only son—a mourning in love, but with the deepest pain and

shame that they had so treated Him who loved them perfectly. This is what they most feel now—it was against Him.

Thus, too, we find certain families mentioned with a very peculiar choice and beauty. The family, we are told, of the house of David, beginning with the very highest or royal line. "They mourn," as it is said, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart." But the family of the reproving prophet is also there; the descendants of Nathan are mourning, too. Instead of now reproving David, they unsparingly judge themselves, and confess each his own sin. Grace, no doubt, can identify itself with others' sins; but this cannot rightly be unless one walks with God in pure conscience. Here it is the thorough repentance of those who are the first to own their long and guilty blindness. Hence it will be no question of David exposed before Nathan, or of Nathan dealing with David; each will find his own sin, and will deplore their common sin against the Messiah.

But further still this might be said to be when the nation was grown up into a maturity of greatness. The work, however, will go farther back still; it will mount right up to the beginning. For, as we read, "The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shemei apart, and their wives apart." Notoriously Levi and Simeon, or Shemei, were the very heads who conspired in revenge for their sister Dinah, and caused the names of the sons of Jacob to stink in the earliest days; and now the posterity of the two who were together in their cruel wickedness are named together in bending alone to confess each his guilt before Jehovah.

There is no more beautiful description of the power of divine grace in searching the heart, fully trusting in the

Lord, yet condemning one's sins to the uttermost. There is nothing finer in its way than the view it gives of the operation of the Spirit on the conscience, which so isolates the soul that we hear of the husbands apart, and their wives apart. The closest relationship is as nothing in presence of sin and God as its judge. Each must be alone : the husband apart and the wife apart, shut out from every influence and thought so of what He is spite of what each had been to Him whom they pierced, yet who died for them. The whole work must be done—the work not of deliverance only, but of restoration in conscience before God.

It is not that they were not quickened before, nor that they only now first knew real compunction of conscience by the Spirit of God. But the dealing of the soul with God and under His truth is far more profound when the sense of danger is gone, and the power of God has wrought unmistakable deliverance. In this case, as we have seen, not only was the beast destroyed that rose up against the Lamb, but now the open and earthly enemies of Israel. The rich and manifest mercy opens the heart, and conscience unburdens itself before God.

—*Lectures on Minor Prophets.*

GATHERED THOUGHTS ON JAMES.

(Chapter i.)

VER. 4.—How much is lost through undue haste? We want to anticipate God. By so doing we manifest self-will, taking matters into our own hands. We need to await the will of our God, conscious that in testing His people He would have them learn more of Himself.

Ver. 4.—The contrast of this we see in Saul, king of Israel, who did not wait out the full time, and lost the kingdom (1 Sam. xiv.). Even in David we see failure of endurance when fleeing from Saul he sought Achish in Gath (1 Sam. xxvii., xxix.). Christ alone was perfect in this as in all else.

Ver. 5.—The Psalmist says, after he had been brought to see the foolishness of his musings, “I was as a beast before Thee” (Ps. lxxiii. 22)—he lacked understanding. The saint of God must view his circumstances in connection with the will and counsels of God. Lacking inability to do this, wisdom must be sought from Him. He gives liberally. He does not upbraid. To him that asks, it is given.

Ver. 5.—When a soul has fairly entered on the path of trials, which faith never fails to experience in a world departed from God, he soon finds his lack of wisdom. But his comfort is that He with whom he has to do is alone wise, and ready to guide those that wait on Him. How much better it is that wisdom should be in Him that we may be dependent on His guidance, than if it were a possession vested in us, exposed to the danger of our setting up to do without Him.

Ver. 6.—Faith is the necessary requisite in asking, expressing as it does, confidence in God. Doubt and distrust are the very opposite of this. Faith counts absolutely upon Him; and this faith is linked up with the perfect work of patience referred to in ver. 4.

Ver. 6.—The doubt of God’s steadfastness is the reflex of man’s vacillation, whereas fulness of faith and entireness of devotion are the conditions of effectual prayer. He who knows not his own mind in asking must have misgivings as to receiving.

Ver. 6.—Ceaseless agitation of storm-driven wave

represents unrest of soul. In Eph. iv. 14, the bark is tossed at the mercy of the winds; here we have the wave, the very element of instability, of restless, purposeless motion.

Ver. 7.—How could it be otherwise in him who in his weakness does not lean on the Lord? Whatever may be given, there is no real receiving from the Lord on his part who does not trust Him. If in one way he speaks, in another he feels and acts, being of double soul. Instability marks all his course.

Ver. 8.—The doubtfulness in the man's prayer betrays itself in all his goings. He cannot walk straight or aim straight at an object; at odds with himself, he goes two ways—and therefore no way.

Ver. 8.—Unstable—that is his character. How then shall he excel? Wanting one thing, he asks for another, and then doubts about both. What does such an one truly know of uttering felt need before, and into the ear of the eternal God? Verily God is a faithful God, but that is left out of the reckoning by the unstable soul.

(To be continued.—D.V.)

SIN.

AND what about sin? Is there such a thing? Is it true that "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"? What says the moral sense again? Are these things inconveniences merely, or do they "defile the man"? Are they results of wrong diet, political blunders, accident, or are they innate in every child of man? If the latter, and if evil, is man as God made him, or is the Christian doctrine of the fall perchance a verity? One or other must be. If

truth, if purity, if virtue, be any more than a mere name, what is the world, and what are we? If we ourselves are exceptions, *what at least are our neighbours?* If God made such a world, He were not God. Either there is no God, or we are fallen creatures.

Allow me once there is such a thing as sin, and the shadow is gone from off the face of God. It may rest on man, and on nature, but faith in God is possible once more. Death and judgment are realities, but God lives, and God is good. The very laws of nature bear Him witness, as the expression of a nature opposed to evil, visiting transgression with penalty. The shadow is the frown of God; and if upon evil, then because He is opposed to evil. Granted there may be difficulties and perplexities, the general bearing of the facts is evident; and the human laws, without which man could not live, are but the copy and the outcome of the Divine.

But grant once again that man is a sinner; grant that he has a will which perverts his judgment, lusts that seduce his intellect; grant that sin indulged dulls the conscience, and depraves still further the heart (and these are lessons of every day experience); grant that an offender is not an unprejudiced judge in his own cause; and you have abundant, over-abundant reason for distrusting the mere rational estimate of man's possible future. That he has a conscience capable of being aroused by God's word, and of responding to His appeal, is, of course, true. That God challenges man's understanding and his moral sense, and makes them His witnesses is also true. He will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged. But that those who have never learnt to measure themselves in His presence should arraign His justice because His estimate of sin is different from others, is the height of irrationality, as it is of pride.

If Scripture be the word of God—if even the consciences of men not the worst in life have given a true verdict,—man is a fallen being; and his estimates of sin and its desert are alike faulty. Viewed in this way by the light of reason only, we might well predict that the divine estimate of either would far transcend our own.

God has taken care, therefore, to make His appeal to man in another way than that suggested. Instead of putting before him as a philosopher, a picture of rectitude with which he would be charmed, or expecting a criminal to fall in love with his sentence, he has treated him as a sinful but a miserable being, a creature fallen and lost. He puts before this prodigal in a far-off country the bread in his Father's house. He appeals to the self-love of an essentially selfish being. He calls to Himself the thirsty, the weary, the heavy-laden, the lost; and the disinterestedness of a love which has come so far to seek, and gives so freely, without any gain but what love alone could count such, is all needed evidence of the truth of the message to the soul that thus finds itself searched out and besought.

Beside this, God's word has its abundant witness, so much the more evident *because* by no means of a mere moral kind. Thus prophesy invokes the facts of history, and even the current events before one's eyes; while in the present day the stones of Egypt and the bricks of Assyria are crying out in ears however unwilling. Thus not only conscience is appealed to; and where it is, it is not put into the critic's chair, but the felon's dock—not to judge, but to hear judgment. If man be a fallen, depraved creature, it must needs be so. If he be not, his existence, his condition, and his end, are alike an insoluble, impenetrable mystery.

Yet it is quite true that to a conscience quickened and enlightened by the Word, God's ways approve themselves. The light brought in manifests itself as such by revealing to the opened eye the beauty and the deformity of things not before apparent. It is conscious knowledge: "One thing we know; whereas we were blind, now we see." Still the horizon is limited, and if the true light now shines, the darkness is yet *passing* only, and not passed. He that sees farthest sees most the limit. He that judges himself most truly will own most fully God's judgments to be a great deep. It is not credulity to do so, but the most clear-sighted wisdom. Reason and faith are not at war.

They who believe that God has given His Son for men can rest in the conclusion that not only will He be "clear when He is judged," but that His long-suffering mercy, and His will that none should perish, will be abundantly revealed in the fast-hastening day of manifestation. This they will not venture to anticipate; nor can they believe that the world would be one whit better governed if the secrets of that government were made fully known. The existence of evil is the one real and only difficulty; but it exists; and God has answered the question as to Himself raised by it, not by a logical explanation of the difficulty, which it may perhaps be doubted if we should have ability to understand, but by unveiling Himself in Christ. I see in the Cross His holiness, I see His goodness, I see His love; and, if the darkness be only passing and not passed, I can walk amid it without stumbling, with a Father's hand close clasping mine. The darkness that remains is but the necessary school for faith; but a faith which has the surest ground under its feet. "We know" but "in part"; still we *know*. The imperfections will pass, but the truth now known will abide for ever.

A LETTER OF INTEREST.

" I SUPPOSE Daniel in the den of lions was as calm, as peaceful, as in any other scene. Perhaps more so. God *was there*, and where His presence is most realised, peace is deepest, most profound. It is true that God was with him in his chamber where he prayed three times a day—but here in the lion's den, the heart of the enemy's power, the extremity of the enemy's resources, God was more than present. He was there as a *Conqueror*, stilling the roar of the lion in his very den, making the dark places of the earth the scene of His glorious operations, saying as it were to the prophet's soul, " Be still, and know that I am God." *God everywhere*—Almighty to save, to bless with unspeakable consolation and inward repose every confiding soul.

The affairs of the province of Babylon must have been of far less interest to the prophet's heart than those of the captive Hebrews—and yet the former had come under his hand, and he had to administer them, while his sympathies were with his own people, and his heart yearned over them, and felt their desolations. How little can we read the heart of a man of God by the position he is in, or trace the current of his affections by the circumstances by which he is surrounded! But God was over all, and His hand was in all the captivity of His people, though it was a chastening and afflicting hand, yet not the less loving and merciful for that, surely. And the captivity had its limit, too. " He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger for ever." The seventy years must roll their course, and " the captivity shall be turned as the rivers in the south." God will make even Babylon confess His might, His majesty, His greatness. " No weapon that is formed against *thee* shall prosper," and in the time appointed the nation that

He loves shall come forth to freedom and to joy. But God's way is always a triumphant way ; that is, it *issues* in triumph to Himself, and to His people. Perhaps the den of lions is a figure, too, of Messiah's wondrous pathway, when He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. The prophet came out unhurt as he entered—innocency was found in him.

The Son having life in Himself came forth from the sepulchre in which His voluntary substitution of Himself for us had laid Him (O what love ; immense, unsearchable), and manifests in resurrection and ascension glory that God, *His* God, and *our* God, is the *living God*, and steadfast for ever, the unfailing and everlasting friend of all that trust in Him.

The eater is always made to yield meat—the strong to bring forth sweetness. God's way has been to allow the adversary to carry out his plans to his own utter confusion and defeat. The Rock on which the Church is built still stands, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I was glad to find you were able to enter upon the afternoon service. May the Lord sustain you in it, dear brother, and fill your own soul with blessing, while you seek to water others. The well of endless life is open for you, and never can be exhausted. He that gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, ever lives to bless you, to sustain you in your labour of love.

H. B.

I cannot tell what may befall,
I know not, but God knoweth all ;
His love will give me what is best,
He lives, He loves, and that is rest.

USEFUL NOTES.

“ Praise relateth to God’s excellencies ; thanksgiving to God’s benefits.” “ Thanks for all things.” “ For things of discipline as well as things of nutriment, for toil and the hardness which toil works, for hunger and cold, for sickness and sorrow, for death itself, for mercy and also for judgment, for riches and also for poverty, for peaceful calm and also for purifying storm.”

O for more love, and more faith, and more spiritual vigour in our constitutions, and then we shall clear half our difficulties at a running leap, and scarcely call them other than light afflictions, which are but for a moment, and are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

From the first Eden, over now six thousand years, we look on to another, brighter and more blessed, God’s own Paradise ; where the tree of life, in new luxuriance and beauty, hangs its glorious fruitage over the perpetual stream that flows from the throne of God itself. Who can fail to see that the one is designed to be the shadow of the other ; and that the contrast is but to remind us that the first is only the shadow, and cannot be the very image of that before whose transcendent beauty all pictures and forecasts fail ? The first scene is the earthly and the fleeting ; the second heavenly and eternal.

Of most other things it may be said, “ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity ” ; but of the Scriptures, “ Verity of verities, all is verity.”

**“THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL
RENEW THEIR STRENGTH.”**

(Isa. xl. 31.)

THIS precious word occurs in that portion of the prophecy which has for its opening the exhortation from God to comfort His people. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.” Then, showing that “all flesh is as grass,” He demonstrates the utter, senseless folly of idolatry, and so leads His people up to Himself—“the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator.”

Now let us not suppose that the *waiting* mentioned here implies a state of passivity. It rather expresses a constant attitude of soul; a condition of dependence upon the God who knows neither wearying nor fainting, and to whose understanding there is no limit. It is not the prayer meeting simply, but what is meant by “pray without ceasing.”

The word *wait* is an emphatic word, and has in it the thought of enduring as well as waiting. Patience is in it surely, as there is the realisation that God waited upon would not fail, but would respond in blessing according to His word. And there is here a contrast between human strength and divine upholding. The former, manifested in its very best forms, fails; the latter, never, but those who have it “go from strength to strength.” In the preceding verse it is with emphasis stated that the *youths*, the personification of untiring energy, faint and grow weary; and *the young men*, a forceful figure of strength, utterly fall, unable to support themselves. “But,” the contrast has it,

“they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” Provision is made divinely for such. A constant supply of support is continually bestowed upon them, with the blessed result that the energy of faith is seen, unwearied service is performed, and sustained communion is enjoyed.

With strength renewed, there is first the upward flight on the wings of faith—“they shall *mount up*,” up to God, with wings like eagles, swift, sure, and strong. How comely that the soul divinely strengthened should thus aspire to God! should find relief in soaring on faith’s pinions to Him! “Thou art my hiding place,” said one who knew the blessedness of having sins forgiven and iniquity covered; refuge and repose he found in God. Verily he mounted up. But further. “They shall run,” it is said, energised by a strength that fails not. In paths of service doing His bidding, they go, and are unwearied. And then “they shall walk” in joyous communion with Him, and “faint not,” though the way be long. How often the length of the journey tests the traveller—finds out the power there is to endure. When home still seems a long way off, how very easy it is for us to well-nigh despair, to faint, to sink in utter hopelessness. But that is not the portion of those who wait upon the Lord; not simply come to Him now and again. “They shall walk and *not faint*.”

Blessed are the results that come to those who thus wait upon Him. And where this is neglected how barren is the soul! Difficulties become magnified into insurmountable obstacles, and the joys found only in the path for faith are missed. Let us attend well to this then. “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say on the Lord.” (Psalm xxvii. 14).

ANTICIPATIONS.

I know not where in bounds of space my future home doth
lie,

No pathway through the air I trace, no portal through the
sky,

But I know that I shall be at home with Jesus by and by.

I've watched the heaving bosom fail, but the soul I could
not see

As from its tenement so frail it passed triumphantly,
But I knew the promise was fulfilled "In Paradise with Me."

I know not how the unclothed soul with soul doth converse
hold,

Or how the blessed Saviour doth to each His love unfold,
But I know that to be with Him there is bliss that can't be
told.

I know not, Oh I cannot tell what it must be to hear
Those lofty themes of Paradise untold—to mortal ear
Untellable—But He is there, and *there* can be no fear.

I know not what my lot shall be, whether to pass away
To taste the rest of Paradise, or here on earth to stay
To watch and wait until hath dawned the Resurrection day.

Nor would I choose. For He who loved and gave Himself
for me

Still waits, the travail of His soul full satisfied to see,
His Father's wise appointed time. His time is best for me.

2 TIMOTHY II. 20-26.

THE truth of individual responsibility set forth in those words "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (ver. 19) is further pursued, and individual faithfulness in the time of general unfaithfulness is brought out in connection with definite separation from what dishonours the Lord. Oh that ears were open to hear the Word, and hearts, responsive thereto, found obeying!

The figure of a great house is used to symbolise the condition of things existent; and as in such a house vessels varied in character and use are found—not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware; not only vessels unto honour but also unto dishonour—so similarly in that which is outwardly called Christian there are those found whose acceptance of Christ is only nominal; there are those whose ways ill accord with the teaching of the Scriptures of truth; these are those whose aim manifestly is to pervert God's Word, and undermine His authority, wolves in sheep's clothing, endeavouring to draw away disciples after them. We have now Christendom without Christianity. The Church and world are merged in one.

What is to be done? Is it to be a matter of indifference that such a state of things exist? Must all exercise about it be checked in the bud as though there were no remedy? Or, shall the evil be met by the substitution of human arrangement for the obedience of faith?

Definite and emphatic are the instructions given: "If a man therefore purge himself from these." Can it mean other than it says? Here surely the truth is on the very surface. The effort to read this two ways plainly reveals unbelief underlying it. What can "*purge himself from these*" mean but just what it expresses? A difficult course

it might be to pursue. Expediency indeed suggests the impropriety of acting in such a stringent way, but faith thinks of God and what He enjoins.

And significant are the words following, showing us that blessing and obedience go hand in hand. Here there is great recompense of reward. "He shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." God deigns to use the man in whose heart He is sanctified, and who, trembling at His Word, acts in His fear. In God's sight he is a vessel unto honour. His path for service might seem much narrowed by his action; but he is found in the very position from whence it can be rightly rendered unto Him who values not according to the amount performed, but according to the character of it. He is blessed indeed who, in the words of Christ, "doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven."

To purge himself from the vessels unto dishonour is the Divine injunction for the man of God. No option, no alternative course, has he in this matter. To abide with those who permit dishonour to Christ is, to say the least, to tolerate evil and to bind His blessed name with what is hateful to Him.

In separation, then, is to be found safety and blessing—*"a vessel unto honour."* For, first, by keeping apart from such vessels (unto dishonour) "he is sheltered from the influences that impoverish and degrade the testimony he has to render to Christ; he is pure from that which deteriorates and falsifies that testimony." Then, secondly, as set apart by God and prepared by Him for service, he is in the essential condition to be serviceable to the Master—a servant ready to perform as opportunity arises, "prepared unto every good work."

What a privilege is afforded the saint in being permitted

to serve Him. Still, let us not suppose that simply "doing something" is service, but rather the doing His will; and those who walk the path that faith finds of God have the "open door" assured them, and find favour of the Lord. May our hearts covet these blessings.

But other evils there are beside those called ecclesiastical besetting the saint. The ugliness of the flesh becomes manifest in lust, and all phases of immorality have to be eschewed. So the exhortation continues, "flee also youthful lusts." Spoken of in the second place, they are yet linked with what has preceded—"flee *also*"; and here again we see safety in separation, security in flight—flight from evil, but into the strong tower of the name of the Lord. We must range ourselves on God's side if hating the evil, and execute unsparing judgment upon all lusts of the flesh. Then He points the way He would have all His own go.

And that way is the way of "righteousness, faith, love, and peace," and these have to be pursued. "Pursue righteousness." How that implies diligence and the calling of spiritual energy into exercise. And it must be noted that whilst we would perhaps have put love and peace first as calling attention to their prime importance, the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle, speaks otherwise, and righteousness and faith have that pre-eminent place.

And we must take them in their order, or be wrong all along the line. Righteousness is rightness, and connects itself with our *doings*, our dealings with others, and only that has the light of His countenance shed upon it which is right according to Him. His Word, then, must be the standard of judgment, for there all our responsibilities in all our relationships are fully unfolded. So in the heart God must be sanctified. Much sorrow has befallen God's dear people because of their neglect of this; for because of

unrighteousness His mighty hand has been upon them. Sin is lawlessness, that is, insubjection, the working of a will antagonistic to God, and great is the necessity for the remembrance that *all unrighteousness is sin*.

Follow righteousness. Oh! let us heed the exhortation. Direst evils have been, and are, perpetrated under the cloak of religion, and page after page of Church history are dark with the records of these deeds, and still that history repeats itself in varied ways, and God and His Word are set at nought. But plainly, to follow righteousness, unrighteousness must be departed from; so those who, seeing and owning the evil, yet, under various pretexts, abide in association therewith, lay themselves open to the charge of allowing the deeds of their fathers. A solemn sentence indeed!

Many have tried to reach the pleasant paths of peace by way of unrighteousness, and wonder when they find confusion instead. Sowing the wind, the whirlwind is reaped. Questions are asked, and exercises are raised, but the root of the evil remains untouched. As lopping off the branches will not kill the tree—it will sprout again from the ground—neither will a simple verbal repudiation of evils suffice. The exercises to which God points His servants are “depart from unrighteousness”—“follow righteousness.” Let us, then, obey and see to it that the breastplate of righteousness is henceforth kept firmly on.

Faith next is mentioned. Faith takes God into account, and, believing His Word, it is to the soul “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. xi. 1.) It rules out sight, and sense is not relied upon. “Except I see, I will not believe,” sets out the determination of many minds, but faith is as the Christian’s breath, and living on the principle of faith he remains unmoved

amidst the surging sea of circumstances which rolls around him. Hand in hand with righteousness, faith has to be followed. The former speaks of consistency of conduct, the latter tells of confidence in God. In both He is honoured.

Then comes love. The path of separation is not the path of pent up love, of withered affections on account of the evil that borders it. Love is from God, and whilst taking His glory and honour into account, ever displays a superiority to evil and personal affront. "Follow love," and occasions for its manifestation will multiply. "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves" is the injunction from another Apostle (1 Peter iv. 8), "for," he adds, "love will cover a multitude of sins." To those outside it is enjoined upon us to do good where hatred has been shown, and to pray for those who persecute. Following love is having an enlarged heart of affection in the narrow path of obedience. And peace closes the list. How this in common with the others, challenges the heart as to where it really is. Are not some bent upon mischief and strife; bent upon intensifying minor differences and making one another offenders for a word? "Blessed are the peacemakers" is a truth that should correct such a spirit. Away with the carping spirit that grows as a rank weed, and creates strifes innumerable. "Follow peace." It is not required that peace be obtained *at any price!* for that would often mean indifference to righteousness and truth; but to endeavour that occasions for strife do not arise is an object to be diligently sought. "Seek peace and pursue it."

And these blessed attributes are to be followed "with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." Our God knows how to separate the precious from the vile in those who are His; He perfectly distinguishes between

true devotion and the wrong position a soul may be in—recognises the one without countenancing the other. Perfect are His ways ; His judgments past finding out.

But insubjection to His Word is not a sign of a pure heart. Disobedience to a known command does not reveal singleness of motive. The pure heart is the heart that has God definitely before it, and whose earnest desire is to do His bidding at all costs. Hearts that are moved by divine principles are in accord of God, and their feet find a path in common.

Then further. Difficulties will arise, but the foolish and senseless questions that conduce to strife are to be avoided. For *to strive*—and this is not contending for the faith—is contrary to the spirit and character of the servant of the Lord. Gentleness, aptness to teach, and patience are to be characteristics of such. He will not make much of what, as profitless, is best avoided, but will rather endeavour, with tact and spiritual discrimination, to correct the wrong, and in patience will wait for God to come in grace and blessing. How contrary is this mode of teaching to that often pursued. Roughness, not gentleness, indiscreet utterances in the place of spiritual wisdom, hastiness instead of patience are oft prevalent, and feet are further turned aside instead of being won.

“In meekness,” too, the servant of the Lord has to instruct. There is no room for spiritual pride, even though the instructed “oppose themselves”—stand in their own light and are false to their own true interests. And the object aimed at is their recovery. Refusing the truth, the feet are ensnared in Satan’s foils ; but by repentance, and submission to what has been refused they are liberated. The Word is passed on in meekness, thus providing for God to give in grace “repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”

Thus is recovery out of the snare of the devil effected.

Truth, truth in the inward parts, is our safeguard. May we, dear reader, examine ourselves, our position, our service, in the light of this important portion of the Scriptures of truth.

(To be continued, D.V.)

H.F.

PAUL'S PRAYER, in Eph. iii.

THERE are two prayers of the Apostle recorded in his Epistle to the Ephesians. The first, in chapter 1; the second, in chapter iii. What led to them is also stated. We scarcely open the Epistle before we find the heart of the Apostle overflowing with praise to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus" (ver. 3). The God of our Lord Jesus tells that He was a Man. The Father of our Lord Jesus intimates that He is a divine Person, and that Person is the Son.

The heart and mind of Paul was first made the depository of the truth. To him it was by revelation made known. It is no marvel that his heart warmed and glowed as he thought of the grace and glory revealed to him, though not, of course, for him only, but for God's beloved saints. The revelation made him a worshipper. The condition of those for whom the revelation was given made him a suppliant. The prayers were his. No doubt there was a divine hand at work guiding the thoughts and controlling their expressions, so that these should be in full accord with the mind of God, and were the desires of the Holy Spirit Himself. Yet were they Paul's prayers.

Then, too, divine intelligence is seen in them. The first

is addressed to the God of the Lord Jesus, and consequently the humanity of Christ is specially before the mind. It is Christ as a Man who is spoken of, and what has been done for Him ; the power that did it, and what that same power is pledged to do for us.

In chapter iii. the Father of our Lord Jesus is appealed to, and here we notice that the attitude of the Apostle is referred to, " *I bow my knees.*" Happily the saint is not compelled to pray only on his knees, or many a prayer would never be uttered, but the posture referred to is a proper one, and should be adopted when practicable. A truly reverential spirit, and a bowing of the knees before our God and Father, accord well together. It is to the Father of the Lord Jesus that Paul here prays, and nothing for himself is he asking. His heart and mind are occupied mainly with the saints at Ephesus, but he is addressing One in whom the whole family (or every family) in heaven and earth is named—One who has, yea, must have, a care for, and an interest in each member of the family, or families, above and below.

To no unwilling ear does he appeal ; to no uninterested person does he supplicate ; and what he asks is to be in accord with the riches of His glory ; and who on earth can tell its extent or value ? For the saints at Colosse Paul prays that they may be " Strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness " (chap. i. 2, R.V.) This would give the ability to endure and to suffer without complaining, whilst the spirit of the saint rises above all the unpleasantness and trials found in the pathway, as joyfulness clearly indicates. " Giving thanks to the Father," etc.,—a most blessed condition. May it be ours and that of each beloved child of God.

The desire for the Ephesian believers differs much from that found in Coll. i. 11; for Paul desires that they may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. "The inner man"—what can that be but the new nature in the believer? A weak thing we know it to be. The inward man, we take it, means the same thing in Romans vii.: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," but the power to give effect in practice to the desires of the inward man was not there, so constant failure is recorded. The power to keep under the old man or the evil nature, the power to bring forth fruit for God, is the Holy Spirit. But that Spirit, even after He has been given to the believer, may be grieved by the allowance of sin.

Paul prays that by God's Spirit the inner man in the saint may be strengthened, so that Christ may dwell in the heart by faith. The new nature needs power to control and keep under the old man or evil nature. It needs power to pass through the pressure of painful circumstances, to endure and to suffer, etc. It needs also to be made strong to receive as an abiding guest that precious glorious One,—that Christ of God into the heart by faith, for it is the province of faith to bring Him, as it were, who is at the right hand of God, down into the heart of the believer. It is closely connected with what follows: "That ye being rooted and grounded in love may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth" (R.V.) Of what? That is a question not answered here, and probably none will be required by that saint who is in the condition above indicated. How often saints connect it with the love of Christ, but that is a mistake, for the Apostle adds: "And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Lengths, breadths, depths, and heights,—what an immensity of blessing and

goodness and glory is here outlined. Are we not a set of dwarfs! Oh Lord make us what Thou would'st have us, even filled unto all the fulness of God! Amen.

E. R. W.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

God has weighed all that sin is, all your thoughts seen beforehand, all your indifference—miserable as all this proves us to be; and knowing beforehand all that we are and all our sin, He has given Christ for us, who has charged Himself with *all*, and us *such as we are*, and has accomplished without us all that was needed by the justice and love of God. It is absolutely accomplished; you can add nothing by joy or sorrow to the perfect work of Christ. All these exercises of soul may be very useful to bring us to the point of acknowledging our own nothingness, so that Christ may have His first place in our minds by faith, but they can add nothing to Him. Your peace will come from a calm and holy conviction that you are nothing, and that He is all, and that the Lord knew all that you were, and because you were all this, took your place in responsibility, and suffered for you.

You will say, but I have neglected Christ after being awakened. It is possible, and it is very sad; nay, more, as I have said, this gives a handle to the enemy to torment us, but does not change the efficacy of the blood and work of Christ *in God's eyes*, and that is what gives peace. It is not what you think of Christ's work, but what God thinks of it, that saves. Your knowledge of what God thinks of it, by faith, gives peace (Romans v. 1). God says to Israel in Egypt, not when you see the blood, I will pass over, but

“when *I* see the blood.” He it is that has been offended, He it is that judges, and He it is that *has accepted* the ransom in justice, as He gave it in love. He is faithful and *just* to forgive us.

As we may confound sometimes the acuteness of our feelings with the spiritual judgment of sin, almost always at the outset we confound the work of the Spirit and the work of Christ. Each has its place in the saved, but they must not be confounded.

The Spirit of God may humble, convict us, reprove within and thus distress us, or give us joy, and often we set about to judge of all this in order to know our acceptance with God. But these things, though they have their place in the mind of the redeemed, are not the ground of his peace. Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. Christ has done all, and has left us nothing but thanksgiving and praise. If someone has paid my debts, my sorrow at the folly that contracted them, or my joy at their being discharged, adds nothing whatever to the payment of the debt, though both be natural and just. It is sometimes hard to esteem all our feelings as nothing, but it is only a remains of self: but only think what it cost the Son of God in undergoing the wrath of God, and we shall feel on one hand the perfect security of our justification, and the nothingness of all our feelings compared with what our sin really was in the sight of God; but He *remembers it no more*, as He has said. If Christ had not completely discharged and effaced it, He could not be in heaven, for He could not sit at the right hand of God charged with our sins, though He was charged with them on the cross.

If your heart demands, but how do I know that I have part in all this? I answer, with the word of the Lord which abides for ever, that whoso believeth in Him. That

all might be grace, God has willed that it should be by faith, and though faith produces immense effects, it adds nothing to the thing it believes. Christ and the efficacy of His work must be, and be before God, all that I am called to believe them to be, before I believe it.

J. N. D.

“ We use words so inexactly that it is necessary to explain, not to have endless discussion.

Usually when we speak of *free* and *can*—that is, the absence of compulsion, and the presence of power are confounded. I say ‘ everyone can come to the meeting,’ meaning it is open to every one. I am told it is not true, for such an one has broken his leg and cannot. I take a plain case, to show what I mean. Thus when the Lord says, “ No one can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him,” it is not that God prohibits or hinders, but that man is so wicked in will and corrupt, that unless a power outside himself act on him he cannot come—he is never morally so disposed. Man is perfectly free to come now as far as God is concerned, and invited to come, yea, besought, and the precious blood of Christ there on the mercy seat, so that moral difficulty is removed by God’s own grace as regards the Holy One receiving a sinner. In this sense he is perfectly free to come. But then there is the other side, man’s own will and state. There is no will to come, but the opposite. Life was there in Christ. “ Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” “ All things are ready, come to the marriage,” and “ they all *with one consent* began to make excuse.” Man does not wish to be with God. “ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” “ Wherefore when I came was there no man, when I called was there none to answer.”

“The carnal mind is enmity with God.” The crucifixion of the Lord is the proof that man would not have God, when come in mercy and relieving even every present misery—“For my love I had hatred.” “They hated me without a cause.” “Now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” And the Lord gives the reason—“Men loved darkness rather than light.” They reject a love that humbles their pride, as they detest a light which awakens their conscience.

J. N. D.

PSALM 103.

THIS psalm celebrates the fruit of blessing by the Israel of God in that day. For them, as for us now, Messiah's sufferings produced endless praise. It begins with the individual, as always, “every one that is written in the book.” It follows up the forgiveness of all iniquities with the healing of all diseases; for the age of habitable earth to come will enjoy the full power of Messiah, of which miracles (when he was here or afterwards) were but samples. Then it rises to His ways as well as acts, not as of old, partially made known, but attested in all the extent and display of His kingdom.

For it is not only Jehovah's mercy from everlasting to everlasting on those that fear Him, but His throne is established in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. Hence His angels, His hosts, and all His work are to bless Jehovah everywhere; as His own soul did; and so it concludes. Could this psalm be with such propriety anywhere but here, immediately after Psalm cii. ? Inspiration arranged as it wrote; the profit of both is lost by incredulity through vain confidence in man and his thoughts. . . .

Psalm ciii. well strikes in, being the praise from a millennial saint, whose heart is full of the goodness of Jehovah. The Lord's past sorrows recounted (cii.), blessings flow to the children of God. And though many and many a child of God has found comfort and encouragement from this psalm, much of it being applicable to saints in all ages who have proved the mercy of their God; yet it must be admitted that every word of the psalm could not really be applied to believers in Christian times. All their diseases are not healed (3). For all the oppressed now, righteousness and judgment are not executed (6). And whilst Christians look to depart and be with Christ, the saint in this psalm celebrates the redemption of his life from destruction (4). It is the language in its fulness for millennial saints. "The Lord's kingdom ruleth over all," they say (19). Angelic hosts must therefore praise Him, and all His work in all places of His dominion should bless Him (20-22). And as the psalm begins, so it ends with, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." The heart is full, and the mouth gives expression to it.

C. E. S.

FRAGMENTS.

THE death of Christ says plainly that the questions of our sins and sin in us are for ever settled. We may, in the naughtiness of our hearts, presume to raise a question that God has settled, but God never will. It is beneath the dignity of His love ever to bring it again to remembrance, because Christ so completely finished the work on the cross (Heb. x. 17). Not only are my sins all forgotten, but they are all gone.

J. R.

READ Exodus xxx. 17-38.—What a fragrant place the tabernacle must have been ! It was a fragrance all its own. There was none like it elsewhere. The fragrance of Christ within, made known by the Holy Ghost. “ All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad.” Oil of joy ! “ Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.” It was not overpowering fragrance, but grateful and reviving as myrrh. No washing when coming out ; but *always* when going in or *near*. No allowance for uncleanness : but *provision* for cleansing. *Incense* altar not for *sacrifice*—not for *putting away sin*, tho’ annointed, *i.e.*, in connection with atonement, and as set apart by the blood.

J. R.

If God has in mercy restored to us any truths of His word, we owe it to the whole Church to impart it to as many as will receive it. “ Feed the flock of God ” ; not part of it (that is sectarianism), but all—any who will share with us what we have won back from the spoiler, though “ they follow not with us.”

USEFUL NOTES.

We cannot get on with philosophical gospels ; we must bring together all these new geological gospels, and neo-logical gospels, and semi-Pelagian gospels, and do with them as the people of Ephesus did with the books—we must burn them, and let Paul preach again to us. We can do without modern learning, but we cannot do without the ancient gospel. We can do without oratory and eloquence, but we cannot do without Christ crucified.

From some eminence in our pilgrimage we look back on the path, and see plainly how much of our trouble was caused by resolutely following our own will. We see how we sometimes turned aside from the true way, because it seemed rough and circuitous ; and how, in other places, attracted by the flowers or the scenery, we neglected the map and the sign-posts, and wandered among bogs and thickets.

The dew that never wets the flinty mountain,
Falls in the valley free ;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert fountain,
But barren sand the sea.

When you experience, on your soul, the happy energy of the Scriptures, every attempt to stagger your belief, or withdraw your veneration from the Bible, will be like an attempt to shatter the rock in pieces with a bubble, or to pierce the adamant with a feather.

We have a Shepherd full of care, full of kindness, full of power, who has said, " I will seek that which was lost, and bind up that which was broken, and bring again that which was driven away, and will strengthen that which was sick. How tender are these expressions and how well fulfilled !

Is it seemly for those who declare, like the worthies of old, that they are seeking " a better country," to be dissatisfied because their path in this life is not so smooth a one as they had desired ? If Christians confess that all they receive is far beyond their desert, it becomes them to remember, when tempted to murmur by the way, that He who for His perfect righteousness deserved all things, had not where to lay His head.

SHADOWS.

Into the shadow called,
 To walk the pathway all alone with Him ;
 To learn sweet lessons in His fellowship,
 That ne'er could have been ours, amid the throng,
 For other well-loved voices might have drowned
 The soft sweet whisperings of that still small voice :
 So gently, firmly, He doth take our hand.
 And there amid the shadows makes us sit
 In company with him.
 Were any fellowship so blest, so real ?
 With Him, Eternal Lover of our souls,
 To hold sweet converse as we rest awhile.

* * * *

Gently He doth remove beyond our reach
 Loved ones, perchance He saw would hold our hearts
 Too closely to this scene of time and sense.
 In His deep, tender love He points our eyes
 To things "not seen, eternal"—to His home
 Which lies beyond the shadows—glorious !
 Where sin and sorrow cometh nevermore.
 Let Him do what He will 'tis surely best ;
 No needless sorrow doth He ever cause
 These hearts of ours. The hung'ring, aching void
 He would but satisfy with His own love ;
 And where the shades lie deepest, and our hearts
 Sicken with sudden fear, we hear His voice--
 "'Tis I, be not afraid."

* * *

Night is far spent. Lo ! yonder breaks the dawn ;
 In cloudless splendour, earth-born mists roll back,
 And there, before us, radiant, and unveiled,
 Framed in the glory of that morning light,
 We see—*His Face !*

NOTES OF ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(No. 1.)

I PURPOSE going over some portions of the Word which deal with the Gospel of God. Although we have heard and believed it, there is much in it that we have not learned, and we need to be reminded of many things that we have already known and believed. We find in Scripture that God has had, over and over again, to recall things to the hearts of His people.

Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in the things which he had learned and had been assured of, "knowing," he adds, "of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. iii. 14). This is just what we need to-day. If our souls have been anchored on the words of the living God, let us hold them fast. No one has been able to fathom any single thought that God has given to us in His Word. No one can take up any portion and say, "I know all that is there." Paul includes himself in the same list when he says, "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. viii. 2). How can we fully know, when it is the infinite God who speaks to us?

There are some parts of the Gospel that have not been dwelt upon as they should have been. With many "the Gospel" has a very limited meaning. If you ask the majority of Christians what the Gospel is they will tell you "It is that message from God which makes known how we can be saved from hell," and if they have apprehended that, they think that is all, but "the Gospel of God" takes a far wider range than that. In the opening words of the Epistle to the Romans, where we have the words "the Gospel of

God" (Rom. i. 1), we are told that it is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." There is more in the Gospel than what meets the guilty conscience. The theme is Christ. It is not *about* you and me: it is *to* us. This Epistle was written to saints. We think of the Gospel as being only for sinners in their sins: certainly that must come first so that I may know that my sins are gone. This Gospel was written to those who had already received forgiveness of their sins. There was a great deal, however, in the Gospel that they did not know, and Paul was anxious to get among them in order that there might be mutual faith in what he brought to them. This should encourage us to study what the Apostle unfolds in this Epistle.

We are living in days when God's Word is being made little of, and all sorts of theories are being sent forth to lessen the effect of the word upon us. We are warned that this will be so. God has warned us of what would come in the last days, and if we read His Word carefully and prayerfully we will not be astonished that men are setting aside His truth and bringing forth strange doctrines to subvert the souls of their hearers. Our safety is in holding fast the Word of God. In Paul's day there were companies of God's people whom he had to exhort not to neglect this wonderful Word. Paul, in writing to the Hebrew Christians, exhorts them to give the more earnest heed to the things which they had heard, lest at any time they should let them slip (Heb. ii. 1). He puts himself on the same ground. He knew the danger and did not neglect "the great salvation." He was not a different man from you and me. He was a better saint I admit, but he had the same evil nature in him as we have, and he watched against it. He knew the need of watchfulness better than we do. He knew the difficulties of the way not only as an Apostle, but as a child of God.

We cannot go meantime into the details of the Epistle to the Romans, but there are three great divisions of the Gospel found in it. The first division, after our sins have been laid bare, shows how God undertook to settle the matter of our guilty condition in His sight. He has pronounced all guilty—but He has not *condemned* anyone yet. In John iii. 18, we should read “ He that believeth on him (God) is not *judged* : but he that believeth not is *judged* already.” (See R.V.) God has judged everybody and pronounced all guilty (Rom. iii. 19). How is this guilt to be met ? What is to take it away ? What will bring peace to a poor sinner who has by the mercy of God been brought to acknowledge his guilt ? Men will say “ We cannot know anything about that until the day of judgment.” But God has written this word which judges all as guilty, and it will be this word that will be held to in the day of judgment. We have in His Word what gives us an answer in view of that moment. John writes “ Herein is love with us made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as He is so are we in this world ” (1 John iv. 17). And at the 25th verse of Rom. iii. we read, “ God has set forth Christ a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness ” (26) “ that He might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” This gives us liberty in the thought of judgment. This brings us to a point of great help, and that is, *God has accepted Christ*. I have sinned against Him, and what I want to know in order to have peace with Him is, what God has found in the death of Christ. His righteousness has been maintained. He laid on His Son the iniquity of us all, and then judgment fell on Him because our sins were there. That is what faith knows to be true, and the knowledge of this that is written “ He was delivered for our offences and

raised again for our justification ” brings me into “ Peace with God.” It is the necessity of my soul : is God satisfied about my sins ? Many a soul that has confessed Christ goes back, instead of forward, but God has not changed His mind, He has not got dissatisfied with Christ. No ; Christ glorified God on that cross about our sins, and by the glory of the Father He was raised up from the dead, and seated at His own right hand. He could not be there with our sins, could He ? No. God has raised up Jesus from the dead, and that fact is the proof that He has accepted Him for us. Christ has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high as the purger of sins, and the eye of faith resting on Christ in glory secures settled peace to the soul. Faith—your faith—has no value in itself, but it is the channel of communicating to you what is of infinite value, “ Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ” (Rom. v. 1.) There is no *merit* in believing God, but great *demerit* in not believing Him. “ He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar ” (1 John v. 10).

Principles in themselves are of no value except as they are applied. God communicates His thoughts to us on the principle of faith, and through our faith in Him, He justifies us, that is, He counts us righteous. We have illustrations of this in the 4th of Romans. The Spirit of God there takes us back to the 15th and 22nd chapters of Genesis. When God was telling Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, there was no Isaac, but God bade him look up at the stars which he could not count and see how great his seed would be. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Chapter 22 gives us the perfecting of his faith. Many years had passed between the 15th and the 22nd chapters—but in the latter portion Abraham’s faith is perfected. At the command of

God he goes to Mount Moriah and there surrenders to God the one in whom the promises were centred. Thus Abraham was justified, and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (James ii. 23). No creature can act thus towards his fellow. Man may forgive me when I have wronged him—but he cannot justify me. God can, because the worth of the sacrifice of His Son is so far-reaching, and so surpasses everything else, that on the ground of Christ giving Himself up to death He can count me righteous, because "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in Him.*" We are *now* become the righteousness of God in Him, and will in the day of glory be displayed as that. All this has come to us through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, where He died for your sins and mine. What sense have we of the grace of God which has put such a cup of salvation into our hands? As we drink more deeply into this fountain of endless love, we will be helped to live our daily ordinary lives to Him. When we lose sight of what we owe to Him, we make self an object. Hence the needs-be of our souls being kept in the freshness of the grace of God, and so we find the Apostle Paul, about to be offered up, writing to his son Timothy as if there were not other two men in the world, "God hath saved *us* and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to *His own* purpose and *grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began*" (2 Tim. i. 9). This aspect of the gospel of the grace of God introduces another subject, for we do not get the counsels of God in Christ in the doctrinal part of this Epistle to the Romans, but we do get how God, when sin had come in and laid hold of all Adam's posterity, could meet that need. Well, that is the first

division of the gospel in this Epistle as it bears on the sinner. Do you and I know all that is in that? We may be quite clear as to the main points of it in our minds, but oh, in our souls how far, how deep down have we taken in this stupendous fact that the Son of God became Son of Man and gave Himself up to death in order to save you and me from an endless hell and bring us to God? People will tell you that there is no such place as hell, but we believe God, and in our own conscience we know there is. If there was no such place, and if it was not everlasting, men would not argue so much against it, but all their contentions will make no difference to the Word of God, which declares that the wicked "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

Man loves to contend, for his own abilities, what he is, and what he can do, but that cannot alter the fact that he is just a poor sinner, dead in sins, without life to God. Man says he can come to God if he likes, but he does not like, and that is why the Lord says "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John v. 40). Man's will is in the matter, and so the Lord says again, "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44). There was, and is, an intense reality in the Lord's words when He said "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). The reason why men cannot come, is because *they will not*. The will is at fault. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Here I should like to notice one thing that presents a

* Some one, when contending against the eternity of the punishment of evil doers, quoted the words in Rev. xx. 14. "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." The words are, "death and hades"—hades, the place or condition of the unclothed spirit—not the place where the wicked are punished.

difficulty to many ; they say, " In spite of God's grace to me, I am so inconsistent." Well, we may all say that, but do you think that salvation would be any more yours or more certain if you were *less* inconsistent ? I am sure not. It is not that I would make little of inconsistency. We know that He died for all that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him. Our salvation from the guilt of sin rests entirely on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which took place eighteen hundred years ago. Nothing can lessen the value in God's sight of the death of His Son. Saved on that ground, we are saved for ever. There is no other. But it is said that " this doctrine of free grace leads to lawlessness." No : for " the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world " (Titus ii. 11, 12). Salvation rests simply upon what God has found in His Son. It is nothing that has taken place since you believed. There are two things that we should be clear about, viz. : the worth of Christ *for* us on the cross, and the worth of His Spirit *in* us communicating the knowledge by the written word of what God has wrought by Christ. There is a great deal to be done *in* us if we are to live to Him here, but that has nothing to do with the perfection of the work of Christ *for* us in giving Himself a sacrifice for our sins. The sacrifice has been accepted for us. This should only make us more careful in our ways as God unfolds to us the value of what His Son has done on our behalf. God would have it distinct in our minds that we *are* saved, and *what* saves us. We are as safe as God can make us. If I am not in possession of this wonderful salvation it is my own fault, through not believing God . His Son has been the sin-bearer, but He is not the

sin-bearer now, because His blood once shed is, in the eye of God, sufficient. The question of our sins will never come up against us. That is all seen to be settled in the 11th verse of the 5th chapter, "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." We have now to follow on as children, receiving His Word, which teaches us how to live consistently with the grace bestowed on us. Do we realize how much it cost the Lord Jesus to bring us to God? No, we cannot; it was infinite. The proof that God has been satisfied is that the Saviour has gone into Heaven and is sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This He could not have done if the sins that entailed on Him the forsaking of God when He died on the cross of Calvary were still upon Him.

D. S.

FOR THE SICK.

"Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick."
—*John xi. 3.*

One touch from Thee—Thou healer of diseases;
One little touch would make our brother whole;
And yet Thou comest not—O blessed Jesus!
Send a swift answer to our waiting soul.

Full many a message we have sent, and pleaded
That Thou would'st haste Thy coming, gracious Lord,
Each message was received, and heard and heeded,
And yet we welcome no responsive word.

We know that Thou art blessing, while withholding,
We know that Thou art near us though apart;
And though we list no answer, Thou art folding
Our poor petition to Thy smitten heart.

A bright and glorious answer is preparing,
Hid in the heights of love, the depths of grace ;
We know that Thou, the Risen, still art bearing
Our cause as Thine within the holy place.

And so we trust our pleadings to Thy keeping,
So at Thy feet we lay our burden down !
Content to bear the earthly cross with weeping,
Till at Thy feet we cast the heavenly crown.

—*Jane Crewdson.*

ABIDE IN ME.

(John xv.)

THE lesson of the vine is here that of the need of concentration : of which Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, gives us so pregnant an example. His " one thing I do " is the only principle of Christian progress, or happiness either. It ensures both. The knowledge of the new man teaches him that " Christ is *all* " ; and we cannot broaden or brighten the spiritual life by adding anything to Him.

" Abide in Me " is therefore what He exhorts to—to realize our dependence, and cultivate that faith which is the acknowledgment of it, and which brought us to Him at first, as the Only-sufficient and All-sufficient Saviour in that hour of supreme distress. Saviour He is still, and all through ; not least from our own will and way—the principle of sin, and the sure road to disaster. To be true to what was our first happiness is to make permanent that happiness ; to abide in Him is to find Him in His fulness abiding in us, and all His promises interpreted to us by their fulfilment in the experiences of a blessed and fruitful life. It is only, as has been already said, what is implied in

our very Christianity itself ; for he who does not abide in Christ in some true sense, is not a Christian. But, alas ! we need the exhortation ; who will say that Christians do not need to be exhorted to *be* Christians ? “ He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth *much* fruit.” We only need to be fully what we really are—not to be untrue to our God, our Saviour, and ourselves.

Now comes the warning : “ If any one abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ” ; that is the spiritual result, as the words “ as a *branch*,” indicate : but there follows the final judgment, in that figurative language in which it is so commonly described : “ and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” The change has been often noted in this place from “ ye ” to “ any one.” The Lord would not have it supposed that it might be possible for those who are truly His to be thus cast forth and to perish ; therefore His altered speech. He returns, however, immediately now to His direct address : “ If *ye* abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Here is a further condition, and which certifies, in the same manner as we have seen His language do elsewhere, the character of the prayer to which He pledges success. If His words abide in us, they will give shape to our desires and requests, so that He can answer them without injuring us or contradicting His own character. But if we thus drank in His words, what wondrous power would our prayers possess ! Why do we not know more of it ? There can be but one reply : we too little yield ourselves to be possessed by these precious words—care often too little to face them. They demand too much of us. We would sooner pursue our own wills, giving Him what we may consider a fair proportion of what is His, and hoping

He will not expect too much from such as we are. Of how much we rob ourselves, in thus robbing Him, we shall learn, it may be when it cannot be righted.

He would touch our hearts with another thought, that His Father will be glorified in our bearing *much* fruit ; and we shall become such as He can count true disciples of His own. A precious inducement ! in which He appeals to our hearts, and expects them to respond to affection so well proved. Have we not dropped out a good deal out of that term so full of meaning, except as applying it to these men of a by-gone day ? Is it not perhaps significant, if we have done so ?

The Lord goes on to speak of the new position in which, as delivered from the law, they were placed—no longer servants, but friends—and of the communion in love implied in this. The disciples of Moses were bondsmen of the law under which they were placed, and had even no access to God—the way into the holiest not yet being manifested (Heb. ix. 8). Grace was now changing all. They had looked upon the glory of the Word made flesh—the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, in whom the Father Himself was declared and seen. God had come nigh : and now, if He who declared Him were going back to heaven, heaven could not be closed by this but rather opened. God come nigh, for those who welcomed this, could be no transient vision. But, for one near God, bond-service is no more possible ; communion in love must take the place of the former distance, and this is the subject here.

As Christ on earth had been the Object of His Father's love, so now were His people that of His. As to Him it was a love of complacent delight : walking as He did in His Father's commandments, the One Man answering to the

heart of God ; He would have them answering similarly to His own heart, walking in His commandments, so as to be partakers of the joy which He had tasted, even amid all the sorrow of His path. He desired for them fulness of this joy. And as He had loved them, even to the laying down of His life for them, so was it His commandment that they should love one another ; and so they would be still in fellowship with His love.

He was laying down His life for them—His friends ; how could they have greater proof that such they were indeed ? Friends ! and no longer servants ; no more did He call them that ; for, instead of mere messages of their duty, He had been opening to them all the truth as to those purposes of the Father with which He had been entrusted. And such is Scripture for us now : with a length, and breadth, and depth, and height in it which lifts such a communication from the Father to the Son as that of which the Son here speaks.

This love was at the foundation of all for them : and to it they owed, and we owe, that choice which was on His side, not on ours. “ Ye have not chosen Me,” he says, “ but I have chosen you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide : that whatsoever ye should ask the Father in My name, He may give it you.” Thus in conscious weakness the power of God is with us : and as He sought us when lost—when there was nothing but our misery to awaken His compassion, so we may count assuredly upon Him, whatever our helplessness, to perfect the work He has begun. What comfort lies for us in that royal word “ I have chosen you.”

But grace enables us to fulfil the conditions necessarily imposed by the holiness of the Divine nature, and cannot set these aside ; therefore the closing words. They are in

the same line with others that we have lately heard, which they emphasize only in a somewhat different way. Fruit that *abides* is that which alone satisfies God. How much that looks well has not that quality in it which ensures permanence. How much that seems truly of God reveals its character by its decay! This "abiding" connects itself, in the Gospel of John, with the divine side of things which is seen all through.

F. W. G.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

MUCH has been said, and written, about the unity of the Spirit, and yet the question may still be asked, What is it? It may be helpful to point out at the commencement of this paper what it is not. In Psalm cxxxiii. we read, "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." This is evidently the unity of the brotherhood, or rather, the maintenance in practice of affection and conduct, suited to the relationship in which each is set as to all the members of the brotherhood. Dwelling together as a happy family, it is likened to the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments. This ointment, placed upon the head, reached even to the feet; his entire person was affected by it. It is like the dew of Hermon, like the dew that descended upon the mountains of Sion, for there Jehovah commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

This practical maintenance of the unity of the brotherhood invites the divine blessing. The existence of this unity is the fruit of divine goodness and grace. The conduct suited to it invites still further blessing from God. Much by us as Christians may be learnt from all this, but it is not

Christians who are here referred to, but to the godly in Israel, who, in a future day, abundantly blessed by Jehovah under the reign of their Messiah, will enjoy life for evermore ; for they will never die.

The unity of the Spirit is not, we believe, a union of assemblies for reception to, and exclusion from, fellowship ; though we venture to think " a circle of fellowship " is a necessity for the times in which we live. Then there is the unity of truth—unity of doctrine it may be called, but this is not, we think, the unity of the Spirit.

What then can it be ? We know that the body of Christ is one, and embraces all true saints in this dispensation who are living on the earth at any given time ; and we know also that it was by the baptism of the Spirit that the body was formed (1 Cor. xii.) The baptizer was the Son of God : " Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God " (John i. 33, 34).

Each true believer is a recipient of the Holy Spirit, and thus partakes in the baptism, although on two occasions only was the Spirit poured out : on Jewish believers (Acts ii) ; on Gentile believers (Acts x). So the body of Christ is composed of believers from both Jews and Gentiles, and the head of the body is Christ, the glorified Man in heaven.

Now it is clear that as we could not make, nor break the one body, so we are not exhorted to keep it. But we are exhorted to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. " Endeavour "—that supposes it may be difficult, and also that we may fail in accomplishing it. What, then, can it be ? We venture to think that it is the Holy Spirit's object to maintain in a practical way the oneness of the body of Christ. The existence of the body is a fact, but He, the

Holy Spirit, is the power to produce everything in the way of practical manifestation of that fact. This we believe is the Spirit's unity.

This unity is maintained when each member acts in a spiritual way with reference to all the other members of the body of Christ. We are to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; and just in proportion as there is an absence of lowliness and meekness in any saint, so will there be inability to suffer long and forbear; failure to keep the unity of the Spirit becomes a fact and the bond of peace is broken. The true secret of external failure—the existence of strife and discord, open rupture, with saints divided—is not to be found very often in what appears on the surface, but to the loss of heart subjection to Christ, and a grieving of the Holy Spirit by fleshly ways and a spirit of self-seeking and self-assertion. Remove the barriers, say some. Well, what if that is done? Shall we then be more perfectly keeping the unity of the Spirit? Is He not the Holy Spirit? and would it not be better to get at the root of things? Would it not be better to get rid of all that causes these separations? What is wanted is real heart subjection to Christ, complete self-surrender, occupation with Christ. Never would there be awkward breaches of fellowship, if real heart fellowship were maintained with the Father and the Son and with one another. We have to face things as they are, and since evil, whether moral, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical, is an offence to the Holy Spirit of God, the true way to keep His unity is not by indifference to what He abhors on the one hand, nor to ignoring it on the other, but by simply obeying the plain teaching of the Word of which He is the Inspirer.

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH.

WHAT is the Church's place? How the Holy Ghost provides an answer to this question, in the yearnings of the heart of the Apostle over the saints at Corinth, who had been the fruit of his ministry and zeal of his Apostleship! "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2). Could any language more touchingly express the deep, devoted, single-hearted affection for Christ, and weanedness from all else, which constitute the only fitting response to the love wherewith He has loved the Church in espousing her thus to Himself? Ought even a converted world, if He were not personally present in it, to satisfy the heart of one who is thus espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ? How do the laborious efforts, even of sincere, devoted Christians, to show that what is before us is a spiritual millennium, without Christ's personal presence, make manifest the condition into which the Church has sunk? Can anything but her Lord's presence satisfy the heart of the faithful Spouse?

Then see the effect of this our departure in heart from the true scriptural hope of the Church as the Spouse or Bride of Christ. Adopting for our object, as the Church at large has done, the rectification of the world in the absence of *its* rightful Ruler, and *our* Lord and Bridegroom, we naturally avail ourselves of all the means and influences within reach to bear upon our object; and hence the strange the anomalous sight, of the professed Bride of an earth-rejected Lord, possessing, using, and seeking still further to possess and use, the appliances of worldly rank, and authority, and wealth, and learning, and popular influence to hasten on, as is affirmed, the epoch of the world's regeneration.

The Church forgets her own calling, to wait as a desolate, widowed stranger in the world whence her Lord has been rejected, and where He is still dishonoured and disowned ; and soon, instead of thus keeping herself for Him, she is found in guilty dalliance with the world, whose hands are yet stained with His blood ! She proposes, indeed, to convert the world ; but it is the world that has converted her. To comfort her and sustain her heart amid rejection by the world, her absent Lord assures her that when He reigns, she shall reign with Him—that when He triumphs she shall share His triumph. But alas ! the world holds out the bait of present power, present influence, present glory ; yea, and consents to adopt Christ's name, and allow, and even patronize, an outward, superficial regard for that name, as an inducement to the Church to enter into the unholy compact. My brethren, has she not ? We know that the false Church says (and, alas ! to what an extent the true is mingled with the false), " I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Let us never forget that it was in the true Church the mystery of iniquity began to work ; and how soon it had assumed this character of self-glorification and living deliciously, contented and at rest in the present state of things.

The tide of worldliness which was then setting in, has since rolled on with such resistless force—it has so swept away all the old land marks, and effaced every vestige of the Church's separation from the world—that now, saints are diligently taught to use every lawful effort to improve their circumstances, and raise themselves in the social scale ; while he is deemed the best Christian who seems to approach the nearest to the practically giving Him the lie who said, " Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

The Church Christ's Bride ! Nay, more—the Bride, the

Lamb's wife ! What affinity is there in Spirit and character between the Bridegroom and the *professing* Bride ? He took the lowest place on earth : she seeks the highest. He was the poorest man on earth : she rolls in wealth. He lived for His Father's glory, and it is her place to live to Him ; but she lives to herself. His life was one of dependence on His Father : her dependence is on the world. He pleased not Himself : she lives in pleasure, and is dead while she lives. He never resented one of the ceaseless injuries and insults He received ; when reviled, He reviled not again : she, without scruple, wields the world's power to maintain what she calls her rights, and often, alas ! to inflict the most grievous wrongs—" In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth " (Rev. xviii. 24).

Many readers may perhaps be saying, " Ah, but it is of Rome that you are again speaking ; and what has Rome, or Romanism, to do with Christ or the Church ? " Dear reader, it is of mystic Babylon that the pen of inspiration uses the words just quoted ; and no doubt Romanism is the principal part of that which mystic Babylon represents. But it is not the whole : and even so far as it is what we are to understand by Babylon, has my reader forgotten that all the bloodshed by Papal Rome has been shed in the name of Christ ? What, you ask, has Romanism to do with Christ and the Church ? Does not Romanism embrace the greater part of what professes to be the Church ? How, then, in considering the responsibilities of the *professing* Church, as measured by the calling of the true, can Romanism be left out ?

But is it Rome alone that, under the name of Christ, and the profession of being His Church, His Bride, unites herself with the world that has rejected Christ, and uses the

world's power to enforce her rights and avenge her wrongs ? " He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." And the Church, as we have seen, is the Bride, the *Lamb's* wife. And think of the perfect grace in which the true Church stands—consisting, as it does, of sinners saved by grace, and saved after such a sort as to be placed nearer to God's throne, and to the Father's heart, than any creature besides—saved thus, " that in the ages to come, He may shew what is the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Jesus Christ ! "

Think of this, and of the way in which we are perceptively taught, both in the Gospels and the Epistles, to manifest this grace—preferring the loss of both coat and cloak to the suing for the recovery of either—going two miles with any one who compel us to go one—when one cheek is smitten, presenting the other also—never being overcome of evil, but always overcoming evil with good. When man's utmost hatred was expressed in the crucifixion of God's Son, God's utmost love was manifested in taking out of the world a number of its guilty inhabitants, cleansing them by the precious blood which had thus been shed, quickening them with the very life of the risen and ascended Saviour, and forming them by the Holy Ghost on earth to be the Bride, the Lamb's wife, when all in heaven and all on earth shall bow the knee to Jesus, and every tongue confess Him Lord. Is not this grace ? perfect, infinite grace ?

And what has the Church to manifest, or exemplify, but grace ? But is this her character ? I speak not now of Romanism, but of what bears the name and sustains the responsibilities of the Church in countries where Romanism is not predominant. Is it grace, or retributive righteousness which holds together the very framework of society in these

so-called Christian countries? Yea, and let me ask further, Do individual Christians generally scruple in the least either officially to administer retributive justice, or to use it for their own defence? "Who made Me a judge, or a divider over you?" said our blessed Lord. And again, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" He stood there the fair, bright, perfect witness of His Father's grace. He has left His Church in this world as a witness of His own. How do we practically bear the testimony?

In treating thus of the responsibility of the Church, one is obliged to regard both the true and the false, the real Church and the professing body. The Church was left here, God's assembly upon earth, to be the witness in patient, suffering grace towards the world, and in true single-hearted affection and fealty to Christ, of all that she will be manifested to be in power and glory, when the marriage of the Lamb having taken place, and the Lamb Himself being enthroned, the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall take her place as the vessel of His glory, and the channel and dispenser of healing and light and blessing to the millennial earth.

The body of Christ, as respects its actual existence before God our Father, has not ceased to exist. All the living members will be found in the Bride when manifested in glory. Not a stone of the holy Jerusalem will be wanting or out of its place then. Meanwhile, as a witness for Christ on earth, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, where is now the body, the Church? Let our consciences weigh this question well. The Lord grant us to take the place of unfeigned humiliation in His presence.

(To be continued.—D.V.)

NOTES OF ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(No. 2).

IN connection with what we have before us in the Epistle to the Romans, I wish to read a verse in the book of Acts—chap. xxvi. 18. Paul narrates his conversion before king Agrippa. He was the vessel which God took up to make known His Gospel in a very special way. We have noticed already that Paul was “an Apostle separated to the Gospel of God,” and that Gospel is concerning the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and is to us sinful creatures. the only title a man has to the Gospel of God is, that he is a sinner. To assume to be anything else, is to shut himself out from the mercy of God which is revealed in the Gospel. The Gospel of God addresses everybody, but alas! the multitude do not believe they need it.

The Apostle in his first Epistle to Timothy says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. i. 15). He was a very religious man, above the most—a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, he tells us in his address before the Council (Acts xxiii. 6), but by and by he learned that he was a sinner. Previous to that wonderful day in his life (Acts ix.) he thought only of what was gain to himself in the eyes of men, not of how he stood in God’s sight. He did not think of what he would require to stand before God. That was a discovery made to him, as he was on his way to Damascus, with authority from the chief priests to bind all that called on the name of the Lord, compelling them to blaspheme. It alarmed him to see a

light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun. He had made no provision for this. We read "he fell to the ground," and, conscious of the fact that he had met his Master, he says, "Who art thou, Lord?" He did not know Him, but he knew to say "Lord." The Lord revealed himself to Saul at once, saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Jesus—the One who had been upon earth but whom Paul had never seen in the flesh, speaks to him from heaven. Saul could not reach Him personally. He was above all principality and power and might and dominion, but the Lord had something on earth that He loved, something that He called "*Me*." No other word could express the closeness of the tie existing between saved sinners on earth and their Saviour in heaven. They were part of Himself, and Saul was therefore persecuting Him in persecuting His people. The Lord says, "You are persecuting *Me*." He felt what was done to them as done to Himself. In Zechariah ii. 8, the Spirit of God, speaking of Israel, says, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye"; and certainly in a much closer way it is true of His assembly which is His body upon earth, gathered out of all nations since He took His seat on the right hand of God. He then told Saul to rise and stand upon his feet, "for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; . . . To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, *that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" In this eighteenth verse we have *conversion* spoken of, and for what end the sinner is converted to God. He is converted *to receive* the forgiveness of his sins.

In the Epistle to the Romans, from the eighteenth verse of the first chapter on to the twentieth verse of the third chapter, the awful condition of the Gentile world, and that also of the Jew, is set before us. The Jew is no better than the Gentile (iii. 9). All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, is God's verdict upon all men. There is no difference. Man is slow to receive this. The religious man, as we have seen, is no better than the profligate.

Now we enter, at verse 21 of chapter iii., on the Gospel as to which Paul has told us he is not ashamed. How should anyone be ashamed, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (i. 16). Our guilty condition is of the past when we believe the record God has given in His Gospel. We are also counted righteous. The last verse of chapter iv. declares that Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Then follows the conclusion, in which the Spirit of God sums up what has previously been unfolded, that being justified by, or on, the principle of faith (in contrast with works of law), "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (chap. v. 1-2). All questions as to our standing have been raised by God, and settled by God. He has declared His mind that as to our *past* we were guilty and had come short of His glory; and as to our *present* we are righteous in His sight, and have the hope given us of the glory of God. Notice well the words bearing on this in verse 30 of chapter viii:—"Whom He justified, them He also glorified." Thus God links our justification by Himself with our being glorified by Himself also. Faith is believing God. It never questions Him, but receives all that He says simply because He says it. Before Christ came, God had been dealing with

man on the ground of law, but the law never produced a single thing acceptable to God, because man's will was not right with God. How is it that man does not come to Christ? It is because he *will* not. The heart of man does not desire the knowledge of God. It is not only that man has done wrong things—but the heart is at enmity with God, alienated from Him by wicked works. God must come in, in His sovereign grace, and bestow mercy where He pleases. Take the instance before us of Saul of Tarsus going on in mad zeal against the saints of God, persecuting them even to strange cities, that he might, if he could, blot out the name of Jesus from off the earth. Why was he so anxious to do this? Because it cut right to the root of salvation by works, and Saul was a very earnest man as to working for salvation, so that he might have somewhat to glory in (iv. 2). All that got cast out of his mind and heart when Christ laid hold of him. He tells us that what was gain to himself he counted loss for Christ. He could say, "I belong to Christ. I am His, and He is mine; and everything that was gain to me I count loss for Christ on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phill. iii. 8).

We are saved men and women, independent of all our feelings. Many are not clear about this, but it is the truth. It is nearly two thousand years ago that the ground of salvation was laid in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. How then could anything of my doing or feeling make any difference or add to the work that saves me? He took the sinner's place: and our sins were laid on Him on that cross, and there and then He endured in His soul Divine judgment, even the forsaking of God, which was our deserving for all eternity. I know that a work by the Spirit of God must be wrought in the soul, we must be born

again, and this work is by the Word and the Spirit (John iii. 5). This is a Divine work, and is complete also as we read in John v. 24. There is a great deal to be *learned by us* of the great salvation which is in Jesus Christ, but that does not add anything to the salvation from judgment. Let us remember the words, "whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30). It is faith in what God tells me in His word He has got in the sacrifice of His Son, that brings salvation to me, faith in what God has declared about *that*. It is a great thing for a soul to understand that *God has accepted Christ*. Many a soul has turned to God and received His word, and thought they were all right, but now they think they are all wrong, because their feelings have changed; but God never changes His feelings about His Son. God has exalted Him to His own right hand, the very One whom He forsook on the cross. *Why was He forsaken?* Surely that is a question that has risen in the mind of every one of us? It was because Jehovah had laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The fifty-third of Isaiah tells the story prophetically of why He was forsaken; the Gospels give us the history of it, and the Epistles are occupied with the fruit of it to our souls now, and it is the basis of our hope.

The Apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, goes a step further than forgiveness of sins. He shows to us that God *justifies* the ungodly who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. His faith is, as was Abraham's, counted for righteousness (Rom. iv. 5). Thus there is no thought in Scripture of our doing the best we can. Such thoughts keep us away from God. But as the Apostle Peter tells us, "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might *bring us to God*" (1 Peter iii. 18). Many think they have "a chance" by their works, but the Divine record is that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. xi. 6).

Condemnation will fall upon them when the source and power of all their good works are manifested, and found to have no connection with God. Our faith rests entirely on God's testimony to the sufficiency of the sacrifice of the Son of God, the Lamb of God's providing (Gen. xxii. 8), the One the Baptist heralded forth as he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). He had come at last.

God has accepted Christ. We are not asked to accept Him. The Gospel is that God has accepted Him for us (Lev. i. 4). He is satisfied. His glory is maintained, and in *righteousness* He justifies the sinner who believes His word. In verse 2 of Romans v., we are told that "we have access by faith into this grace, or favour, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It is a beautiful word "access."

The glory is coming, and it will claim all those in whom grace has wrought. We are now fitted to be in the glory of God (2 Cor. v. 5). Just think of that, dear friends—the glory where He dwells, fitted by Himself to be there. That is the well-founded hope the justified one possesses now. Now, do not make any mistake. Where there is faith in the soul which is God's gift, there will be works—good works. The Spirit of God then leads the Apostle to gather up all he has been dwelling on in the previous chapter as to the Gospel, and finishes at a point where there is no getting beyond. In chapter v. II, he writes, "Not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." There is no getting beyond this: it will be the believer's portion through all eternity *to joy in God*, not in the mercy and favour only, which He has bestowed, but in God Himself. We are fitted now for the presence of God, and all this grace

is righteously bestowed on us through the Lord Jesus Christ bearing the righteous judgment of God, which we deserved when He said, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." If my sins were not on Him then, they will be on me for ever, because the Lord Jesus Christ will not appear again to die. He has died once, and God is for ever satisfied.

Now, we saw there was another question to be answered for a saved soul. No one who is saved can afford, or will desire to make little of it, but many have not learned the Divine answer to the question, *how are we to live to God and be superior to the sin which we find in ourselves, and around us?* Please to carefully notice that it is *sin* now that is the question—not our sins.

Many a one who has got the knowledge of forgiveness of his sins, thinks he will have no more difficulty, and that everything will go smoothly. But, as we have said, *sin* is in us still, and it was in Paul when he was writing this Epistle to the Romans. He says, " I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing " (vii. 18). Sin was in him (Rom. vii. 17), and is in us, but God has made provision for that, and has written of this in His word. From verse 12 to the end of the chapter that question as to *sin* is taken up and shown to be settled. Sin came into the world by Adam's one sin and transgression, " and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned " (Rom. v. 12). God had reserved one tree, telling Adam that he was not to eat of it (Gen. ii. 17). The tempter soon appeared on the scene, and he gained an easy victory over Adam and Eve, and thus sin came in and death by sin. Satan told them that eating of this tree their eyes would be opened, and they would be as gods knowing good and evil. He had previously told them that they would not surely die (Gen. iii. 5).

I do not doubt that Adam and Eve were a great deal

wiser after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, but then they were under the power of evil. Before sin came in they did not know good in the sense that one thing was better than another. Everything was very good. Now there is "good," but it is in contradistinction to what is around it ; there is the bad. The condition of man without God is that he is under the power of the bad ; he loves the *bad*. The second Man, "in the fulness of time," came into the world, but while knowing good and evil, He loved the *good*, and was always under the power of the good.

Scripture speaks of two Adams, the first and the last Adam (1 Cor. xv. 54). By the "first man Adam" sin came into the world, and all the strivings of men with all the laws they make, never will bring about any advance in getting sin out of the world. Good laws, if they are attended to, will make people in a certain way, good citizens, but that is a very small thing after all. It only concerns the life that now is ; it will secure no blessing for eternity. In fact, the more correct man is, and is built up in his own goodness whatever form it may take, the more inaccessible he becomes to the goodness and mercy of God. He covers himself with a cloak, considering himself better than his neighbours, forgetting God's judgment of him that there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of His glory (Romans iii. 23).

In Romans v. 12-21, we have the two Adams—the heads of the two races—the fallen race and the righteous race. All by connection with the first Adam, and their own sin, have died ; all by connection with Christ, the last Adam, have got "a righteous title to life," and shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ. Where sin abounded, grace did *much more* abound. Paul, when speaking of Christ, delights in the words, "much more" (Rom. v. 9, 10, 15, 17, 20).

And now he closes the subject of the two headships of race by telling us that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus we have God's revelation to sinful man, showing that, in spite of all that he has done, God is righteous in saving him. Grace has reigned through righteousness. We see grace when the Son of God on the cross had our sins laid upon Him—the holy One of God taking our place there and suffering in our stead. There was no mercy shown to Christ, but now because righteousness has had its full sway on Him, mercy has come to you and me. When our sins were laid on Christ, then righteous judgment was the only thing that could fall on the sinless One, and God having raised Him from the dead, we are free. The whole question of our sins has been settled by God Himself, and we have nothing else to do but believe His testimony about it. Believe His word, and it will answer every question. Now is the time for questions to be raised. Now all can be settled. If they are left to a future day it will be past time for settlement. Now is the day of salvation. To believe that God has settled everything to His own glory is present salvation.

I close this paper apologising for the repetition of much that I presented to my young friends in a previous article, but the great importance of the subject I have endeavoured to treat, but so feebly accomplished, is my reason.

Next time I address you I hope to dwell on the blessed fact revealed in the Scriptures of truth, that victory over sin within and around us is in the belief of the word which declares, "I have died with Christ to sin" (Rom. vi. 2-8; Col. iii. 3).

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT AND ITS RESULTS.

(Esther vi.)

It has been well said that " although the *name* of God is not in this book, the *hand* of God is plainly to be seen throughout." Nowhere is this more clearly manifested than in the present chapter, every verse of which attests to His overruling providence, and His unfailing love and care for His people, in a wrong place though they were. He is behind the scenes, it is true ; but, to use the expression of another, He moves all the scenes that He is behind.

It is not until the last night that He interferes :

" God never is before His time,
And never is behind."

To all appearances, Satan was to have everything his own way, at least so far as Mordecai was concerned. In Haman's tessallated courtyard the now completed gallows stands fifty cubits high. The lofty Amalekite is already gloating over the death of the unyielding descendant of Kish, and tosses restlessly upon his couch as he waits for the first glimmer of the morning for the execution of his wrath. He is not, however, the only restless one, for " on that night could not the king sleep."

In itself, this was apparently a very trifling thing. How many a crowned head before and since has turned uneasily on its pillow and courted slumber in vain ! But in this case, how much that sleepless night was to mean to Mordecai, and all his condemned brethren !

In his insomnia, the king, at last despairing of natural rest, called for " the strangest soporific ever sought." " He commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles ; and they were read before the king " (ver. 1). Surely, in

those blood-stained annals, there was enough to have driven away sleep for ever. But One is overruling all, and the august Iranian emperor is but as a puppet in His hand, to be moved by Him at will.

As the records of his reign are read aloud in his hearing, "it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hands on Ahasuerus" (ver. 2). How well all had been timed! He who knows the end from the beginning, had caused this service to be recorded. He had also so ordered it that, at the time it was rendered, the pre-occupied monarch should overlook entirely the one to whose faithfulness he owed his life. To Mordecai this may have seemed at the time like base ingratitude, though we read of no word of complaint. Possibly he had learned to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." At any rate, it was now made manifest that there was a Divine reason for the king's forgetfulness. God had timed everything well, and He "makes every thing beautiful in its season."

Do these pages meet the eye of some tried and discouraged saint? Have you been overwhelmed at times by a nameless dread as though God had utterly forgotten you, and you were cast off for ever? Have you wearied yourself devising one human expedient after another, in the vain hope of averting threatened disaster by the arm of flesh? Learn, then, from God's dealings with His servant of old, that His heart and His hand are for you still. And, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" He has heard every sigh; noted, and stored in His bottle, every tear; taken account of every cry of anguish; heard every confiding prayer. His arm is in no wise shortened; His ear is in no sense deaf to your cry. At the appointed time He will awake in your behalf, and you shall know that it is "the God of all grace"

with whom you have to do. Only look up: be not cast down, for you are ever on His heart; and if you just leave all with Him, He will make your affairs His care. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." How sweet the words! *He* careth. He, the Most High God; yea, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ *careth*. He is no indifferent spectator—no callous, unconcerned looker on; but, as no one else can, He careth for *you*. Assured of this, may not the reader and the writer well cry, "I will trust, and not be afraid?"

The hitherto neglectful king is at once aroused as his memory is refreshed in regard to Mordecai's service in days gone by. "And the king said, what honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him" (ver. 3). 'He had shown himself to be a loyal and faithful subject, despite the fact that he was one of the children of the captivity; but though the king had profited by his devotion, he allowed him to go utterly unrewarded, while bestowing favours with lavish hand on so worthless a character as the selfish and despicable Haman. Such is the favour of princes. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and *shall not see when good cometh*; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and *shall not be careful in time of drought*, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. xvii. 5-8). How sharp the contrast between the time-serving man of

the flesh, whose eyes are fixed on man for his reward—doomed ever to disappointment—and the God-fearing man of faith, who rises above all creature-help to the Most High Himself! Mordecai has left all in His hands. He is now about to make his way prosperous.

And yet, even at the last moment, how active is Satan in his efforts to thwart God's purpose of grace! At this moment a step is heard in the outer court of the royal sleeping apartments. "And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in" (verses 4, 5).

If God is at work, so is the great adversary. Haman, still burning with wounded vanity, is early on the scene. He would forestall all further slights from Mordecai by getting the easily influenced and luxurious despot to sign the order for the Jew's execution as soon as he shall rise. Then, the hated object out of the way, he will be in good humour for the festive board. He is, however, but to learn that "those who walk in pride, God is able to abase." He has reached the highest pinnacle of earthly glory to which he can lawfully aspire. He is about to be hurled into the lowest depths of shame and ignominy.

The king's first words fairly cause his head to swim with wild exultation, and seem to point to the early fulfilment of his most cherished dreams. "What," asks his royal master, "shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" It is hardly to be wondered that the vain-glorious prince whose only concern was the advancement of his own interests, thought in his heart, "To whom would the king delight to do honour more than

to myself ? ” What a place that same “ myself ” had in this conceited, wretched man’s mind ! And what a snare is self-occupation, in any form, to the saint of God ! Pride is distinctly said to be the cause of Satan’s fall. “ Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty ; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness : I will cast thee to the ground ” (Ezek. xxviii. 17). And when giving instruction concerning overseers in the House of God, in the New Testament, the Holy Ghost says, “ Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil ” (1 Tim. iii. 6).

When we see pride in another, how hateful a thing it is ! Haman is the very incarnation of it ; and how we loathe so despicable a character ! Yet, alas, how readily we tolerate in ourselves what is so detestable in others. “ The proud He knoweth afar off,” but “ the meek will He guide in judgment ; the meek will He teach His way.”

Filled with a sense of his own self-importance, Haman replies to the king’s question in the boldest manner. He would have the man whom the king delights to honour appear before men as king himself in all but name. That, too, might come later if the populace but grew used to him appearing in royal garb, and the king’s most noble princes were made to have a due sense of his power and ability. How plainly the Amalekite shows himself ! The hand which of old was upon the throne of Jah is now stretched out to grasp the throne of the world ! “ And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought, which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head : and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man

withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour " (ver. 7-9). Could human pretension and ingenuity go farther? Intending all this for himself, can there be any doubt regarding his desire to have the people behold him in all the outward trappings of royalty, in order to accustom their minds to a future usurpation of imperial power?

Did the king begin to see beneath the surface? Did he already commence to mistrust his favourite? Or is it only in our imagination that we see a touch of genuine irony, meant to cut to the very quick, in the brief and pithy command, "Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken." Did the royal eye detect the way the colour came and went in Haman's face? Did it note the downcast countenance and the disappointment too deep for words that marked him as he turned away without reply? We do not know. But the readiness with which the erstwhile favourite is given up to a richly deserved judgment later in the day, would imply a lack of confidence already cherished in his heart.

"Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the principal street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour" (verse 11). A terrible downcome, surely, and a remarkable turn of events! No wonder that we read, "And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered" (verse 12). Did Mordecai see in this sudden transition from

ignominy to honour, the pledge of his deliverance from condemnation? It would seem so, for he made no effort to resist the changing of his attire on this occasion. Haman, too, reads a lesson in it all, and in shame and confusion of face hurries from the public gaze to the seclusion of his own house. He knows it is in vain now for him to seek permission to hang Mordecai. The gallows stand like a monument to folly and vanity, still towering up to heaven, casting a shadow that speaks of approaching disaster.

“And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had befallen him. Then, said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shall surely fall before him” (verse 13). Little comfort indeed, does he find in this, which is all too true, as the sequel shows.

“And while they were yet talking with him, came the king’s chamberlains and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.” His enthusiasm is greatly dampened. He would, without question, prefer retirement until he has regained his accustomed poise and self-confidence, but the king’s command must be obeyed. Yesterday he would have needed no chamberlain to summon him. To-day all is changed. Already he has been greatly humbled, ere the remaining hours of light pass he shall have more crushing experiences still, and shall prove to the full the truth of the ominous prophecy of his wife and friends.

—*From Notes on Book of Esther.*

II. TIMOTHY III.

THE fact has already come before us that there was departure from the truth of God even in Paul's day—not simply lack of heart for the path of faith, but manifest renunciation of it. "All in Asia" had turned from the Apostle (ch. ii. 15) and the servant passes through, in measure, the experience of his Lord.

But this downgrade would necessarily lead to what was worse; the abandonment of faith's path must end in apostacy. Then man would be in prominence, and his real condition covered by an outward "form of piety." So with prophetic voice Paul speaks, and what he uttered then is now fast being fulfilled.

"*This know also,*" he wrote. Particular attention is called to what was particularly important. In his first letter (ch. iv. 1), he gives the solemn intimation that there would be departing from the faith in the *latter times*. But here we are still further down the stream of time, and the dispensation is rapidly nearing its close. "*The last days*" is a more definite expression; in them perils for the saint of God would prevail, and hence the necessity of remembering that increasing evil calls for increasing watchfulness.

The *last days* mark the culmination of man's vaunted progress and enlightenment, and what a picture is presented by Him who reads the secrets of all hearts. Desire of heart for the Son of God's love exists not. Tested by the Christ of God, man still loves darkness rather than light; and to Him, before whom all things are open and naked, man is seen as degraded morally in his boasted culture and civilisation as the heathen in his darkness (Rom. i. 19-22). Both are without God—the latter God gave up when their

foolish minds were darkened ; the former gives up God in the haughtiness of his mind. The Creator is displaced by the creature.

The subtle character of much that prevails to-day derives that from its connection with religious activity ; and self is seen as man's beginning, centre and end. How plainly that comes out in these apostolic warnings ; for of the characteristics mentioned, *self* is the dominant one—love of self is first mentioned and love of pleasure, the glorification of lustful desire, closes the list. Man without God must ever be a creature unsatisfied.

What a revelation concerning men is here unfolded ! and remember, not of men in heathendom, but of men in Christendom, the sphere of light and privilege. They possess the form of godliness, but deny its power. Where that power is known, self is judged, and God is worshipped and served ; but here self is loved, God is ignored, and license is given to lust.

Then covetousness reveals an unsatisfied soul ; and, as covetous, the guilt of idolatry exists (Col. iii. 5). Wholeheartedly the unrighteous mammon is sought, for gold is the god men worship. Is not this a trait prominent to-day ?

And further, this communication shows us that the boaster will abound ; that men will be in heart, proud ; in word, blasphemous ; in relationship, disobedient ; for mercies, ungrateful ; in act, unholy ; without the feeling proper to a creature ; with no regard for their own word, yet falsely accusing others ; in will, unsubdued ; in demeanour, fierce ; haters of good ; false, headstrong, pretentious, they seek the satisfaction of their own indulgences ; and whilst being eminently religious in outward form, they have not the truth in the inward parts. " From such turn away " is the command here given.

The urgency of the need for watchfulness and constant judging of self lest any of these propensities of the flesh find expression in us is apparent. The danger of following the current of things around is ever present, hence let all watch unto prayer, and find strength and security in separation.

So then, with minds morally darkened, but outwardly clothed in a religious garb, these active workers pursue their proselytizing, and ever learning are yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth (verses 6, 7). What a sad condition! An outward engagement with the Scripture, yet submission to it!—that would be bibliolatry, and the worship of a book is idolatry of the rankest type! Blindly they seek thus to cover the fact so patent that reception of Scripture as from God is foreign to their minds. The voice of God Eternal they hear not in it; and, alas for them! though posing as champions of the truth, they are “far from the kingdom.”

And as illustrative of what should happen to such, we have our attention directed to a page in the history of Moses, who, when appearing before Pharaoh with Jehovah's message and command, was confronted by juggling imposters who attempted by their conjuring to render null and void the testimony of power rendered. What was extraordinary in the signs given? They could show that it was only an attempt to dupe the king. Similar signs *seemingly* they could produce. But they *resisted the truth*, and the solemn moment came, as it does for all such, when their folly was open and manifest, and “the finger of God” was too strong for them. Through their folly they find that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

And so it should happen, predicted the Apostle, to the

men of whom he wrote ; men " corrupt in mind " whilst vaunting their advanced enlightenment ; and utterly devoid of faith, whilst pleading their orthodoxy. But the day of manifestation comes, when what is covered is revealed, and what is hid is made known, and then God makes plain that their deeds were wrought in wanton error and lawlessness, For the time, seducers wax worse and worse, increasing their following indeed, but are themselves deceived. Unhappy men, though popular and praised, they are demeaned in glorifying themselves, and degraded even in the exaltation accorded them. May eyes be opened to perceive the true character of these last days.

Then next we have a blessed contrast, a brief personal touch, a page in Paul's history. Timothy was acquainted with the Apostle's doctrine. It was of God and Christ, and his conduct befitted his teaching. This his " son in the faith " was acquainted with, knowing the faith, long-suffering, love, and patience that had been displayed, as well as the sufferings and persecutions which had been endured. At Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, he found suffering. For faithfully bearing testimony to the truth of God he, and those with him, had been expelled from Antioch (Acts xiii. 45-50), his own countrymen being most prominent. At Iconium an attempt to treat him with violence was made ; whilst at Lystra he was dragged from the city as dead (Acts xiv. 5, 19). Through God's mercy he lived, returning eventually to the three places mentioned, confirming the disciples therein, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, showing them that the path to God's kingdom was by no means an easy one, but that rather it is through much tribulation entered.

H. F.

(To be continued).

NOTES OF ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(No. 3).

Deliverance from the Power of Sin.

WE now proceed to consider the second division of the Gospel of God as given us in the Epistle to the Romans. It tells us how we are delivered from the power of sin. Of course, if we should die, we should be free from sin, but here the great thing for every heart that has been touched by the grace of God, is to be freed from its power *now*. We must have God's way of it, and it is to this wondrous word, which men are so belittling to-day, that we must turn. You and I know nothing about it outside this Book, but in it, it is all made plain to the one that listens to God in faith.

In speaking of being freed from the power of sin in us, it is well to know what *sin* is. What we have had before us has been in reference to *sins*. Some one may say, "They both mean the same thing." No; every one of us has his and her own sins. Some have foolishly said, "We sinned *in Adam*." There is no such thing in Scripture. Look and see. It is just as far away from Scripture as the way that verse in the ninth chapter of Hebrews is quoted. It is constantly quoted by writers and teachers of the Word thus: "As it is appointed unto *all* men once to die, but after this the judgment" (27). The *all* is not as God has given it to us. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." 1 Cor. xv. 51 tells us that "we shall not all sleep." As God's children, it is surely no hardship that we should be shut up to what God has written. When we leave this scene, we shall not have anything that will stand but this unerring word.

God's way of delivering us from the power of sin is plain enough in Scripture, and the writers of the New Testament Paul, Peter, James, and John, have each something to say to us on the matter. They put it in different ways, but although we have different writers in Scripture, it is one whole : God is writing. He takes up Paul to state a certain thing, and gives him what he is to write. Then Peter presents the matter in another way, but very important for our pilgrim journey. James and John we find are instructed on the same subject. There is no discordant note in any one with the others, for as I have said, it is God who is writing ; those I have named are in His hand to do His work.

It is Paul who most definitely sets before us the doctrine we are looking into just now. The Spirit of God would not have it lie in our minds merely as a doctrine. He makes it known to the heart that wants to be a victor.

In the closing nine verses of the fifth of Romans we have an interesting statement as to the headships of race—Adam and Christ, and how the actings of the head affect the whole race. You and I are not guilty of Adam's sin. We read at verse 12, " Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men for that *all have sinned.*" That takes in every one of us. " All have sinned and come short of the glory of God " (Rom. iii. 23).

The great thing for us is to learn what *sin* is. The Apostle John tells us that " Sin is lawlessness " (1 John iii. 4). I understand it to be the root principle in man's nature which leads man to seek his own will instead of God's will. Sinful actions result from a nature that loves its own will.

There was a law given to Adam, and that is taken up in this fifth chapter and disposed of. We read at verse 14,

“ Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” Sin and transgression are two different things. Of course, where there is transgression, there is sin ; but there is sin without transgression. Transgression refers to a certain law given. A law was given to Adam, but we do not read that those of his posterity on to Moses got a law. It was a time of lawlessness, such lawlessness that God had to come in and sweep the earth with judgment. Men were sinning during that time. After a time God gave the law to Israel, and then we have transgression. They broke the law. They said at one moment “ All the words which the Lord hath said will we do ” (Ex. xxiv. 3), and the next, they set up a calf of gold and said “ These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt ” (xxxii. 4).

God never gave the law to you and me who are Gentiles, but we are sinners, and the Spirit of God takes up the question of sin in these verses, and shows that while it is the truth that we are not guilty of Adam’s sin, we are affected by Adam’s sin. The condition that came into the world through that sin tells upon the whole race ; so when we read the closing verses of this chapter, we find that the grace of God abounds infinitely beyond the condition that was brought in by Adam’s transgression. One offence brought death into the world, and everyone that is connected with Adam has got a fallen nature. You may cultivate it and do all you can to make people better members of society, but sin, the nature, the root of all the sins, is still there.

The Apostle goes on to argue the question in the sixth chapter as to sinning. Are we going to sin that grace may abound ? Grace has been seen to be mighty, so overflowing and wide-reaching in its effects to Adam’s race, that the

conclusion of the natural mind would be "Since grace so overflows, and has reigned through righteousness unto eternal life, we had better sin that grace may abound." But the Apostle conclusively shows that that cannot have any place, so he challenges such question at the beginning of the chapter by asking, "How shall we who have died to sin, live any longer therein?" We should read it "have died," not "are dead" to sin. There is great help in cleaving to the fact that "we have died to sin." It is not an actual fact that any of us "are dead," but it is a fact for the reception of faith that *we have died with Christ to sin.*

A person once said to us that he was not a creature now, because he was in Christ, but this was not "sound speech." We are *creatures*, and everyone in this world is connected with a fallen creation.

Christ has done with sin. He will have no more to say to sin until He comes again, and by His mighty arm will banish it from the world. He came into this world where sin was, "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38), and at the end of thirty three years and one half He is put to death by wicked hands. But He lays down His life. He tells us, "No man taketh it from me, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). He has gone out of the world by death, and so has died to sin, and faith learns from this Book that we have died with Him to sin, not died *in* Christ. Scripture does not say that. You have died to sin, and therefore must not allow it. There is a mighty power in this, if you can say in the presence of God when temptations come, "I cannot do that." Why? Because I have died with Christ, and God has given me a new life, eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

There are many of God's children who have desires after

holiness. That is good, but with many it is judged as an improvement upon the old nature, and they think they are getting better—they think they have not so much sin in them as they once had. I readily admit we ought to be getting more sanctified to God. It is Christ's desire for us to the Father. In John xvii. 17, He prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"; and in 1 Thess. v. 23, you have the same desire—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." But it is not improving the old nature in which there is no good thing, but feeding on Christ, walking in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith (Coloss. ii. 6-7), and thus as children of the Father and priests to God, we bring to Him filled hands with Christ. We speak of Him to God, and thus worship Him in spirit and in truth, and have no confidence in the flesh.

The reckoning that we are dead (Rom. vi. 11) is to go on steadily. Thus only do we walk in newness of life. Someone said, "What! every day to reckon?" Yes, my friends, every day. Things that may be right in themselves may not be suitable for us children of God, and we have to pull back our hand and say, "*No, I have died with Christ, and my life is hid with Christ in God*" (Coloss. iii. 3). We have God's Spirit to keep that before us, and to keep up the reckoning of faith as to the present question of victory over sin which is in us.

Over and over again it has been said that the past has been all settled, and the future is all sure, but it is the part between that requires the activity of our souls in faith. To some the way between is longer than it is to others, but it is the reckoning of faith as to what is in us, that root of evil, sin, that we need to remember every day and every hour. The Apostle says, "How shall we that have died to

sin, live any longer therein ? ” That is simple, is it not ? That is not confusing language. God has told us in His word that “ of Him we are *in Christ Jesus* ” (1 Cor. i. 30), and thus it is that the conditions of Christ with reference to sin are true of us. “ Wherefore if ye have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances (Touch not ; taste not ; handle not ; which all are to perish with the using) ” (Col. ii. 20-22). That is with reference to the law, and that is a subject very closely connected with the one we are just now considering. It is death that meets them both. “ How shall we who have died to sin, live any longer therein ? ” We cannot live two lives at the same time. If I am going on sinning I am denying that I have died with Christ. If I profess that I am saved, it must be seen by my life. If it is not so seen, it is also a denial of the act of profession spoken of in the 3rd verse—“ know ye not that so many of us as were baptized *unto* Jesus Christ were baptized *unto* His death ? ” Another “ manner of life ” (2 James, iii. 10) is the consequence in us of this new condition. We have died with Christ to sin, and so to talk about continuing, or living in sin, is to deny that wonderful fact which God has made known to us, and also to deny the profession we have made in being baptized *unto* Christ’s death, for that is the meaning of baptism. We have been baptized *unto* His death, to be *practically* dead. It is not just an act of obedience and then I am done with it, but I have been baptized *unto* Christ’s death, and so to *reckon* myself dead.

An interesting point in the 6th chapter is that the Spirit of God uses the little word “ we ” very frequently in enforcing the truth presented. “ Shall *we* continue in sin ? How shall *we* that have died to sin live any longer therein ? *We* are buried with Him by baptism *unto* death ; that like

as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so *we* also should walk in newness of life. For if *we* have been planted together (*i.e.*, Christians altogether) in the likeness of His death, *we* shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Then in the seventh verse it is "*He* (not *we*) that is dead is freed from sin." The Apostle in this last verse takes an illustration from a thing of daily occurrence. We often see a dead person. He is freed from sin. He is done with sin, is he not? There is no fear of that man sinning any more. Paul does not say, "*We* that are dead." No, he simply illustrates the point from the natural order in this world, "he that is dead is freed, or discharged, from sin." He is done with it. Well, if we get hold of this blessed fact in our souls, that we have died with Christ to sin, sin will not have the dominion over us. If we are wise people we shall not be talking loudly about it, because we never would be so near being overcome as when we are talking about it. But let us pass on in the quiet of our souls, living to Him who died for us and rose again (2 Corin. v. 15).

The Spirit of God resumes in the 8th verse, "*If we have died* with Christ, we believe that we *shall* also live with Him." We shall live with Him, that is future. In the Epistle to the Colossians the Spirit of God takes up this bearing of Christ's death. "Set your mind on things above, not on the things of the earth, for ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Ch. iii. 2-3).

When we turn to 1 Peter iv. 1, the writer puts it differently from Paul. In chapter iii. he tells us that Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. In chapter iv., at the beginning, we read, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath *ceased* from sin." This is Peter's

way of putting Paul's teaching of the sixth of Romans. Peter shows us as plainly as Paul how we get the victory over sin. There is no clashing with Paul. We have the same truth put in a different way. What is meant by the suffering? Not yielding to sin. When we yield to sin we are not suffering. We are exhorted to arm ourselves with the same mind as was in Christ, for "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." We get the same word as "hath ceased" in chapter iii. 10. "He that will love life and see good days let him *refrain* his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." "Refrain" might be more easily understood. When we suffer in the flesh, refusing to act according to the dictates of our evil nature, we are refraining from sinning. That has to be continued. It is not a point that you can reach and say, "Well, I have got up to that point now. I am done with it." Oh no, as long as we are here we must watch to carry that out. That is Peter's way of putting the doctrine we are considering.

James watches that we do not boast and get led away by the language of boasting. "In many things we all offend," he tells us (iii. 2). We know this to be sadly the case. Why? Because we fail in our reckoning. We may be like the ship that has got everything needful for steering clear of a rocky coast, but if we are not careful to be acquainted with our chart (the Word of God), and to have all the tackling in good condition, we shall break down in spite of it.

Then we come to John, and he is very absolute. He looks at one side of the matter, and many, not apprehending this, are troubled. They say, "Oh dear me! I thought I was a child of God, but I find that I have sinned, and John says, 'Whosoever is born of God sinneth not' " (I John v. 18.) John is viewing the Christian from one side. One thing filled John's soul as he went through this world. He had

occupied a place that belonged to every disciple. John lay on the bosom of Jesus, and his teaching is in keeping with the lying there. Many other such verses are in his Epistle, but when we come to read the whole of it he tells us of the provision that is made if we should sin. Paul takes us up in our composite condition. We have sin in us : we have not got rid of the flesh. Paul says in the seventh chapter of Romans, " In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing " (v. 18). He does not say " In *me* dwelleth no good thing." He could not say that because he had Christ in him, and the Holy Ghost in him. Do we all know what is meant by " the flesh." It does not mean this body of mine. The flesh in that sense is spoken of in Scripture (see Job xix. 26 ; 2 Cor. xii. 7) no doubt, but that is not what is meant by " they that are in the flesh cannot please God " (Rom. viii. 8). It means that evil condition I received from Adam, which, being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am not in before God. " They that are in the flesh cannot please God : but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you " (9). " Ye are *not* in the flesh." Does everyone understand that ? *Every* believer, according to the teaching in Eph. i. has the Spirit of God in him (v. 13-14), and is sealed until the day of redemption (iv. 30). This does not come through your living the life you have received, but it is a gift from God on believing the Gospel.

I have said that sin is doing one's own will. I have to live to the will of another now (2 Cor. v. 15). However, I may fail ; that is what I have been called out for, and saved for. He has saved us from eternal judgment, from the wrath to come, not only to make us happy in eternity, but to do His will while it is His pleasure to leave us here. We are to *live* here from this time right on unto Him who died for us and

rose again. The reception of the Holy Spirit is not a matter of attainment, but the gift of God on your believing the Gospel, and thus receiving the forgiveness of sins. Now you are *in Christ*, and being *in Him* the fact that was true of Christ, that He died to sin, is true of you. We need to get hold in our hearts of the *facts* of Scripture, and remember they do not become facts when we believe them; we get the good out of them then, but they were facts before. There are many things in the Word of God that become true to me when I am obedient to the word, I grant you, but the fact that Christ died for my sins according to the Scriptures, and that believing this I am sealed with the Spirit, and that I have died with Christ to sin, are facts that are true of every believer.

In our natural state we wanted our own way, until "God in mercy interposed, and turned our night to day." We were on the broad road that leads to destruction, but God came in and turned us from darkness to light, and now we are to do the will of Him who has become our Redeemer. He has redeemed us, and now we would be like the poor slave, who, when she knew that she was redeemed, said "I am going to yield myself to the man that has redeemed me: he has paid the price for me and made me his own, and I will go with him."

Ere closing I notice briefly the blessed fact as to the Lord Jesus Christ being our present Saviour. He is *in heaven* to keep us from falling on our way home. Do you know that? Do you realise the need of being so kept? The One that died on the cross is on the right hand of God, a Saviour, and you need to go to Him now. God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phill. ii. 13). He lives to save us (Heb. vii. 25). This verse applies to the children of God. It is a blessed thing that you can go to Him and pray

to Him, but what about the Great High Priest praying for you? He ever lives to make intercession for us. He died for sinners, but He prays for saints. We are poor saints—yet we are saints, God's saints. The epistles are written to saints, God's holy people. We forget that. We need to be careful to keep our garments unspotted from the world (Eph. iii. 4; James i. 27).

He is in heaven to save us, and He is coming from heaven to take us out of the place where sin is, if He does not send for us before that time. He may send for you or me in a moment, and it is the work on the cross that sets us clear for that moment when we shall be ushered into His presence to wait with Him till He comes to take all His people to be forever with Himself.

But some will say, "I am so inconsistent." Yes, that is true, and you do not know how inconsistent you are. You cannot measure your inconsistency. And you and I are called to judge ourselves for our failures and our sins, but our inconsistency does not affect this that "whom He justified (*that* is the beginning of your life as a Christian) them He also glorified" (*that* is the end of it). Then we have the blessed conclusion that the Apostle comes to, as he reviews what has taken place, and is presented to us in the last half of chapter v.: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (viii. 1), and also, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free^r from the law of sin and death," which is the conclusion regarding our deliverance from the present power over sin as set forth in chapter vi.

May the Lord root this word deeply in our souls.

MAN'S THOUGHTS, OR GOD'S THOUGHTS : WHICH ?

What do *I* think of the Scriptures ?

Ah ! to you my thoughts would not avail ;

They would cause you to sink in life's ocean,

On your service they'd stamp the word *fail*.

They might shine like real diamonds in brilliance,

And sound like wise sayings—abroad,

But they spring from a heart that was darkened

By despising the sayings of God !

Though appearing like pearls that are priceless,

God's estimate of them is—"vain,"

Hence to you their possession is worthless,

You would hold them in loss, not in gain.

Though they seem like bright stars in high regions

Peering out from blue settings behind,

They are only of human production,

Framed by a once reprobate mind.

Ah ! my thoughts are like chaff in the summer,

Which is blown by the wind in men's eyes,

So therefore they cannot be trusted,

And thus, to reject them is wise.

But take God's ! For 'twas He who in wisdom

Laid *deep* the foundation of grace,

Secure from the power of the *tyrant*

Who is seeking God's work to efface.

His salvation is great ! 'Tis eternal !

Designed by His infinite skill ;

In Christ Jesus our Lord it is centred,

In Him God will His counsels fulfil !

"Vain man would be wise, though he's born
Like unto a wild ass's colt,"

But his wisdom of justice was shorn

When from God, his self-will caused revolt.

He blames God for his present condition,

But O ! how unjust is the charge ;

His *will* he allows to run rampant

Like an ass in the desert—at large.

How, then, can he form a sound judgment

Of what God in His Word has declared :

Till he owns that his *will* is unbridled

And to act without God he has dared ?
 Man's thoughts are *not* God's ! then discard them !
 Follow not in the way he would lead ;
 " For a fish he may give you a serpent " ;
 And for *truth* a plain falsehood instead.
 Yes, man is a flat contradiction !
 The *truth* he professes to seek
 But " he calls evil good, and good evil,"
 Then the *truth* how can such an one speak ?

For *salvation* man wants to *do* something,
 But God cannot accept from his hands ;
 For his gifts like himself are all filthy,
 And cannot meet God's holy demands !
 God Himself hath provided a ransom,
 To deliver from sin's binding chains,
 And He purges the soul who accepts it,
 Till *no* spot on that conscience remains.
 That ransom is Jesus ! My Saviour !
 Is He yours ? Does your soul now rejoice
 When you think of the hour He is coming
 To wake the dead by the sound of His voice ?
 For that moment is quickly approaching :
 He shall speak—earth and sea shall obey,
 And yield up the dead they embosom,
 Who have trusted, and made Him their stay.
 Yes, Jesus my Saviour's a *Person* !
 Not a *principle* framed in man's mind ;
 And Calvary's cross was a *substance*,
 Not a *theory* evolved by the blind.
 You may say " That is not my idea,"—
 Perhaps not ! But it's God's, and He knew
 What was good for the man He created,
 I accept of His judgment,—will not you ?
 The earth, and the sea, shew God's wonders !
 The beasts of the forest, and field,
 All these are fulfilling His purpose,
 Only man to his Lord will not yield !
 Sun, moon, and stars, all declare Him,
 And express His most wonderful scheme !
 For without them the earth would be darkness,
 And chaos be reigning supreme.

These things man ascribes to Dame Nature ;
 But Nature's *sun* causes Nature to die ;
 Vegetation cannot live without water,
 Nor the fowls in the heavens that fly.
 Dame Nature herself is dependent !
 Which is proved by her *governing laws* ;
 Could her work be accomplished without them,
 Their existence would prove *needless cause* !
 Therefore Nature is only a servant,
 Not a goddess in power supreme !
 And the man who bows down at her altar,
 Finds his goddess is only a dream.
 No wonder he says " she is fickle ! "
 He himself is much higher than she ;
 He can think for himself but she cannot,
 Hence, his blesser she never can be !
 For man needs a power *far* above him
 To uplift, to uphold, and sustain,
 To meet the need that his heart ever craveth,
 Which in Nature he seeks for in vain.
 That power is in God the eternal !
 Who in *Jesus* as Man among men,
 Sought in grace to awaken man's conscience
 To a sense of his need of Him then.
 But in hatred, His grace men rejected ;
 More intense grew their thirst for His blood,
 As a lamb to the slaughter they led Him,
 And in *wrath*, on Him rushed like a flood.

They thought now His life they had taken
 His words they for ever would shun ;
 But that crucified Man, was Creator
 Of themselves, of the earth, and the sun !
 But of *death* He could never be holden ;
 In his *person* is hidden the key
 Which unlocks all the tombs in creation,
 Made in rivers, in fire, earth, or sea !
 So man's thoughts here again are a failure ;
 For His *life* no man ever could take !
 He Himself laid it down on God's altar,
 When the earth owned Him *Lord* by a quake.
 Even *this* did not break down man's envy ;
 Though by *some truly* owned " Son of God " !

And man still seeks to be the dictator
Of the path which to heaven should be trod.

If from man all the Scriptures have issued,
He can do with them just as he will ;
He can alter, or add, or take from them
All the *words* he can never fulfil.
But if they have " come to him *only*,"
A gift from Jehovah, divine,
He is bound to accept, or reject them,
Not a sentence is his to define.
As God's " Letters Patent " they meet Him,
And the man who infringes God's " right,"
Exposes himself to God's anger
When He acts in the power of His might !

J. H.

CHILD of God, is the road rough, the night dark, the cross heavy ? Faint not, nor be discouraged, as though some strange thing had happened unto you (1 Peter iv. 12). There are many close beside you wrestling on toward heaven, 'gainst storm and wind, and tide, though you think yourself alone. It is the King's highway, much traversed by Zion's pilgrims ; and One bearing His cross hallowed the path on a darker day than thine. The day dawn is near, " Weeping may come in to lodge at even, but joy cometh in the morning " (Ps. xxx. 5, R. V. Mar.).

You carry a wondrous *secret* in your bosom, the secret of God's love. What joy, what dignity, to be beloved of God ! " And it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We live on the eve of a glad surprise ; we expect the return of One who loves us ! Shall all that this poor earth can offer lure us in any forbidden path ? One glimpse, Spirit given, of our absent Lord, throws earth's brightest glories into the shade.

RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is a marvel of divine grace that He who is God—God the Spirit—should be given to a creature, and that creature a member of the human race—to one who had been in rebellion against God, and a lover of what He hated, who was, in point of fact as regards God, “dead in trespasses and sins.”

When is the Spirit given? When the sinner receives the forgiveness of sins (Acts ii. 38; chap. x. 43-44), or believes the gospel of his salvation (Eph. i. 13). The Spirit received is of the greatest possible blessing to the receiver. In many ways is the Holy Spirit spoken of in connection with the believer. He is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii.), and is there regarded as identified with the life, that everlasting life, which is received *from* Christ, who *is* our life (see Col. iii. 4).

Life in its essence, if we may use such a term, is derived from the Son: “He that hath the Son hath life” (1 John v. 12). But when it is a question of a saint’s practical deliverance from the law, or rule of sin and death, the Holy Spirit is identified with this life. So we read, “The law (or the rule) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath set me free,” etc. (Rom. viii. 2); and when the question of practically expressing the life is spoken of, then we read, “The Spirit is life, because of righteousness.” No doing right can there be in God’s account without life, and the power of that life is the Spirit.

Then He is a witnessing Spirit—bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. He is an interceding Spirit—making intercessions for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. He is the Spirit of adoption, or Sonship—enabling the believer to cry *Abba, Father*. He is the

unction, or the anointing, from the Holy One (1 John ii. 20)—conferring knowledge and relieving from dependence on man (ver. 27). He is the seal of appropriation on the part of God—sealed for the day of redemption. So there can be no miscarriage, no failing to reach the home above. Every sealed one must arrive safely. He is also the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. i. 14). So no improvident one will there be. No pauper there! Beyond the question of salvation, lies the certainty of immense wealth; as Peter puts it, “An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,” and we are kept for it by God’s power through faith.

The believer is a child of God, and is then an heir, but a joint-heir with Christ, who is the heir of all things. Of their inheritance the Holy Spirit is the pledge, or earnest. We are bound to get there—what a comfort! Handsomely provided for—what blessed grace! Why linger here? Why not begin our packing, sending on our hearts’ best affections there? Here there is no continuing city. “We seek one to come.” We should lay up treasures there (Luke xii.).

The Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer is a guarantee of the quickening of His mortal body; for we read, “If the Spirit of Him which raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by (or because of) His Spirit which dwelleth in you.” By the indwelling of the Spirit we come to be in Christ, members of a spiritual race of which He in glory is the head (see Rom. viii. 9-10), and so are new creatures. By receiving the same Spirit we are united to Christ, and are members of His body, the Church. The glorified Christ is the head. There is also the Spirit’s unity, which we are exhorted to keep in the bond of peace.

How shall we succeed in the doing this ? Only by attending to the conditions laid down for our guidance "with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering"—not with a little, not with some, but with *all*. Must we sacrifice Christ or the truth of God ? Nay. How could the Holy Spirit's unity be maintained in that fashion ? But sacrifice self we may, and should not be over sensitive, not easily provoked, not wanting a place ; but a door mat if necessary, a servant of all. If all truly seek to exalt Christ, that is what the Spirit is doing. "He shall glorify me." Can such fall out ? Never !

E. R. W.

O Fellow Christian ! whosoe'er thou art,
 This is for thee and me ;
 This wine of Trust, that maketh glad the heart
 In its adversity !
 Drink therefore, and so bear a braver part,
 For as thy days, thy strength shall be,

" Thy days " may be a life-long battle field,
 A warrior's history,
 Where every weapon Satan's arm can wield
 Shall each be aimed at thee ;
 But strive in Trust and thou shalt never yield,
 For as thy days, thy strength shall be.

O wakeful toiler in a world of pain,
 A long rest waiteth thee ;—
 Seek it not here, but bravely lift again
 Tired hand and feeble knee ;
 If thou wilt Trust, thy Master will sustain,
 And as thy days, thy strength shall be.

Grace never appears grace, till sin appears to be sin. The deeper the sense of the evil of sin is, the deeper our apprehensions of the free grace of God in Christ will be

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH. (*Continued.*)

If we view the Church in its completeness as the body of Christ, and think of its ultimate blessedness and the display of the glory of God therein, we are assured that it is impossible for these to fail. Christ is yet to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. That great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, will to eternal ages make manifest the exceeding riches of God's grace, as well as the glory of His manifold wisdom, unfailing faithfulness, and almighty power. The final result is in His hands, and cannot fail.

If we view the Church as a body or assembly on earth, placed here in responsibility to manifest Christ, and its union with Him by the power of the Holy Ghost indwelling it, and working in it, we find two things. First, those who do really compose the Church, who are vitally united to Christ, have totally failed in this responsibility; and there is, in consequence, no such manifestation of Christ, and of our union with Him as there ought to have been. Secondly, those who do really compose the true Church, are mixed up with the vast professing body, which, in assuming the name and privileges of the Church, has become responsible for manifesting its true character and destiny; but which, alas! so far from this, has so apostatized from Christ and become so wedded to the world, that nothing but judgment awaits it. The true saints, those who really compose the Church of God, will all be changed at Christ's coming, and with the departed saints, caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Judgment will afterwards fall on the false professing body which will be left on earth.

What remains, then, but that we humble ourselves before the Lord, and prayerfully and diligently search His word, and wait on Him, to learn how He would have His people act in the solemn emergency of the present hour. May His

light shine clearly on our path ! May we have grace to take our true place before Him, and faithfully use, at any cost, the light He may in His grace afford ! And may the assured certainty of the speedy return of our blessed Lord both comfort our hearts, and induce all holy watchfulness and circumspection in keeping our garments unspotted from the world !

—Trotter.

II. TIMOTHY III. (Continued.)

Paul's own experience bore that out fully, but it was his experience likewise, as it would be theirs and ours too if true, to prove the abiding faithfulness of the Lord. "Out of all the Lord delivered me," sets out this side of his experience. They were occasions when he was brought into closest contact with the Lord, and proved thus a means of blessing. As Deliverer the Lord manifested Himself, not, be it remembered, to save His servant *from* trial but *out of* it. The stones rained thickly round him at Lystra, but his life was in other hands than theirs. The Master yet required His servant, and vouchsafed the deliverance needed.

And now the word is recorded which shows that the day of trial has not yet ended. Persecutions still await any who "will live godly in Christ Jesus." They are peculiar to no special period, for such living ever fans into flame the enmity that exists in man's mind against God, and against His Christ. Not in the same way, perhaps, will God's people suffer now, though we must not think that the days of the stone, the faggot, and the fire have gone for ever. By no means ; but let us have our treasure in the heavens, and our hearts being there, we shall not fear what man can do, nor dread his threatenings. Out of them the Lord will deliver His own, it may be by taking them beyond the reach of trial, sorrow and care, even home with Himself, where it is very far better to be.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(No. 4.)

DEAD TO THE LAW.—Rom. viii.

WE have had before us the question of how we can get freedom from the power of sin. Sin is in us ; we are conscious of that. There is no diminution in the fact of the presence of sin, but there ought to be diminution in its activities in us. We need to distinguish between the *presence* of sin in us, and its *activity*. We shall never get rid of the presence of sin in us as long as we are in the body, but by the grace of God there ought to be daily less of the fruits of sin in us, for it is written, “ sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace ” (Rom. vi. 14).

Many say, “ We shall get rid of it when we die, but we must just go on while here, up and down, as best we can.” But that is not how we are taught in Scripture, and we know nothing but what is told us there. He has written in this book how we should be practically above the power of sin, even by accepting and acting on the fact that we *have died* with Christ to sin. Then we are directed in verse 11 to “ reckon ourselves to be *dead* indeed unto sin.” We have believed that Christ has died for our sins. It is also a fact that Christ has died to sin, and we, because we are in Him, *have died* with Him to sin. Every child of God accepts the fact that Christ died for our sins. You could not be a child of God without knowing something about that. I do not say we know it fully ; there is not a single thing that God has made known to us that we know fully (1 Cor. viii. 2).

I remember someone speaking of that long ago. A brother had been praying that the Lord would tell us what it was to be forgiven. He had long been a child of God, and another hearing this, said, "Dear me! does he not know what it is to be forgiven?" He did know it, but he knew he had not fully realised what a wonderful thing it was to be forgiven by God. None do that. There is more to be learned than we have yet got hold of in our souls. As we pass through this world, we ought to have the power of that in our souls, what it is to be forgiven of God. Our sins and our iniquities He will remember no more (Heb. x. 17).

Now, as we have already seen, the gospel in the Epistle to the Romans is divided into three parts, viz. : deliverance from the *guilt of sin* (ch. iii. 24); deliverance from the *power of sin* (ch. vi. 14); and the *law* (ch. vii. 4, 6), in order that we may bring forth fruit unto God, and then when the Lord comes we shall get deliverance from the *presence of sin* (viii. 11).

Ephesians i. 13 teaches that when the gospel is believed, God seals the soul with His Spirit—He takes possession of it. We are sealed unto the day of redemption (iv. 30). The Spirit takes up His abode in the believer. Alas! we often grieve Him, but He does not leave us.

Since Christ took His seat on the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost has been upon earth indwelling all who believe the gospel. Then, through our being *in Christ* by the indwelling of the Spirit, His relation to sin becomes ours: we have died with Him to sin. That is the subject of the 6th of Romans. Christ had no sin in Him; you and I have. When He was here He had to say to sin around Him, but He is done with that now. He passed out of the world by death, and when He comes again He will have no more to say to sin, save to deal with it by His power. The believer

is *in Christ* now, and that is another point of immense importance. Many a true child of God has not got a shadow of a scripture thought as to what it is to be *in Christ*. It is a blessed thing to be converted to God, but that is not all. In Acts xxvi. 18 we are taught that we are turned (converted) to receive. We must go a long step further to apprehend what God says as to our being "in Christ."

We have in the last half of the 5th of Romans the two headships brought up, Adam and Christ. These two headships divide all the souls that are in the world at this moment. It will divide all from the beginning right on to the end into two races, those in Adam and those in Christ. Here it is not a question of our *sins*, but of *sin* the root, and how it came into the world. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. The results of Adam's sin tell upon the whole race. Then we have the second man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the results of His death on the cross for sin bearing upon all those who belong to Him. In the sixth chapter the Apostle applies these things, and asks, "What shall we say? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The natural mind learning that grace has abounded will say, "Let us sin: you seem so joyful over the fact that grace has so abounded, we had better sin." No, "how shall we that have *died to sin*, live any longer therein." This is the Divine declaration resulting from Christ having died to sin, and we because *in Him*, have died with Him to sin. In verse 8 we have the words, "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." We are not actually dead; we are here still fallen creatures in a sinful world; but we ought to reckon ourselves dead. We are not dead, we very soon show that, but *faith* accepts the fact that I have died

with Christ, and if I carry out the fact, in *reckoning* myself dead, I can work to please God, but if I get into a passion, they will likely say, "You do not look as if you were dead." Well, when I have failed in my *reckoning* and so sinned, that does not alter the fact that I have died with Christ. There is provision for our restoration when we have sinned which we learn from 1 John ii. 1. That is an immense blessing, but that is how we get victory over sin in us by the acceptance of the fact that we have died, and then the practical living it out is by reckoning myself to be dead. In 2 Corin. iv. 10 we read "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." That is how the life comes out. It is in proportion to the reckoning myself dead that I practically live. That is not how I *get* life. It is a gift. The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. vi. 23). You cannot earn it, but "if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live" (vii. 13),—that is, carry out the life. In the seventh of Romans we have another matter taken up, viz. : that we have died to the law. } This is intimately connected with the question of sin, as you will see on reading the chapter. Sin is spoken of a great many times in connection with the law.

The Spirit of God speaks of our being delivered from the law by the body of Christ. What is the object of my being delivered from the law? The answer is given, "That I may bring forth fruit unto God" (ver. 4). We bring forth no fruit to God if we are in our relation to God connected with the law. Then there is a positive statement in Gal. v. 18, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Many of God's people, and teachers among them, say, "I do not take the law as the ground of my standing before

God, but I take it for my work." You and I cannot take the law and use it as we please. The law will have to say to us. We cannot move it out of its domain, and so we see from verse 4 of chapter vii. that the only way we can bring forth fruit to God is by being connected with Christ as risen from the dead. We have got Christ as our life through believing on the Son of God, and that is the life we have to live here (2 Corin. iv. 10). The Apostle takes an illustration from the marriage tie in the first three verses of chapter vii. to show us that we can only be made free from the law by death. He speaks of the husband as corresponding to the law, but it is not that the law is dead. When we come to the actual statement of the matter, we have to reverse the figure and apply it to ourselves. It is not that the law dies. There is nothing wrong with the law, but it is the material the law has to work upon that is bad. It is we who have died and risen with Christ, and through our being connected with Christ, who is risen, by the indwelling of the Spirit we are freed from the law. When He was here upon earth He kept the law perfectly. Every jot and tittle of it He fulfilled; but He was alone: there was no connection or association with Christ until He died and rose again, (John xii. 24). He is done with that order of things (the law) now—has gone out of it all. We are in Him, and so we have done with it, because He has died to it. We have got free from the law by the body of Christ (ch. vii. 4, 6).

Now we must get hold of the meaning of the expression in verse 5, "when we were in the flesh." That does not mean "my body." I am in my body. Paul was in his body when he was writing these words; but he is speaking of a past condition. The Christian, as God describes him, is not now in the flesh, but he is still in his body. You will find the word "flesh" used in Scripture in various ways, and

the meaning is determined by the connection in which it is found. I do not say a converted person merely, but a child of God, a Christian, as God describes him, indwelt by His Holy Spirit, is not in the flesh. he is in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in him (ch. viii. 9). A child of God alas ! often walks according to the dictates of the flesh, and that is sin. When we do sin there is provision for restoration. If we were not liable to sin, the Spirit of God would not write as He does in the first epistle of John : " My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not ; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (ch. ii. 1). We do not have a great sacrifice, but an advocate with the Father.

The Holy Ghost is spoken of as a positive " Gift " (Acts viii. 20). I do not work for a *gift* or it would not be a gift. The gift of the Spirit is not spoken of in Scripture as an influence. He is a Divine person. He is God.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of chapter vii. present to us the doctrinal part, and then the Apostle turns again to them and says, " What are we going to say ? " This forms the subject from the seventh verse to the end of the chapter. It is a question of *deliverance*, not of *salvation*—subsequent deliverance based upon objective facts. We have died and risen with Christ (Coloss. ii. 3). Thus we are to pass through this world in bodies of sin and death, surrounded by sin and everything that appeals to our evil nature, and count ourselves dead to it (Rom. vi. 11 ; vii. 4, 6). All this calls for watchfulness and dependence, so that we may bring forth fruit unto God.

What is the use of the law ? One reason given is " that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful " (verse 13). The law never made sin, but it stirred up sin that is in us, that we might know what sort of people we

are. The law shows us what creatures *we* are, and that is a profitable lesson. The point in chapter vii. is not *sins*, but *sin*. From the seventh verse all down this chapter it is *sin* that is spoken of, *sin* that is working in us. *Sin* in connection with the law is the point, not *my sins*, they were all put away by the *blood* of Christ. When he speaks about our reconciliation, and deliverance either from *sin* or the law, he brings in the *death* of Christ. The Spirit of God has a positive reason for using one word in a certain connection in preference to another. There is many a dear child of God who knows he has got forgiveness of sins, but is not quite prepared to accept the fact that there is no good thing in him. All that the Spirit of God brings before us in this chapter is to bring us to this conclusion (vii. 18). Many a professed Christian thinks there is some good principle in him that can be wrought upon and good fruit be the result. But that is a ruinous error. *Sin* characterises all that is in us, and no good thing can spring up from that evil root. God allows us to struggle with ourselves, trying this and that until we come to the conclusion reached at the end of this chapter (verses 24, 25).

The fourteenth verse sets forth the character of the law—*it is spiritual*, but immediately it is added "I am carnal." The Christian *knows* that the law is spiritual. "We know" is what characterises the child of God who gets his thoughts from the Word of God. I mention other two instances which it will be to profit to read. You will find them in 2 Corinthians v. 1, and 1 John iii. 2. There "we know;" you will find others. The Apostle adds "but I am carnal." "I" often comes in here. It is used as the Apostle describes the exercises of a renewed man, but a renewed man that has not the Spirit dwelling in him. We know that a person who has passed through this experience as to self, and comes out

on the right side realises by faith what it is to be in Christ, as the One who died to sin and the law. Christ dead and risen again, and we, as having died and risen with Him, is an answer to the whole thing. "Sold under sin" does not describe a child of God who is indwelt by the Spirit of God. Surely not; but it is the state of soul under law that is described. It is the condition of a renewed soul that wants to do right, but is not able to do it. After all the pouring from vessel to vessel we get three interesting points in the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd verses:—

1st, he *finds* a law that when he would do good evil is present with him.

2nd, he *delights* in the law of God after the inward man (he has not yet got the power to do it).

3rd, I *see* another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. This last shows he is not sealed.

Is it not a great thing to find the Spirit of God tracing for us the exercises that are needful for us to pass through, and perhaps are going through yet?

In this chapter we do not have *Christian* experience. In the epistle to the Phillipians where we do find Christian experience unfolded, the same writer says, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me power" (Phil. iv. 13). Paul writes in this seventh of Romans as one who is in the conscious knowledge of deliverance. He could not have described the condition if *in* it when writing. He is out of the bog, and so can tell us how he got out. We get the pronouns "I" and "me" more than forty times, and Christ never mentioned until the last verse. The law in his members wars against the law of his *mind*, which sides with God (25), and he is brought into captivity to the law of sin

which is in his members. What God wants for His children is liberty. He writes in the epistle to the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. v. 1). You cannot get the liberty by struggling, but by Christ and the Spirit of God. The soul comes to this and cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death!" (verse 24, margin). We may ask again, Could this describe the state of one sealed by the Spirit of God? A child of God as set forth in this epistle and other epistles is indwelt by God's Spirit, and *therefore in Christ*. He has a home in heaven to which the Lord will come and take him by and by. We see that in the condition described in these verses (7-24), with new desires, but no power, he cannot enter into the enjoyment of the blessings that belong to one in Christ. Sin is in him, and he does not know what to do with it. The question is, however, "*What has God done with it?*" God never pardons the nature I have from Adam. He has *condemned it*. He cannot *forgive it*. He has forgiven *me*. When a child does wrong, his father forgives the wrong, but condemns the disposition that led the child to do the wrong. God has condemned *sin in the flesh*. When this is received into the heart it gives great relief. Then *we* should condemn it too. Now, he does not say, "What am I going to *do*?" He has come to a complete standstill, and he cries out, "Oh wretched man that I am! *Who* shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then he says, "I thank *God*." He is my deliverer—my salvation. There is full deliverance whenever our eye rests upon God.

We have then in the last verse the summing up of all the exercises gone through in this chapter. "So then with the mind I *myself* serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." "I myself," that is the Christian: but with

the flesh, that is sin in us. We are not in the flesh—we are in Christ. This is our *condition* in the sight of God. To learn rightly what it is to be *in Christ* we must read Romans v. 13-21, and viii. 1-11. “In the Son” speaks of *Life*—and this all saints had before Christ died as truly as after—but “in Christ” speaks of *race* and refers to His manhood which could not be said of any until He had died and risen again. They were in the Son, and so *had life*, but did not *know* it until the Holy Ghost came. But as John xiv. 20 tells us then they would. “*In Christ*” is a condition which did not exist until the Holy Ghost came, and He did not come until Christ was glorified, as John vii. 39 declares.

The Spirit of God recapitulates in the three first verses what He has presented to us in detail in chapters v.-vii. Happy are we when we come in some measure to receive the thoughts of God. Then we are at liberty. We get freedom to love God and serve Him. Till then we are always thinking about ourselves, saying “I, I, I.” The more conscientious you are, the more desirous you are to be godly, the more you will be repeating I, I. “*I cannot do this, and I cannot do that.*”

We need to think of Christ, look to Christ, and feed upon Christ. That is the only way we can live to the glory of God.

D. S.

TWO "ENROLLED" WIDOWS.

Luke iv. 25, 26 xxxi. 1-4.

As a class specially to be condoled with in a world so full of sorrow and suffering as ours, widows have in the Word of God a peculiar measure of attention given to their case. Their place of honour in, and the solicitous care for their welfare shown by, the early church is evidenced by the directions given by Paul to Timothy in the fifth chapter of his first epistle, a chapter the larger part of which is devoted to them. The ninth verse of the same chapter speaks of a special roll or list, admission to which was to be a matter of discretion on the part of the church, certain being "taken into the number" or "enrolled," others "refused" or "declined" in accordance with the Apostle's prudent counsels. This has been taken frequently as a kind of official board of superintendence, for which the circumstances and character spoken of were qualifications; but it is surely rather a simple, perhaps informal, list of such widows, as from the reasons mentioned could be commended to the assembly's special care.

However, there is another list we may be allowed to mention, or at least imagine. It will scarcely be thought pure imagination perhaps to speak of a "roll of distinguished widows," concerning whom honourable mention has been made by the Lord. Then of the two widows indicated at the head of this paper, it can be said they were given an abundant entrance into it. There is this in common between the two lists at all events, that at least two of the honourable traits which qualified for admission to the one appear manifestly in the conduct of the two whom

we are considering as members of the other. "If she have lodged strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet" is surely a characteristic with which the widow of Sarepta's recorded action complies. "If she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good, or benevolent, work," would just in effect be what the poor widow of Luke xxi. attempted.

The first-mentioned we make acquaintance with in 1 Kings chapter xvii. through her connection with the work and service of Elijah the prophet. Christ Himself also made use of the incident to illustrate a certain point in regard to His own ministry, and Luke iv. 25 gives the inspired account of this. Both in the original form of the narrative in the Old Testament and in its New Testament repetition it is more especially from Elijah's side that the matter is presented however; the story is told as it affects him rather than the woman. It formed part of the sequence of events in the history of the conflict between heathen, and worse than heathen, darkness, and God's truth ministered through His prophet Elijah, and given as part of his history rather than of hers. The Lord Jesus also at Nazareth, in what has sometimes been called His first sermon, points to this incident—illustrating as it does what lines His own ministry was being forced to take—as a part of Elijah's service as God's prophet.

But there is interest also in considering it from this woman's side, as an event in her life, what it meant to *her*. Well, it meant in the first place a trial for her faith. The question of course arises, Was faith really in exercise previous to this? was there in this poor desolate heathen's soul a vital spark of the knowledge of God? Let us recall the incident. Elijah the prophet of Jehovah, an outcast from his people, had passed through one stage of that

strange path of separation to which God had called him, and at the brook Cherith had learned the blessedness of trusting and obeying the Lord, being sustained by God in his place of separation in unlooked for and wonderful ways. Still called to follow further the leadings of faith, when the brook dries up, he passes on to Zarephath at the word of the Lord, to be the means also of educating a poor widow there in the same blessed lessons. There was nothing as far as the woman's outward circumstances were concerned, as far as we know, to account for any spark of divine light in her soul before this. In Zarephath, in Zidon, to which it belonged, all was as dark as it well could be. From thence had come both Israel's idolatry, and its royal patroness, the terrible Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, who proved herself indeed her father's daughter in all she did and inspired Ahab to do in "troubling" Israel, forsaking the commandments of the Lord and following Baalim. In such a land of idolatry and heathen darkness did this widow dwell, and if nought but the shadow of death overspread her spirit it was in one sense a wonder. Met at the gate of the city by Elijah, and requested by him first for drink and then for food. she shows her willingness to supply what she could ; but explains at the same time how abject is her condition as far as his second request was concerned. A handful of meal in a barrel, she declares, and a little oil in a cruse, is all that the famine has left her. Want can be no longer kept from the door, and in despair she looks for nothing else, for her son and for herself, after this one meal, than the same death by starvation of which possibly some around her had already been the victims.

In her answer to Elijah, however, she makes use of one expression which for certain shows some glimmer at least

of acquaintance with the true God. "As *Jehovah thy Elohim* liveth" she declares, these things are so. She had at least "heard of Him by the hearing of the ear," and presently she is tested as to what faith she is prepared to put upon the word of this One she has spoken of; for says Elijah—"Make me a little cake first . . . For thus saith *Jehovah Elohim of Israel*. The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." Were this the initial act of faith on her part, it certainly was a striking one, and whether or not absolutely so it was a severe test it underwent, to be ready to provide first out of the last frugal resources left a portion for the outcast prophet of Jehovah. Yet according to this saying, she went and did. And her faith was abundantly rewarded, for, famine around notwithstanding, the gaunt spectre is kept outside, and "she and he and her household did eat many days; and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail according to the word of the Lord which He spake by Elijah."

"The Lord will provide" was in all truth the great lesson she learnt from the occurrence. The blessedness also we are surely shown of those who, at the word of the Lord, no matter what its demands, are prepared to trust and obey. She is enrolled also, may we say with Luke iv. before us, as a bright example of what grace can accomplish outside the boundaries of the chosen people, when rejection of Him whom God has sent is what they manifest; of what faith can produce, and how it is rewarded where the rejected one is received.

The widow of Luke xxi. comes up for mention in presence of a far greater than Elias the prophet. The Lord Jesus was at this time following a practice He had formed of

resorting each day to the temple to teach. It was in the last week before He suffered, which was such a full and busy one, that this incident occurred, and in the temple, more particularly in the treasury, where He was wont to teach, that this attracted His notice. Seated in that part of the temple where the donations of the devout were received, the Lord Jesus, with downcast or closed eyes, as someone has suggested, wearied with the discussion and controversy with the chief priests, scribes, and Sadducees, in the former chapter, "looked up" at the stream of people who came to cast their gifts into the treasury. His eye first encountered the *rich* donors, of whom from Mark's account we know there were many, for "many that were rich cast in much." But among the rest there came a *poor* widow, a work-woman of some description we know, for the word in the original signifies one who supported herself by labour, the only time the word is used in the New Testament by the way. Of the scanty reward of her labour she here casts in all that she has, two mites, amounting to about a farthing. Jesus has had His eye upon the whole transaction; and, possibly unknown at all to the woman herself, He comments on it to His disciples. Having divine knowledge He knew not only her widowed state and her station in life, but also what probably none but the woman herself knew, that in giving her donation she had parted with all that she at that time possessed. No mere casual observer could have guessed at these details, and no other could have appraised the gifts at their proper value, for as a matter of fact things are not what they seem here. Though not in outward appearance, yet in real value, intrinsically, and possibly potentially as well, this last offering exceeded all the rest. The rich out of their abundance had given a portion of what they could very well spare; but this needy

widow out of her penury, her "deficiency," had cast in all the living she had. Much that found its way into the temple chests that day shall never more be heard of. Some of it from those who gave most might have been dishonestly come by, or fraudulently extorted from others in the manner spoken of in the previous chapter, characterising such as the scribes who "devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers." We do not know. Possibly its purpose was to support the building and the service of that temple, of the early destruction of which the rest of this chapter, among other matters, goes on to speak; but there was one small gift that should continually be had in remembrance, and with which the poor widow shall for ever be associated—the two mites, the money that was hardly and honestly earned, and freely, ungrudgingly given.

Reasoning after a human fashion, it was but a very small amount of assistance to the work of God that she contributed; but in the estimation of the Lord this was the fullest and greatest endeavour witnessed that day. It involved a fuller measure of sacrifice than any other contribution, however large, and therein lay the true test of its worth. "She had done what she could," as Christ said of another, and the pleasure He found in the action of that other no doubt He tasted in some measure in this; while the prediction—that "wheresoever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her,"—also holds good as to what the poor widow that day performed.

Enrolled she is, may we not then say, on the roll of the illustrious children of faith as an illustration, and a telling one, of the truth of the statement that "God loveth a cheerful giver." *It is a great matter to have the Lord's*

approval of our conduct. It is a still greater thing to be able to give Him positive pleasure in contemplating the fruits of the workings of His grace in our hearts. And this poor widow had both. Do we covet a similar position ?

The widow of Luke xxi. in some ways resembles her sister of Elijah's day. Especially in one feature are the cases similar—in the smallness and insignificance of the resources they possessed, and from that very feature how much may we to-day learn. On the one hand, two mites was all that was available. On the other, a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse was all that was left. Yet who can tell to what extent the Lord may have multiplied the power and usefulness of the small sum put into the treasury, and who can gainsay the miraculously provided abundance from the small store of the prophet's hostess. Ours is a day of small things. Let us not despise it or them ; but remembering that in the divine economy it is by such small and despised means that God ordinarily works, as creation, providence, and grace alike testify, may we see bracketed with these two "enrolled" widows the timely lesson they teach in common, that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty."

J. T.

SOME PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS ON EPHESIANS IV.

"ENDEAVOURING to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). Such is the language addressed by the Spirit of God to every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ ; and well it becomes every individual Christian to question

himself or herself as to how he or she is carrying out the divine instruction, and what endeavours he or she is making towards this end.

Despite all that has been written and spoken on this and kindred subjects, it cannot be denied that the spirit of independency is very prevalent among Christians generally. It is, one is sorry to say, a matter of common knowledge, that many who possess some gift, or are imbued with an ardent and laudable desire for gospel-preaching, undertake gospel-work among various sects and denominations, quite independently and without even the cognizance of the Assembly to which they are locally attached. In many cases, it happens that at the very time they are thus engaged, the Assembly are putting forth their most strenuous efforts, and needing the help of these same brethren (if it be only by their presence) in bringing the glad tidings of God's salvation to needy souls !

The contention, that a servant is responsible alone to the Lord, and that the Assembly have no controlling power over the exercise of his gift is, in the main, correct. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether an evangelist, or one acting as such, can, scripturally, follow such an exclusively independent course ; else, what is the meaning of " He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints " ? (Eph. iv. 11, 12). If this scripture were seriously considered, would not any one desirous of doing the work of an evangelist—so far from acting independently—crave the sympathy, the prayers, and the hearty co-operation of the Assembly ? The aim of his efforts, like that of a teacher or pastor, would be : " The perfecting of the saints with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ."

How could this end be attained apart from, or in the independence of, the Assembly ?

Is it not too often the case, that souls converted (in the overabounding grace of God) by this independent course, are allowed to shift for themselves, and to drift hither and thither for the lack of proper teaching ? Do gospel-preachers bear this in mind sufficiently ? Can they who undertake these services among people, of whom the local Assembly may know nothing, be aware of the discouraging and detrimental effect such conduct has upon those with whom their highest privileges are enjoyed. A good servant is wise-hearted as well as willing-hearted, and his zeal is according to knowledge. " All things," says the Apostle, " are lawful (permissible), yet all things are not profitable ; all things are lawful, but all things edify not " (1 Cor. x. 23). But while there are so many inducements held out to some to embark in a line of service marked by independency, there is with others the tendency to become lethargic—a condition which sooner or later must degenerate into sheer indifference. This lethargic spirit is induced probably through the idea possessing one, that he has no ability for service of any sort, or through a natural love of ease, dislike of trouble, or something of a similar character. We are all of us so prone to lose sight of the fact that " The whole body fitted together and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure, of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love " (Eph. iv. 16, new translation). To produce this result (or any approach thereto) it is incumbent on every " joint of supply " being in good working order ; and nothing conduces so powerfully to this end, as having our senses exercised in regard to our individual responsibilities.

It is an axiom, that the more justly a privilege is estimated, the more keenly is responsibility felt. And here lies the secret of half the sorrows from which we, in a corporate way, are now suffering. We have too readily entrusted to others (such as committees and the like) responsibilities which we, as a body, should have taken upon ourselves. As a consequence, many of our privileges have been lost to us, and we remain, as a people, scattered and peeled.

No one would wish to under-rate or in any way disparage the services of those who are commonly spoken of as "labouring brethren," and "gifts"; yet are not such names frequently applied in a somewhat technical or restricted sense, so that, imperceptibly, it may be, those to whom the names are given, are fast becoming a distinct class, and exercising an influence which in some instances is tantamount to authority? Let but each "joint of supply" own his responsibility, and seek to faithfully discharge it, and the state of things referred to will soon cease to exist: a deeper interest in all that concerns the Assembly will be awakened; and the anxieties incidental to the Assembly will be shared in by all; and not, as has so often been the case, by only a select few. Independency, that plant now so vigorous and full of deadly fruit, will wither and die; and spiritual loungers, who, apparently, seek only their privileges and disregard their responsibilities—who are rarely seen at any meeting save that on Lord's Day morning—now so strong (numerically) will perceptibly diminish, being transformed into devoted fellow-labourers.

"Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. vi. 9).

NOTES OF ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(No. 5.)

Ephesians i. 1-14.

WE have had before us the subject of what God has done in connection with the coming of sin into the world.

It has been principally to the Epistle to the Romans that our attention has been turned, where we learn how God has wrought in order that His guilty creature man might be delivered from the guilt of sin (iii. 22-26) ; from the present power of sin so that he might live to God (vi. 11) ; and from the law that he might bring forth fruit unto God (vii. 4-6).

The third division of the Epistle in its doctrinal part presents to us how deliverance shall be effected from the presence of sin (viii. 18-23). This will form the subject of the last of these addresses. It is of great importance to have these things clearly in our minds and received into our hearts. God means that His people should know them. God is as good for our *hopes* as to the future, as He is for the *faith* He has given us to rest upon His Word for the present. His Word is everything, and the moment we leave it and cease to make it our all, and the Holy Ghost who is *in* us, and *with* us, our teacher, we go astray (John xv. 26 ; xvi. 13).

Let us now look a little at the Scripture I have just read. It is a wonderful thing that God should come in to a world of sin and meet the condition we were in, by bringing in something infinitely greater and better than that of man in innocence. These verses in Ephesians noted above speak of Christ the second Man, the Lord from heaven, and teach us that the counsels and purposes of God are all resting for

their fulfilment on Him ; and that we (saints of God) were chosen in this One *before the* foundation of the world. When God made the first man, who fell in Eden, He was thinking of the second Man (Rom. v. 10) who was to come.

There is a point I wish to notice with regard to the first Adam. God gave him a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for in the day he ate thereof he would surely die (Gen. ii. 17). Now it is very commonly said that God said to him, "Do this and live." But God had said, "If you eat thereof, thou shalt surely die"—observe that this was said to a *living* man on whom death had not come. "Do this and live," are words in effect said to Israel (see Exodus xix.) They were a people really in death. God gave them His law to prove to *themselves* the truth *He* knew regarding them (Deut. viii). The object God had in giving the law is further opened out to us in Gal. iii. 19-25, and Romans v. 20 : "The law entered that the offence (not sin) might abound." The Lord Jesus Christ, the Man of God's counsels, never failed. He was tempted in every way by Satan (Matt. iv.), and by His creature man as the Gospels tell us, but He never failed. He was always dependent and obedient to His Father's will. Now all things are based on His person and His death, and we have seen our connection with Him as has already been pointed out when dwelling on Romans v. 12-21. The grace of God which has flowed to sinners by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, abounds, yea did "much more abound" over the sin that came in by the first man. We need to keep these verses in view, to study them, and learn where our fortune lies.

There is such a thing as being in our thoughts still connected with the first Adam. A child of God, in God's mind, is never connected with anyone but the second Man. In

the way we judge ourselves as to what God thinks of us, we often associate ourselves with the first man, the head of the fallen race. The cross of Christ has made the difference, and for faith, our peace with God, and our enjoyment, we are associated with Christ, or in other words are "*in Christ.*" Many a dear saint of God think they are still under the law as to their living here. Well, surely if the life of Christ is in activity in our souls we shall not do the things the law forbade. We have to follow Christ so that we may truly live the life that God has given to us. He has given to us eternal life. That is Christ (Coloss. iii. 4). and we have to let that life be seen in its expression in us. We have to learn of Him. That is our responsibility, but then, dear friends, it will not do for us to say "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." It is written in Rom. vi. 14, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace," and as we read the Epistle and other Scriptures in the New Testament we discover the ample provision God has made for the new life showing itself in us.

These fourteen verses furnish us with an introduction to the Epistle. All that comes out further on is in some way traceable to this part. In the third verse the Apostle breaks forth into praise. He begins with blessing God. He is leading us to think of God's actings before sin came into the world, as He had His only begotten Son in His mind. After saluting the saints at Ephesus, he bursts forth, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*" That is the purpose of God: we are not that yet, but we shall be in the day of

presentation without a spot or wrinkle or any such thing (chapter v. 26, 27). Thus there will be before long perfect correspondence between the purpose and our actual state. We (all saints) will be the expression of God's righteousness in Christ. He will be seen and admired in us (2 Thess. i. 10). God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. That was before sin came into the world. Then in the fulness of time He sent the Son of His love, His only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father. He never had any beginning. He was with His Father from all eternity, and God chose us in Him. Is that how we are in the habit of thinking of the character of our blessing ?

God sent His Son into the world and gave Him up to die on the cross for our sins, and raised Him again for our justification, as Rom. iv. 25 tells us ; but here as to the blessings God has bestowed upon us, those spiritual blessings in Christ, they were given to us in Him before the foundation of the world. When we come to the question *when* we were personally brought into this order of blessing, that was some moment in our own history ; but all the spiritual blessings of verse 3 were given to us in Christ before the world began. It is very interesting to find that when the Apostle Paul is about to pass off the scene, as he looks upon the difficult times he knew would come in upon the Church, the House of God upon earth, he says to Timothy (2 ep. chap. 1), " He has saved you and me ." " God has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began " (2 Tim. i. 9). Everything had failed in connection with what had been committed to Adam, and the Apostle Paul saw that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock. Nevertheless he is in perfect peace

Nothing can touch this order of things. Frequently the thought of election has been held as a doctrine very much isolated from Christ, and thus it becomes a dry and repulsive thing to souls. No doubt election is taught in these verses, but it is more than election, my friends. There is nothing in the way that God presents it to us, but what calls for wonder and praise. The Lord Jesus when on earth told His disciples that He had many things to say to them that they might marvel (John v. 20). We do not half marvel as we read the wondrous story of the grace of God. It is indeed marvellous to understand that we sinners of the Gentiles should have been brought into an order of blessing which was in the heart of God before this world began. Where did God go to get subjects to work upon, and set forth His wondrous grace? Why, among sinners dead in trespasses and sins. He did not make a new race out of the stones. The sphere in which He showed His grace was among men, sinners like you and me. Here God is seen quickening the dead (Eph. ii. 1-5). In Romans we have God justifying the ungodly (Rom. iv. 5); here it is as the quickener of the dead—giving a new life. The thoughts of God ran upon us before sin came in. Then when sin came in, in order that His *purposes* might be accomplished, He gave His Son to die. He is a righteous God, and He must be righteous in the way He accomplishes His purpose. Then His love comes in; He so loved world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John iii. 16). He could not, and be the God He is, bring us into the fulfilment of His counsels from all eternity without righteousness being satisfied, and thus His throne vindicated. His holiness and His glory had been traversed, but He would not give up His purpose and form a new race of people that never acted

contrary to His will. No. He says in effect, "I will go in among the very people that trampled upon My will, and I will have those from amongst them who will shine to My glory with Christ." It is the *good* pleasure of His will that is being carried out. That is the reason for it all. How can I know why He saved me? Am I going to search my own heart for the reason? No, I should never find it there. No, it was His own pleasure, the *good* pleasure of His will. He awakened my soul to a sense of need, and opened my eyes to find in Christ everything I needed as a sinner. Then He has placed on the unfailing page of His Word what He has for me as His child, the thoughts He had about me before the world began. All according to the good pleasure of His will. I think this is beautiful! Now notice this sixth verse: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." In the Revised Version you get another translation of that verse, and I have been told by those who know the original that it is the correct one, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, which (grace) He hath freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved." It is generally quoted as if it meant how God justified the sinner. That is not the subject of Ephesians. He has been speaking of grace in the previous verses and so He says "which (grace) He has freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved." In the next verse He speaks of grace in another way: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the *riches of His grace.*" When it is a question of the state that we are in as sinners, God met that through the riches of His grace, as we learn in the second chapter, "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding *riches of His grace* in His *kindness* toward us in Christ Jesus" (verse 7). When the subject is, as in the epistle to the Romans, God dealing with the Lord

Jesus Christ as to our sins, and taking us out of the sinful condition that was ours through connection with a fallen head, in order that He might bless us according to His thoughts before the world began, He speaks of it as the riches of His grace. When it is the purpose of God, His eternal counsels, according to which He has blessed us, it is the glory of His grace (6). We ought to consider these things—the *glory* of His grace (6), and the *riches* of His grace (7).

Ponder well verses 8 and 9 : “ Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence ; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself.” It is blessed and wonderful beyond all conception to learn how everything is resting on the will and purpose of God. When God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth, no creature had any voice, and all was “ very good.” Now we read that the assembly sets forth “ the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord ” (iii. 10-11).

In verse 10 we read of “ the dispensation of the fulness of time.” God in the fulness of time will “ gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in Him.” This is what God is to do by and by. He is to have His kingdom upon earth. He will gather up all the different threads of actings, and complete everything. Take the book of Revelation. What is the book of Revelation ? It is a gathering up of all that is past, taking up all God’s dealings with man, and bringing them unto a final issue in Christ. This verse (10) refers to that. Everything is to be headed up in Him. There will be no failure there. God is to have His kingdom set up under the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a certain form of the

kingdom going on at present, a mixed state, but when He sends His Son into the world again, and puts all power into His hand, He will gather out of His kingdom everything that offends. He will put down all rule and all authority ; everything will be subjected to Him ; and when the kingdom is manifested, and all power vested in Him, everything will come to a right issue. That is the thought in Eph. i. 10. It is not the eternal state, but something that is going to take place upon earth, when God puts authority into the hand of His Son.*

When He has put down all rule, and all authority, and power, what do we read in 1 Cor. xv. ? Even " that the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all " (verse 28). In the present time God is gathering out a people for His name. Acts xv. 14 tells us that God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. That was at the beginning of this dispensation—even at Pentecost. And what is He doing to-day ? Still gathering *out* a people for His name. He is not gathering the nations. No one can tell us as to what God is doing. He only can make known His ways, and what He has written is for us to take heed to. God is gathering out sinners, the people who were given to His Son before the world began to be His Bride, the Bride of the Lamb, and who also are individually part of the new race. The *new race* of which Christ is the Head is a much wider thing than the Body. *All* the redeemed are included in it, at whatever age or period they are found. There are only *two* races ; the fallen race connected with Adam, and the righteous race con-

* Eph. i. 10, the result of the ways of God in government. 1 Cor. xv. 28, the eternal state—that of the perfection of His nature.—J. N. D.

nected with Christ. But then God has *another* thought regarding the saints of the present time. This is the dispensation of the Spirit, and the gathering out of the members of the Body of Christ. He is gathering out a people to be associated in a special way with Him in glory as His Body and His Bride. He will gather together in one *all things* in Christ. First of all He will call away from the earth His people whom He is gathering out just now (I Thess. iv. 13-17 ; I Cor. xv. 50-54). Then He will take up everything that God has been doing in the past, all that has failed in man's hand, and bring it to a perfect issue under Christ—all things in Him. You cannot have a blessing at all but what is in Christ, and that is how everything is so secure. All things are in Him. We are surrounded by His will, and therein is our security, for we read that all is *according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will* (II). What is all this for? It is written, "That we should be to the praise of His glory." No doubt when He says, "who first trusted in Christ," He is speaking of the Jewish part. Then He goes on to say, "in whom ye also trusted" (13), that is the Gentiles. Here we have the first acting of the Spirit of God upon *believers*. We are sealed until the day of redemption (iv. 30). This is something totally different from being born again by the Spirit. Look carefully at the book of Acts and you will find the expression "the gift of the Spirit" (Acts ii. 38 ; viii. 20 ; v. 32 ; x. 45 ; xi. 17.)

It is by the Spirit coming and working on a person that he is born again, "born of water (the Word) and the Spirit"; but *after* the soul receives the gospel (13) the Holy Ghost comes and dwells in that soul. Scripture does not speak of a length of time elapsing between the soul's believing and its being sealed, but the sealing is *subsequent* to

believing. I have no contention that you can believe of yourselves : it is *given* to us to believe (Phill. i. 29). The last quoted Scripture tells us so, but it is *after believing* that the Holy Spirit comes and seals us until the day of redemption. He dwells in us, my friends, that is a high thought ! It is a wonderful blessing, a blessing that was never known till the Lord Jesus Christ took His seat on the right hand of God as the purger of sins. It was never known by a people upon earth until then. In the Old Testament you get the Spirit of God coming upon individuals, so that they did certain things and prophesied : but in the Psalms David says, " Take not away Thy Holy Spirit from me " (Ps. li. 11). That is not a Christian's prayer : neither is it for a *Christian* to pray that God would give him the Holy Spirit. If you have not believed the Gospel you are taking Jewish ground, in praying for the Spirit. I do not say that such a person is not converted, but if you are asking for the Spirit to be given, that is not a mark of Christianity ; it is what marked Judaism. Before Christ came and died and rose again God gave the Spirit at times for certain special purposes, but now He seals the believer (verse 13), and comes and takes up His abode in him. You get the subject wonderfully opened out in the book of Acts.

Well, the Holy Ghost is the seal of the believer, the mark that we are God's ; and He is the earnest of our inheritance. We are to have an inheritance, a portion with Christ. We are to share in the kingdom with Christ (Rev. xx. 4). It is not that we are His inheritance. He speaks of Israel as His inheritance (Deut. xxxii. 9). What we may have been taught as to our being His inheritance, came through not simply reading what God had written, and believing it because He had written it. We should get

many a thought turned out of our minds if we would simply read the Word, and believe what we read. Now the Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance : we have not got it yet, but we have blessing already connected with it, made known to us in the Scripture for our enjoyment. The word says, " He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son " (Rev. xxi. 7). It is no small portion that we have lying before us in the future. We ought to know it better now, and if we did know it better, we would be more devoted to Christ through the knowledge of it. We would walk more separately in this evil world. Notice verse 14 still further. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, until the *redemption* of the *purchased* possession. It is purchased, but not redeemed. " Satan is the god of this world " (2 Cor. iv. 4), but he will not always be that. He is to be cast out from where he is, and finally will be consigned to his own place. The blood of Christ is the purchase price of everything, but the inheritance is going to be redeemed by the power of the One who purchased it by His own blood.

Then what is the Lord doing just now ? and what are we to do ? After the Apostle has opened out all these wonderful things to the Ephesian saints he goes on his knees (Eph. iii. 14) and prays for them. If we believe what we have read here, we shall have to go to our knees and pray that these things may be made good in us. I remember, many years ago, after a brother and I had been praying for certain things spoken of in Scripture, he said to me, " You will need to have your armour on if God is going to give you the things that you have been asking for " ; as much as to say, " Satan will not let you alone if God gives you all these things." We shall only be able to practice the things we are praying for, as we are clad in the whole armour of God, and

you will observe that one special part of the armour is *prayer*.

The Apostle's prayer in the end of this chapter, all refers to what has been unfolded in the first fourteen verses. God does not reveal His truth for us to make a toy of it, something to please us. No, He beseeches us to walk worthy of the calling wherewith He has called us (Eph. iv. 1). In the Epistle to the Romans, after the wonderful unfolding of the Gospel of God, he says, " I beseech you brethren by the compassions of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service " (Rom. xii. 1). The Word does not profit us unless this importunity by God is made good in us.

The Lord grant that we may " make it our aim " to have the spirit of this wondrous portion taught us in our inner man.*

D. S.

1 TIMOTHY III. 14-17.

PERSECUTIONS then, varied in form doubtless, await the man of God. But unwearied in well doing, in the which he can " commit the keeping of his soul unto God, as unto a faithful Creator " (1 Peter iv. 19), he is to hie on his way. Evil ripens ; seductions increase ; deceptions are practised. What, then, shall be the guide, guard and stay of the saint ?

To the Word of God, the provision of His grace indeed, Timothy was definitely turned, with the exhortation to continue in the things which he had learned, and was assured of (verse 14). The need for that *continuance* was imperatively necessary ; for the forerunners of apostacy, contentions and questionings, abounded. Steadfastness was urgently required. Having bought the truth—but not

* Errata :—Page 185, top line read walk for work.
 „ 186, 12th „ „ flesh for great.

with lucre—he was to sell it not. Renunciation of it was (and is) the order of the day ; but the path of wisdom is the way of faithfulness—and continuance stands for that.

It is the necessity for continuance that tests so severely and discovers so truly where we are. When the road is long and thorny, reasons for abandoning it come easily. Excuses are readily invented when the heart is indifferent to the claims of God. But how have we learned the Scriptures ? After such a fashion that every wind of doctrine sets us off in a contrary direction ? or, rather that we continue, in simple dependence upon God, to act on the unchanging principles therein found, ever counting upon Him for the supplies of grace which will enable us to endure whatever of trial, isolation, or difficulty that may come upon us in endeavouring to be obedient ? Let us remind one another of that word which shows that true wisdom is displayed by obedience to God's Word, and all else is like building upon sand (Matthew vii. 24-27).

Then, "*Continue thou.*" We have not simply to hold God's Word, but must be held by it. Many are seeking "broad paths and pastures new," and an outpouring of pentecostal power is spoken of without any regard being given to the moral condition prevalent. Large things sought in a day of small things reveals the soul out of touch with God.

But, "*continue thou.*" The things revealed to Timothy through Paul abide to this day. The principle of separation, so urgently pressed, stands still unrepealed. The command to walk apart from unrighteousness, and pretentious profession, remains. With some it appears that the only requisite to Christian fellowship to-day is bearing the Lord's name. Such would do well to consider that, whilst the Lord owns what bear His name, He judges what is

contrary to God's Word unsparingly (Rev. ii. and iii) ; and Laodicea, *bearing His name*, is to be spued out of His mouth. And again, the command comes with the Lord's authority to every individual professing His name to depart from unrighteousness. Those who neglect to do this under whatsoever plea—indifference to Christ will be at the bottom !—disregard it at their peril. How easy to say, "The Lord be glorified." How hard oftentimes to continue. Zeal cannot take the place of faithfulness. Neither can human effort mend failure in divine things. Sowing that wind, the whirlwind is reaped. Efforts, in spiritual things, based on human energy, must prove disastrous ; for such energy contains within itself the very element that works catastrophe, namely, self-will. Weakness and truth may go together, but the will of the flesh and the will of God never. Let us make room for God in mourning over the common failure, and in taking the place of confession and self-judgment before Him, and, by His grace, truly "*willing to do His will.*" For this continuance, *spiritual stay* is needful.

But to return. The Apostles were vessels chosen of God and used by Him to give His Word. They were the channels through whom *He* was pleased to communicate it. Thus they spoke with authority ; and the spirit of truth and of error is detected by the way their words are received—"He that is of God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us," is the statement of John (I John iv. 6), whilst Paul states that the truly spiritual man will acknowledge that the things he wrote were God's commands (I Cor. xiv. 37). So upon *God's Word*, as upon a rock, we are set, and oh, what joy to have such a security in a world of changing circumstances and ever altering beliefs !

Timothy had known the holy Scriptures from a child. Brought up in the fear of God, in the nurture and admoni-

tion of the Lord, the reading of—the being made acquainted with—the holy writings, formed a part of his education doubtless. Happy child !

And the privilege conferred when little ones are permitted to have access to the Scriptures is inestimable ; for whilst such reading imparts instruction that must prove of immense value when applied in preserving from error's way, yet that is very far from all. In them salvation is to be found, to become wise unto which faith is required—faith which is in Christ Jesus, faith which appropriates to one's own need what He is and has done. The reception, through faith, of what the Scriptures contain brings blessing in time, and blessing eternally.

And such reception honours God ; for it is the fact that they are God-breathed, *divinely* inspired, that places them first amongst writings, and gives to them their authority. His voice is heard in them, and faith acknowledges this ; and truly he who has received the testimony they give, has set to his seal that God is true. " There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself," and His Word abides for ever.

Speaking of it as having been " by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved," one writes, " If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height because it comes thence : as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so. None but God could—and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God, and went to God, so does the book that divinely reveals Him, come from Him and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by."

The closing verse of our chapter shows us that through what the Scriptures impart "the man of God" is perfected, that is, made complete, fully equipped, to every good work (verse 17). Then the Scriptures are to guide him in all that he does. By them he is to judge everything; and "filled with the knowledge of His will," he is to be fruitful in every good work (Col. i. 9, 10). Christian conduct and service, to be that really, must result from the reception of God's Word, must be based upon Scriptural doctrine. What the Scriptures condemn is antichristian, and how much of that character abounds to-day!

But what a place the Word must have with us. It is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Are we ignorant and need to be taught? Teaching is found in the Word for everything. Have we erred? The Word of God convicts as to it. If unconsciously straying, heed paid to that Word will reveal the necessary correction. Would we be right at all costs? To the Word we must go for instruction in righteousness. What is righteousness? is sometimes asked. Men have varying standards, but God's Word never changes, and from it the Christian must get his instruction in righteousness. Not what we think, or judge, is important, but what *it says*. Acting upon the former is doing what seems right in our eyes; but obeying the latter is bowing to God. Oh! let us honour Him in this more and more, lest, though now lauding and being lauded, in the end we be lightly esteemed. A path there is for the saint to walk in, and God's Word marks it out. Good works there are for him to perform: how to carry them out that in God's eye they be good works indeed, the Scriptures reveal. There it is laid down for all time that "to obey is better than sacrifice."

GRACE AND REWARD FOR SERVICE RENDERED.

THE Christian is furnished with two powerful levers to lift him out of indolent selfishness that he may become a true and wholehearted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. First there is what grace has done for him, unto which of necessity he contributed nothing whatever. Nay, it was his very beggary, and his despicable wickedness, his utter moral ruin as a sinner, coupled with the awful future in store for all such, that gave the blessed God and the Lord Jesus Christ the opportunity of showing grace. Oh, what a story of love and goodness it is! Love triumphing over hatred! Goodness over evil! God gave His Son. Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us. Surely if the heart could but take in the exceeding blessedness of all this grace, there could be no lack of incentive to hearty worship and service.

But rewards are offered, and these are intended to appeal to us and to encourage us in the path of true discipleship. There is something to be gained. There is something to be attained, which individualises us, and urges to fresh effort in faithful service. Is it not deeply sad that we should need this? Is it not immense goodness and grace to stoop so low as to present something more to whet our ardour, to tempt our appetite, to allure us on and on? It is not wrong to desire approval, nor to desire to obtain a reward. Were it so, they would not have been offered to us. But if we love Him, we keep His commandments. "If a man love me he will keep my words." He will not need the eddard incentive. Love, known and enjoyed, begets love; and love so begotten seeks to please, and finds intense delight in doing it.

Besides, where all we have, and all we are, belong to God and to Christ by a treble claim—first by creation, next by purchase, and last by all the grace displayed towards us,

and all the wealth of blessing conferred upon us—what have we that is ours to use? What can we do that we ought not to do?—nay, that we are not under an obligation to do? If this be so, and it surely is, then we can never exceed the doing of our plain duty, never even reach in practice the full extent thereof. So that the idea of reward is but another proof of grace. Grace rewards a saint for the doing of something which he was under an obligation to do, and in which he would be neglectful and unfaithful if he did not perform.

Shall we be rewarded for doing our duty? Yes. Shall the gaining of a reward be our chief reason for devotedness and faithfulness? No. Let it rather be our soul's expansion and unbounded delight in all that Christ is and in the knowledge of our God and all His boundless grace, so that we shall act in loving obedience to His will and find our delight in so doing. Then God Himself will fill our vision, and we be found dwelling in God and He in us.

We owe obedience to God as our Creator. We owe obedience to Him also as our Saviour. We owe the same to Him as our Father. Faithfulness is our duty. It should be our delight and joy, but even if it be not so, it is our duty after all; and from this there is no escape. The moral power to meet our obligations, to perform our duty, is found in the enjoyment of what grace has done for us, and given to us, and this is by the Holy Ghost. Service it is ours to render, but the character of a saint's service will depend in part upon what he is specially called to and fitted for. All are to serve, but some are called and fitted to minister the word. And even here there is a difference. One may be an evangelist, whose work is to preach the gospel; another may be a teacher, who instructs the saints. Service has its snares as well its privileges. There is

great danger in service of *I* becoming prominent—of using service as a platform for exalting self—of claiming something for oneself. One may adopt a certain style in dress to distinguish oneself from other saints, whilst another may adopt a distinctive title, as Rev., *e.g.*, and so forth. What is this but self exaltation? placing oneself upon a pedestal and thus tempting Satan to try to pitch one over. Little did the seventy realise the danger that the Lord saw when they rejoiced before Him that the demons were subject unto them through His name. “Notwithstanding,” said Jesus, “in this rejoice not, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Here we are safe to rejoice in all that sovereign grace has done for us, but what we have a hand in there is danger. Pride is a frightful sin. Humility God loves. To be humble, to be patient, to be meek, to serve, to obey, these are positive duties, but if reward is offered, and it is, it is pure grace that will give it. But that which we have had, and can have, no hand at all in, will be the greatest and the grandest and the best. And that is what God has done, and what Christ has done! What endless delight and joy as we see Him face to face! Sweet indeed will be any special mark of His approval, but surely we shall say with one of old, “Thou hast wrought all our works in us.” Our crowns we shall cast at His feet. The marvel is that we shall be there at all, and that we did nought toward getting there. We ran away, but He sought us. We sinned with a high hand, but He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. We hated Him without a cause, but He loved us and gave Himself for us. We would not come to Him to obtain life, but He drew us, spite of all. We were enemies but are now reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

The promise of future reward is not for doing something more than any other saint should do. “Be thou faithful

unto death and I will give thee *a crown of life.*" Should not every saint be faithful unto death? Surely he should. Suppose I receive a White Stone, will it be because I have done something above what all should do? No; but the prevailing apostacy, the almost universal departure from the truth, gives a saint the opportunity of being obedient and faithful, of walking *before* and *with* God. But in doing this he is only doing what every saint should do. Rewards appear to be connected with the kingdom. In connection with the eternal state, I do not see them mentioned. Then *will* be reached the full accomplishment of God's counsels, all His own, and to which no one has contributed an iota, save the Man who is God's dear Son. Then God shall be all in all!

E. R. W.

THE CROSS.

THE cross and the crown go together; and more than this, the cross and communion go together. The cross touches my natural will, and therefore it breaks down, and takes away that which hinders communion. It was when Peter rejected the thought of the cross that Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me"; it is with a rejected Saviour we have to walk. The whole system of the world is a stumbling-block to turn one's heart from God—dress, vain show, flattery, even the commonest things which tend to elevate nature. All that puts us into the rich man's place is a stumbling-block. Heaven is open to a rejected Christ. Remember this. God's heart is set upon carrying His saints along this road to glory. He would have us walk by faith, and not by sight. Whatever tends in me to exalt the world that rejected Christ is a stumbling-block to others; in short, anything that weakens the perception of the excellency of Christ in the weakest Saint.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

(No. 6.)

The Assembly which is His (Christ's) body.—*Eph. i. 22-23.*

The Assembly of the living God.—*I Tim. iii. 15.*

My thought to-night is to turn to some portions of the Word where the Church or Assembly is spoken of, that we may consider two ways in which Scripture uses the word. This will help us in understanding the Scriptures where in our Bibles the word is translated *church*. We get the word in different connections, but it would not do to translate it "church" in every case. At Ephesus (Acts xix. 41), we are told the town clerk dismissed the 'assembly.' It would not do for us to read "he dismissed the *church*." It was, of course, a popular assembly of the people, but in *every* case where we find the word *church* we should read it *assembly*. The church, the assembly of God, has a character given to it in Scripture. As I have said, there are two ways in which God has written about His church or assembly.

When we read about the assembly we come to learn something about our collective condition. I am not speaking of the handful here : it is all God's people that I have in view. We need to be reminded of that, because we get very narrow in our hearts. We must *walk* in a narrow path, if we would walk by the Word of God, but we should not be afraid of the word "narrow." The Lord said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matt. vii. 14) ; but He would not have us with narrow hearts. He would have us with hearts like His own, and thus take in all His people wherever they are found ; but the way was narrow in which He walked. If the love of Christ is in activity in

our hearts, it will produce love to all His people. We cannot walk with them all it is true. Alas ! we are not as in the beginning, in the days of Pentecost, " when all were of one heart and one soul, and great grace was upon them all " (Acts iv. 32-33). We are in the days of a fallen assembly, but God's truth has not fallen. The Word of God remains. Some one said to me the other day, " Things are not as they once were : the testimony is gone." I replied, " What is it that is gone ? The Word of God has not gone. The Spirit of God has not gone. God's thoughts and purposes about His people abide as sure of fulfilment as ever they were." The difference is that we are nearer the moment by about 2,000 years of their fulfilment than if we were in Pentecostal days.

When the Apostle Paul was about to pass off the scene, leaving a timid young man to follow in his steps and feed the flock of God, he foresaw the failure that would come in upon them, and said, " Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner " (2 Tim. i. 8). *The testimony of our Lord* remains to-day as untouched as ever it was. The saints of God are not in the same condition as they were, certainly ; instead of being united we are all broken up, and creeds and chapels containing man's thoughts are contended for, and the testimony of the Lord is completely neglected.

The word that was spoken to Saul on his way to Damascus contains the kernel of the truth of the Assembly of God, which is Christ's body. " As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? " (Acts ix. 3, 4). In that word " *Me* " there is the truth of which Paul became a minister. In Col. i. 25 he speaks of it : " the assembly whereof I am made a minister." He was a

minister of the Assembly of God : that is not the same as "minister of the Gospel" (Col. i. 23). Many of God's dear children confound the two things. If you speak to them of the assembly of God upon earth in its relation to Christ in heaven, they think you are talking about *salvation*. If you tell them what you have learned from Scripture, that the assembly is composed of all saints from Pentecost, and that these belong to Christ as His body, and that saints of God before that time were not in that relation to Him, they think you are making out a different salvation for Abraham and others who lived before the death of Christ. But that is confounding things that differ. There is but one salvation for Abraham or for any one else. No one will be saved except on the ground of the sacrifice of the Son of God ; but there are different relationships. There is a relationship that saints from Pentecost up to the coming of the Lord are in, which saints before that time were not in and will not be in : that is *His body*. He has a people gathered out and brought into this relationship during the time of His rejection here, and while He is waiting in heaven at God's right hand until all the members of His body are gathered in. This was what laid hold of Saul. His enmity to those who owned the name of Jesus of Nazareth had got to such a height that he was hailing men and women and committing them to prison. There is no hatred so bitter as religious hatred ; and deep hatred was raging in the bosom of Saul of Tarsus, when God laid hold of him and brought him down. He made him feel that he had met one who had the complete mastery over him. Saul could make no provision for power from heaven taking hold of him as he went along his way. He had a retinue with him, but where were they ? They were all on the ground too. They could not stand "the glory of that light." Saul made the discovery that he

was persecuting Christ Himself, in persecuting His people. Christ said to him, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Nothing could so present the closeness of the tie between Christ and His people as that little word "Me." Saul was reconciled to God by the death of the One he was persecuting, and he was then and there told he had been chosen to be a minister of what he had seen and heard. This service he carried on until the close of his days on earth. None of the other Apostles give us the doctrine of the Assembly as the body of Christ.

John unfolds to us the relation of children to God. In chapter iii. of his first epistle he breaks forth, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." Peter writes of "a spiritual house" in contrast to the earthly one, and tells us of "judgment beginning at the house of God," and of the need of our walk being like "pilgrims and strangers" seeking to please the Lord in all our ways. James gives us the last call "to the twelve tribes" before their being finally driven into captivity; giving us also many suitable exhortations as to our behaviour. He mentions the synagogue in chapter ii. and the assembly in chapter v.

It is Paul alone who gives us the doctrine of the assembly as the body of Christ; and wherever I find a believer in the Lord Jesus, there is one that I am related to. I have a living connection with him. The Spirit of God in Eph. iv. 3, exhorts me to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit with such in the bond of peace. A unity is already formed by the Holy Spirit of God. The unity of the Spirit referred to, bear in mind, is not unity of spirit. The moment a soul believes the Gospel it receives the Spirit of God, and that effects two results. The one is, I thus come to be "in Christ" (Rom. viii. 9); and the other, I become part or member of

the body of Christ (1 Corin. xii. 13). God's children often pray for a fresh baptism of the Spirit. Prayer, if it is to be answered, must be in accordance with God's will, and you will never find the thought in Scripture of a second baptism of the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit is a formative thing. When the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost, He formed a body, on the earth, and that is a thing that is never repeated. Every believer in the Lord Jesus is sealed, but baptism of the Spirit is not repeated. The Spirit of God will be poured out in the latter day on all flesh. In the second of Acts the Holy Ghost descended, and there we get the first half of the assembly, the Jewish half, but it was not until Peter went to Cornelius, as recorded in Acts x., that the Gentile portion was brought in.

Let us be guided by Scripture, and the children of God will cease to talk of "my church," or "our church." Scripture speaks of one assembly in a town, and *the* assembly of God as comprising all saints in a certain period (Acts xx. 28). In the first chapter of first Corinthians, Paul addresses his letter "Unto the assembly of God which is at Corinth." That embraces all the saints in Corinth, and if the Holy Spirit were to write a letter to the assembly and saints of God in A——, it would include everyone of God's people in this town.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians we see how the Spirit of God speaks about the body of Christ. It has been remarked that the truth about certain things often comes in as a parenthesis, and in that form it is presented in the third chapter of this Epistle. The Apostle was speaking of the conduct of the saints, then he opens out his connection with this wonderful subject, which he three times in this chapter calls a "mystery." That is it was hid. It is not a mystery now, but it was hid from ages and generations, and then in

Paul's day the truth of it was given to him to make known, that there was a people upon earth whom Christ called His body. What a wonderful relation to Christ! Whatever part of the body we are, it is His body. In the Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle illustrates the truth he is making known by the human body, and lets us understand how important every member of the body is. We know that in the human body we would soon feel the want of one member, but alas! we do not feel the want of the fellowship of the saints of God so keenly. We do not realize our broken down state, and we get under the direction of man. We get our thoughts from words used by man, and we put thoughts into Scripture that are not there. God's thoughts about His church have really no practical power over the minds of the people of God. We hear Christians say, "I belong to this body, and I to that." We cannot have the Spirit of God connected with these thoughts. They are entirely foreign to His mind. There is "One Body" upon earth, Christ's body, and He dearly loves His assembly. He will have His assembly made suitable to Himself. A wonderful thought that is! Look at the present state of things, and read the 5th chapter of Ephesians and see what the Spirit of God says about the presentation day. He will not present it to Himself in a make-shift sort of way. Every line of His purpose will be filled in to perfection. Not a blemish will be seen. He will present the assembly to Himself as the result of His labour, a glorious assembly without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This hope lifts up the fainting spirit. We must hold it fast, and be learning during this little while to walk in obedience to His word. The Lord's word to Peter, "Follow *thou* Me," is what we have ever to yield ourselves to, and doing this we shall not miss our way. All the ruin in the assembly of God has come from not following Christ.

“Christ loved the assembly and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word.” That is what He is doing just now, and what He will do until He comes to call us away into His presence.

There is a remarkable expression in the 8th verse of this 3rd chapter : “ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.” This is how Paul viewed the wonderful mission committed to him. These riches are the same to-day : they are not diminished ; and what a story this is to tell—the unsearchable or untraceable riches of Christ ! The Spirit of God in the first chapter of John’s Gospel says, “ Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” All the fulness was pleased to dwell in that wondrous Man who was from all eternity, and is the only begotten Son of God. Everything is in Christ, and all the best things we have, unless held in connection with Christ will become dry doctrines ; but if they are by God’s Spirit keeping our hearts in connection with a living person they will be carrying us on fresh and green in the ways of the Lord.

We will now turn to 1 Tim. iii. 15, and we shall find the expression “ the assembly ” used with another character. It is not spoken of there as the body, but as the house of God. Here is the assembly in relation to God. The house or habitation is what God dwells in upon earth. God speaks of a house which is composed of all His people. That is not a new thought, but what gives it a new character is that the Gentiles form part of this habitation. At the beginning of this dispensation it created a complete revolution in the minds of the Jews to have Gentiles on the same footing as themselves. In Christianity the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is gone.

Now we must not confound the body of Christ and the house of God. There are different responsibilities connected with each, and it is an important thing that we should know what our collective relation to Christ and to God are, that our conduct may be directed accordingly.

God has made known to us in His Word that His children are builded together for a habitation of God by the Spirit. That is our relation to God. Now He says, "Walk worthy of it," and He desires that we should be seen walking "in all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love." That is to characterise us as those who have received such a wonderful calling. If we had the power of this truth in our souls that we are of a building on earth which God is dwelling in, it would make us put down our steps quietly and carefully. There will be often call for long-suffering, but let me say it is not longsuffering *with* ourselves ; we have to show it to others. We are to judge ourselves. If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged (1 Corin. xi. 31).

In 1 Corin. vi. 19, the Spirit of God, in view of the lax state the saints were in in Corinth, stirs them up by saying, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" That does not mean the assembly, the house of God. It is the individual believer that is spoken of. In the 2nd of Ephesians, where we have the *temple* in its collective aspect, we read, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." It is not yet finished ; by and by it will be completed. In 1 Corin. vi. it is our own bodies that are referred to. We have a holy inmate dwelling in our bodies, and we must not be careless of His presence. God would have us to remember this, and not allow ourselves to enter on habits or associations that would bring dishonour upon the name of the Lord.

In closing this address, I would note shortly the difference learned from Scripture between the gifts given by Christ when He ascended on high (Eph. iv.), and the elderhood as to which Paul, Peter, and James all write.

We do not read of the ordination of those who were given by Christ as gifts for the edifying of His body the church. He gave such, and this was sufficient authority for labouring among His people. Their sphere of labour embraced the whole church of God. *Elders* appear to be limited to one assembly in any town. It required the Apostle Paul, or his delegate, to ordain them. An elder had oversight in one place. He was appointed, or ordained, to his office by the Apostle, and we read of Titus in chapter i. having been left by Paul in Crete to ordain elders there. *Deacons* were chosen by the saints, and appointed by the Apostles (Acts vi. 3).

Gifts (Eph. iv.) will remain as long as the church is on earth. Ordination, or appointment of elders, does not remain—as the church has not Apostles nor their delegates to do that work. There is no use of pretending to an authority which is not possessed by anyone.

It would be a joy if God would revive the hearts of His people, and bring them back to Scripture to see what His thoughts are, so that our conduct in view of the coming of Christ might be found acceptable to Him.

We cannot pray too earnestly for an awakening in the world, but we need a revival in the assembly of God, and that will be obtained by reading the Word of God and discovering how far we have fallen. There was a wonderful day of revival in Josiah, king of Judah's reign. One came into the presence of the king and said, "Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book" (2 Kings xxii. 10), and when Josiah heard the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes.

He looked at his kingdom, and saw what a sad difference there was between what God had written, and what was going on in his kingdom. Then a revival began in the kingdom, and if God is going to grant a revival to-day *it will be by bringing us to His Word*. The first thing will be humiliation before God. If God is going to bless us we must humble ourselves and confess our sins as the people of God. Should this be granted to us we would not be careless as to the condition of the unsaved around us. The salvation of God which rescued us from judgment would be greater in our eyes, yea everything that is of God would be more to us if we were revived as the people of God. We have to look to ourselves, and let His Word flow in upon us, and judge us, and we judge ourselves to the glory of God.

D. S.

PSALMS LV.—LVIII.

THESE psalms continue in various forms the feelings produced by Christ's Spirit in circumstances which look on to the last crisis when the godly Jews suffer from Antichrist and his partisans, especially in Jerusalem and the land. David had these trials in the case of Absalom, and Ahithophel; our Lord far more deeply through the treachery of Judas. But the Spirit of prophecy links all that is past with the coming hour, when the outward oppression and inward apostasy bring the sense of evil at its worst on the true-hearted Jews. Thus God is more and more looked to, not man or circumstances as the result, not only to sustain the sufferers in patience but to bring in deliverance and blessing in power.

WORSHIP.

I bow me at Thy feet, most blessed Lord,
Who purchased me at such tremendous cost,
Giving Thy life to save a sinner lost.

I bow me at Thy feet ; it was for me,
For my transgressions, that the stroke of God
Lay heavy on Thy soul most holy Lord.

I bow me at Thy feet, that Thou for me
Wert willing e'en to go to Calvary,
Be made a curse, and die upon the tree !

I bow me at Thy feet, O Saviour God !
Emptying Thyself for me, Jesus my Lord ;
For ever be Thy Name beloved, adored.

I bow me at Thy feet, who did'st lay by
Thy glory, and for sinners such as I,
Leave yonder glorious home and stoop to die.

I bow me at Thy feet, whose precious blood
Hath washed me in its mighty cleansing flood,
Spotless, and clean I stand before Thy God.

I bow me at Thy feet, whose wondrous love
Hath raised and folded close Thy wet-winged dove,
Thy triumphs soon to share in courts above.

The story of Thy love my lips repeat
Until I see Thee, on yon glorious seat ;
Then evermore I'll bow me at Thy feet !

AN INSPIRED LETTER TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

THE beloved Apostle John wrote his first Epistle to the children of God. He could tell them in chapter iii. 2, "Beloved *now* are we the children of God," and in verse 1 he calls attention to the *manner* of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. It would be well for all God's children to behold the manner of the love, and to get the heart filled with it.

We have said he writes to the children, and in fact it was because they were such that he wrote to them at all. Several reasons are given by him for using his pen. The first is found in chapter i. 4: "And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." He was one of those who had seen with his eyes, had looked upon (or contemplated), and his hands had handled of the Word of life. "The Word of life" was a person—was Jesus. The life, the eternal life, had been manifested, yes, manifested in Him. He was God. Of Him we read in the same writer's Gospel (i. 4): "In Him was life." All the blessed characteristics of eternal life were manifested in Him, who, though the Word, and was God, had become flesh and dwelt among men, and whose glory the writer had beheld.

A sharer in that eternal life John was. So were all the children. He would report to them what he had seen, contemplated, and handled, that they may have fellowship with him and, of course, with the others who had enjoyed the same privilege. Then he adds, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Fulness of joy was theirs, and it was found in communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Fulness of joy will be ours as we enter into this blessed communion.

This communion, or fellowship, needs guarding, and false pretences thereto are exposed in what follows. Even where the heart is true, there are hindrances. Sins always hinder, but grace invites to confession, and God righteously forgives. But the child of God should not sin. Hence the writer gives his second reason for writing to them in ii. 1: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not." If any one did so there was an advocate with the Father. What a merciful provision!

Why does the writer say, *My little children*, or *my children*? God's children they were as he tells them in chapter iii. Perhaps it was that he knew God better than any other saint did, knew the love of God better, entered into communion with God in a deep and blessed way, and so would love the objects of God's love as all the children undoubtedly were. Thus he would feel a kind of fatherly interest in them, and could use familiar and even endearing terms in addressing them. Sweet words from some lips disgust; from others one feels they are genuine, and they give cheer and real delight. *Beloved*, wrote John, and he meant it. Dear to the Father's heart are all His children. Dear to the Saviour's heart are all His brethren. Dear to the true pastor's heart are all those who are beloved by both the Father and the Son. John would help, warn, cheer, exhort, and instruct. A many-sided service he rendered. Love was the mainspring and the propelling power in all. There is nothing like it. Oh for more of this divine love!

Another reason he gives for writing to them in ii. 12: "I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." Observe, he did not write to inform them of it, to teach them what they did not know. Their sins were forgiven, and they knew it. The forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to all who believe the Gospel of God,

and to those who receive this great boon, the Holy Spirit is given. So a little lower down (verse 20) he writes, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Evidently he meant that they had received the Holy Spirit, and so would know what was anti-christian. To deny that Jesus is the Christ is a lie, and they knew that no lie is of the truth. To deny that Jesus is the Son of the Father is to be an antichrist. No one could have the Father who did not own the Son. God had one only-begotten Son, and that was Jesus. There was, there could be, no other.

There were many such antichrist's in John's day. Identified with Christians they had been, but were so no longer. They had gone out: they were outside the family circle. Having neither the Father nor the Son, no part or lot had they in the believer's heritage. They went out into the world. That was their sphere. There they would be at home, and such influence as they had, or could gain, would be against the truth. But even the little children could judge of such. They knew the truth. They knew the Father. The babes in the family knew their sins forgiven; they also knew the Father and had an unction from the Holy One.

But there was, and is, growth and development as in nature. So in the family of faith, babes first, then young men, then fathers. John has something to say to each. The young men had the Word abiding in them, and had overcome the wicked one; but the world was a danger. They must be on their guard. In another place John writes: "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Faith occupied with a divine object finds satisfaction, and wants no other.


Any other would be a rival, would be an idol. Children of God must keep themselves from idols.

To the fathers John does not say much. Christian work is not their characteristic, though they would certainly not be drones. But they knew Him who is from the beginning. To such the world was no snare. They had consciously what was infinitely better, and what perfectly satisfied them. It was Himself. He was all, and outside Him all was a lie and a cheat. He was the truth.

There is yet another reason why John wrote to the children of God. We shall find it in chapter v. 13, "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Doubtless they had this life. They could not be God's children without it. They knew their sins were forgiven for His name's sake. They had an unction from the Holy One. They knew the Father. Eternal life was theirs, but they needed the knowledge of this fact, and John wrote to them that they might know it.

E. R. W.

CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD.

IT has been said of Christ that "having made purification for sins" He entered heaven (Heb. i. 3). But such a statement is simple assumption and an addition to God's Word. Hebrews contains no such saying. "*He sat down*" are the words of the inspired writer. "*He sat down*" speaks not of entrance, but of a work completed. Aaron sat not down. He had to re-enter the holiest, for only a temporary salvation did he obtain. 

So in Hebrews ix. The contrast is between (1) Aaron's many entrances—"once every year" (ix. 7)—and Christ's one entrance; and (2) Aaron's entrance with the blood of others, and Christ's by His own blood. He entered *once*—why? Remembering the contrast with Aaron, the answer is provided: "Having obtained eternal redemption." In the holiest on earth, "the figures of the true," Aaron made atonement, to be repeated year by year "on that day" (Lev. xvi. 30); "in heaven itself" Christ obtained eternal redemption. "When He had by Himself purged sins, He sat down." So to say, "By His own blood He entered; therefore that blood was accepted before He entered," is human reasoning on a *part* of Scripture. "By His own blood He entered in *once*." Therein is "the parallel of contrast" between the Aaronic type and New Testament doctrine.

Do we hear Christ speaking *as priest* in John xvii? Surely all there is personal not official. The very terms used by our adorable Lord should have checked the thought. Out of the fulness of His heart the Son spoke to His Father. Was it as priest that He asked to be glorified, or said, "Father, I will?" Subject hearts respond, Nay! Nay! Let us not confound things that differ. And again. Did Christ *as priest* intercede for Peter? That intercession is illustrative of His advocacy. Christ's priesthood is for the weakness of the saints in the wilderness. "He ever liveth," and "He is able." (Heb. vii. 25; ii. 18).