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A STORY OF THE GRACE OF GOD



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A STORY OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

I N a pretty country village, not far from the sea, lived little Agnes. I dare say you would think her home a strange one. It goes by the name of "The Black Hut," for it is only made of wooden boards, nailed together, and painted black, and, as it stands by itself, it looks dark and solitary, but inside it is a bright little house, with three rooms—a little house in which people could live very happily, if they had the fear of God, and without that none can be happy, not even in a palace. God has so bound together His blessing and our happiness, that nothing in this world can really give us the latter, unless we have the former. We may fancy we are happy, as we enjoy what we can get of pleasure out of the world ; but it is soon over. God says it is "like the crackling of thorns under a pot"—a great blaze for a moment, and then *darkness*, a "darkness that may be felt," because it is *soul* darkness. Natural darkness is bad enough, but how terrible for a *soul* to be in the dark—

for a soul never to have heard God say, "Let there be light; and there was light."

Though the light of day shone in through the windows of the black hut, the light of God had never shone there; never there had there shined "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But, though the inmates thought not of God, God was not without thoughts of them. And that is just what God is, and what He loves to do. "Jesus *sought* me when a stranger." He is always the One to go after the wandering ones; He does not leave them to seek Him. If He did, not one would ever be found, for "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and, instead of seeking Him, only tries to get farther and farther away from Him.

Some of Agnes's cousins came every Sunday afternoon to our Sunday-school, and one afternoon, amongst the new faces that often shew themselves at it, were Agnes and her sister, Emily. Agnes was seven years old, Emily three. Their sister, Moggie, aged fourteen, took care of them and of the baby sister, whom their mother had left a little infant, when she died a dreadful death of small-pox, a year before. Moggie kept the children very tidy, and sent them nicely to school.

Children in a Sunday school are often

very inattentive ; teaching them is a work that needs patient endurance with God to go on with at all. Agnes was neither better nor worse than the rest, but, as she generally sat near her teacher, she, anyhow, *heard* better than most, whether or not she received what she heard.

A few weeks ago we had a treat, in connection with a school near. It was a lovely bright day, more like June than February, and, when between fifty and sixty of us walked down together, with a cripple boy beside us, in a wheelbarrow, waving his red pocket-handkerchief, tied to a stick for a flag, we were a very merry party. Before tea, some of the children said “pieces”—little poems or hymns ; and one little boy said Psalm xxiii., which so sweetly tells of the Good Shepherd’s care of His helpless sheep, and their happy portion, as they are led by Him into green pastures and beside the still waters.

After tea, and a game of half-an-hour in a field outside, there were three very interesting addresses, and presents of little books.

When we were ready to set off on our walk home, Agnes’s father was waiting outside to carry back little Emily, for fear she should be tired, and to hear Agnes tell all about the happy day she had had, for he

loved his little girl much, and liked to hear her talk. Rough man though he was, and harshly though he might sometimes speak to others, he did not to his children, and Agnes was his special pet—indeed, the pet of all the family.

A week or two later, we were one Sunday afternoon going down to the same place, for a children's lecture, instead of our own classes, and had started on our walk, when, looking back, I saw some late ones running after us, the foremost of them being Agnes and Emily, hand in hand, and I said to the rest, "Wait a moment for these behind," and added, to one of the teachers, "'They look just like a pair of trotting ponies.'" And so they came smiling up, glad to be in time.

I have said thus much about Agnes and her sisters, that you may be the more interested in what I am now going to tell you.

(To be continued, D.V.)

READY TO MEET GOD.

I WAS requested by a friend to visit a girl who was dying of consumption, so I called at the house where she lived.

She was, however, asleep at the time, but her mother appeared and invited me in. We soon got into conversation, and as her trials, which were very severe, were uppermost in her mind, she spoke freely of them.

She told me her husband had died of consumption and that she had already lost five of her children by the same disease, and that the sixth (the one I had called to see) was now dying of it too ; that, although once in very comfortable circumstances, she was now reduced to poverty, and altogether her case was one of deep trial.

“May I ask,” said I, “*are you ready to meet God?* because, if you were, it would be a great comfort to you.”

“Oh, no,” she replied, “indeed I am not ; there are very few that can say that.”

“Very few indeed,” I replied, “but perhaps not as few as you think.”

“I don’t mean to say that I am *very bad*,” she continued, “for all that know me can bear testimony to my *unblemished character*,” and she went on to tell me how much she was valued in her last situation as matron of a hospital.

“Both my grandfathers and my father were clergymen,” she added, “so I ought to know enough about religion.”

That at once explained to me why she

was not ready to meet God. She was, like many another, trusting to her “unblemished character” and so forth, and thinking that these things counted more or less in God’s sight as a set off against her sins ; so I said to her, “Are you aware of what God says ? ‘All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags’ (Isa. lxiv. 6) ; consequently your ‘unblemished character’ and all you have spoken of are only ‘filthy rags’ in God’s sight, as a ground work or help towards salvation.”

She expressed astonishment at my saying so, and said it was contrary to what she had been taught. “I am a Protestant,” she said.

“Yes, but that won’t save you either,” I replied.

I then asked her to listen to me while I read her a part of Romans iii., from the tenth verse, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

“Do you ever do good ?” I asked.

“Oh, of course I do *sometimes*.”

“Well, but God says you *do not*. ‘There is *none* that doeth good, no, *not one*.’ What you *think* is good in God’s sight, is not so ; you have never done one good thing yet, and your best works are only ‘splendid sins !’”

I continued in this strain for some minutes and was glad to find, some days after, that our conversation had not been without effect, in shewing her what a poor, sinful, wretched thing she was before God.

I left, promising to call again to see her daughter, who, I heard, was most anxious for an interview.

Dear reader, if you are one of those who are trusting to an unblemished character outwardly, that is to say, if you are trusting to a good reputation in this world, let me beg of you to read carefully the third chapter of Romans, and you will then see how impossible it is for any man to have an unblemished character in the sight of God, and if they come to Him for blessing it must be as ungodly sinners.

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES?

I THINK we may take it for granted that every Christian, whether just beginning the pathway of faith, or who has been on the road many a year, will have a desire to know and understand what God has been pleased to reveal of His mind and will in the scriptures.

If we have to make any exception to this—that is to say, if there are any Christians who do not care to study the Bible and know the Lord's mind, it would be those who are not walking according to His mind, who are so mixed up in the affairs of this world, and full of self-seeking that they have lost all desire to know more of divine things. When we think of such we can only pray for them, and leave them in the Lord's hands that in His good time He may arouse them to a sense of their dead and back-sliding state.

But I desire to write for Christians, especially young ones, who are not in this condition, but who really wish to become better acquainted with the sacred volume.

There are no doubt many ways in which the books may be studied to profit, and my desire is to point out some of these, and the readers must judge which particular way will be most suited in their individual case, according to the amount of time they have to devote to the study before them, and the means at their disposal in the way of Helps to study, Bible, Handbooks, Concordances, &c., &c.

In our favoured land there are perhaps very few who have not in some little measure an acquaintance with the Bible, what with the family readings in some

households, the teaching of Christian parents to their little ones, the many Sunday schools scattered through our land, the profuse publication of christian literature, and in summer-time even the preaching at the corners of many a street together with a certain amount of Biblical teaching given in almost every school and college, all this, one would think, must leave very few in real ignorance of Bible truths, and even ungodly men and women, or the children of ungodly parents may and often do surprise us by being able to quote scripture when it suits their purpose even though it be only to bring it into ridicule.

But in spite of all this, the moment a young man or a young woman is converted, what a change it makes, what a very different book the Bible becomes. Many a well-known verse is at once lighted up with quite a new meaning that we never dreamed of before, not only that, but the book that we read of old merely as a duty now becomes one in which we can delight, for it tells of the mind, the purpose and love of God who has become so precious to us that we long to know all He would say to us, His children, in this inspired volume.

The first thing is to become acquainted with the letter of scripture, to be familiar

10 HOW DO YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES?

with the style and language of its various writers. This in itself takes a long time. The Bible is usually printed in much smaller type than other books, in order to make it portable, we forget this and often lose sight of the fact that there is such a large amount of reading in it. If the Bible were printed in the same size type and on the same kind of paper as an ordinary book of travels, it would make so heavy and large a volume that no one would care to carry it about.

This shews us that there is a great deal of reading in it and if we are to become familiar with all its parts it can only be done by reading it regularly and steadily every day.

Let us therefore not fail to read a chapter every morning and another every evening, or if at certain seasons of the year the pressure of business is such that this cannot be managed, let it be one chapter every day. This alone will give us three hundred and sixty-five chapters in a year, and of course double that number if we can read both night and morning.

This will make us acquainted with the letter of scripture, apart from any special study of truths that lie beneath the surface.

This alone is of great importance as the Spirit of God can at any time apply the

truth in blessing to our souls of portions with which we are familiar, which cannot be the case with things, however precious, that we have never known or read.

A well known divine, who read three chapters every day, once said, that no one should rob him of that little bit of legality

X. Y. Z.

(To be Continued, D. V.)

“ HIS FATHER SAW HIM.”

“ I do earnestly remember him still.” (Jer. xxxi. 20.)

“ Doth not he see all my ways, and count all my steps ?”
(Job xxxi. 4.)

“ Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy ; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”
(Psa. xxxiii. 18, 19.)

“ When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him ” (Luke xv. 20.)

“ His father saw him ! ” Ah ! those eager eyes
Had watch'd through many a dark and lonely
night—

Watch'd 'neath the silence of the midnight skies
Till the dawn flooded them with sound and
light !

“ His father saw him ! ” After weary years
Of passionate yearning for the well-loved
face ;

Now to behold him, through joy's sudden tears,
And feel the rapture of his child's embrace !

"His father saw him!" All those years of
sorrow

Lost in that moment of ecstatic bliss!
Peace for the past, and joy for all the morrow
Given in the gladness of the father's kiss!

* * * * *

Is this a story but of earth's poor love;
Has it no deeper meaning to impart?
Has it no sweeter answer from above?
Does it not manifest our Father's heart?

Whose is the love so quenchless in its burning?
Whose is the patience which delights to wait
For the slow footsteps which are home return-
ing—
For the lost sinner who is coming late?

Whose are the lips which utter no complaining—
Never reproaches the repentant one;
Gives an embrace which knows no half refrain-
ing,
Shouts the acknowledgment of "This is my
son!"

Whose is the heart, that so divinely yearning,
(Father and God, 'tis Thine, and Thine alone!)
Sees the first step the sinner takes returning,
Runs to embrace, and bids him "Welcome
home!"

THE BASKET OF STRAWBERRIES.

MANY years since, I was travelling in Cornwall from T—— to P——. It was a hot summer's day ; and, before starting, I had purchased a basket of strawberries, to slake my thirst on the journey. At the outskirts of the town the vehicle stopped, and a lady stepped in. She had barely taken her seat, when, her eye lighting on the strawberries, she ejaculated, loud enough for me to hear, "Oh, dear me, I am so sorry." On hearing her exclamation, I inquired the cause thereof, when she replied, "Because I omitted to procure some strawberries to take with me to the friend I am going to see, who is sick." I immediately said, "Pray, madam, take these," holding the strawberries to her. "I could not deprive you of them," was her reply. "I assure you, madam, you are quite welcome to them, if you will accept them," I answered. "Oh, no," she answered, "I cannot take them unless you allow me to pay for them," at the same time putting her hand in her pocket. "You must have them for nothing, madam, or not have them at all,"

I rejoined. She hesitated ; but at length, when I added, " You must have them on my terms, or not at all," she perceived my purpose was to give, and not to sell, and immediately thankfully received them.

After they had become her property, I said, " The reluctance you have shewn in receiving those strawberries is just what many a sinner shews towards God in the matter of his soul's salvation, because he wants to pay God something for it." The conversation was here stopped by her having to leave the omnibus.

A few months after the above incident took place, I was again nearing P — — by a different route, which necessitated my crossing a river by a ferry-boat. The boatman was a hale old Cornishman, fully sixty summers, who said to me, on stepping into his boat, early in the morning, by way of excusing the use of the pipe which was in his mouth, " Always have a pipe after breakfast, sir," and immediately added, " have been a teetotaller for twenty-eight years." His countenance confirmed his statement that he was a temperate man. " Teetotalism is all very well for this life, my friend, but it will not save the soul," I replied. " So I find, sir," was his ready answer. And on getting into further conversation, I soon discovered that he was in

an inquiring state of mind, having been many years previously awakened to a sense of his need of a Saviour. All these years, however, he had never tasted the forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of Christ, nor the blessedness of peace with God. As he was slowly paddling me across the river, I sought to unfold to him the way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and illustrated the freeness of eternal life as God's gift to the sinner by the foregoing narrative of the basket of strawberries. I had no sooner finished, than he exclaimed, "Oh, dear me, I see what I have been about these last twenty-one years, like that lady, wanting to give God something for His great salvation; but I see that it is the free gift of His love through our Lord Jesus Christ; I have nothing to do but to take it;" and he then began to rejoice, being filled with joy and peace in believing.

Nine years elapsed ere I again saw my friend the boatman, who, having expressed his joy in again seeing me, said, "Oh, sir, I had the peace of God flowing into my soul ever since you met me in this boat that morning; and besides which, He has converted two of my sons, one of whom has gone to the island of Bermuda to preach Christ."

Beloved reader, this incident is related if by any means your eyes may be opened to see that God is a giving God; "He so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." In the midst of a world of ruined, guilty sinners, who have forfeited every claim on His mercy and favour, He was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, never judging or pronouncing a woe but on those who dared to hinder Him in the blessing of the needy sons and daughters of Adam; or those who, with the most unmistakeable proof of the divine character of His acts of love, turned away from Him, who alone could save them from their sins.

UP YONDER.

I HAD been for some weeks attending upon Mrs. H——. An incurable disease slowly, but certainly, was shortening her days; but, God be thanked, as the outer man grew weaker and more attenuated the inner man developed in vigour and power. She had known the Lord many years, her heart was in the

enjoyment of His love, and, as she felt the chill hand of death each day more firmly settling on her, her spirit brightened as the prospect of soon beholding Him who had loved her and died for her became more distinct before her soul. Two or three days before she passed away I said to her, "I am going to speak this evening at a cottage meeting in a village, there will be many young people there; have you any message for them?" She looked surprised at my question, and replied: "I do not know them; how can I have any message for them?"

"True," I said; "but you are on the very verge of eternity, on the border land, within sight of the gates of glory; have you no word to send back to those that are young and careless?"

For a minute she fixed her eyes on me in silence, and then, deeply feeling the words she uttered, and which came with great power and solemnity, she replied, "Tell them to come to Jesus, and bid them come *now*, and warn them not to put it off till a death-bed, for it takes it all——." Here her strength and breath failed, and she could not finish the sentence.

I gathered her meaning, and responded, "By 'It takes it all,' I suppose you mean that when the death-bed is reached the

body is so racked with pain and the mind so feeble that the affairs of the soul, if not previously settled, are neglected then, as the body claims such attention." She nodded her head in full assent, merely adding, "Yes, bid them not put it off."

I then said, "Good-bye! I will take your message, we shall not meet down here perhaps any more, but we shall meet by-and-by, shall we not?"

Slowly she withdrew her emaciated hand from beneath the bed-clothes, and, pointing with one finger upwards, softly replied—"Up yonder!"

They were her last intelligible words to me, I have never forgotten them, though years have rolled by since they fell upon my ear, and sure am I that "up yonder" I shall meet her.

And now, dear reader, permit me to ask, shall I meet you "up yonder?" Will you form one of the ransomed throng that will gather round the Lamb, and swell the chorus of redeeming love "up yonder?" I hear you say, I hope so. This will not do, it must be more than hope. With you hope means uncertainty. In scripture it never does; there, it is the heart's bright anticipation of things not seen as yet, but which it *knows* it possesses. The personal knowledge of Jesus alone can give this.

Have you come to Him? If not—oh! I beseech you to give heed to the pointed word of warning above related. If unconverted, the enemy knows well how to whisper in your ear, “There’s time enough.” A child of God replies, “Warn them not to put it off till a death-bed.”

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

II.

OUR HINDRANCES.

WHEN the Israelites had passed through the wilderness and survived the dangers and difficulties of the way, they were at length led of God to cross the Jordan, to take possession of the land which God had promised to them. But though He had promised them the land, they found that it was occupied by enemies, who had to be conquered and driven out ere they could peacefully enjoy the possession. The blessing was there for them, but there were many hindrances to their enjoyment of it.

It is something like this when we come to study the word of God. It may seem a very simple matter to say, I will read a chapter, all being well, every night and

every morning; but when we come to carry it out, we shall find that there are many hindrances.

Of course, there will be times when there is no opportunity to get the necessary quiet. Sometimes there may be sickness in the family, or some untoward event happen which puts all usual arrangements out; at other times the whole house may oversleep in the morning, and the precious time be thus lost; but the great thing is, to be prepared for hindrances, and not let the reading of the scriptures give place to everything else as if it were of the least importance.

We take care not to go short of food for the body, and shall we not take equal care to get food for the soul?

These hindrances are very insidious, and it is astonishing how often they creep in when we are least on our guard.

An evangelist once said that he often asked young people if they read the Bible for themselves, and many time the questions and answers have been like the following—

“Do you read the Bible for your own profit, my friend?”

“Oh, yes!”

“I am glad to hear that, what chapter did you read this morning?”

“Well, I did not read this morning.”

“What chapter did you read yesterday morning or the morning before?”

“I don’t remember now, but I am not able to read every morning.”

Now, if we think of this matter honestly, is it not often like this with many of us? We purpose reading every morning, but the interruptions and hindrances come so often that if we read three or four times a week, perhaps, it is as much as we do.

Oh, let us face the question, and if we value God’s book, and wish to become instructed therein, may we seek to lay aside those things that hinder us, and look upon them as our enemies whom we have to subdue and conquer, so that we may enter into the blessing which is in store for us. Not in a legal way, as if God had said, “Thou shalt,” as in olden times; but as something that will be for our real good.

The children of Israel gathered the manna early in the morning before the sun was hot, and that, no doubt, is the best time to read your daily portion.

It is a blessed thing to begin the day with God, and a real help in our prayers to hear His voice speaking to us before we speak to Him.

But in some cases this would be well-nigh impossible, and if persisted in would

only lead to its being done in a hasty or legal way. 'Take, for example, one whose business required him to rise very early, or another very common case of a christian domestic servant, who may have to rise at six in the morning, light two or three fires, and prepare an early breakfast for children going off to school. In a case like this, she must watch for another opportunity, perhaps, after the bustle of her early work is over she may have a quiet half-hour for her own breakfast, when she may seize the opportunity of seeking to feed the soul while also feeding the body. It would be very easy for such an one to excuse herself and say, "Certainly I have no chance of reading the first thing in the morning." and thus let the day pass away without once handling the precious volume, if only half-hearted in such matters; but this we have to guard against. The fact is, if the heart is right and there is a real desire to read the word, a way will be found to accomplish it. However pressing the affairs of a family or a business may be, it is always the more important things that get done, one way or another; and if we make the study of the scriptures a matter of first importance, it will not be overlooked or set aside for other things.

Doubtless many a one misses the Bible reading without in the least intending to do so, but simply from the lack of having a special set time for the purpose.

We must ever remember that the enemy of our souls seeks to hinder us from all blessing and progress in divine things, and reading the scriptures is one of the ways by which we receive God's blessing, if we bear this in mind we shall be more zealous in meeting the difficulties and overcoming every hindrance.

The thing is therefore to have a set time and keep to it, and be careful that it is not encroached upon by other duties. May the Lord give us to see the great importance of studying for ourselves this book which he has given us and which contains the revealed mind of God and the divine form of the truth.

(To be continued, D.V.)

“ COME ! ”

“ COME ! ” 'tis Jesus gently calling,
 “ Ye with care and toil opprest,
 With your guilt, howe'er appalling—
 Come, and I will give you rest.”

For your sin He “once has suffered,”
On the cross the work was done;
And the word by God now uttered
To each weary soul is “*Come!*”

“Come!” the Father’s house stands open,
With its love, and light, and song;
And, returning to that Father,
All *to you* may now belong!
From sin’s distant land of famine,
Toiling ‘neath the mid-day sun,
To a Father’s house of plenty,
And a Father’s welcome, “*Come!*”

“Come!” for night is gathering quickly,
O’er this world’s fast fleeting day:
If you linger till the darkness
You will surely miss your way.
And still waiting—sadly waiting,
Till the day its course has run,
With His patience unabating,
JESUS lingers for you—“*Come!*”

“Come!” for angel hosts are musing
O’er this sight so strangely sad:
God “beseeching”—man refusing
To be made for ever glad!
From the world and its delusion
Now our voices rise as one;
While we shout *God’s invitation*,
Heaven itself re-echoes “*Come!*”

RAHAB'S "AMEN."

GOD has but one way of salvation! you, dear reader, may have heard it again and again, but are you saved? Have you obeyed the gospel you have heard so often? Have you sealed God's testimony with your "Amen"? People hear the gospel preached times without number, passing on heedless, and read lightly gospel papers put into their hands through God's grace, never thinking of the tremendous responsibility all these privileges bring upon them. Their conduct calls to mind a solemn scripture, "Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." (Ezek. xxxiii. 32.) O reader, if you are thus delighting in gospel papers and preachings, because they seem simple, easy and nice, but yourself have never bowed to God's word, your position is most solemn. Remember God asks, "How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great salvation?"

But I desire in these few lines to point

you to one that God speaks of in Joshua ii., one who was nothing but a poor wretched Gentile harlot, wrath hanging over her, the just judgment of God coming speedily upon her. Her position was indeed a sad and terrible one ; but she knew and believed it, cowering beneath the sense of that coming judgment. And has God a way of escape for such an one ? He has indeed, for He is the "God of all grace." His way of deliverance from judgment is unfolded in verses 18 and 19 ; but what I press earnestly upon your attention is her way of hearing and receiving it. She heard it but *once* when, without questioning or reasoning, she added to it her "Amen." This was her answer (ver. 21), "According unto your words, so be it" (Amen). It stands on record as a beautiful reception of the word of salvation. *Reason* might have said — What a foolish thing, a scarlet thread save me ! *Faith* bowed to the word, sealed it with amen, and at once bound the scarlet thread in the window.

The unsaved one, like Rahab, has the wrath of God abiding on him (John iii. 36), and God's just judgment against sin coming *speedily* upon him (2 Thess. i. 7-9), and no way of escape but—Christ and His precious blood.

Reader, will you lay aside this paper a

rejecter of Christ, a neglecter of God's salvation, a chooser of death and a portion in that lake that burns with fire and brimstone; or will you, like Rahab, bow to God's testimony, seal it with your Amen, and take from God's own hand the everlasting portion of joy and bliss He urges upon you? Which?

A STORY OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 4.)

ON a Tuesday, soon after, one of the women in the village, happening to go outside the door, looked across some little distance, and saw a child, wrapped in flames, rush out of the Black Hut to the nearest cottages. She ran in next door, and gave the alarm to Agnes's aunt, who lived there, and she at once, with many other neighbours, who had also either seen the flames, or heard the cries, ran up, full of fears, to see what had happened. There, in the kind neighbour's cottage, wrapped in a piece of matting, stood little Agnes, too terrible to look at, and her cries too sorrowful to listen too.

Moggie had gone out on an errand, and had left the three children together; but Agnes was quite old enough to know the danger of fire; strangely, too, she had been warned by her teacher only a few days before, when she had come down to the house on a message; a large burn in her pinafore told a tale that drew out the remark, that, unless she were careful as to fire, she would be burnt some day. God had not left her unwarned, though she had not heeded the warning. Her sister being out, she had got on to the fender to arrange something over the chimney-piece, and the fire had caught her clothes; the strong March wind, blowing in at the open door, fanned it into a flame, and the terrified child rushed out of the house, and across the road, to the nearest cottages, screaming for help. But before help could come, it was too late; the little frock, pinafore, petticoat, literally dropped off the poor scarred body, leaving nothing for it but to suffer and to die.

There she stood, surrounded by pitying hearts and willing hands, that hastened to attend to her two requests. One: "Oh, let me go to bed! let me go to bed." The other: "My poor bab! my poor bab! Who'll go and see where it is?" But the wee thing was sitting playing hap-

pily in the bed, unconscious of all the sorrow.

A little messenger was sent running down to tell me the sad news, and I was soon standing beside what had been pretty little Agnes—now no longer to be recognised. There she lay in the bed, where they had put her, screaming with agony. It was heartrending. I bent over her, and said, “Agnes.” But she took no notice. Sympathy had no effect, so I tried the power of the name of Jesus, hoping that it would soothe ; but, alas ! she only screamed the louder. When I asked, “Would you like to *go* to Jesus, Agnes?” she shook her head, and said, “No.” I spoke of Him and of His love, but she gave no heed ; and then I said, “Agnes, shall I ask Jesus to take you ?” No answer. “Shall the lady pray for you, Agnes ?” repeated her aunt. “No, no !” again was the only answer. Still, despite her refusal, I tried in a few words, as I stood leaning over her, to bring her into God’s presence, to carry her in my arms to the feet of Jesus, and lay her down there, as they of old did, whose faith when He saw, He said to the sick man, “Son, be of good cheer : thy sins be forgiven thee.” But the poor child’s screams only redoubled, till I could not hear my own words. My heart sank low indeed, for that Name

seemed to raise but opposition and distress, and sadly enough I turned from the cottage.

After hours of agony, the remedies employed began to tell on the little sufferer; her screams ceased, turning to moanings and restless sleeping. So Wednesday passed by—the last precious hours; life here was ebbing out, and there was no sign of any other life to take its place. It was difficult to tell if she were still conscious of what was said to her, but as the day wore on, it was evident she no longer was. She ceased to ask for her father or to care for his presence, which at first she insisted on continually. The only hope in my heart was that, despite all appearances, God, who had known the end from the beginning, had not brought her to the Sunday school for nothing during what were to be the last few months of her life, and that somehow, though we might never see any sign of it here, we should meet her there.

Here hushed are all the sounds of earth—

*The laugh of pleasure, moan of pain ;
The vain deluding shouts of mirth,
Here fall upon my ear in vain.*

*I see the crowds of earth go by,
I hear the world's loud trumpet call ;
Though through its midst my path should lie,
Yet I must live above it all.*

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

III.

WE have now to speak more definitely of studying the scriptures after we have in some measure become familiar with their contents.

With all ordinary books the theme that is before the writer always lies more or less on the surface. If it is a simple narrative, a memoir, or book of history or travels, once reading through will generally be sufficient.

In more difficult subjects, such as books on science or philosophy, we may have to read the book through two or three times before we feel we have done justice to the subject. This may not be because the things meant to be conveyed to the reader do not lie on the surface, but merely that the author has not a clear way of expressing himself and we feel doubtful if we have caught his meaning, or else that the subject being profound we either do not grasp it or find it too difficult to retain without going over it again and again.

With scripture it is quite different, the meaning of a passage often lies beneath

the surface, and a cursory reading of a chapter may in no way reveal to us what is there for our profit.

The scriptures being divine are necessarily profound, thus the ablest and best-taught student will ever find something fresh for his heart to delight in and his soul to feed upon; but it does not seem to be the will of God that we should receive this help and blessing without some trouble and exercise, hence we get the injunction :

“BUY THE TRUTH.”

That is to say, if we are to hold the truth in any measure of power in our souls, we must buy it—it must cost us something, there must be real exercise and desire to get hold of it, there must be careful reading and meditation upon it, and truth learned in this way will leave its impress upon us, we shall be formed by it; whereas that which is easily grasped and lightly held will prove to be nearly always mere head knowledge, which will not help us much when a time of testing comes.

The rest of the exhortation just quoted is :

“SELL IT NOT.”

This is of equal importance, if we have once learned a truth, felt its divine importance, and that we have it from God, on no account sell it—that is, give it up for some apparent advantage in another direction. Alas! many have done this, and then, of course, progress in the things of God is impossible.

The Bible is divided into Old and New Testament, and it has been said that the Old Testament is *unfolded* in the New and the New *enfolded* in the Old.

This is very true, and the spiritual meaning of the types and shadows and figurative language of the Old Testament will be found fully explained in the New Testament.

If we begin with the Old Testament we find that, as given in our Bible, it consists of thirty-nine books; but the Lord Himself when upon earth divided them into three great divisions—viz., the law of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets. (Luke xxiv. 44.)

The first of them embraces the *five* books of Moses; the second, the *five* books of psalms—that is, from Job to Song of Solomon; and the third, all the remaining portion of the Old Testament.

As we now have the New Testament as well as the Old, the following divisions will be found useful in keeping the several parts clearly before the mind, and help

us to grasp the scriptures as one grand whole, not merely as a number of writings brought together and made into a book, but as arranged by the Spirit of God to present the revelation of His mind to man in a divine sequence.

- 1, Genesis to Deuteronomy, known as the Pentateuch. Treating of the world and the wilderness.
- 2, Joshua to Esther—giving an historical account of the land and the kingdom.
- 3, The five books of Psalms—embracing the Book of Job to the Song of Solomon, containing valuable experimental teaching.
- 4, Isaiah to Malachi—giving us the lives of the prophets and the varied prophecies they had to proclaim.
- 5, Matthew to John—being the testimony of the four evangelists as to the life of Christ on earth.
- 6, Acts to Revelation speaks of the church of God on earth while Christ is in heaven.

Here, then, we have the book set out in its six chief divisions, and I would suggest that one of these sections be studied at a time, or should the reader prefer it, take two sections, one for the morning, the other for the evening.

For this purpose it is well to obtain some

twopenny portions of the books required. The whole Bible may now be had in these small portions, which are very handy, as they occupy so little space in the pocket and thus may always be carried, where a Testament or Bible would be inconvenient.

Those who desire blank paper on which to make brief notes, will find it easy to cut the stitch, interleave the pages with thin writing paper, and then sew the book together again.

In these small books many brief but helpful notes may be made of anything brought to our notice of a special character while reading the scriptures, or remarks found in other books or given in addresses on scriptural subjects.

Many a valuable link in the divine chain of truth, though enjoyed at the time of hearing, is forgotten and lost for want of a convenient and suitable place to write it down, and it may be years (if ever) before the same thought is presented to us again.

All such notes should be written as near as possible to the text to which they refer, so as to be easily found when wanted, for jottings made on loose pieces of paper, are often mislaid, and the connection with the text entirely lost.

X.Y.Z.

“NOTHING TO PAY.”

“When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.” (Luke vii. 42.)

Are you weary and sad 'neath the burden of sin,
Does it fill all your soul with dismay?
And to meet the just claims of a sin-hating God,
Do you know you have “nothing to pay”?

Come! come! come unto Him!

If you own with repentance, you've “nothing to pay,”

He will freely and “frankly forgive.”

All your tears and your sorrow will never atone,
Nor by works can you clear away sin,—
Then come to the One who can help you alone,
To the Saviour in confidence cling!

Come! come! &c.

He's the One who has come from God's glory
above,

To save you from ruin and loss;
For He paid the full debt in His own precious
blood,

When He “put away sin” on the cross!

Come! come! &c.

Then come, ruined sinner! no longer delay,
Nor in bondage and misery live;
If you own with repentance, you've “nothing to pay,”

He will freely and “frankly forgive.”

Come! come! &c.

THE WORK OF THE SCULPTOR AND ITS LESSONS.

I WAS taking a walk one lovely day in summer, alone, and thinking about life with its many and various lessons which we, as pupils in the school of the divine Master, must learn, profitably to live and be fitted for our work here, and for our glorious home hereafter, which is a prepared home for a prepared people. In this mood of thought, my steps were directed to a workshop where many sculptors were engaged at work.

My attention was drawn to a sculptor intent upon his white marble. Around him were scattered all kinds of tools for the different processes of work. Now a shapeless block of marble ; but when it left his skilful hands, you would see a perfect statue. The sight was most interesting, for by him stood his little girl, much interested in her father's occupation. The hard mallet and other tools of strength were used with great severity, the block being made to feel that skilful hands were near.

I watched the sculptor and child with pleasure and profit. My thoughts were fixed upon our *heavenly Sculptor*, and we as

the unsightly marble in His loving hands. All his energies were bent upon moulding it into a perfect shape: he spared neither time nor strength. Many heavy blows and strokes were given to accomplish his purpose of perfection. The work before him shewed his skill and wisdom—once an unshapely piece of marble, now *almost a perfect statue*. All through this time, the child with wondering eyes was watching her father; and as she saw the fragments flying in all directions, her simple mind could not understand the necessity for *wasting* so much stone. She could no longer keep silence, but, looking up into his kind face, said, “Father, why *waste* so much stone?”

“It is,” he said in accents mild,
 “By strokes and heavy blows,
 That as the marble wastes, my child,
 The more the *statue grows*.”

Are we not all like little children? We doubt and fail to see at all times the Father's loving wisdom when He so often uses the sharp chisel of affliction and trial. We see dear ones called from our midst to bloom above. The little ones whose lives were rich in song, our Father takes to blossom in His heavenly garden; our possessions leave us, take to themselves wings, and flee away; but the heavenly

Sculptor is too wise to err. and too good to be unkind. He takes us, and in His own time and way—*always the best*—moulds and fits us for *our* home and His glorious presence. As the child could not understand why her father used the various tools to perfect the statue, yet trusted his skill, so we must leave all our concerns and trust ourselves and our loved ones entirely to Him. As the repeated strokes to the marble were producing its completeness, so all trials, sickness, bereavement, and adversity—if borne with patience, and as coming straight from a Father's hand of love, whose *pressure* only tells us *He loveth us*—leave their mark on our souls, and are truly blessings in disguise. Our prayer should be, “Lord, do with me, in me, by me, as thou wilt; only glorify Thyself.” The Lord Jesus drank to the dregs the bitter cup of sorrow for our sakes, and was sinless. Wondrous love!

How, then, can we, sinful beings, expect to escape cares and trials? Nay, rather we would endeavour, by His grace (for without Him we can do nothing, but are as chaff before the wind), to receive thankfully and cheerfully the bitters and sweets of life, knowing that every step of the way home is marked by the hand of love; and when we are moulded into His own image, His

work in us complete, He will take us unto Himself, and place us amongst His many redeemed ones, to sing the new song in the kingdom of the Father.

Dear reader, is *your* name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Are *you* like those blessed ones of whom it may be said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 14)? If not, do not rest satisfied until you *can* realise that the precious blood of Jesus Christ *has* cleansed your soul from sin, and washed it white. Then you can with rejoicing say, "I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine." (Song of Sol. vi. 3.) No knowledge so precious, so secure and certain as this. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

M. E. W.

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

IV.

OUR desire really should be to have a thorough knowledge of the Bible, to know and be able to trace the divine

plan that runs through the whole from Genesis to Revelation. It is a wonderful thing that a volume composed of 66 books, written by many different men who occupied the most varied positions in this life, and covering a period of some five hundred years, should, when placed together, shew a divine plan and connection; that these books should be linked together by being quoted one from the other except Genesis, which quotes from none.

In taking up the study of one of the books of the Bible, it will be found of great service to go through it twice. First, to discover the general scope and application of the book, and then a second time to carefully consider all its details.

We may first notice such points as the name of the writer of the book, to whom it was addressed, where written from, and the period of which it treats, if these points can be ascertained.

With reference to the epistles, some are addressed to individuals like Timothy, Titus, Philemon, others to the church of God in certain localities, like Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, while the following are called general epistles:—James, Peter, John, Jude, as being of wide or general application.

I might here mention that the brief notes

at the ends of some of the epistles, giving the writer's name, &c., are not to be relied upon, and, though apparently very old, are evidently only the work of copyists, and should therefore be disregarded.

In connection with the general scope of a book, it is interesting to choose a key-word for each, and write out a list of them, or note them in your Bibles. These words should be such as to indicate the chief characteristic of the book in question.

Perhaps no two people would adopt exactly the same words, but that does not matter, and they may not be necessarily wrong on that account. We may also get further light later on, and have reason to revise or alter our list.

The word "beginnings" is a good one for Genesis, as it contains not only the beginning of this world's history, but also the beginning of all those principles of action which obtain through all time. We see the first sin, the first sacrifice, the first promise and so on.

Sometimes we may decide on the best word by noticing any word that is many times repeated. Romans may be given as a good example of this. The words righteous and righteousness occur some forty-three times, hence the word "righteousness" is a good key-word for that book.

The next thing is to notice if there are any special divisions in the book, and mark them also in your Bible ; this is a great help in judging of its general scope.

We will give two examples of this—one from the Old Testament, and the other from the New.

The book of Esther may be divided into three parts as follows :—

1. The Gentile queen, Vashti, is removed from her regal state, and the Jewish queen is exalted in her place. (Chaps. i., ii.)

2. The wicked devices of Haman are all frustrated, and he and his house utterly destroyed. (Chaps. iii.—vii.)

3. The faithful Mordecai is exalted to the right hand of the imperial power, and uses his authority to effect the deliverance of his people and to secure their blessing. (Chaps viii.—x.)

If we keep these three divisions clearly before the mind, we shall have the scope of the whole, and the histories of Esther, Haman and Mordecai.

Then, from the New Testament we may divide the Acts of the Apostles as follows :—

1. The Lord's ascension and a kind of introduction to the following chapters. (Chap. i.)

2. The early church and grace lingering over the nation, especially in connection with Jerusalem. (Chaps. ii.—vii.)

3. The Gentiles are brought in, and Samaria receives the gospel. (Chaps. viii.—xii.)

4. Paul's extensive labours, while he worked from Antioch as a centre. (Chaps. xiii.—xx.)

5. Paul is taken from Jerusalem to Rome as a prisoner. (Chaps. xxi.—xxviii.)

With reference to the epistles, the moral state of those to whom they were addressed is often disclosed by the very exhortations given them. Thus we learn the low state of the Corinthians and the Galatians, as well as the advanced condition spiritually of the Ephesian church.

A STORY OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

(Concluded from page 30.)

ALL means of communication with her were over; she lay in a sort of stupor; one eye was closed, so that it could no longer open; the other opened at times, but only to look vacantly up. We could do no more; she was past our reach. And now God began to shew how He could do without us, and we stood by, and wondered to see Him work. Her moanings and murmurings turned into another channel; being no longer able to speak to man, she began to speak to God. It was that God was dealing with her soul by the Holy Ghost, having set aside all human agency.

We had not told her that she was dying, but God did. He let her know that her

time was come. And now, from the poor parched lips, came the words of the little hymn she had often sung in school—

“There is a happy land,
Far, far away.”

“Far, far away,” indeed, it seemed from such a scene of suffering, but it was very close to the sufferer. The Holy Spirit was shewing her the goodly land, letting her hear the harps of gold, as she looked in through the gates, and she said, “Listen to the beautiful music.”

Then she became occupied with the One who makes heaven, heaven—without whom heaven would be no heaven to the soul that loves Him. She, like Stephen, “saw Jesus,” and her oft-repeated exclamation, “Heavenly Jesus! Heavenly Father!” told of what her eye, to us so vacant, was gazing on. “Whom, having *not* seen, we love.” She saw, and how could she but love? And the little lips that certainly never had uttered such words before, burst out with —“Oh, Jesus! I *love* you! You are *my* Jesus! Are you ready? I am!”

Yet one step more the Spirit led her; she passed on from “Jesus” to “Christ.” Did she get hold, in any measure, of what that implied? The glorified Head in heaven, and union with Him there; “a

member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." None can tell. She was a little ignorant child, yet "Christ in glory" were her words. With God for her teacher, what might she not learn? "Who teacheth like him?"

So the Thursday morning came, and inside the Black Hut still tossed and moaned that little suffering form, whilst sympathising villagers looked helplessly on. The poor father sat in the outside room; his presence was no longer needed by her, and, Hagar-like, his bent figure seemed to say, "Let me not see the death of the child." My heart ached as I looked at him. I spoke to him tenderly of the little one, whilst the tears flowed down his rough cheek. The neighbours stood round, listening, and poor Moggie sat with the baby on her knee. It was a sorrowful scene.

"Well," I said, "little Agnes is passing away, but she is going to her Saviour. How would it have been with each one of us, if the summons had been sent to us instead of her? Is there one of us could say, 'I am ready?' Yet He has shed His precious blood that we *may* be ready. He has made the way to God for every poor sinner who knows how far off He is, and longs to get back to Him. God is taking your little Agnes from you, H.; let it be

the beginning of a new life to you ; let it be the starting-point Godwards, and you will yet bless Him that He took her."

There was silence—nothing but tears for answer, till together we knelt round the tiny table ; and surely, more than one in that little room desired at that moment to seek and find that Jesus who had saved Agnes, and who alone could save each one of them.

The words were ended, but none stirred.

At last we rose from our knees, and H. again seated himself by the fire, his face buried in his hands. I put my hand on his shoulder, saying, "Oh ! H., God does not want to break your heart ; He wants to wash your soul whiter than snow." A sob was his only answer.

I went inside, to have one more look at Agnes. She lay as before. She had not spoken for some time. But, as I looked, her lips parted, and faintly the words came—the last ones : "I am ready ; are you ?"

Yes, Jesus *was* ready. Who was there ever called Him, and found He was not ? A few more minutes of patient waiting, and, without a struggle, her spirit passed into His presence : the Good Shepherd folded His little lamb in His arms, to go no more out for ever.

GLORY TO GOD.

(LUKE II. 24.)

GLORY to God, the blessed God,
 Who sparèd not His Son
 Jesus, the Christ, His well-beloved,
 The Father's Holy One :
 Sent Him to seek and save the lost
 Vile sinners such as we ;
 Gave Him up freely for us all,
 On Calvary's cursèd tree.

All praise to Jesus, who came forth,
 God's counsel to fulfil ;
 His joy, His meat and drink it was,
 To do His Father's will.
 His church, the " one pearl of great price,"
 He bought with His own blood :
 He loved and gave Himself for her,
 To make her nigh to God.

Exalted now, He hath shed forth
 The Spirit from above,
 The Holy Ghost, the Comforter,
 To fill our hearts with love.
 With love to God and to His Christ,
 With love and childlike fear,
 With love to every saint in Christ,
 To God so very dear.

Oh ! praise our God for all His gifts,
 Our hearts with joy which fill,
 The chiefest of them all His Son,
 His gift unspeakable.
 Yea, praise Him for the Spirit, too,
 To link us to our Head,
 Jesus, the risen victorious Christ,
 The First-born from the dead.

M. S. S.

VICTORY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

THERE was in a city in Lancashire, in an Infirmary, a dear servant of the Lord, who lay suffering from a sad, painful, and incurable disease. The doctors he had consulted previous to going there found it absolutely necessary for him to undergo an operation, as the only possibility of prolonging his life. This was a great trial to him, but he bravely faced the worst, as a christian man, and willingly consented, for the sake of those he loved, to go into the Infirmary.

He was thus enabled through the power of God, to leave himself and his dear ones in confidence, in the tender and loving care of his heavenly Father, whom he had loved and served for many years, knowing that whatever might be before him, whether life or death, "*All would be well.*" The sad disease had made rapid progress, and necessitated a very serious operation.

A dear christian worker had the privilege of calling upon this child of God, he found him lying there, on his narrow bed in the

Infirmary ward, in great pain and weakness. This was previous to the operation, though not in his own home, he was surrounded by *every* comfort. Kind nurses and attentive doctors, who did all they could to minister to his wants, and alleviate his pain. Bright flowers, with their sweet perfume, adorned the ward, so making it bright and more cheerful for the suffering ones. The glorious sunshine was also pouring his healing and life-giving beams upon them. The patient's face, though so emaciated by intense pain, was bright, and the sweet *peace of God* rested upon him. Submissively he lay there, realising that underneath him were the "Everlasting Arms," and above "a crown of righteousness" awaited him.

The christian worker told a friend of his that he had spent one of the *happiest hours* of his life by this dear man's bedside, as he talked to him of the Lord's great love, and his firm trust in Him. He left himself and his all, in His safe keeping. Such lessons we are taught by patient, calm endurance, as are never to be forgotten. The sick and convalescent, in the Infirmary ward, *must* have been blessed and cheered by his short stay amongst them. He seemed much to enjoy the visit of our dear christian friend, which was a source of refreshment to them

both, as they talked together of God's love to us "sinners saved by grace" divine. The next visit he paid him, he took his dear wife, who, though far from strong, with her husband, devoted her life in the Lord's work, having no home ties to hinder, visiting the sick and dying, going here and there on the wings of love and tender ministry *just* where our Lord *leads*.

The three had a *very* happy and helpful time together and after a brief prayer, they bid this dear saint *goodbye*, for they felt sure they would not see him here again, so they left, committing him into the Father's tender care. They *did not* meet here again. The next time will, we know, be in the glory-land, where we, "His own," *shall see* the King in His beauty, and in His presence be fully satisfied.

This dear one had always loved and *worked* for Jesus, and worked for Him until the end, watching every opportunity of winning precious souls for God. And now, even though weak and ill, he spoke about the Saviour he loved to his fellow-sufferers in the ward as they lay there afflicted with different maladies. The operation took place a few days after this happy yet sad interview, and was *most* successful, and all seemed to be going on well. A few days after, a young athlete, who had

been seriously injured on the football field was carried into the ward and carefully put into the bed next to this child of God. Undoubtedly an overruling providence permitted this young sufferer to be placed side by side to a praying and happy Christian. It must indeed have been a sad sight to witness this fine young fellow who, only a short time before his accident, was in health and strength, striving with all his energy to reach the goal and win the prize, so suddenly cut down, helpless and suffering. Our dear brother, though himself so weak and ill, saw he was near the end, and watched the first opportunity that presented itself of telling out the Saviour's dying love to perishing sinners. So he raised himself in his bed, leaning upon his elbow to support his fast weakening body, and *preached Jesus* to his fellow-sufferers and all present in the ward. It was truly a *dying* man addressing *dying* men, and must indeed have been a touching sight to witness and impressive to hear a dying man offering salvation to all those who had not accepted Christ as their own Saviour, and inviting them, *even* at the eleventh hour, to come to Him *now*, for pardon, peace and everlasting life. After speaking most lovingly for a little while, he fell back completely exhausted and died.

Shortly after this the poor young man also passed away. This patient saint of God had the wish of his heart granted, of what he often had sung—

“ Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name—
Preach Him to all and cry in death :
Behold ! Behold the Lamb.”

The last words of this dying saint just as he fell back were :—“ *Victory!* through the blood of the Lamb.”

A few days after these two sufferers had died, our dear brother, who had the privilege of visiting the Infirmary spoken about, saw in one of the shop windows, as he was passing along, the portrait of this *same* young man, the champion player, who had fallen seriously injured on the football field, just after kicking the *winning goal*, and underneath was printed in large letters this grand word—*VICTORY!* Strange coincidence that the same word was the last word on the dying saint's lips ; on the one hand denoting an earthly honour *only*, on the other hand a heavenly *triumph*. We can only hope that the *faithful* warning he had had sent to him by God upon his death-bed through another had led him to Christ, and that even at the eleventh hour his sins were pardoned, and

his soul washed white in the precious "blood of the Lamb," and that as soon as this earthly scene had closed that they both had passed through the golden gates, with the joyful cry of *Victory*.

THE CAPTAIN'S INQUIRY.

CAPTAIN R. was evidently in earnest as he placed his hand to the side of his mouth sailor-fashion, so as to conduct the sound of his voice from the bridge of the steamer where he was standing, to the ears of some fishermen who were passing by in their vessel.

The captain was so anxious to be heard, that he leaned over the ship's side, and then hailed the smacksmen with the following words: "WHERE'S SUMBURGH HEAD?"

The short sea passage between two groups of islands in the North had been a very favourable one, and the captain knew, according to ordinary calculations, it was time he should be sighting the land. A difficulty, however, had arisen which, though not uncommon, often baffles the skill of the navigator. A dense haze was overhanging the land, and completely hiding it from view. Instead of proceeding with reckless

haste and uncertainty, the captain therefore wisely hove the ship to, and seized the first opportunity of learning his whereabouts.

At such times, reliable information is most valuable, and sometimes can only be obtained from fishermen who have very recently put off to sea. This was the case on the occasion referred to. Thus, when the fishing boat approached near enough, it was at once hailed by the captain.

The inquiry has often connected itself, in the writer's mind, with a question which was wrung from the heart of a notorious sinner, known to many by the name of the Philippian jailor. It was as follows:—
“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?” This was asked in the innermost part of the prison, and fell upon the ears of Paul and Silas in that gloomy cell. No doubt it was also heard in heaven as soon as it was uttered on earth. It entered the ears of the Saviour on high as it reached the ears of His servants below.

The jailor had been brought face to face with death and judgment. His sins were arrayed against him and darkness was all around. With true desire for salvation, he made the earnest inquiry, and obtained at once the simple answer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts xvi. 31.) God,

through the lips of His servants, answered the jailor's question as soon as he asked it, and the jailor believed the word as soon as it was spoken, "and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

Reader, are you in doubt and darkness as to your whereabouts for time and for eternity?

Can you "read your title CLEAR to mansions in the skies?" Heaven is the home of the redeemed. The blood of the Lamb is the sinner's only title. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is that which secures it to him.

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

V.

IN studying the scriptures in detail for spiritual profit, there is one thing all should guard against, and that is, being too critical and lingering too long over a single chapter.

We have sometimes been in reading meetings where week after week they would only get over three or four verses each night. The examination of each word and sentence was far too dry and technical,

the effect being that the savour of the word was lost, and it left us at the close of the meeting with a sense of weariness and conscious lack of spiritual food.

We must ever remember that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

Some study the scriptures in a very literary way, and can tell you how many chapters and verses there are, which are the longest and shortest verses, and which the middle verse of the whole Bible; all this may be very interesting to the curious, but is of no great value, and we think the time might be spent in a more profitable way.

Others can tell you how many times certain important words occur in the Bible, such as "atonement," "reconciliation," "redemption," "substitution," &c. This is sometimes of real interest, especially with words that are only used a very few times, as pointing to some special significance; but it is well not to spend much time on points of this kind, lest your knowledge of the scriptures should assume an intellectual rather than a spiritual character.

Others again will delight in searching out the grandeur of the language of certain writers, or the great poetic beauty of others;

but while this is no doubt of great interest to some, we must be careful not to be so occupied with the form in which the truth is presented as to lose sight of the truth itself.

This is quite possible, as expressed in a hymn we sometimes sing :

“ I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,
Isaiah's wild measure or John's simple page ;
But e'en when they pictured the blood-sprinkled
tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me.”

Many persons, for various reasons, are totally unable to study scripture in any systematic way, yet they need spiritual food, and in reading a portion, perhaps only one verse may strike their attention, and in that verse there may be a precious truth or promise that they can understand and enjoy, and it will cause a note of praise to rise to God, although the real line of teaching in the chapter be quite unknown.

Many a text is thus enjoyed, perhaps but a brief text from an almanack, that is taken quite out of its true connection. The Psalms, for instance, are valued by some, because they find expressed in them just what they themselves had felt or experienced ; but afterwards they learn

that the Psalms do not set forth true christian experience, and the more light they get, the less are they able to use them as their own words.

But we want to learn the truths of scripture taken in their proper connection and context, as the same words and expressions in different books often have quite a different meaning and application.

As an example of this, we get the words, "He came to his own, and his own received him not," in John i.; but "his own" here were the Jews who rejected Him, and therefore very different to "his own" spoken of in chapter xvii. of the same gospel: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." These were clearly His disciples and others who had received Him and believed in Him.

The importance therefore of taking each passage in its true and proper connection cannot be too strongly pressed, while it may be compared or contrasted with any other portion to bring out the truth more clearly.

WAITING FOR YOU.

IN the gladsome light of morning,
 'Midst its beauty and its song ;
 While thine heart is fresh and hopeful,
 Knowing naught of wreck, or wrong ;
 From the storm-cloud, in the distance
 Stealing o'er life's tranquil sea,
 Some have fled to Christ for refuge,—
 And He waits to shelter *thee* !

By some "well" of earthly pleasure,
 In the noontide hour of life ;
 Once He waited with the offer
 Of an "everlasting life."
 But you passed Him by, unheeding,
 Drinking deeper draughts, anew ;
 But He knows you still are "thirsting"
 So He's waiting still, *for you*.

From the shades of evening falling
 O'er a life grown grey with care,
 He would lead thee to a region
 Ever bright and ever fair.
 Chains of sin may bind and bruise thee,
 But He longs to set thee free,
 And 'midst darkness, storm and trouble,
 He is waiting still for *thee* !

Do not keep Him any longer,
 For the day will soon be past ;
 And His voice of gentle pleading
 Will be heard no more at last !
 Then, the night of wrath and judgment,
 From which now He bids thee flee,
 Will envelope thee in darkness
 And He'll wait no more for thee !

“A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.”

A N earnest christian worker for the Lord was telling me of a curious incident, undoubtedly guided by the Lord, which occurred to him in his early christian career, and was used as a means of great blessing, being the turning point in his life, shewing how oftentimes God uses the tender lambs of “His fold,” to accomplish His purposes of love. At the time of which I am speaking, he had not made any decision for Christ, but realised himself a sinner; needing a Saviour to cleanse him from sin. He was halting between two opinions, in this state of soul he had of course no peace, but was distressed and downcast, for not knowing the Saviour, he could not cast his cares and burden upon Him, though He loveth and careth so tenderly for the sheep and lambs of His fold. The day of which I am speaking, our dear brother was in a very miserable mood, and going into the dining-room, threw himself down on the couch, feeling in a most unhappy frame of mind, when

suddenly his dear little neice, then some five or six years of age, came bursting into the room, in her childish glee, where her uncle was lying. She was a bright and very happy little child, with clear but dark complexion, with dark hair and eyes, rosy cheeks, and looked the picture of health. She went up as usual to her uncle, whom she loved dearly, expecting he would talk to and amuse her, as he generally did, but the child was much disappointed to find her dear uncle in a very bad mood ; she chatted to him, but he answered not a word. How we should watch our actions with these wee lambs, and give them no cause for sorrow. His little neice, when she saw her uncle was cross, turned away from the couch, much disappointed ; but as she was going out of the room, her eyes rested upon a beautifully printed text, hanging upon the wall, and as she looked at it, she *slowly* spelled it out aloud, in her childish fashion. Her uncle during this time was listening to his dear wee niece with great interest, little thinking that she would be used as an instrument of blessing from the Lord to his unsettled and unsatisfied heart, she very slowly spelt out this beautiful prayer of David's, in her simple fashion—

L-E-A-D M-E T-O T-H-E R-O-C-K

T-H-A-T I-S H-I-G-H-E-R
T-H-A-N I.

The dear child had not read it quite correctly, but His message, though unknown to the child, did its work and went straight from God to her uncle's troubled heart. He felt greatly impressed, and, touched by this incident, so rising from the couch on which he had been lying, he hastily left the room and went upstairs into his bedroom, where he knelt down and told the Lord everything, of his struggle with the adversary, who was striving to keep possession of his heart, of his bad temper with his “little one.” And there, at the throne of grace, through faith, he sought and received the cleansing needed through the precious “blood of the Lamb,” and unreservedly gave himself—body, soul and spirit—to God, fully determined, through His grace, henceforth to serve Him. And so he found that day as never before, and sheltered underneath—

“The Rock that is higher than I.”

This incident I have told you about was the great turning point in our dear brother's life, and he looks back upon that day with mingled feelings, but with joy and thankfulness, for he sees in this dear child the

tiny messenger God used for enabling him through grace to decide for Christ, and come out boldly on the Lord's side, in whose blessed service is perfect freedom. He realises as never before the truth of those beautiful words—"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." (Matt. xxi. 16.)

So well do we know that the Lord counts nothing too trivial or beneath His notice to use and bless.

A simple, common little sparrow falleth not to the ground without His care and knowledge. How much more are we to Him than the sparrow. This incident is only one amongst many where the little lambs have been used and made a means of blessing to a great end. In this instance, leading to a full heart surrender. To our God we give all the glory, all the praise. Our dear christian brother has since that curious coincidence, which occurred several years ago, led a devoted, happy life. His heart is filled with the love of God and intense love for souls, whom he strives, by his feeble efforts, through grace, prayer and faith, by pointing to the only Saviour, to lead sinners out of the bondage of darkness and sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

M. E. W.

“THE OTHER SIDE.”

(MARK IV. 35-41.)

IT is interesting at any time to see a fleet of small vessels leaving the harbour for the fishing grounds, or sailing across the sea to “the other side.” It was on a calm evening by the Sea of Galilee, when a scene of this kind presented itself. The Lord Jesus having said to His disciples, “Let us pass over to the other side,” they at once responded by making preparation for the short voyage. There were other crews, it appears, who followed their example, and soon this little fleet was under weigh. They needed neither “admiral” nor “pilot,” not that they were free from danger, as we shall soon see, but because they were under the protection of One

“Who plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm,”

and who is the Saviour (or Preserver) of all men, specially of those that believe. (1 Tim.) But there was one of these little ships’ companies that had the advantage of all the rest, for they had “Christ IN the vessel,” and were not only preserved BY Him, they had His presence WITH them to command the vessel, to control the elements,

and conduct them safely over the sea. And they were to have a **FREE** passage and a **SAFE** passage, but not a **SMOOTH** one. Here is the advantage, then, of having “Christ in the vessel.”

May God awaken in the heart of some unsaved one, who may read this paper, a desire to have Him too; to have Christ in you, the hope of glory, and then you will not only have His presence and protection on earth, but “**A FREE PASSAGE**” to the mansions on high. You will be on “the other side” of death and judgment already, and on heaven’s side for ever, when Jesus comes. For since He bore the judgment for all that believe, His people can safely sing—

“Death and judgment are behind us,
 Grace and glory are before;
 All the billows rolled o’er Jesus,
 There they spent their utmost power.”

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

VI.

I SHOULD now like to speak of a line of study that is of the greatest importance and that is, dispensational truth.

No one can go very far in the study of

scripture without being more or less affected in their views by the various dispensations. If they acknowledge and distinguish them it will go a long way to give them correct thoughts of Bible truths.

If, on the other hand, they ignore or fail to see the dispensations so clearly marked in scripture, the chief part of their study will go hopelessly wrong, and their very best deductions will probably be wide of the mark. This may easily be proved by much of the cloudy religious writings of the present day put out as christian theology.

What then is a dispensation, we may ask?

A dispensation is a period of time, and may be of long or short duration. It is a period of time during which a certain line of action is pursued by God towards man and when that line of action is changed or discontinued the dispensation comes to an end.

We once heard it forcibly explained in the following manner. Suppose a commercial traveller buys a railway time-table in the month of January and uses it during that month, and suppose that when February begins, instead of buying a new time-table, he says, "I have got on so well with this one, and found it so reliable, I shall use it all through the year." He

may say, "It is issued with the full authority and sanction of the railway company, so I know I am safe in keeping to it." What should we think of such a man? Should we pity him when he got into trouble by losing his train because the time had been altered? Certainly not; we should say he had received the due reward of his folly.

Now this is just the way some people act in reading the scriptures. They can understand that a company may change its dispensation or way of acting every month, but they cannot see that in scripture God has clearly marked dispensations, and has changed His line of action towards man at different times.

This has only to be pointed out to any thoughtful person to be seen at once. For instance, God's first dealing with man was when Adam and Eve were in the garden. They had only one law to keep there, and that was not to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden.

Every one must see that man has never since been in the same position towards God, and never will be again.

Other periods or dispensations will be found clearly marked in scripture, and to mix them up will be fatal to any endeavour to rightly divide the word of truth.

But the three chief lines or dispensations of God's dealings with man are as follows:

1st. The law given by Moses to Israel till the coming of Christ.

2nd. The dispensation of grace and truth running on at the present time.

3rd. The reign of Christ over the earth, or the millennium.

The careful study of these three dispensations alone will throw a flood of light on God's dealings with men, of which thousands of Christians in the present day are little aware, or they would not be found putting themselves under law which properly belongs to the first great dispensation, and was never given to Gentiles at all.

Beside the above three periods, we also find that the peoples of the earth are by the Spirit of God divided up into three large classes as mentioned in 1 Corinthians x. 32 :

1. The Jews.
2. The Gentiles.
3. The church of God.

This again is deeply instructive. To trace through scripture God's dealings with these three classes. His earthly people, the Jews, first called in Abram, then the world outside this special calling—the Gentiles—and lastly the church of God, composed of converts from both Jews and Gentiles.

I may further add that there seem to be seven great periods of history in scripture which it is well to keep clearly before the mind in order to have a concise grasp of the divine testimony, from the creation till the eternal state:

1. From Adam till the flood.
2. From the flood till the call of Abram.
3. From the call of Abram till Moses.
4. From Moses till Christ came.
5. From Christ to the Second Coming.
6. From the Second Coming till day of the Lord.
7. The millennium.

ETERNAL STATE.

ON WHICH SIDE ARE YOU?

THERE are
TWO GATES
THE ONE WIDE. | THE OTHER STRAIT.

TWO COMPANIES.

THE MANY.

Those who have no fear of God before their eyes, love pleasure, please themselves; also those who are satisfied with their own righteousness, rejecting God's—Jesus Christ.

THE FEW.

Those who have confessed themselves nothing but sinners, have accepted God's gift, Jesus Christ, and are now living soberly, righteously and godly in this evil world.

TWO LEADERS.

SATAN,
THE DECEIVER.

JESUS CHRIST,
THE TRUTH.

TWO WAYS.

BROAD,
DARK,
SMOOTH.

NARROW,
LIGHT,
ROUGH.

'TWO DEATHS.

IN THEIR SINS

IN THE LORD.

TWO RESURRECTIONS.

TO JUDGMENT.

TO LIFE.

TWO ETERNITIES.

DAMNATION IN HELL.

Weeping and wailing and gnashing of

teeth, torment, sin and sorrow, with the devil and his angels.

GLORY IN HEAVEN.

Reigning as kings, worshipping as priests, serving in holiness, joy and love, with the Lord.

On which side of the line are you? There is no half-way place; you are either condemned or justified—which? If you think it will be somehow right in the end, without having God's word for it, we pray God that your eyes may be opened to see your danger, for there is no more awful condition than that of man sleeping on the edge of hell and dreaming that he is awake. If you have discovered that you are on the broad road going on to destruction, thank God that He has shewn you this, for you must know your danger, before you will value salvation. Now is the time to be saved for eternity, and it may be

NOW OR NEVER.

I ONCE HAD CONVICTIONS.

A CHRISTIAN was called to the bedside of a dying man and thus related the account of the interview. I took out my Bible to read to him: the poor man gathered his little strength together, twisted the sheet around his wasted fingers, and placed them in his ears to stop the sound of the words of life from reaching him. I then spoke to him, but he was deaf to my words. In sorrow for his soul, I knelt beside his bed and prayed for him—for he had but a few minutes to live.

When I rose from my knees I looked at him earnestly, but still the twisted sheet was stuffed into his ears to deaden my voice. Mournfully I turned from the wretched man, and while shutting the door I cast another look upon him: he lifted his thin finger, and, beckoning me to him, fixed his glassy eyes on mine—he could not raise his voice, he was so weak.

I bent over his bed, hoping that he was turning to God, and, putting my ear to his mouth, I heard him whisper, “It is of no use your reading the Bible to me—it is of no use your speaking of Christ to me—it

is of no use your praying for me—I ONCE HAD CONVICTIONS—it is too late now—I am damned!” These terrible words were his last—he uttered them and died.

Many, many a lost soul in hell will say, “I once had convictions.” Perhaps in boyhood, at the bedside of a faithful Christian, at the moment of sickness, while reading the Bible, while hearing a sermon, or reading a tract. Ah! reader, and you too say, “I once had convictions, I once was sorry for my sins, feared God’s wrath—but—”

But what? poor soul. Dare you court a similar awful end to that of which you have read? Remember how Jesus pleaded with Jerusalem, how He would have gathered her children to Himself, yet what had He to say? “BUT YE WOULD NOT.” Is this your present answer to the voice of divine love? May God save your never-dying soul, may He give you now in this accepted time to seek Him.

HOW GOD ANSWERED MY PRAYER.

I WANT to place on record, for the encouragement of those who may be passing through temptation, how, on one occasion, our dear Lord answered my

prayer. My husband was an officer in the Indian Army: we had spent most of our life in India, where for many years we had been most happy, with all our dear children around us. But alas, the time came when we were obliged to take them to England, and to return to India alone. We took them home, and spent a happy, though half sad, time with them; for the shadow of our coming separation fell across the days and weeks as they passed quickly, too quickly, away, and brought us to the bitter parting from those we loved. It is impossible to say what we felt when, as the steamer carried us swiftly away, we looked back to see three small wistful faces that, for anything we could tell, we might never look on again. Five years passed away; blessed years to us; for during that time God in His mercy revealed Himself to us as He had never done before, and pointed us to the cross, and shewed us it was not what we were in ourselves, not our church-going, our charities, and our good life, that saved us; but the blood shed on the cross—our sins laid on Jesus. We came to see that God does not look to us for righteousness, but to Christ, because He is our substitute, and with His stripes we are healed.

With assurance of salvation came a

wonderful change in our lives. Before, we seemed to be drifting wherever the tide of life and circumstances took us, like a ship without a rudder ; now a strong, loving hand was ever near to guide and lead us wherever it was best that we should go ; and with this knowledge came gradually a belief in the reality of prayer—a feeling of rest, when we learned that we could take all our troubles, anxieties, and difficulties to One who is ever ready to hear, and to grant all that it is best we should have. I need not say that the wish which was nearest our hearts—that we should live to see our dear ones again—was brought to the loving Saviour, and how well He knew all it meant to us. So the years passed on, and as they came brought nothing but blessings with them—loving letters, health, prosperity, until the last year of our long separation came and went, and little more than six months were left to the time when we hoped to meet our dear ones once again. It was the beginning of our last hot weather in India, and we went up to the hills to a place where one of our dear children had been born, and where every house, and road, and grassy slope recalled them to our minds, and with them our youth, and many happy years long passed and gone. It was very

soon after our arrival at this place that Satan did his best to tempt me, and make me believe that it was no use praying. It certainly was not God who put into my heart the feeling, first of intense melancholy and then of despair, that took possession of me. I became conscious of some influence about and around me that seemed always to be whispering to me ; “ You may give up all thought of seeing your children again ; for you will never leave this hill. God has forgotten you, and He does not mean to answer your prayer. It is only a matter of time ; wait, and you will see.” I was surrounded by kind friends, and in my own home I had every wish realised that love could grant or plan. I got joyous letters of welcome from those who already had begun to make plans for our happy home life ; but nothing lifted the dead weight that had fallen on my heart. They might make plans, but I would never be one to help them to carry them out. They might come to meet their father, but they would never welcome me.

Just about this sad time, one of our friends on the hill—a mother with several little ones in England—became very ill, and as we were but a small community, and there was not such a person as a nurse to be had, I was only too glad to sit now

and then by her bedside, and help a little in nursing her. She was a loving Christian, and was not trusting to a death-bed repentance to make her fit for the other life; if it were God's will to take her to Himself. He did take her, and the children she loved and longed to see again, can only meet her in the home to which she has gone to be "for ever with the Lord." By that dying bed Satan never left me; telling me that in a little while I, too, should lie as she did, helpless and fading; leaving all her little ones and her husband standing on this side of the river, while she passed over to the other side. I walked home in the grey of the early morning of the day on which she died, and such a sense of despair filled my heart as I could not tell even to my husband. The same evening our dear friend was buried, and oh! how well I remember the feelings that filled my soul as I watched the little funeral winding down the hill, and wondered how many days would pass before mine followed. All this time I never had any brighter thoughts, and never felt cheered even at times; for the tempter's voice was always in my ears, telling me one thing and then another. Sometimes I used to think it possible my reason was getting affected; so hopeless did it seem to me to resist the dreadful

feeling that filled my mind. One thing I was ever thankful for, that I never had a doubt as to my own future. I knew that He in whom I believed was faithful, and I trusted His promise, that "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life." (John v. 24.)

I need not say that I prayed at this time often and constantly ; but I got no comfort, and it seemed to me as if God was not in the room with me when I prayed. I used to tell my husband a little of what I felt, but even now, I know that God alone knew what I suffered ; for it seemed as if He really had forgotten me, and I had to bear Satan's temptation alone. One day I felt ill, as if I could not walk up the hill to our home, and that night I could not sleep, and when my temperature was taken it was found that I had fever. Again the tempter told me that it was only the beginning of the end, and I know I thought so during that day, and even my husband could not altogether hide his anxiety. After thirty-six hours the fever went away. But still the dull pain filled my heart as before.

When I was thus feeling very sad the thought came to me, I will go and ask God to give me some palpable sign if I am to see our children again. I knelt down, helpless and troubled, and spoke to Him just as I

might have done had He been an earthly father. I told Him all my trouble ; I said I did not expect Him to speak to me directly as He had done to His servants of old ; but I prayed Him to shew me in some marked way that I had no need to fear. I told Him I knew it was only Satan who was trying me, and I prayed Him, in His own best way, to give me the power by some sign that I might resist him. I laid my request at his feet, and so left it, with a feeling in my heart, that whatever was best for me my faithful Lord would do.

I was in the habit of getting small tracts and religious books to give away and lend, and one morning the postman brought us a parcel of books which I knew at once were some I had lately ordered. To our surprise a long roll was handed in with them. "What is that?" we both exclaimed ; and as it was an unexpected and strange looking parcel, we opened it first. It was a scripture card ; my husband held it up, wondering how the bookseller could have sent it. "It must be a mistake," he said ; "we did not order any cards." He turned it towards me, and I read, with a rush of joy to my heart such as I had long been a stranger to—

I WILL TRUST, AND NOT BE AFRAID."
(Isa. xii. 2.)

“It is the answer to my prayer,” I cried; “and God has put it into the man’s heart to send it.” We never learned why the bookseller sent the card; it was not as an advertisement, for it was charged in his bill. We certainly never thought of ordering it, as we were just going home to England. And yet we *do* know why he sent it; it was sent under the orders of Him who said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.” (John xvi. 23.) From that day I never had a doubt as to my seeing our darlings again. I felt as if I trod on air, and as if I never had been so happy. I have no doubt in my mind, as to God having in His infinite mercy sent the text to me, and with it the joy and faith to trust Him. I need not add that when the time came I was united to our dear children again. My precious card, carefully framed, hangs where I can always see it, and ever be reminded of Him who has said, “It shall come to pass, that *before* they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” (Isa. lxv. 24.)

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

VII.

THE STUDY OF A SUBJECT.

LET us now look at another way in which we may study the scriptures. Instead of taking a book or a section of scripture we may take a subject and trace it through the various books of the New Testament, or indeed through the whole Bible.

This is a deeply interesting way to gain a knowledge of divine truths. Some may, however, think that as God's hand was evidently over the Bible and as He caused the books to be placed in their present order they must give a divine sequence of truth and that He intended they should be read and studied in that particular order.

This is no doubt true in a general way and every one must see that Genesis is the most suitable book to be placed first and Revelation is the only one that could rightly be put last. But so long as we see and recognise the divine order in which God's mind has been made known there is no reason why we should not study it in other ways as well. Indeed we are told to

search the scriptures and also to rightly divide the word of truth.

Many have found the greatest help in tracing a subject through scripture, and are able to retain it much better in the memory when thus learnt. There is no doubt that all Bible students make use of this plan more or less.

We read a good deal about the righteousness of God in Romans, but to have a complete knowledge of all that is written on that subject we must search the other books as well, and notice the particular phase that each presents.

Many subjects of interest will be thought of for this purpose, but we will suggest two or three that have often been considered.

Justification, Sanctification, The Atonement, Resurrection.

The work of the Holy Spirit will be found a large subject, and referred to in many parts, as also the subject of the Lord's coming and the appearing about which there are references scattered all through scripture, from the time of Enoch down to latest epistles.

Take as another example the subject of Redemption, which may be termed a change of masters by purchase. This is first found in Genesis xlviii. 16, the angel which redeemed me. Then the firstling of an ass

redeemed. (Exo. xxxiv. 20.) The cities the Levites may redeem (Lev. xxv. 32), and thus in nearly every book in the Bible is the thought of redemption presented in one way or another till Revelation xiv. 3, when we read of the remnant of 144,000 redeemed.

It is extremely interesting to trace the shades of meaning oftentimes where the same truth is spoken of by different writers, as led by the Spirit of God, and to notice that no writer ever falsifies what another has given out on the same subject. Thus the book makes a wonderful whole, worthy of its divine Author. Man may, and often does, misunderstand the Bible, and think that there are inconsistencies in it which need reconciling, but as often he finds that it is his slowness to apprehend or inability to understand what really is written.

May we learn our own littleness, and the greatness of our God, who has thus been pleased to speak in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, and has in these last times spoken unto us by His Son, who is indeed Himself the key to unlock all the wonderful fulness of the divine revelation.

INSPIRATION.

THE word inspire means to breath in, and when we speak of the inspiration of the scriptures we mean that while human instruments were used to record the message, the matter itself was given of God. These men were inspired by God that they might record in an unerring way what He was pleased to make known and have written, for the help and blessing of all who should come after.

We may go further, and say that not only was the message given to the writers, but they were guided and controlled by the Spirit of God as to the very words they should use in expressing it. This is what is meant by verbal inspiration.

Scripture itself says that "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. i. 21.)

But it is wonderful to see that while these men of God wrote His message, yet that He was pleased to permit the individual character of His servants to shine out through it. This we see in both Old and New Testament, whether we think of Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah, or Peter, James and John.

It is this inspiration which makes the Bible a different book to all others, whether written or printed, and is therefore a point which we as Christians should hold to tenaciously, for the moment we allow the thought that the scriptures are not inspired we reduce the book to the level of all other books, and then there is no certainty left for the soul to rest upon, no salvation and no Christianity that is of any value.

Any one can understand that many a large building may be thrown down by the removal of one important foundation stone, and so it seems to be with this divine structure. If it were possible to prove one part to be false or untrue, the whole of scripture would lose its power in the souls of men.

Probably nearly the whole Bible has at one time or another been brought into question, but there are certain portions which are like foundation stones, and have many times been challenged, such as the five books of Moses, the book of Jonah, &c., but it is blessed to see that the Spirit of God has safe-guarded these parts in a very special way.

The Lord Himself said to the disciples going to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 25.)

We know that at that time the New Testament had not yet been written, and the scriptures here referred to were the Old Testament books only, but the Lord evidently accepted them as being reliable, and charged them with being slow of heart to believe. How much more would He need to charge some in the present day as being fools and slow of heart also.

The book of Jonah being the record of a wonderful miracle and likely to be put aside as impossible, the Lord speaks of it in such a way as to put this seal on it that it was perfectly true. Any reasonable person must therefore either accept the whole of the Old Testament as being God-given, or else reject Christ as not being the One He represented Himself to be—the Son of God.

We can easily understand how that infidels and unbelievers hate the Bible more or less as it condemns their attitude towards God, and therefore they would be only too glad to find a flaw in the divine revelation, but it has stood all their criticism for centuries, and will last till the end of time.

When, however, we find professed Chris-

tians of these days allowing doubts to enter their minds respecting the verbal inspiration of the Bible, we may well desire to raise a note of warning. Some, too, will allow that the Bible is inspired, but only in the same measure that Shakespeare and other writers were inspired. This is a very specious way of putting it, and makes the Bible nothing more than a human production. Again we repeat that if we allow such suggestions as this, everything of eternal interest is taken from us.

THE EXPRESSION OF A CHILD'S LOVE.

VERY recently, a friend of mine, who is a Christian worker, was visiting in a very poor district in the great metropolis. After paying many visits on his rounds, all more or less encouraging, he called upon a family, the father of whom was a pedlar. He found the mother with several little ones at home. My friend was asked to walk inside, and there he met with a warm and kind reception.

He looked up to the Lord to bless his visit, and to give him a suitable message for parents and children. Sad and unfortunate

this case, one amongst many, not one of this family could read. A very fine girl of six years old more specially attracted the attention of my friend, her face was lit up with smiles, and her dark eyes were very bright.

My friend got into a pleasant conversation with the pedlar and his family, and he interested the group of eager listeners by telling them a little bit of his own life's experience. He told them of the first text he ever learned, I suppose it would be in the "Sunday School" and many years ago. The precious text was, "God is love." How true it is, and so full of blessed interest, and deep teaching, and means much to us, but if redeemed, we can place these four words after our names, whether we be either young or old, sinner saved by grace.

None of the group could read but they gathered round my friend, who proceeded to give them a spelling lesson, which was an interesting way to teach them, and which they very quickly learned. Let us trust the lesson patiently taught, will not be forgotten, but some day bring forth fruit unto eternal life, and to His praise, sooner or later. My friend then spoke very plainly and faithfully to the family, who seemed to be greatly interested in the simple story of the Saviour's dying love. He urged them

to accept full salvation now, and to receive the free pardon for all their sins, in love offered by Him, "Who loved us and gave himself for us." After speaking to the mother and father on this important subject, my friend put to the youngsters this question, Now children, will you answer me what I am going to ask you. They gazed into his face, and intense interest was written on every little upturned face. What an interesting picture it must have been, I should like to have had a peep at the group when he put to them this question :

Tell me said he, "If the Lord Jesus has done so much for you, what do you think you ought to do for Him?"

The child of six years, with the bonny bright eyes, was the one to reply, looking straight up into my friend's face, she said, with such earnestness, Sir, I would love and kiss Him if He were here. A simple and childlike answer, but it meant much. My friend said he should like to have taken a photo of that little one's face, as she made this answer, her simple idea of shewing her love to the Saviour, who came to save sinners, and who had done so much for her. Let us trust the arrow of conviction entered the hearts of some of the group as they heard of "His great love." After a brief

prayer my friend left this family, and went on his way refreshed, and rejoicing, trusting that the bread cast upon the waters may be found after many days. Dear reader, whether a child of God or not, there is a lesson we may learn from this innocent child's expression of love. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise!" Give Him your heart, unsaved reader. He claims you, and longs to make you happy in His love, wherewith He has loved you.

M. E. W.

THE FRIAR'S CONFESSION.

SOME hundreds of years ago, there was a poor Carthusian friar, named Martin, to whom the Lord Jesus revealed Himself by His Spirit. The friar being shut up in the lonely cell of his convent, had no opportunity of testifying before men of the Saviour he loved, but he longed to utter the praises of Jesus, so he wrote out the following confession, which he placed in a wooden box with its precious contents in a hole within the wall of his cell:—

"O most merciful God! I know that I

cannot be saved and satisfy Thy righteousness, otherwise than by the merits, by the innocent passion, and by the death of Thy dearly beloved Son. . . . Holy Jesus! all my salvation is in Thy hands! Thou canst not turn away from me the hands of 'Thy love, for they have created me and redeemed me. Thou hast written my name with an iron pen in great mercy and in an indelible manner, on Thy side, on Thy hands, and on Thy feet. . . . And if I cannot confess these things with my mouth, I confess them at least with my pen and with MY HEART."

Some hundreds of years rolled by, the old convent at Basle went to decay, and part of the building was formed into a dwelling of another kind. The confession of the friar remained unseen by mortal eye. At length, in the year 1776, some workmen began to pull down the old building which had absorbed the remains of the convent, and in doing so they stumbled upon the box, and thus was brought to light the sweet confession to the preciousness of Jesus, which the good man had hidden in the wall of his cell.

"He being dead yet speaketh." A voice, uttering the worth of Jesus, sounds from the crumbling wall of the old convent cell. Doubtless the writer of the confession

prayed over his words, he longed to speak of Jesus, but the darkness of popery prevented him, yet to-day he speaks to you. With the privileges of an open Bible and a gospel testimony before you, do you say from your heart, "I know that I cannot be saved otherwise than by the death of Thy dearly beloved Son"?

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

WHO IS YOUR GOD?

THE following appalling instance of idolatry has been recently brought before my notice:—At a meeting for prayer, an old woman was remarkable for her punctuality and regularity; her poverty and age drew forth the sympathy of some christian ladies who attended the same meeting, and the old woman was frequently the subject of their benevolence. On a sudden they missed their friend, and ascertaining where she lived, found that she was dying. The woman was very reserved, and as the ladies could not reach her heart through conversation, they offered to read

from the Bible to her, hoping thus to soothe her spirit; but to their astonishment and horror, the old creature flatly refused to hear anything from the scriptures. Being deeply interested in her soul's welfare, the ladies procured a christian nurse to attend her, for the old creature seemed wretchedly poor.

The nurse carefully watched the woman, and at the last, observing the look of death upon her face, and hearing her murmur something, she hastened to the bedside to catch the sounds, and bending over the dying lips, she heard them faintly whisper—"Gold! gold! gold!" With these words the woman fell back and died. In her withered hand was clutched a purse of gold—*her god and her destruction*. To gain gold she had assumed to be pious, but in her last moments she revealed the true state of her soul by crying to her god—GOLD! GOLD! What a fearful example is this of the end of a worshipper of false gods in our land!

Dear reader, who is *your* God? are you scrupulous in your observance of prayers—nay more, do you take into your lips the emblems of the precious death of Jesus, and yet all the time are you a worshipper of a false god—reputation, fashion, gain? How hateful is such service to God, who

searches the heart! Has He not said, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me"?

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof," not merely the world, but the pleasures of it. How soon will the eye close to its idols and lusts for ever! Ah! should you die grasping a shadow, and your dying hand unloose its vanity for ever! Ah! should you go into eternity having nought save your sins with you! Consider, dear reader, who is your God?

Blessed are they who have laid hold of Christ!—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Blessed to be *one with* Him—to be *in* Him—to be a fellow heir with Him! Reader, is this your portion? Then give Him the praise. If not yours *yet*, it *may be* yours even to-day, even as you read this paper, for they who believe in Jesus *have*—POSSESS—eternal life.

MARCHING HOME TOGETHER.

“At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.” (Num. ix. 23.)

SWEET to tread the desert land,
Marching home together;
Heart to heart, and hand in hand,
Marching home together.
Dark and rough the way may be,
Often clouds hang o'er us;
But it is the path where He,
Christ—has gone before us!

Strangers here we seek no place,
Marching home together!
Every step we learn His grace,
Marching home together!
Every need by Him supplied
Wakes a note of singing,
Every sorrow sanctified
Praise to Him is bringing!

Every day the miles grow less
Marching home together!
As our footsteps onward press
Marching home together!
Even now we catch a gleam—
Hear the chorus swelling
As each wanderer finds his place
In the Father's dwelling!

Will *you* join our happy band?
Marching home together!
Travelling to the better land,
Marching home together!
Will you wait with us for Him
Who will end all sorrow;
Gazing past earth's dark to day,
To heaven's bright to-morrow?

THE HERMIT OF LIVRY.

IN the middle ages when the power of Rome had reached its height, and the minds of men were captivated by its customs, when penances and pilgrimages were resorted to as a means of obtaining pardon of sins; and man set himself high on the pedestal of his fancied righteousness, proclaiming forgiveness of sins according to the liberality of the sinner in his gifts of gold and silver; it was at such a time that the subject of this narrative lived. It was in the depths of the Forest of Livry, some three leagues from the city of Paris, he lived a lonely hermit. His heart at first seemed to be as dark as the hearts of those around him. Shut up in the silence and solitude of his hermitage, he did his penance, said his prayers, prostrated himself before the images of Romish superstition, but still his conscience was ill at ease, these observances yielded no solid satisfaction, they had to be constantly repeated, and always with the same result.

Being poor, and having nothing except the loaf of charity which the neighbouring peasants on the skirts of the forest gave

him, he had nothing to boast of in the way of riches.

However, one day he sallied forth from his lone home in the forest in order to bestow his accustomed blessing and receive his loaf. But this day there chanced to be some travellers from Meaux bringing with them the glad news of salvation and justification by faith. The hermit listened to the wonderful message. He drank in the precious words, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 1, 6, 8.) The light of God's truth entered his soul; he looked back over the years of a wasted life, entirely misspent, gone for nothing, all the penances, prayers and the most devout worship of relics and images spent in vain—the works of sinful, degraded man, who endeavoured by lifting his puny, polluted hand to add something to a work accomplished in complete perfection. A perfect salvation, a perfect Saviour, a perfect peace completed to God's eternal satisfaction. The news of this filled the heart of the poor man with joy.

The travellers resumed their journey, the

hermit retraced his steps to the heart of the forest enriched with a heavenly treasure from which death itself could not separate. He could say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." Now, instead of shutting himself up from human society he went forth filled with fervent desires to communicate the glad news to others. From house to house he diligently taught the truth as it is in Jesus. From the humble hut of the poor peasant to the higher habitations of the rich he carried the name of Jesus. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus. (Acts iv. 12.) "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.)

Very soon the sayings and the doings of the new evangelist found their way to the ears of the Sorbonne and the tribunals of Paris. Soon their messengers found their way to the home of the now happy hermit in the heart of the forest. Seized, dragged from his hermitage, from everything he held dear, he was carried into the very heart of the great busy city, examined, and condemned to death. His fortitude, however, never forsook him, his riches were laid up in heaven, his Saviour was there.

Death could no longer terrify him, because for him it had lost its sting, having been overcome and subdued entirely in the death of Jesus and His resurrection. The knowledge of this sets the mind at rest, and the Christian can calmly await death in triumph.

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES.

IX.

WHEN we use the word study it suggests at once the thought of learning something, but in reading the scriptures there are times when we should lay aside the thought of study and read with the idea of personal profit. This has been termed, "Feeding on the Word," and is a matter of the deepest importance for the well-being of our souls. Just as our bodies need daily food to be kept in health, so the spiritual life within us needs to feed on the heavenly manna to be preserved in freshness and power and to grow in divine truth.

Many people may be unable to study the Bible to search out the deep things of God, to trace how His plans and purposes run through the books to form one harmonious whole, but no one from the most advanced

to the humblest Christian should neglect to feed upon the spiritual food which God in His goodness has provided.

For this purpose it is a mistake to suppose that it is necessary to read a whole chapter, as one verse will often give food enough for the soul to feed upon. Indeed oftentime when we have read a chapter a single verse may be all that seems to attract our attention and cling to us, but, thank God, a single verse of the divine record is enough to fill the heart and entrance the soul.

But there is one thing necessary in order to enjoy heavenly food, and that is, the soul must be in a condition suited to heavenly things. All true believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and it is by the power of the Spirit only that we can really feed on Christ. The Lord Himself said that the Spirit would take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us, hence the Spirit within us must be in an ungrieved state to be free to lead our souls to enjoy communion in the things of Christ.

This will no doubt account for the fact that many times we may open the scriptures to read therein and apparently get no blessing or profit thereby. God does not bless us in His things apart from a suitable state of soul in us. How im-

portant, therefore, that we should be walking in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, so that there may be no hindrance to divine blessing.

When there is anything wrong with us the Spirit of God must be occupied with that in order to produce within us a state of soul that can receive blessing. Hence prayer and confession must often come in to bring our wandering hearts back to Himself.

“CONDEMNED ALREADY.”

SOME years ago, during a short stay at a small village on the east coast, the writer was asked to preach the gospel one Lord's day afternoon on board an old dismasted vessel, which could be seen “high and dry” on the beach, firmly bedded in the sand. A gangway had been properly fixed for the purpose, which made it an easy matter for persons to ascend the ship's side and reach the deck, where we held our meeting that day.

The old ship had been purchased in that dilapidated condition. She was not seaworthy, nor ever would be. It was no fancy. The Board of Trade had, I suppose, decided this, she was “condemned already.”

The owner had bought her, not with the intention of either “patching” or “painting her up,” but of breaking her to pieces, and, being a Christian, he was glad to seize the opportunity for making the gospel known on board before carrying out his intention.

There are two lessons of immense importance, to be learned from this simple incident apart from which it would not have been worth while relating. I refer to what has been said about the condition of the old ship. First, it was “condemned already ;” secondly, it was about to be “broken to pieces.” The application of this is clear. If the reader should happen to be unconverted, and yet is willing to accept the divine authority of the word of God, he must confess that what was true of the above mentioned vessel also applies to himself, for we read in the gospel of John (chap. iii. 18), “He that believeth not is condemned already ;” and in the first book of Samuel (chap. ii. 10), “The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces.”

We have turned round now, from a worthless ship, condemned by the Board of Trade, to look at a wilful sinner condemned by the word of God. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John

iii. 19.) God is in no hurry to execute judgment. But depend upon it, that, except they be "born again" and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, such as are unsaved and "condemned already" will have to be "broken to pieces." And I quote now the Saviour's own words to prove it (Matt. xxi. 44), "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Christ is that Stone. If you fall into His hand He will save you. If you refuse Him, His hand will presently fall on you, when it is said, "He will break them with a rod of iron: and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psa. ii. 9.) There is no wonder then that David, when he had sinned, said, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great."

My unconverted reader, does David speak for you in saying this? Have you done what he did? If not, do it soon, do it TO-DAY, do it now; fall into the hand of the Lord, call upon the name of the Lord and He will save you, and it will be well with you. The Lord Jesus Christ has tasted death for every man. He made a settlement with God, on the cross, for the sins of all them that believe in His name; and now, sheltered by His blood from the wrath to come.

H. H.

“HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS
WELL.”

IT was in the spring of 1879 that we went to stay for some weeks at the Bridge of Cally, near Blairgowrie. It had been a matter of prayer for some time before, that there might be blessing to some souls there, and an opportunity soon appeared.

There were a few cottages near, and in one of them lived a young man, very ill with consumption, weak and quiet. He had been a teacher, and knew logic well; but was now laid aside and staying with his parents for a time.

He seemed pleased to have a visit now and then. After kind inquiries as to his health, the things of the Lord Jesus were spoken of.

One day that Psalm, the twenty-second, was the theme. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Ah! why, indeed? It was the inward experience of what the Lord Jesus suffered and endured on the cross.

Dear reader, can you say it was for me He died there? That bitter cry is over now, thank God, some hearts can say, God’s holiness and justice have been fully and for ever vindicated, and there-

fore my sins put away by His sacrifice on the tree. "It is finished," He also exclaimed, thus telling that the work necessary for the sinner's salvation was perfectly done—the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, shewing that the way into God's presence is now open. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x. 19.) It is also true that

"The very spear that pierced His side
Drew forth the blood to save."

Nothing but blessing flows out now as the result of that blessed work of the Lord Jesus. What relief and happiness it brings to the receivers of such love and grace!

This young man was asked if he liked such conversation and such a Saviour.

James B., for such was his name, replied, "Yes."

"Would you like your visitors to come again?"

"Certainly."

But still he did not say much.

Meanwhile the members of the family were remembering him before the throne of grace in prayer. One day when asked how he was, and almost before, his mouth was suddenly opened, and his happy lips

poured forth in glad accents what the Lord had done for his soul. During all those past days he had been drinking in the words of that Psalm xxii., and his hitherto almost silent tongue was filled with praise and affection to the Lord Jesus, who had been there on the cross, never so dear to the heart of God than then.

Much in the language of that psalm, he went over in the hearing of his visitor what the Lord had done for him. As the last clause of the concluding verse of the same psalm says, “that he hath done this.”

Can you also say this? Our Jesus “hath done all things well.”

In the days that followed, others came to visit him, to whom he also spoke of his Saviour. He liked to be read to, when able, and one day we sang that hymn:

“Heaven is our home!
This world’s wild wintry blast,
Soon will be overpast,
We shall reach heaven at last,
Heaven is our home!”

It was enjoyed to its sweet melody. So you see he knew something of the home beyond the sorrows of time, which nothing can touch, as well as the virtues of the blessed One who died to secure it to him. What a prospect! To be waiting for God’s Son from heaven, “even Jesus, which de-

livered us from the wrath to come."
(1 Thess. i. 10.)

A friend, who came to see him one day, said, "James, you will like that," referring to something that had been said, "you know logic."

"I have done with logic now," said he ;
"I have Christ."

And so he had, for after a few more days his earthly course was finished, he was absent from the body, present with the Lord.

Several followed him to the grave ;
"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," though surely we can say, who know the Lord, it is really being put to sleep by Jesus.

May this simple and true story be for the refreshment of any who may read it. Is it possible that one may yet be a stranger to the Lord Jesus and to His great salvation? Oh, come now at once, and your heart shall be made to rejoice for ever, and the blessed Saviour have all the praise, and He indeed is worthy of it.

"Worthy of homage and of praise,
Worthy by all to be adored,
Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays—
Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus Lord."

THE BEREAVED SHEEP AND MOTHERLESS LAMB.

A FRIEND told me the following true incident. He said he had listened to hundreds of sermons during his lifetime, but this one he *saw* at the time of which I am speaking, and it was made a very great blessing to his soul. He thanks God for having thus led his feet into the paths of blessing and peace.

My friend, then only a young man, set out for a good long walk, one early spring morning; he was neither in good health nor spirits, so hoping that the fresh bracing air would dispel his miserable and gloomy thoughts. He entered a large field, where a shepherd was busy attending to his flock.

It was a most interesting sight that he saw. He got into a pleasant conversation with the shepherd, and watched with pleasure the following scene which he has never forgotten—truly a living sermon, which touched and reached his soul and dispelled the gloom which was wrapped around him as a mantle of darkness, not being at peace and rest with his God.

There were many sheep in the field, and the sweet little lambs in their innocent frolic were skipping about all over the field,

the bleating of the sheep and lambs filled the morning air with the music of spring.

It appeared that during the previous night a poor sheep had lost its little lamb, and another lamb had lost its mother, so one was lambless and the other motherless. The shepherd wanted the lambless sheep to adopt the motherless lamb, but the sheep would not, so what could the shepherd do?

He took the skin of the poor little dead lamb and with it covered the motherless one, then he took it to the bereaved sheep, who, when it saw and smelt the skin of its own wee lamb, immediately received the motherless one to its bosom.

In a moment, quick as a flash of lightning, my friend caught the beautiful meaning of those true words, "Accepted in the Beloved." Also the striking text in Isaiah xli. 10: "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

We see here a beautiful picture of the Saviour and the sinner—naked, sinful, lost, having no hope and without God in the world, until the Lord Jesus, in His great love wherewith He loved us, shews us our lost condition, reveals Himself to our souls, and through His wondrous love and match-

less grace, receives us unto Himself, and looks at us through the Lord Jesus, thus we are “accepted in the Beloved,” adopted into the happy family of the children of God, safe, and blest for time and eternity.

That picture of the shepherd, the sheep and lamb, was blessed to my friend, who since that time has learned to live unto the Lord Jesus, “who loved us, and gave himself for us.”

“ ’Tis He adorn’d my naked soul,
 And made salvation mine ;
 Upon a poor polluted worm
 He makes His graces shine.
 And lest the shadow of a spot
 Should on my soul be found,
 He took the robe the Saviour wrought,
 And cast it all around.” M. E. W.

THE GREAT FIRE.

I N the middle of the month of June, 1861, a great fire broke out in some of the warehouses near London Bridge. For days it burnt with fury ; at one time a space covering three acres was a mass of roaring, seething flame. Building after building fell under the power of the fire, and no human aid availed. Enormous, so-called “ fire-proof ” buildings were scorched

up and fell crumbling into the huge furnace. Iron doors melted and ran down like water, iron pillars broke like straws; the heat was so great that no one could approach, while the attempts of the brave firemen to stay the devouring flames were useless, and their machinery little better than children's toys.

Not a breath of wind moved, or a large portion of London must have been destroyed. The smoke rose in one enormous cloud straight up to the heavens, and, as it was with Sodom and Gomorrah, could be seen many miles off like the smoke of a furnace. Several lost their lives, some were buried in burning ruins, others were overtaken by the flames, or were drowned in torrents of flaming oil.

Well-known scoffers were obliged to admit that, "At such a time as this, man's power is useless, and his only resource is in prayer."

Christians, as they gazed on the devouring flames, remembered the word of God, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." And again, "their worm dieth not, and the

fire is not quenched." And also where it speaks of the smoke of their torment rising up for ever and ever. Yes, they wept over the hardness of their fellow-sinners hearts, at the thought of the terrible judgment in store for those who despise the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader, where will you be at the time of THE GREAT FIRE? Will you be with Jesus and His saints singing the song of redemption, "To him that loves us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" or will you be writhing in everlasting destruction—ever living, ever dying?

In that day, man's inventions will be useless: this so-called fire proof world—so secure, so improved, so progressive, so worthy—will melt with ardent heat, for God hath spoken it: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet. iii. 10.)

Then man will cry aloud but in vain, and prayer will be too late: for "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision." *Now* is the day of salvation, *now* is the day of long-suffering.

Beloved reader, despise not the gospel, or God will despise you - mercy rejected to-day, may be hell to-morrow. Come to Jesus now. Flee from the wrath to come. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." If in Christ, none shall make you afraid; whether sin, Satan, the world, or your own conscience. "It is God that justifieth. It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again."

"When the great day of his wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?"

THE TWO "PLEASURE PARTIES."

"OUR train is late this morning."

"Yes, and I fear we shall be late for business. I suppose this is your morning pursuit."

"Well no, I am having 'a day off,' and am going to join some friends at D—— to form a kind of 'pleasure party.' Will you accompany us, what say?"

"No, thank you, I must be at business to-day, and besides, I have joined 'a pleasure party' already."

"What party do you refer to, pray?"

"There are two pleasure parties spoken

of in the scriptures. One consists of such as will have 'pleasures for evermore' (Psa. xvi.), the other, of those who are content with having the pleasures of sin for a season. (Heb. xi. 25.) It is the former party I belong to."

"And how came you to find out this 'pleasures-for-evermore' party, as you term it, may I ask?"

"It was simply listening to the voice of wisdom, saying, 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.' (Prov. ix. 5, 6.) That voice is heard again in Luke xiv., where the feast of love is spread and the guests are invited. 'Come; for all things are now ready.'"

"I never feel at home, do you know, with these subjects, and am rather glad when the conversation takes a turn."

"Ah, no! you never will, until the question of your sins is settled and you are reconciled to God. You can never feel yourself at home with Him till you are reconciled to Him. Therefore the apostle says, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' (2 Cor. v. 20.)"

"No doubt your intentions are good in

speaking to me in this way. At the same time, I must confess, I know of nothing better than for a person to have a share of the world's amusements, and enjoy life as long as it lasts ; and besides, what harm is there in it ?"

"I own there is truth in what you say in this respect, and it seems strange there should be such reserve in our minds towards God, but so it is."

"But there is something far worse than 'reserve,' there is positive hatred of God in the heart of man, and this accounts for his refusing what is good and choosing the evil. Man is at enmity with God, and the power of divine love is the only thing that can conquer his evil heart."

The Saviour's love was set on us. It was "sorely tried" but not destroyed. It is stronger than death. It overcomes its very enemies, and finds a throne in the hearts of its objects where it reigns supreme ; whilst such as are under its sweet control can sing :

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want ;
More than *all* in Thee I find."

You cannot wonder after this, that I should prefer my own party who are to have "pleasures for evermore," to the one you are going to join to-day, whose pleasures are only for a season, and will

end for ever with time, to be followed by “outer darkness” and anguish of soul—for ever. Allow me, therefore, to return the invitation, and in the language of scripture, and on behalf of the pleasure party to which I am joined to say—“Come *thou* with *us* ;” but if you turn your back on Christ and the glory, how deep the gloom will be when the following passage of scripture will be fulfilled—“And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard *no more at all in thee* ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found *any more at all in thee* ; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard *no more at all in thee* ; and the light of a candle shall shine *no more at all in thee* ; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard *no more at all in thee*.” (Rev. xviii. 22, 23.)

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES.

X.

THE question has often been asked, what are the best helps for one who desires to study the scriptures to the best advantage? This question may admit of many different answers, as some would find

a certain class of books to be of great value, while others perhaps studying in rather a different manner would make use of quite a different set of books.

There is, however, no doubt that one of the most helpful books to a beginner is a good concordance, to be able to turn up references without loss of time.

I am quite aware that some call the concordance a "good crutch for the lame," that is to say, a help for those that either have no memory, or else are too lazy to exercise it in remembering where texts are to be found. In reply to that, I would say that if you have the leisure and the ability to so store the mind with Bible references without the help of a concordance, by all means do so. I have known those who had marvellously retentive memories, and who were seldom at a loss where to find almost any given text; but I am convinced that this is the gift of the few only, and though to some extent it is a thing that may be cultivated and increased, yet to the vast majority of Bible students the use of a concordance will be a great boon, and save many a precious hour in searching out some well-known text, the exact wording of which it is desirable to verify.

In buying a concordance, it is well to get an unabridged copy. All small editions

and those bound up with Bibles are much condensed, and therefore not nearly so useful. If a little extra expense is not objected to, we would strongly advise the purchase of the Englishman's Greek Concordance. This has an English index, by means of which any one can use it, and the references in it are far more accurate than those of ordinary concordances.

The next book one should obtain is "Helps to the Study of the Bible." This is sometimes bound up with Bibles, but can also be had separately if so desired. It contains a great deal of information in a very condensed form, and will be found most useful for reference. The recent issues have been a good deal enlarged, and in some editions illustrations have been added.

Then what seems to be so necessary is a book that will give an outline in brief of each book in the Bible, so that the particular theme may be grasped at once, and thoughts directed in the right channel.

There are many books that have this for their object, and the reader will be able, on inquiry, to find them out and make his own selection. We will mention three or four at the end of this article which are known to us, but others can easily be obtained.

Those who are critically inclined will not be content with the above books, but will

want to dip a little into the original texts in Greek and Hebrew, especially those who have already learned something of these languages.

We have heard tell of some one who began to learn Greek at eighty years of age, so none need despair on the score of age who have any leaning towards these classical languages in order to the better understanding of scripture.

For this purpose a Greek Testament, a Lexicon and a Greek Concordance will be necessary for the New Testament and corresponding books in Hebrew for the Old. Doubtless Wigram's Greek and Hebrew Concordances, published by Bagster, are the best for this purpose; and they also issue a Greek and English interlinear New Testament, which is a convenient book, it gives the English under each Greek word.

But for the English reader who has not the leisure for Greek and yet values accuracy in the text of scripture, several revised versions are on sale, which will not be read without profit.

The following books may be mentioned as being useful for reference:—

The Synopsis of the Books of the Bible.

A Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible.

The Dates and Chronology of Scripture.

Outlines of Old Testament Study.

Our Father's Will; a Brief History of the text of the New Testament.

Biblical Words and Phrases Briefly Explained.

The Gospels: Why are they four, and are they fully inspired?

THE YOUNG STOWAWAY.

THE good ship H——, Captain B——, sailed on 20th May, 1889, from the South West India Dock, London, on a voyage to Melbourne, Australia.

When three days from London, and off Portland, in the English Channel, two lads were discovered who had stowed themselves away in the fore-peak amongst the coal, where for this time they had subsisted as best they could.

As they pleaded not to be put ashore, but to be given a passage to Australia, they were put one in each watch.

It was a rule of the Captain's that no boy who had not been to sea before should be *sent* aloft, but if any voluntarily went, the officers were not to stop them. Usually, an order being given, the first man in the rigging went aloft to carry it out; and at times two would compete for the honour, and one had to be called down. The two stowaways were, however, constantly seen aloft, evidently wishing to win favour and to do something to pay for their passage; and one of them, who had given the name

of Brown, was noticed to be particularly smart and active, as well as thorough in his work.

All went well for a time, nothing worthy the name of a gale having been met with, and the Captain and his friends often thanked God that they numbered every soul that had left the shores of the old country.

But on Wednesday night, 24th July, the first blow approaching a gale was encountered from the S.W., which increased the sea and necessitated shortening sail, but it was not very severe, and soon blew itself out. About 7.30 a.m. on the 25th all were alarmed by that dreadful cry at sea—

“A MAN OVERBOARD!”

The tramp of feet overhead, as the men rushed aft to see if assistance could be rendered, assured all who heard the cry, and would fain have persuaded themselves that it was a mistake, that there was horrid reality in it; and the Captain's voice, heard as he descended the companion stair—“Its too late, boys, its too late; you can do no good!”—told the solemn tale that a soul had passed away in a moment from this life.

WHERE?

“Who was it? Who was it?” was now eagerly asked; and at last came the answer, “It was Brown!” the active, willing

YOUNG STOWAWAY.

“How did it happen? What about his soul?” are questions that now crowd into the mind and arise to the lips. “Who knew anything about him? Who had spoken to him?”

The gale having abated, the order had been given, “Loose the fore-royal!” and Brown was soon in the rigging and on the yard-arm, and the men stood ready, awaiting the further orders to “Sheet home,” and “Man the fore-royal halyards,” to hoist the yard into position, when a dark object was seen in mid-air between the yard and the deck; then a “thud” on the weather-rail, and poor Brown was thrown *dead* and “all of a heap” into the sea.

He had commenced to loosen the gaskets, and, it would seem, had found that the outer weather gasket which he supposed was loose had still one turn at the yard-arm, and had returned to the yard-arm to clear it, when the ship rolled to windward, and by some means he slipped.

A slip! A fall! A thud! A plunge!
And—

ETERNITY !!!

He had fallen on the weather-rail, the ship having rolled to windward, and had struck probably about or below the shoulders, and had broken his back, having fallen a distance of about two hundred feet.

The black quartermaster, who stood, as usual, on the weather-side, saw the poor fellow in the water soon after he fell, and knew by his position in the water that he was dead, "But," he said, with quivering lip and tears in his eyes, "I could not help giving him a life-buoy, which I threw just before him as he passed, but there was no movement; his head hung downward, and under water."

A LIFE-BUOY TO A DEAD MAN!

What use? But who blames the quartermaster?

The Captain was ready to heave the ship to, and there were willing hands and stout hearts to lower and man a boat to get the poor fellow aboard again; but what was the use to a dead man?

He had come on board with all he possessed on his back; and he went overboard with several things that his messmates—a kind-hearted set of fellows—had sup-

plied him with. Did he leave anything behind?

Yes, a New Testament and a pocket book. The latter shewed his name was Pearce, and not Brown; and the Testament had several scriptures marked. His companion stowaway said he had a widowed mother living in Barnsley, Yorkshire.

Leaving the inquiries—"Why was he in London? Why did he try to get a passage to Australia in such a way?"—we would rather ask here, Had he believed the scriptures marked in his Testament? Here are some of them:—

"These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John xx. 31.)

"By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 39.)

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)

"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. . . . Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark ix. 23, 24.)

JESUS ONLY.

HOW many real Christians there are at this present time in darkness! and some of them in a darkness which borders on despair, because they are trusting in their experiences, or their feelings, instead of Christ! The more we look **WITHIN**, the worse we feel; we should look **WITHOUT** and see Jesus.

If you stand back to the light, and look at your own shadow, no wonder it is darkness; but if you turn your back upon your shadow and look at the glorious sun, your face will shine with its light. Some believers turn their eyes to their own dark thoughts—others look to Jesus—those are filled with heaviness, these with the light of God's presence.

It was more than twenty years ago that a young woman was awakened to feel her lost condition before God, while hearkening to the words of some men preaching by the wayside. After this she committed a sin (to which many would attach little importance) and it so preyed upon her mind that she lost her joy, and shortly afterwards her peace. Instead of going to God with her fault and confessing it, she looked within herself for the joy which evildoing had chased away.

Twenty years and more passed by, and the once hopeful young believer seemed nothing less than a despairing, desponding, brokenhearted outcast. What a dreary stage in the believer's passage to glory! Twenty years bowed down, like the woman of old!—twenty years unable to look to Jesus! And why all this? Because instead of looking off to Jesus, and trusting God's faithfulness and justice (1 John i. 7–10), she was seeking for “the peaceful hour she once enjoyed.” But the Lord *abideth* faithful—He led this stray sheep back. One Sunday evening after hearing the preaching of God's gospel, she was enabled to exclaim with an overflowing heart, “I have found Him—I have found Him—He is precious to me! Yes, now I see that it is all Jesus—my feelings have nothing to do with my salvation, or with preserving me. Christ first—Christ last. For more than twenty years I have been and we are “Risen with him.” “Complete in him”—what more can we want?

Does our reader say, I want the experience of these things? If you have Christ in your heart, you will experience His presence, but if you put the experience of your heart first, take heed lest by looking upon your own shadow you be turning your back to the light of life. “Ah! but I

have sinned," do you say? But "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" is God's word. The only way, either for bright experience or bright shining, is to live looking off to Jesus. Both true happiness and practical holiness derive their strength from Christ Himself, who is our joy and our power by His Spirit for living to God.

We are justified for ever, because the Lord shed His blood for our sins. In respect of our daily short comings, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"THE CURTAIN OF SILENCE."

1 Pet. iv. 8; 1 John v, 16.

IF we have not been able to discover the good thing in our brother and fellow-servant; if our eye has only detected the crooked thing; if we have not succeeded in finding the vital spark amid the ashes—the precious gem among the surrounding rubbish; if we have only seen what was of mere nature, why, then let us with a loving and delicate hand, draw the curtain of silence around our brother, or speak of him only at the throne of grace. C. H. M.

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES.

XI.

HELPS TO THE MEMORY.

IT is almost impossible to over estimate the value of a retentive memory.

While of great advantage in every department of life, it is a most wonderful help in divine things.

Looking back over a period of 20 years we sometimes think how well stored our minds would be if only we could retain one third of all the profitable addresses we have heard and the many books and pamphlets read, and when a passage or a subject has been specially studied and some of the hidden beauties brought to light for real enjoyment even then after a lapse of time how much fades from the memory and we forget points that once claimed our attention very distinctly. On the other hand, some few subjects brought to our notice so cling to the memory that they remain all through life. One such address comes to my mind, heard over thirty years ago. The hall, the speaker, the subject, the points of interest, all indelibly impressed on the memory,

while dozens of other addresses heard about the same time have scarcely remained a single week. The question naturally arises what was there in that subject different to others that caused it to be so well remembered? Probably there were several things that contributed to cause this effect. In the first place it was a subject that was naturally interesting, then no doubt the speaker was able to give it out in an attractive manner, and lastly, it contained such good points for illustration and comparison, that once pointed out in a forcible manner, they were never forgotten.

Now can we so handle any portion of scripture on any scriptural subject in such a way as to produce this effect. Well, we may say the same of memory as has often been said of learning, there is no royal road to it, and all we can do is to give a few hints that have proved useful to others, and may be of use to the reader, also, if he has a mind to be diligent, for it is ever true that it is the diligent soul that is made fat.

The first thing is to find out the chief points of the subject you wish to remember, and, if possible, arrange them in some way that will naturally strike the memory. As by having a number of index words all beginning with the same letter. We will give two or three well-known illustrations

of how this may be done. Take the subject of Joshua who was clothed in filthy garments. (Zech. iii. 3.) He was cleansed, clothed, crowned, charged. In those four words you have practically the whole of the subject kept in view.

The story of David and the lion may be described with three words. The lion was destroyed, the sheep delivered and the shepherd was delighted. Many subjects seem to lend themselves to this line of things.

But I wish especially to draw attention to the great value of writing in connection with memory. The advice has often been given never to study the scriptures without writing down what your thoughts have been.

You can tear it up if you wish directly after, but the mere fact of writing seems to fix it on the mind. We only really know what we are able to express to others, and the moment we begin to speak or write on a given subject we find out how little we know about it.

It is also a very good plan, to strengthen the memory, to write down when you get home, after hearing an address, all that you can remember of what you have heard. At first you may only be able to write a very few lines, but with practice and per-

severance you would soon be able to write the greater part of the address, especially if brief notes are taken at the time of the headings of the subject and also quotations and the scriptures referred to.

“WENT INTO A FAR COUNTRY.”

He has left his home, and his father's love,
 In a distant land to roam ;
 And our hearts go out with a yearning cry
 O'er those miles of ocean foam.

Does he hear that cry ? Does an echo ring
 In his heart by night, or day ?
 Does he ever think, with a longing sigh
 Of his home, so far away ?

We cannot tell ; but if e'er his feet
 Should start on the homeward track,
 While “a great way off” our hearts go out
 To welcome the wanderer back.

My Bible ope's at that son's return,
 On whose neck the father fell ;
 But I wonder how long he staid away ?
 And the scripture does not tell.

But I know in that far-off land of sin,
 Earth's husks are *his* only food,
 And the cry from his heart must often rise—
 “Will none shew me any good ?”

“ JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY.”

WE frequently find in the gospels, incidents which illustrate very fully the way in which a sinner lays hold of Christ. In this scripture we have a lovely picture of a seeking Saviour and a seeking sinner, and how they met. In the Gospel of Luke we find the text that is at the head of this paper, which was (as it were) preached to this blind man. A very short sermon! “ Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” And Jesus never passed that way again! Bartimæus had come to the turning-point of his history ; and if that day had passed, he never would have had his eyes opened, for Jesus was then on his way to the cross. And the difference between the Lord’s journey on that day and now is this : He was then on His way to the cross, where He accomplished the work of redemption, shed His precious blood, died and rose again ; and having finished His work there, He is now on His way to the judgment and the glory !

It is because of that judgment, which must come, that I would now urge upon

every unsaved soul, who may read these words, that which we find so blessedly characterised Bartimæus — *promptness* ! The deep necessity of seizing the present moment, for it may never come again. How often moments like this, in the history of souls, are slighted and they never return ! “ I shall have plenty of opportunities ; people do not often die as young as I am.” Such like excuses are pleaded by those who would procrastinate. But I would warn you. There is one sin more terrible than any in a man’s history, and that is his *last*. Souls float on easily down the stream of time ; they go quietly out of the world, perhaps without any fear of hell. Some are exercised, and for a time are in an agony of conviction, but many slight the warning, the fond entreaty of the father, the mother, or the friend, as to the solemn eternity which lies beyond time ; and it comes to a moment when God says, as it were, “ Let him alone !” and his heart is hardened. It is a solemn, deeply solemn thing, this hardening of the heart. And the more solemn when we think of *God* doing so. We have an example of this in Pharaoh. God warned him in nine solemn judgments, and then, as it were, gave him one chance more. Pharaoh did not yield his will to God ; he hardened his heart against God and God

hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he went to destruction.

In the face of such a fact, I would press on every sinner the need of promptness in the matter of salvation. The Lord is long-suffering: He *waits* on His road to judgment, but at any moment the day of grace may have closed.

We find it more difficult now than in the earlier days of the church to press the fact that at any moment the Lord Jesus may come. The enemy of Christ and His people has succeeded in almost blotting out the hope of the Lord's coming—a truth held by all at the first. The word of God describes it as “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound.” So sudden will be the coming of the Lord for His own, and the transit of the blood-bought throng from earth and the grave, to the Father's house on high!

No figure of speech could give a more true idea of the sudden (and to many, alas!) unexpected action, and yet Satan has almost succeeded in blotting out this truth. But for this also scripture has prepared us. In Matthew xxiv. 48, we read, “The evil servant shall say in *his heart*, My lord delayeth his coming.” From his *heart* comes the thought. He is not living as he would like his Lord to find him: his heart

is set on earthly things, and he does not desire his Lord to come. To cover what his heart says, he settles that there is much to be done before the Lord can return—the Jews have to be converted, and such like things. Treat all such theories as the voice of the evil servant. *Nothing* has to happen before Christ may come *for* His own; and with that event the day of grace closes for all who have listened to the message of salvation! The denial of this truth, which should have such power in the conscience of the sinner, is immense loss; but I press earnestly and affectionately on you and say, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Will *you* allow Him to pass in the day of grace, and meet Him in the day of judgment for the first time—like Pharaoh?

We find three kinds of blindness in the world. There is physical blindness, like that of Bartimæus. His sightless eyeballs never gazed upon the light of the sun, as we may suppose. Then there is another kind of blindness—that of the mind, of which scripture also speaks—soul blindness, which is of the god of this world. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not [we read], lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Such see no beauty

in Jesus to desire Him ; fatal blindness unless removed. The blinded one in such a case is “lost !” Then there is mental blindness, as we say, That man is an idiot.

Bartimæus was blind, but “he *heard* that Jesus passed by.” God’s resource for the blind sinner is the “hearing of faith.” This was the avenue to his soul. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. x. 17.) Remark the little word “when.” (Ver. 47.) Bartimæus might have said, Here is a golden opportunity ; I will get me a harvest to-day from this multitude. Perhaps crowds like this were not often to be seen on the roadside between Jericho and Jerusalem. The great multitude were following Jesus to-day ; He had many followers, but few friends. He might reason thus : I will speak to Jesus some other time, and gather the silver coins to-day. Such an opportunity will not come again, and Jesus may be met at any time. But he did not reason thus. How many do so ! I will give myself to my gains *now* — get rich ; perhaps at some craft that is not as it should be—then I will retire. I wish to be saved, but I must attend to other things now, then I will look after my soul.

But Bartimæus felt that the *present* was too great an opportunity to lose, it might never come again. “When” Jesus passed

by he cried out. He was in earnest, and his promptness to use the moment was lovely to behold. It was his turning-point! Saints and sinners have all their turning-points. If he had missed his, the opportunity had never come again. We boldly say this, for Jesus never did pass by that way again. He was on His way for His last entry into the City of Solemnities—to Jerusalem, where, after a few days, He was crucified. He was on the road to the cross that day. He is on His road to the judgment now, and the cross is past—His work there is done.

But a man with a need in his heart will be prompt, will be in earnest—and "when" Jesus was passing he cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Have you, my reader, an unsatisfied need in your heart? This may meet the eyes of some whose hearts Christ has satisfied; but I speak to those whose hearts are still unsatisfied. Do such feel their need? Then cry out, and Jesus will stop—your cry of need will arrest His steps just where you are at this moment. When was there a cry of need which He refused on earth? Will He refuse the cry of need now that He is in His glory? Will He not, as it were, stay His steps as He did on that day, and meet the need, yea, fill the void of your heart?

HOW DO YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES?

XII.

(Conclusion.)

BEFORE closing these brief papers on the study of the Word, we must not omit to speak of one very necessary condition to progress, and that is individual condition of soul. If the heart is not in the present enjoyment of divine things, there will be very little progress in the knowledge of truth. This will account for the fact that at public addresses on scriptural subjects it may often be that some will enjoy and drink it in, while others fail to appreciate it at all, and as far as we know God never blesses His children apart from a suited state of soul.

It is quite true that many Christians may go to a meeting in a parched up and starving state spiritually and come away refreshed and blessed, but then there will have been soul exercise during the meeting, and Christ in some way brought before the soul before there can be this blessing.

On the other hand it is very certain that many believers go to meetings in a careless and indifferent state and come away in the very same condition.

Let us now apply this to reading the Bible. There must not only be a dependent spirit, but a receptive state of soul; a real desire to receive the blessing which should accompany the reading and study of scripture, or otherwise we may read it night and morning, and yet miss the blessing. A man may be a very intelligent and intellectual Christian, and yet miss the divine thought and blessing in the portion he is considering if he does not approach scripture in the right spirit.

What then, you will ask, is the right spirit for this purpose, and how can we cultivate it? There is no doubt that the right spirit is one of prayerful earnestness on the one hand, and real dependence on the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us. This will account for things being hidden from the wise and prudent, yet revealed to babes.

If we come to scripture with the feeling that we are competent to search out its hidden treasures we may be very disappointed; yet it is ever true that "He filleth the hungry with good things" and "He satisfieth the longing soul." (Psa. cvii. 9.)

May we therefore be found in the attitude of longing souls, and surely we shall be more than satisfied with the rich feast which the Spirit of God will spread out before us.