

Letters from the East

Notes of the Lord's Work in Egypt
and the Middle East

1884 to 1890

B F Pinkerton and others

Extracted from *Things New and Old*

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

77

drous privilege ! as to all our sins, we have now unhindered joy in God ! Salvation is entirely of God, and we know Him, so as to have joy in God, according to all that He is. We need not say this could not be through the law. If even the law could have justified from past sins—which was impossible—yea who could stand on his own responsibility as to the future, and joy in God ? No, it is all through our Lord Jesus Christ, from first to last. Let us beware of letting slip this perfect grace, of letting in the least bit of confidence in the flesh. It is Christ in the future, as Christ in the past.

This verse 11, then, closes the question of sins. The question of sin will come before us in our next, if the Lord will. May the Holy Ghost deepen in all our souls a sense of the infinite grace of our God, so that we may continually joy in Him.

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

“ It is a mighty gap from the dark and Satanic system of Islam into Christianity. It is very different from the case of a (nominal) baptised christian sinner, although the remedy in both cases is the same, for it is Christ. But in this case you have no christian foundation to build upon. So far as your work is concerned, all must be new. You dare not take a single thing, even seemingly good, of his old system, for it is

Satanic. The Koran is to us an 'unclean book, whose authority we dare not admit, even as a witness. I would not quote a single sentence from it as a means of dealing with souls.

"I was puzzled, for a good while, to find some line of truth to meet the state of mind amongst Christians. If you ask a man here, Are you a Christian? he says, 'Yes, thank God, I am a Christian.' And he will go on talking as piously as you can do. What I finally struck upon was very simple. I say, 'Well, my friend, if you should die to-day, where would you go to?' He replies, 'If my works are good, I should go to heaven; if bad, to hell.' I take him up on that, and insist to know how he estimates his works, if they have been of such a nature as to entitle him to go to heaven at once. It finally comes out that his works are not good. Well, I tell him that he would certainly go to hell, according to his own shewing. We then go on to the question of man's works, as measured by the law, and from that to Christ."

"I was once spending a few days in Ramleh, Palestine. People were coming and going. A man of some intelligence came in, and asked me if it were true that the English were going to make a railway from Joppa to Jerusalem. I told him I did not know. 'Well,' he said, 'it would be a great blessing, and make business good,' &c. 'Well,' I said, 'we may die before it is completed,

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

79

and what then?' He replied at once, 'That would be far better, for then we should go to Christ.' His remark being unusual, it struck me, and I thought I would probe it. I replied, 'Certainly being with Christ would be far better than remaining here. But will you kindly tell me *how* the like of you and me can attain such a great blessing?' Again he replied promptly, 'By faith *and* works.' 'It is, then, by faith and works?' I said. 'Yes,' he repeated, 'faith *alone* will not do.' (It seems he was a Greek.) 'Well, now,' I said, 'my friend, we must look into the matter; for if our getting to heaven depends partly on our faith, and partly on our works, we must look out that our works are of the proper kind and quality. We must have the right measure for them.' He replied, 'They must be measured by the law of God.' 'You are, doubtless, right,' I said; 'for if any part of our getting to heaven rests on our works, they must be according to God's law. Well, this law says we must love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourself.' 'Just so,' he replied. 'Now,' I said, 'we will admit that part that speaks of love to God, and look into the matter of love to our neighbour. If your house were on fire, and that of your neighbour at the same time, you will throw one jar of water on the fire in your own house, and the next on the burning in your neighbour's. If you receive one pound, you will divide it with your neighbour,'

&c. He was astonished, and said, ' Well, if that be true, hell is nearer to us all than heaven;' and bade me good-day; and I saw no more of him.

"A talk of this kind never fails to gain the attention of (nominal) Christians here, but would have no effect whatever on a Mohammedan. The god the Mohammedan talks about is *not* the true God at all. His creed is, There is no god but God, and Mohammed is the apostle of God. That is, the god he owns has spoken and revealed himself by Mohammed. But this is not the God I know. Many Protestants seem never to have doubted that Mohammedans own the true God, but are only mistaken in their way of worshipping Him. The god Mohammed speaks of has neither holiness, love, truth, justice, or any other of the true attributes of God.

"There are many here who are instructed in the dark acts of Satan. One, who says he is Christ, wrote me a letter last year. It was inspired by Satan, and wonderfully adapted to deceive. I burned it. He referred to little things, known only between God and my soul, and I am sure he could only have referred to them by Satanic inspiration."

When we remember the above extracts refer to those very lands where the gospel was first preached—Palestine, Syria, and Egypt—surely there is much room for grave reflection.

And if this Satanic, flood of apostasy and

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

81

iniquity rolls over those once favoured lands, is not a still worse apostasy foretold, soon to cover the whole of the restored Roman empire? (Rev. xiii.) And yet men will talk in their sleep about wonderful days of progress! It is a terrible thing to give up Christ, no matter what may be accepted in His place. The wickedness and darkness of those lands should be a solemn warning to us. Perhaps the best thing that Satan used, in Mohammedan apostasy, was total abstinence. May we be aware of his wiles.

Oh, fellow-Christians, was there ever a time when we had greater need to cleave to Christ with full purpose of heart? Are there not also many in these favoured lands in the same uncertainty and ignorance of a finished redemption, and justification by faith, as the nominal Christians of Syria? Is that thy state, beloved reader? Art thou nearer to heaven, or hell? Has God proclaimed to thee forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and art thou uncertain that God speaks truth to thee? Do we hear thee saying, Nay, I believe God, I believe that blessed message proclaimed to me. Then we hear God saying, Thou art justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

103

sinner that repenteth. It is one more snatched out of the kingdom of Satan or out of the great house of lifeless profession, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, that shall be to His praise and glory to all eternity. But there should be *present* joy—joy down here as well as in the presence of the angels of God.

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

“ You say, Will you please inquire if it is true, that the wild olive grafted into a good olive, makes the wild olive become good and fruit-bearing? In reply, I assure you that the olive is wild by nature, and instead of grafting the wild into a good one, it is the very reverse: they graft the *fruitbearing* into a wild stock.” The process is then described, similar to the grafting of the apple, or the rose. “ The apostle says that what God did in the case of the Gentiles, that is, in grafting the *wild olive* into the good, was contrary to nature. (Rom. xi. 24.) For the natural process is just the reverse. If you get a copy of a book called, ‘ The Land and the Book ’ by Dr. Thompson, an American Missionary who resided here for about forty years, it will tell you the same.

“ By the way, I have for a good while doubted the correctness of even using the process of *grafting* to illustrate the two natures in the believer.

I know it has often been thus used, when there was no thought of any wrong use that might be made of it. . . . The word for 'engrafting' in the New Testament is only found in this passage (Rom. xi.), where, as you know, the thought is dispensational, and has no reference to the new birth at all. James says 'The engrafted word,' but it should be 'the implanted word.' Really there is no such thing as grafting a new nature on the old; nor is there anything in common between the two, save that they are both existing in the one responsible person. Nor is there such a thing as cutting off the stock of the old, that it may yield its power to the new. The old is there in its entirety; and, as we know to our daily sorrow, if not practically mortified, it yields its fruit. The wild, and the good olive, are but two states of the one kind; but the old and new natures are two different kinds.

"The error of Dr. M. you refer to is simply current theology, that makes the new birth the reformation of man as he is: the only point of difference between him and other theologians being the degree to which this reformation can be now carried. I learned it in my boyhood in our Presbyterian Catechism, where the question is asked, 'What is baptism?' the answer there given is, 'Baptism is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein the washing of water in the name of Christ doth signify and seal our engraft-

ing into Christ,' &c. In fact the framers did not see the distinctness of the new birth at all.

“ You will be glad to know that the word from Upper Egypt is still very cheering. Thus far the Lord’s hand is very manifest, and it seems a point has now been reached when separation [from evil] must take place. I think in my last I stated the — had attacked the work, and published (or, at least sent written copies) of their official answers to these erroneous doctrines. Last month some five or six of those prominent in the work met together to give their answer on all these points. That is, they met to agree together on a written reply, and spent a month together. I had a letter from one of them this week. He closes by saying, ‘ The Lord is working in every direction. He first awoke His saints, and is now loosing the bonds which bound them to human systems, that they may worship in spirit and in truth.’

“ I hope to see them when the Lord will. [He is now there] Communication between here and Egypt is still impeded by strict quarantine regulations. Added to this difficulty, there is now much anxiety about the general state of things in that country; and in fact the minds of Mahomedans everywhere are now much exercised about the expected ‘ guide,’ or ‘ Mahdi,’ whom it is alleged their prophet foretold God would raise up for them in the last days when the faithful would be in perplexity, and not know what to do.”

Other letters have come since from this servant of the Lord, relating to the deeply-interesting work of God in Upper Egypt. The world may not be able to understand the great wave of Satanic power in the Soudan ; but those who know of the blessed work of the Holy Ghost in Upper Egypt amongst the Copts, will not fail to see it is the dragon's old hatred and effort to destroy that which is to the glory of Christ. May we all be much in prayer for these dear young converts to Christ and awakened Christians, and for the brother who has gone with his life in his hand.

A word of explanation may help the reader to understand the question of the wild olive. We were speaking lately with a great teacher of what we believe to be false views of holiness, namely, the improvement of man's sinful flesh into perfection, instead of God's judgment upon it in the cross of Christ as taught in the word. He denied the two natures in the believer as taught by the Lord Jesus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and said the two natures in the stock rose, and the apple, were not the correct illustration of the believer ; but the olive was the true illustration ; that it was contrary to all other trees—the bad was engrafted into the good olive, quoting Romans xi. Thus the bad sinner was engrafted into Christ, and became all good, no bad left ; no bad root, or shoots. As scripture was so sadly

misapplied by this leader, we felt led to question the fact as to the olive as stated by him ; and we wrote to a beloved brother in Lisbon, who made careful inquiries. The answer we got from him was precisely in substance the same as this answer from Syria. The whole character of Christianity is involved in this question. Is the new birth the reformation or improvement of the old nature, or an entirely new creation ? We quite agree with our brother : the mode of engrafting of the rose may be pressed too far, as explaining the mode of the new birth. But we have used it solely for the purpose of shewing that just as there is brier and rose in one stock rose, so there is the flesh, or the old nature, and the new in every Christian. His remarks are very valuable, as shewing that the two natures are far more dissimilar, in the one responsible person, than the two which are of a kind, in the stock rose, the olive, or the apple.

Surely such persons as Dr. M. can never have thought or meant what they say. If he reflects for a moment, he would not say it was possible for a sinful nature like ours, to be engrafted in the sinless Christ ? Yet we have often noticed where there is a wish to glory in the flesh, to exalt human nature in its self-righteous perfection, there is also a similar tendency to deprecate Christ. He was made sin for us once on the cross—He bore the sins of many. There He, the holy One, was forsaken of God. But did not God raise Him

from the dead and receive Him to glory? But for a sinful human nature to be engrafted into Him now, in order to make that sinful nature all good, like this untrue statement as to the olive—could anything be more heretical?

We do trust all who are in danger, or may have imbibed these unscriptural views of holiness, will ponder this well. It is also a proved fact that if a bad or wild olive be engrafted into a good olive, the wild or bad overcomes the good. It would be so if this dreadful view of the new birth were true. If our sinful nature were engrafted into the sinless Christ, He would no longer be the holy, holy One. Oh Christians, beware! never was there a time when we needed to be more diligent in holding fast the truth of the spotless sinlessness of Him who is the Holy and the True. We scarcely need say there is no such thought in Romans xi. as the engrafting of Gentiles into Christ, but into the olive-tree of promise or Abrahamic privileges.



PATIENCE.

PSALM XXVII. 14.

How needful this word of exhortation, uttered through the psalmist by the Spirit of God! “Wait on the Lord: . . . wait, I say, on the Lord,” is for each of our poor hasty minds, that we may be found waiting on the Lord, in confidence and dependence, for everything, knowing that He will supply all

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

“ You will be interested to hear a little of my visit to Egypt. I crossed the track of war, pestilence, and a work of God’s grace. The first thing I met in Alexandria was a work of grace that had taken place, and was still going on, among the English soldiers in Ramleh, at the outskirts of Alexandria. Within a few months a good many nice conversions had taken place. Before the work commenced, there was only one among them taking a decided stand for the Lord, and that was Sergeant H., a brother in fellowship, and a truly nice, godly man. When the soldiers were quartered there, he became known, and soon it appeared that there were some souls inquiring. One after another came to some quiet meetings, where they felt the warm atmosphere of christian love, and came under the power of the word. Converts in due time sought fellowship. Some were awakened remarkably, and were the subjects of deep conviction before finding peace. One dear fellow had been nineteen years in the service, and his life had been a bad one. The Spirit of God laid hold of his conscience while he was in the hospital, and, as the Lord’s words to the Samaritan woman, shewed him all that he ever did, and that in the presence of divine light that admitted of no concealment or evasion. He returned from

the hospital to the barracks in deep conviction, sought the few persecuted ones (for they were reviled and persecuted, even to hard blows and breaking of bones), and after three weeks got peace, and was afterwards received to the Lord's table, and, by his subsequent walk, was a nice testimony to the delivering power of the Lord Jesus. Instead of spending his money on his lusts, as formerly, he sent it home to two needy sisters, who had dependent families. Also—he had been a tailor by trade before entering the army—he now reported himself at the tailor's shop of the regiment, where he received extra pay, reminding one of the words, 'but rather let him labour, working with his hands . . . that he may have to give to him that needeth.'

"Another was an officer in the Commissariat, and had been a Pharisee, as he told me. He could always see that Christ might be the Saviour of other people, but could not see Him as his own Saviour; but it finally turned out that the reason was, that he was not as bad as others—he was building on his own morality. Well, light dawned on his soul one night when the well-known words of John v. 24 were being opened up. There were about thirteen soldiers at the Table when I was there. Several others have been converted. Dear fellows, they need our prayers, for their life is one constant temptation.

"In Upper Egypt I saw something of the

work, and met most of those prominent in labour. It was a matter of thankfulness to hear from their lips an account of what God had been doing in many parts. I thanked the Lord heartily, as I had done before, that He was pleased to raise up labourers in the place where He was working, and to sustain them by His grace. He has already given them to see much fruit of their labours and prayers, and we trust will enable them to go on in the path of faithfulness, be more largely blessed in their own souls and their ministry. I could not undertake to give all the details of the work, for it has spread very extensively. In the farthest places up the river—that is, about Luxor—the work, thus far, has been principally among believers, and been characterised by very deep conviction of sin, especially of its defilement and power over them. In some places, I was told, they spent days wholly given to fasting and prayer—in fact, many were so overcome by a sense of their state, they became unfit for the discharge of their ordinary business. Some were constrained, by their deep distress, to make confession before their brethren of special sins they had been guilty of. Their inward anguish led them to disregard the pain and shame of public confession. Those who were labouring there are rather in the line of the doctrinal and pastoral gifts. One especially, a very godly and blind brother, is quite a pastor, and lays the state of souls before God in prayer.

There, as elsewhere, there was a work among the children.

“ Further down the river the awakenings were more in connection with preaching and evangelising, and were more extensive and diversified. In some places there were quite evident manifestations of the Spirit working in unusual power. Persons would be seized with conviction and trembling, and some laid prostrate. Persons not previously accustomed to pray in public, would be led to pour forth their souls in prayer, and almost the whole audience would become bathed in tears. The character of the preaching was solid, although of a moving kind. The main subjects were connected with Christ in grace now towards sinners, and in judgment on the world at His coming. One who has been blessed a good deal (whom I did not see this time) had been a backslider, and was restored in a very marked manner. His subject is, ‘ Death and the curse through the first Adam; and life and blessing through the Second.’ He has been used to reach some Mohammedans. His line of things seems to attract their attention, and fasten conviction, ere they are aware. There was one marked case, where a young Mohammedan was converted through him, and though severely persecuted, remained firm.

“ There is one labourer in whom I was much interested. He is a black man, from Soudan, and was originally a slave, and in religion a sincere

Mohammedan. He has been converted for a few years, and for some time had been among the brethren at Mellawa—where he got a good knowledge of the truth; and, as to walk, is well reported of by all. During the last year the Lord led him out in evangelising, and has used him a good deal. He seems to be specially gifted to take the gospel into villages, where both the christian and Mohammedan inhabitants are in the deepest darkness. When he learned that I was in Mellawa, he came home, in order to spend some time where I was. I was much interested in him and his work. He had been at a christian village the night before. I asked him what he had been preaching about. He answered, The punishment due to sin, and the way of escape from it. He is a remarkable man, tall, black, grave in appearance, not ready to speak, but speaks to the point; and, I should judge, with great animation and power, when dealing with souls. As a rule, Mohammedan converts, even when genuine, do not grow much after the first and testing persecution; this one, Abdulla, and Ibraheem (the boy whose story so interested you), and some others—all blacks—seem to be exceptions. I was interested to learn from Abdulla what line of things he took when dealing with Mohammedans. He promptly replied, I take them to Genesis iii. I shew them how God created man, and dealt with him. I insist on death being the penalty of sin, and that

God will not, and cannot, change what He has said. I shew them that Adam's sin, and departure from God, have infected *all* his children—all descending from him are in a state of alienation from God, and of corruption, from which flows all the sin we see. Not one of all the prophets or holy men we read of, was not in himself, by nature, a corrupt and guilty child of Adam. *And God's sentence is death*; the full meaning of which is, eternal banishment from God, accompanied with the torments of hell. On this I enlarge, said he, and shew how capacious hell is, and how dreadful to think of its never-ending torments! This, he says, arouses their fears, and they begin to ask me to shew them by what way they can escape. I reply, Have you not got some means of escape already—some holy man or prophet who can deliver you? No, they reply. They are all corrupt and guilty children of Adam, and cannot save themselves, according to what you have been telling us. Well, now, he says, if you listen to me, I will tell you the way of escape. Then he goes on to tell them of the incarnation of the Son of God, shewing them, in a simple way, that we do not call Christ the Son of God in a carnal sense, as they have been accustomed to think. He then shews how Christ's body was holy, and in no sense connected with Adam's fall; and how God carried out the sentence of death in Him as a propitiation; and he urges repentance and faith.

“ His line in dealing with Mohammedans is unique, and I was impressed that he is gifted and taught of God for this ministry. All his questions about the word were of a profitable nature. I did not see the lad, Ibraheem, but heard a good account of him. The Lord may yet use him. I should mention, that Abdulla does not expect the conversion of many Mohammedans. This accords with my own judgment; but, nevertheless, it is still the day of salvation, and God’s testimony in grace is going out towards all. It does reach even some Mohammedans. What I have long felt is, that Mohammedanism is, in fact, on the ground of apostasy. As a system, it is deliberately and intelligently built upon the rejection and denial of the Son of God. I have said that I crossed the track of the pestilence. In every village you can hear of its ravages, and how many victims it carried away. In Upper Egypt God overruled it to the awakening of a good many to hear the gospel. Happily, in the upper country they do not hear much about the war in the Soudan, and other exciting events, and hence, those inclined to be occupied with the word, are not distracted by these movements, that do, in fact, possess unusual importance in the affairs of this world.

“ I am writing with some difficulty, as I got a fall in Upper Egypt, and injured my right shoulder, and have not recovered the use of it yet. It is better now; and I think the Lord’s hand

was in it, for different purposes, especially to shew me that, at present, my work is not to go about to visit villages, where He has already raised up labourers on the ground, efficient, by His grace, for the work needed, and suited, in their circumstances, to bear with ease what would soon wear me out, and unfit me for the special service He brought me back to the East to perform. I had distinctly felt this on my way back from the West. I have a knowledge of the language, and facilities for giving souls here the truth in a written and permanent form. There is a need for what I can thus give, and I am sure that it is His mind for me to bestow most of my strength on this line. . . . I am just getting through the press 'Son of God,' by J. B—, and I feel it will meet a need in souls. I am also writing on Matthew's Gospel, and hope to go on through the New Testament. Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Revelation are already expounded in Arabic, as well as six books of the Old Testament.

B. F. P."

March 4th, 1884.

There is a wide field opened for the Arabic tracts and books printed by our brother, both in Egypt and Mesopotamia—indeed, they get scattered wherever Arabic is spoken. The above letter will shew how graciously the Lord has been pleased to use these tracts in Upper Egypt.—C. S.



EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrouth, March 19th, 1884.

“ SINCE writing I have had word from Mesopotamia which certainly affords some matter for encouragement and thankfulness. My correspondent wrote in December last, and his letter only reached me last week. This fact will shew you how slow travelling is between here and there in midwinter. He says, ‘ The books which we have distributed have wrought benefit to many, and the truth in them has been received, so that some now call us not as a reproach, but because of the thoughts which we express among the evangelical brethren here, such as the impropriety of asking for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as He has been poured out and is here ; and that the church began at Pentecost, and other truths. And we express those thoughts not among ourselves only, but also in the presence of the American missionaries, who admit the truth of them, and do not oppose ; but seek to explain that what is meant by asking for the Holy Ghost is that He may demonstrate His working in the church ; for He has been given, and is in the church, and is in and with believers ; and the present period is characterised by His working to convict men of sin and judgment.’ He then goes on to express his joy at my return to the East, and

the hope that I may be able to visit them, that their joy may be increased. He requests that some more books be sent, and is extremely anxious that I go on with expository helps to the study of the scriptures.

“ He gives a postscript which I thought would interest you. He says, ‘ It is with sorrow I inform you that one of those who have been receiving the truth has recently died in a desert place, distant from here some three or four hours. He died from exposure to rains and cold, and fatigue, and hunger, and fright. He had gone on business with a partner to some distant villages. On their return they were in company with a caravan (for safety), but got separated from it in the storm and darkness, and both perished. When the caravan reached here, they gave the word that those two had got separated from them during the night, but no one could go out in search of them on account of the darkness and storm. Next day their friends started out to search for them, and found the partner dead on the plains ; and going further on to the mountains they found the other one lying dead also, near a stream of water, which had been swollen by the rains, and was flowing hard by his feet. His New Testament had been in his pocket, for it was found near by ; while the money he had on his person had been taken. His companions in travel informed us that previous to the time of his separation, he had been praying

fervently that God would give help and succour. This brother had been hated by many because of his piety ; even some of the evangelical brethren disliked him on that account. He had gone above a year ago to Jerusalem, carrying with him a petition from parties here asking the agents of the Church Mission Society there to send them a missionary of the Episcopal Church. On his way returning from Jerusalem he passed through Ramleh, and found some brethren there who entertained him, and advised him to abandon the thought which had taken him to Jerusalem. He had not known of their existence before that time. He happened to be passing along the street near to the house of one of them, and heard the voice of singing, and was led to enter and make inquiry about them. He remained with them three days. After his return home he told me about them. His thoughts about getting an English missionary quite left him ; and he lived spiritually. His mother and brother, with whom he dwelt, disliked him because he prayed too much. They are beginning to know his worth now that he has gone from them for ever. But I rejoice exceedingly, for without doubt he died in the Lord.'

" Thus I have given you this little account of the death of one who was, no doubt, dear to the Lord. The little details shew what daily life in that region is ; and also the trials that those who seek to live in godliness will have to bear, where-

ever they dwell. No doubt his testimony had been given, and the Lord's time had come to release him from further trial and sorrow, and he found that 'absent from the body and present with the Lord,' was just as quick a passage in the storm and darkness and desolation of that scene, as other saints have found it when departing from the midst of the peace and comforts of home. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'

"I HAVE written under a good deal of pressure, my right arm having been in disuse for nearly a month and a half. A good deal of work has accumulated for it. I was glad to get your letter. May the Lord abundantly bless all who care for the wants of His work and servants. I have given you an account of the last news from Mesopotamia. I know many are interested to hear about the first dawning of the truth in that region. I scarcely feel that the time has yet come for me to make a visit there, although I desire to be ready for the Lord's guidance at His time. In my last I gave you a little account of my visit to Egypt. I have recent letters which speak of much agitation on the part of the Protestant missionaries, who are seeking to crush all before them. I thank God many are standing firm for the truth. The labourers are all busy in different places, and the

Lord is evidently with them. They still find wide doors, in direct contrast with the agents of system, who cannot get a hearing from the Copts at all. One other labourer of gift has got free. He is one of the black men I spoke of. He is an evangelist who had been in the employment of the Americans, but for some time had felt that he was muzzled. He has now left them and is going out with Abdulla, the other dear black fellow I told you about. I trust you will remember them in your prayers, as they go from village to village declaring the glad tidings to all.

“The copy of *Things New and Old* came. You are perfectly welcome to make any use you can of my letters. I am glad to hear of blessing in England and France. It does seem that the Lord is working in many places manifestly ; and those who are humble and devoted will carry the work with them.

B. F. P.”

March 20th, 1884.

Surely there is much to interest us, and to call forth earnest prayer for the Lord’s work in the land of Abraham and Rebecca.

C. S.



this wounded one, and leave him in his misery. He was his neighbour; and thus we are exhorted to do good unto *all* men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. All men are our neighbours, all Christians our brethren. Man is an *injured* being, as well as a sinful one, and we see all around us those who have been the victims of Satan, and who are left in their misery. Through mercy, we have the Balm of Gilead, and if we have not this world's goods to relieve his bodily wants, all can tell of that which will both heal his sin-sick soul, and give him a new life that shall sustain him here, until the Good Samaritan return to call us all above. "Go and do thou likewise."



EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

"*Syria, May 20th, 1884.*

"I ENCLOSE a few extracts (translations) from letters received from Upper Egypt and Mesopotamia. There is just one thought that I would venture to express. . . . For my own part, I always read such notes with interest, and find that my heart is enlarged and led out in prayer for all saints, and I suppose many others feel the same way.

"Thank God for help, in every way, to disseminate the truth in a printed form. During the last month and a half I have, through His help, put about fifty pages of exposition of Matthew in print. I think I will send you a few leaves of it.

I send some by post to subscribers, in monthly parts of sixteen pages. They greatly desire this. And then I keep a large edition for being bound. But the labour involved in writing and printing Arabic, one who has never experienced it can form but little idea of.

“One of the extracts from Upper Egypt is from a brother A. Kundeluft, from this country. . . . He is a brother of a good deal of gift, and I have thought for a good while the Lord would lead him out. Hence his visit is a very interesting event. He has been filled with wonder and joy by what he has seen of the Lord’s work up there. He has never before witnessed the like. So far as I can judge, he was just the right one to visit them at this time, and can give them help, such as neither S. nor I could give them.

“The coming out of our brother H. at this time was remarkable. There was a need, and the Lord brought him, I doubt not. All you have written in your recent letters about the Lord’s work in different parts has filled me with thanksgiving and encouragement. I was struck with the fact that you make a remark about the near coming of the Lord being indicated by His work of awakening and ingathering, exactly similar to a remark of our brother, A. K., writing from Upper Egypt, *at the same date*.

“The extracts from Mesopotamia are from one there, who, I think, is quite true. . . . I have not yet heard what they think about that brother who was found dead, whether any of the caravan had played false with him, or not.

“B. F. PINKERTON.”

TRANSLATED EXTRACTS.

“Mellawa, April 31st, 1884.

“I have come to these parts to make a visit. Truly the hand of the Lord is evident here, and I am exceedingly happy. The more I see of the brethren here, the more I rejoice. God is causing His voice to be heard, and is waking up His sleeping children. It appears that the coming of the Lord is near. What I am seeing here is wonderful, and I cannot describe it. I hope to see most of the brethren in these parts. Pray for me, for I need your prayers, along with all the brethren; for the field is large here, and I see that the Lord is here raising up faithful servants, truly devoted to His work.

“A. KUNDELUFT.”

“Mellawa, April 31st, 1884.

“Our dear brother, A. K., of Homs, Syria, is now making us a visit, and we all have joy. He has helped the brethren, and they have been comforted through him. We have asked him to visit the brethren in places higher up, and he purposes to do so. For a few days he has, in company with brother S., been visiting places near here, remaining three days in a place.

“Concerning the state of things in this place, I have to say that the disaffected evangelicals, who had hitherto been meeting with us, withdrew, as they desired to remain identified with the system. The brethren thought it best for us to give them the old room; so we have left it to them, and now we meet in a private house; and, since doing so, our thoughts are quite at rest. The brethren at some other places have done the same. The work

is still going on, and the truth spreads in proportion to the efforts made to quench it. We have heard of some persons in the province of F. who have been awakened ; and also some in M. who have been awakened, and desire our brother, S. R., to visit them. A few days ago, brother S. felt led to take some books, and go to the last place to distribute them. But time would fail to give the details.

“S. M.”

FROM MESOPOTAMIA.

“The books you sent are desired by many, and there are those who study them ; and the hearts of the elect are touched by them. There are some who desire a visit from you. Our souls are weary of human arrangements in the church of God, which are all characterised by the spirit of the world.”

Also :—“What you remark about the parable of the sower—only one part in four bringing forth fruit—is true. Ah, how powerful is the spirit of this world, and how effectually it works in our days. Human arrangements are multiplied, and relied upon, and the results turn out contrary to expectations, because Christians do not surrender themselves to the work and guidance of God’s Spirit. Ah, my brother, what is man, and what are man’s arrangements in these things? And what are the schools and wisdom of this world, all which are to come to nought? As for myself, I am happy, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, for I am saved by grace, through faith, and by faith I can soar above, and sing the song of victory, in spite of the flesh and the world.

“Your brother, ____.”

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

"Alexandria, July 18th 1884, 10.30 p.m.

“BELOVED BROTHER C. S.,

“We feel so thankful to our God and Father, through His infinite mercy to us. We have had such a blessed time this evening, I feel constrained to let you also partake of our joy. Three young men of the 50th Regiment, who have attended the Bible reading every Wednesday, called to-night (one of them was saved the first or second night we went to Ras-el-Tin palace, through the Lord using John v. 24); the other two unsaved, and could not see the truth before; but it pleased God to reveal it to them to-night, I trust. We had a blessed meeting on the marriage-supper (Matt. xxii.), and one of them made a bold confession, and is determined to kneel at his bed, and confess *Him* before his comrades. . . . I am sure the blessed Lord is never ashamed of a poor sinner that goes to *Him*, and we should not be ashamed to let *all* men know that we are on the Lord’s side.

“*August 5th, 10.15 p.m.*—I know you will be glad to hear that one of the above-mentioned converts has desired fellowship, after very prayerfully going into the matter, and, no doubt, he is a bold young servant for Christ, and he brings all he can to the meetings. Brother W. has been used specially of the Lord to the conversion of one of his

comrades, an old soldier, who is really, like us all, a perfect miracle of saving grace ; and the dear old brother is always poring over the word.

“ We had a remarkable case of conversion. On Sunday, the 27th of July, C. and I were standing at his window when a sergeant of the Army Hospital Corps was passing, C. asked him why he would not *come into the ark* ; and he said he should like to, and eventually came into the meeting, and, after the meeting, brother C. and I prayed for him. And the next Lord’s day we were surprised to see him come again, unasked. After that meeting, when we were seeing the sailor brethren off home, he went with us, and he told me that, ever since the last Sunday, he had had no peace, and did what he had never done, in all his soldiering, before, namely, read and prayed over the word of God. And yet he could not find peace as we spoke of it. We proposed to go to his quarters, and tell a loving God and Father about it all. He was pleased, for he was truly in earnest about his soul’s salvation. For to be seen with brother C. is quite enough to bring a laugh from the world. Well, we got into his room, and there was an old Bible, his dear father, I think, gave him, years ago. He took it up, and told us he was in this fix : ‘ he could not understand how, after a long life of sin, that he could be saved *at once*, or *suddenly*, without shewing some signs of getting better,’ &c., &c. The Lord at once guided

to Ephesians ii. 4-10, and he was requested to read them. He did, and was pondering deeply, in earnest, and we were praying. At last he said, 'Well, I cannot get over that 5th verse; "Even when we were *dead in sins*; *hath quickened us* together with Christ; by grace ye are saved." Praise and bless His holy, peerless name, dear M. saw it at once, and all three of us praised the Lord, while the presence of the '*Almighty to save*' was gladdened with the joy of a sinner being saved.

"I was struck with the order: first, confession as a sinner; then, asked forgiveness; then, thanked God for saving him; and then cried, with tears, to God for his darling wife and child. Then he prayed earnestly that he might be allowed by God to tell others what God had done for him.

"Nearly all the brethren from Cairo have gone to the front. The 50th Regiment is, I believe, to go up in a month's time. We received a nice letter from the brother at Suakin; they break bread in the desert. Also from Port Said; they also break bread in the desert. I know I need not ask your continued prayers for us. Now, dear brother, I must draw to a close. All the saints here salute you, and I also salute you in the Lord, and knowing that now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. I humbly pray that we may shine the brighter in the darkening clouds of an evil world, thanking Him that we are brands plucked from the burning. J. HINES."

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

“Beyrouth, Syria, July 15th, 1884.

“We had a short visit last week from our brother S., who was on his way to the interior, to make a visit to the brethren at Deir Mimas. He had recently been on a tour in the direction of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, finding, here and there, some souls glad to get a book, or a tract, and to hear some words about the Lord. He has been greatly delighted with the translation of Mr. Bellet’s ‘Son of God,’ and has taken three hundred copies of it to distribute. It is a book that brings the Person of the Lord before the soul with peculiar power, and I believe it will be a blessing to many. The Syrian Bishop of Jerusalem, with whom our brother is personally acquainted, was very glad to receive a copy of it, and some other books, I believe. I may remark, that it is often refreshing to us to meet persons in these old churches who really have faith in the Lord Jesus as the eternal Son of God, who suffered, and died, and rose again, and sat down on the right hand of God. Five or six years ago, a bishop in Damascus read something I had published, and requested copies of all the rest; with which he was at once furnished. There have been (and may yet be found) persons, even among these hierarchical officials of these Eastern churches, so hoary and burdened with superstition, who really loved the Lord Jesus; and, as proof of it, some

of them have laid down their lives for His name. Only twenty-four years ago, at the time of the massacre of the Christians in this country, there was a godly Greek priest in Damascus, who accepted a horrible death, rather than deny Christ. His tormentors urged him to do so, and, having called in a butcher, told him to choose between death and giving up Christ. He remained firm. One eye was torn out, and held up before him, with the threat that a like fate was for the other, unless he denied Christ. He said, You may cut me to pieces, and I will not deny my Lord and Saviour. And they did cut him to pieces, as a slaughtered sheep!

“ While our brother S. was with us last week, we were cheered by the return of our brother A. K. from Upper Egypt, whither he had gone, more than three months ago, to labour, and found open doors in many places, and hundreds of souls anxious to hear the glad tidings of God’s grace. This is a brother from Northern Syria, who has been in fellowship a good while, and has a good deal of ability in bringing a clear, touching gospel to the hearts and consciences of those who bear the name of Christ, and, while confessing the great facts of redemption, know but little of them in their application. He had gone to Alexandria on business, and while there felt constrained of the Lord to go to Upper Egypt, to labour in the word. He was much surprised, on

reaching there, to find such a desire to hear the word of God. In every town and village he visited, many would crowd together, and listen to the word of God with breathless stillness, eager to catch every word that fell from his lips. It was an altogether new and happy experience for him ; for, although he had for years preached a good deal in this country, he had never seen an awakening, and never addressed such crowds, pressing to hear. He felt much interest in the Copts, who are deeply affected when they hear the simple gospel of God's grace, proclaimed in lowliness and love, without any desire to draw them after man. These poor Copts have been sorely worried and harassed by the severe denunciations of the Protestant preachers, who, instead of preaching Christ to them, denounce the errors of their old church, and make their salvation depend on their leaving it at once, and joining what is held up as the only true and pure church. And, alas ! in most places, it is the Protestants, not the Copts, who bitterly oppose, not church truth only, but the simple gospel also. I do not doubt that God has a people among the Copts, and that He is working to bring them to a knowledge of salvation ; and that there will yet be much fruit, if those who labour will only have patience, and go on in grace—the only hope of us all. How much need there is for Paul's directions to Timothy, that there must be patient labour before enjoying

the fruits of it. The masses there, to whom the gospel now comes, are a good way off from understanding church truth, as yet ; for they are only awakening, as it were, from the deep slumber of ages ; but the same grace that took us up, and led us on, can do the same for them also. The truth received will eventually deliver from the vain traditions of Coptism, as well as from the vain confidence in man, and the well-known errors which characterise Protestantism. However, there are some souls more advanced than those to whom I have alluded, who are now breaking bread on the ground of the one body. May the Lord sustain them !

“J. N. D., a year before his death, made an important remark to me about the state of souls in Upper Egypt. He said, souls in their state need to be formed ; and the important question was, who were to be used as instruments in forming them ; and this is, and has been, a most weighty question with us ; for the field there is wide, and the mere physical difficulties are great in the way of labourers from elsewhere going thither. One there remarked to me last winter, that it would require *at least two years* for me to visit all the places now open to the gospel. Thus far the Lord has raised up persons there, who proclaim the gospel, and help believers, to some extent ; but, as you are well aware, when the sifting time comes, there is always a good deal to fear from such ; for

when the more advanced souls are led to take the ground of the church of God, the instruments used in an awakening are tested, and many break down. Such may have preached the truth with blessing, and withal borne much reproach for the truth. But all this may take place, and *man* still retain his importance ; nay, the very blessing God has given to souls, through the preaching, may have served to give the poor human vessels undue importance in their own eyes, and, it may be, in the eyes of others also. Hence, the sight of greater faithfulness in others is a bitter test to many ; for it seems to make nothing of man, and so it does, but magnifies the Lord, who is alone worthy to be exalted and obeyed.

“ We are, therefore, especially thankful that the Lord led this brother, to whom I have referred, to make a visit to those parts. He seems to have been used, both in proclaiming the gospel, and in strengthening those who had got on to the point of breaking bread. At one place he found eighteen or twenty meeting ; they spent their time, when met together, in singing and praying. He told them that the work of the Holy Spirit, in building up our souls, is not confined to praise and prayer ; and if the word of God has not its place, and the breaking of bread also, the worst consequences are to be feared. The better-minded ones were at once convinced, and confessed that they had been feeling how hollow and unedifying their meetings

had been. A few opposed, but afterwards yielded ; and, after due time, all began to break bread. But how skilful the enemy is ; for there had been great awakenings in that place, and much preaching ; but the enemy was working to keep them in that state ; out of the false, in a sense, but not into the true. He was willing, for them to sing and pray, and then go out and preach in the streets and fields, or engage in any other religious activity, but not to remember the Lord's death on the ground of the one body. They all knew the doctrine of breaking of bread before, and quite admitted it ; but those taking the lead had kept saying the time had not come for it.

“August 11th.

“DEAR BROTHER,—Thus far I wrote nearly a month ago. We are now in Midsummer, and I can assure you, it is no easy matter to get through a Syrian summer, especially in the cities on the coast. Many go to the mountains for the summer, and I had thought, last spring, that I should do so ; but time has passed, and I had not seen my way clear to do so. Especially the printing work has pressed on me, and I feel the time is getting short for work and testimony. In the meantime our brother S. has returned from the interior, and, after a short visit, went on to his home at Ramleh. I have also had recent letters, both from Upper Egypt and Mesopotamia. We had had a good

deal of anxiety about those in Egypt who had recently commenced breaking bread; but the word last week was encouraging, and I trust they will be sustained of the Lord. One brother writes, July 30th, and says:—

“ The state of things with us is now very much better. May the Lord watch over us, and preserve us from the attacks of the enemy, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. We ask your prayers for the children of God in these parts. Some of those who fell back, during the sifting times, now feel their condition, and are sorry; but we shall not be in haste to receive them to the Lord’s table. Also some who had left now wish to be with us, but the brethren think it not best to receive them. At N., where eighteen began breaking bread, there are now twenty-four, and some others desiring fellowship; but the brethren delayed receiving them. Those in H. expect to break bread next Lord’s day. One of them was here, and broke bread with us last Lord’s day. It will be good, if our brother S., can visit the brethren here, for all desire him to do so.’

“ My correspondents from Mesopotamia write, acknowledging the receipt of some books I sent them, and tell of their distribution, and request more. One of them, evidently a godly man, seems anxious to get clear of his trammels, and is naturally a good deal occupied with the evil; but

at the same time he seems to be bright in his soul. After giving an account of the distribution of some copies of 'Son of God,' and other books, I recently sent to him, he says, 'I desire that these books distributed may be the means of blessing to those who read them, that they may flee from the thick darkness to the light of God's beloved Son, and be ready to meet the Lord, without any lukewarmness; yea, that we may all be looking for, and hasting unto, His near coming, for He is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness. It is a faithful saying, that if we suffer, we shall also reign, with Him. Let us thank Him for His sure and faithful promises, that will be fulfilled in their time. In fact, the more I study the word, the more I see of its preciousness, and find in it what rejoices the heart; and I say, Oh, the exceeding grace! And these precious things are hid from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed unto babes.'

"This is a sample of his somewhat lengthy letter. I thought I would give you a little bit, for it refreshes us to meet souls in the fervour of first love, when the precious light of God has but recently dawned in them, and filled them to the utmost of their present capacity to receive. I suppose that our joy, or peace rather, is no less real as we advance, but it is less demonstrative. Alas! that an advance in knowledge should ever be attended with lukewarmness. I am getting a

good supply of books ready to send them soon. I have been a little delayed, on account of having to reprint a gospel volume that has been much blessed there and elsewhere, and I am just now finishing a second edition of it.

“ As an illustration of the way in which light and blessing are scattered, even when we know nothing about it, a man, from Mesopotamia, called on me a short time since. He had got this book in his own country, and read it with blessing. Last winter he started with a drove of horses for the Egyptian market—a long distance by land. He brought with him half a-dozen copies of his favourite book, to distribute by the way. He had given all away before reaching Damascus, and expected that he might find more there; but was surprised, when reaching there, to find that the Christians, whom he asked, knew nothing about it. And thus it is, brother, everywhere. Books and tracts you may have written may carry joy and blessing to souls in India, or in Western America, and your neighbours who live within a stone’s throw, may never have seen them, or cared aught for the blessed messages of grace contained in them.

“ When speaking of books, there is one book I ought to mention, and that is the word of God, of which we have a good translation in the Arabic—on the whole, it is the finest one I know. The British and American Bible Societies have printed

Bibles and Testaments, and scattered them in all directions, almost as abundant as the leaves of the forest. How thankful we should be that God, in His providence, has multiplied the copies of His word in so many languages. But, at the same time, there is a very solemn thought that comes to the mind in connection with this fact. The darkness of the middle ages was dense indeed; but there were no Bibles! The darkness of Christendom in our day is increasing and deepening on every hand, while Bibles, in abundance, are on people's tables, and in their hands. Colporteurs, actuated, no doubt, by various motives, have gone everywhere, and if people will go on in darkness, it is because they love it. Hence they have no excuse. Before Luther's day it might have been said, 'True, the darkness is great, but men have no means of light.' And, as matter of fact, when the word of God was given, thousands accepted it, and got light. But what shall we say of the state of things now? Men translate and publish the word of God, and scatter it broadcast in the earth, while they themselves are in darkness. Nay, more, they say, 'We see.' What new remedy can we devise? We can devise no other. As J. N. D. remarks somewhere, 'For a gospel definitely revealed, and rejected, there is *no gospel*.'

"Your brother in Christ,

"B. F. PINKERTON."

only spread these in faith, in regions beyond, but also the evangelist take the glad tidings everywhere, "and round about."

Some may say, we are not evangelists. No, but you can help the evangelist ; let him be well supplied with tracts and books: these greatly help him in his blessed work in winning souls to God, and in building them up when converted. You can help, perhaps, most in prayer, and sympathy. You can help him to take lodgings in the distant village. In a word, if our hearts are stirred up in the sympathy of Christ for precious souls, He will open up the way in which we can all be fellow-helpers in this blessed work. The Lord give us more of the yearning after souls we have in these verses.



EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

IT is sweet, in the midst of the din of war and all its sad concomitants, to be assured that the Lord is carrying on His own work of grace. We are filled with thankfulness that the work in Egypt still goes on. The midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," is heard in towns and villages, and even in remote corners; and along with it the glad tidings of grace, which enables every awakened one to meet Him, by simple faith in Him, as the One

who was once here, and in love, suffered and died, the just for the unjust. Surely we are thankful to hear that a good many are being gathered to His name, and meet to remember His death, in hope of His near coming. But if we should stop here, should we not be in danger of stopping short of God's thoughts and purposes? He would have us preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of His beloved Son, until the very moment He arises from His present position of grace, to come for His own, preparatory to the execution of judgment. And if we, who have been favoured with clearer light, allow ourselves to become soured, and self-occupied, either individually or ecclesiastically, we shall be but poor ambassadors of peace to the world. One can almost envy the freshness and simplicity of saints in Egypt, and desire that they may be long so kept. Those who labour in the word find open doors and meet with much blessing. Dear black Abdulla, I hear, is still going about in his simple way from village to village, and has either gone, or is going to a distant province, where, as yet, no labourer has been.

It is a little remarkable that recently a very old book has been found in a convent, in which the writer speaks of the coming of the Lord, the first resurrection, and the thousand years of the kingdom. Church history tells us that this doctrine flourished much in the middle of the

third century, especially in parts of Egypt. And now that it has been revived, is it not a little remarkable that traces of it should be found in old writings hidden away for centuries in their convents ?

A few days ago I sent some parts of scripture and tracts to Suakim, in answer to the request of a brother, chief engineer on one of the British ships of war stationed there. So it is not all dark in the track of war. Some of the soldier brethren are with the advanced portions of the army in the Soudan. May the Lord watch over and shield them. I have heard of one of them who departed peacefully to be with the Lord. No doubt he found it far better than to remain in the body in this dark scene of strife. Others of them in their letters, speak of the struggle to keep their heads above water; but so far all seem to have been kept—a mercy to them in their circumstances; and to us all, wherever our lot is cast. We are to remember, that to be kept in the midst of trials means positive growth.

Some of the sailors remarked to us last summer, that doubtless saints surrounded by home comforts think of them as having but little joy in the Lord, while the fact is, they are often filled to overflowing; and when a few of them get together in prayer or around the word, they find a rich feast in an occasion where saints in more favoured circumstances, might perhaps find

only dry crumbs. We here felt the force of the remark ; and should it not be a rebuke to us, that the very abundance of our mercies often proves a snare to our souls and leads us to forgetfulness of God ? Alas ! that we should ever gather around the word, and find it stale food, or what is worse, get occupied about it in a way that ministers questions rather than godly edification !

The interest of the civilised world daily becomes more and more centred and absorbed in these lands. And this is the more remarkable when we observe that England, the chief power interested, is being compelled to do so, in spite of her present policy and wishes. Our thought here is that these troubles will continue until Islam, as a power, be completely broken. These sad, bloody wars, in Egypt and the Soudan, were not brought about by political aggressions from without, as the Russo-Turkish war, for example, but by the revival of the religious spirit of Islam from within. This is to be noted. It was this that compelled England to interfere, in power, and still keeps her there, contrary to her desires. This is especially true of the Soudan affair. No one thought, and no one wished, that a few semi-barbarous tribes, inhabiting those undesirable climes, so difficult of access, should be the occasion of such great military enterprises, and such intricate and danger-fraught diplomatic negotiations. But so it is, in spite of the wisdom

of the world's great ones; for there the ancient spirit of Islam has revived; and they must meet it whether they will or not. Perhaps, internal jealousies will compel European powers to preserve Egypt as a separate kingdom, and this I think will be the case, as will doubtless be the case when they shall have to consider Palestine and Syria; but the fact is, that whatever are their motives, they are now face to face with a question which they themselves regard as the most difficult of all that affects them internationally. As saints our interests are elsewhere; but as long as we are in the body, it would scarcely be true, if we would say, that we have no interest at all about what goes on in this mundane sphere. It is surely not our object, but we observe it as we pass on. And indeed we have divine light as to the course of this world and its end.

February 14th, 1885. B. F. PINKERTON.

IN answer to inquiries, the Editor would here say, that he will be happy either to forward help to the Lord's servants in Syria and Egypt, or give information to those who wish to do so direct.

C. S.



searches the heart, and tests our practical state. Are we habitually walking in the fear of God, and judging the flesh with its lusts, so that nothing is seen in our walk or ways but what is Christ-like ? Do we carry in our souls, daily and hourly, the sense that we are in God's presence ? And do we realise the manner of life that becomes that place ? We are in the light, we are in God's presence.

We are not there to-day and some place else to-morrow. *It is the place we are in as Christians.* May the power of this truth possess our souls, giving us that holy sobriety of soul, and abhorrence of sin, suited to the place we are in, and the nature and character God has given us as His own children.

A. H. R.



EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrouth, December 29. 1885.

“ I WENT on to Jerusalem, where I had access to a few souls, and left some books. From thence I proceeded northwards by land to Nazareth ; but touched two points by the way, and met with some souls, and left some books. In every place I met some who had been reading the books formerly, and are somewhat interested to see me and get some more.

"At Nazareth I remained five days, and was quite happy, and saw a good many. Thence northward to Tiberias, where I slept one night; and after two days more reached Deir Mimas, near the foot of Mount Hermon, where I made a short visit.

"I was really encouraged by my visits at the different points, and felt assured that the Lord has some souls even in the moral and natural desolations of Palestine, to whom God's word is precious. How *far* and how *fast* they will get on is a matter we can leave to Him. It is a joy to be used, even in helping them a very little. A good many I met were schoolmasters, and are accustomed to give out to others any light they get. I seek to help them by a clear gospel.

"Here is a sample of what often takes place. In Jerusalem I was invited for the evening to a friend's house. Several came in. One of them, a schoolmaster, had been reading, and was interested to see me, and ask questions. He said, 'I have been reading your exposition of the Romans, and would have liked if you had gone more fully into some of its knotty points.' 'What knotty points?' 'Oh, election, and some of its kindred subjects, which are so difficult, and are the strong meat which only those who are of full age can take in.' 'Why, my dear friend, election is not among the advanced truths of scripture at all.

We cannot call it strong meat. It is really A B C truth in scripture. For such is the state of fallen man, that when God wants a people, He has to *choose and call them.* 'Oh, but chapter ix. is very, very difficult.' 'But, my friend, may not the difficulty be with you? Perhaps you have not yet mastered chapters i., ii., iii. You are a schoolmaster. Suppose a pupil would come to you complaining of the exceeding difficulties of the rules of fractions, and you found that he had not yet mastered addition, multiplication, and division, and subtraction: what would you do with him? Why, of course, you would take him back to the first rules of arithmetic. Now, so it is with divine truth. You must first learn what man is in Romans i., ii., and then what God has done in grace in chapter iii. After that you may go on step by step, and when you reach chapter ix., you will have no difficulty.'

"This was the opening of the evening's conversation. So the way being thus opened, we looked into the truths of Romans as to what man is, and what man has done: the others present listening, and some of them asking questions or stating objections. And this is a sample of how we get access to souls. Some get stirred up, and desire to have a book to read. This is selected for them, and freely and cheerfully given, and in some instances they are promised

some special book or tract, not at hand, but which will be sent by first opportunity.

“ Again, I am walking over to Bethany, and have a guide. ‘ Well, Sergis, what are you ? ’ ‘ A Christian of the Copt religion.’ ‘ Well, where would you go if you were to die to-day ? ’ The old answer, ‘ If my works are good, to heaven. otherwise not.’ Then the remainder of our time as we walked over Olivet and Bethany, was mostly taken up with these important questions. He cannot read Arabic, but his aged father is a Coptic priest resident in the Holy Land : he is a great reader, and is delighted to look into christian books. ‘ Now, Sergis, you kindly take this parcel of books to your father, and give him my christian love, and I am sure he will be interested to read what I give you.’ He was not in Jerusalem, or I should have called on him, and made his acquaintance.

“ Now I must not omit to tell you of the last night of my journey. I spent it in the quiet of a Jewish family in Sidon. The brethren in Deir Mimas have been for some time interested in some Jews in Sidon, with whom they have had much conversation about Israel’s calling and hopes, and what Christianity is, &c. ; and they told me these Jewish friends were anxious to see me, and that I might spend the night with them on my way. One of the brethren came with me a day’s journey on foot (I was riding), to intro-

duce me to them, and make arrangements for me to spend a night with them.

“I was interested in them. They have been deeply affected by the spirit they witnessed in the brethren in Deir Mimas, and are quite willing to listen. We went over God’s calling of Israel, and His ways past and future with them. We had Isaiah viii., and Daniel ix., and a good many other scriptures, which relate to Christ’s birth, rejection, and death. Also His present place in heaven, and what Christianity is. The rapture, and what follows. Altogether it was a profitable evening, with no controversy. They quite freely communicated to me their thoughts and expectations, which are of course Jewish. They are of Aaron’s family. The old man is a merchant, and has travelled much in Russia and elsewhere, and knows the state of the Jews. One of his sons has a good deal of discernment, and grace may yet call him.

“They say that there are now about 80,000 Jews in Palestine and Syria; 12,000 in Jaffa, about 30,000 in Jerusalem, 7,000 in Hebron, 7,000 in Tiberias, and 12,000 in Jafed. Other authorities put the number of Jews in Jerusalem at about 20,000. All agree that they now form two-thirds of the inhabitants. Of the remaining third, one half are foreigners. All the activity there now is on the part of foreigners. It is religiously a city of ‘stirs and activity,’ and

is getting ready for its part in coming events, just as fast as London, or Paris, or Rome, is getting ready.

“I have long been impressed by the wine-press of God’s wrath, in which the *vine* of the earth is cast to be trodden outside that city. (Rev. xiv. 17-20.) It differs from the harvest of the earth mentioned before, and seems to be more definite and specific, and more severe. I have long thought that man’s religion, in its various forms and types (apart from open heathenism), will eventually be found centred in Jerusalem and Palestine; and that God will in due time execute special judgment on it: in what form I do not undertake to say, but it will be terrible.

“Almost all sects are even now represented there; even some wretched coteries of heretics have taken up their headquarters in this city. . . . Oh how solemn to think that all these events are just at the door. Men, in their blindness, see not. How much grace we need just now to go on in grace, having confidence in God’s word, which is the only thing that abides.

“Since last writing to you, I have fresh word from Mesopotamia. From all, I gather that there has been some blessing in souls there through the truth. Some six new correspondents addressed a letter to me, which I received just before my last journey. Word from Upper

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

111

Egypt still good. May the Lord in mercy keep them fresh in a sense of His love and grace. If we do not drink in peace and communion from the living streams of grace, 'living waters' will not flow from us to refresh others. We shall only be clouds without water carried about by winds of strife, as 'Things New and Old' so forcibly expresses it.

"The temptation seems to me to be strong now, to get us away from simple grace. I lately recalled what took place at — meeting, as to those who calmly accept death, rather than deny God's blessed Son. At Nazareth a good many were present on one occasion, and the question came up, 'What about our forefathers, who lived and died before this Protestant light came to us?' Well, I said, it was a question of what God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, was to their souls. If any of them had Him, they went to Him. And it appears that many accepted oppression, and even death, rather than deny Him.

"They mentioned a case that occurred there (*Nazareth*) in the memory of some of the older ones. A young girl was washing clothes at the fountain; a Mahomedan stepped over them with a lighted pipe, and, it may be, let fall on purpose some coals on her clothes. Female like, she said something bitter about the use of tobacco. He then accused her to the judge, who

decided it was constructive blasphemy against their prophet, who himself used tobacco, and praised it, and that she must either embrace the faith or die. She replied, ' You may kill me if you choose, but I shall not deny my Lord Jesus Christ.' They then tied her to the tails of horses, and dragged her to death !

" Well, Christ was certainly something (yea, everything in the supreme moment of trial) to her soul. It is not Protestant light, but what Christ is to our souls. The former are just as ready to boast of their superior light, as many in the west are to boast of theirs. But increased light is only increased darkness, the moment there is a state of soul to boast of it. Any who have been favoured with increased light, dare not give it up, for God hath given it to them ; but, oh, how much all need His help to maintain it in communion. . . .

" Your Brother in Christ,
" B. F. PINKERTON."

Surely it is blessed to hear of a few called of Him, in the desolate land, where His feet once trod. We would ask the earnest prayers of all who are the Lord's, who read this paper, and especially for His blessing on the tracts and books in Arabic, scattered amongst the vast numbers who speak that tongue. C. S.



LETTER FROM THE EAST.

Alexandria, Egypt,

Dec. 31st, 1886.

DEAR BROTHER —,

Your last, of the 15th, came to hand on the 25th. It contained —. I am exceedingly thankful to the Lord for it, because I had been feeling that the time had come for me to go down to Egypt, and visit the saints. In fact, I had told my wife to get all my clothes ready, for it seemed that I was soon to start on my journey. Hence, when your letter came, it found me quite prepared, and I took the first steamer for this port, and arrived here last night.

After I wrote you last, I closed up my printing work for the present, and on the 25th of last month, I took an inland journey, to see some of the saints at Deis Mimas, and was about a fortnight, and now have reached Egypt. I am in perfect peace, although, if I would look forward a little in a human way, it would seem that a good many sorrows are in store. However, I am in peace, and desire to go forward step by step, as guided and sustained of the Lord. I have already had some joy here, in finding that the Arabic-speaking brethren in this place have not been mixed up with the recent troubles that

so scattered the soldier and sailor brethren. I have not seen them all yet, and the old leading brother is now absent, but I learned from his family, last night, that he has had nothing to do with the for a good while.

Please the Lord, I shall proceed on my journey the first of next week, from whence I may drop you a line, after I shall have seen how things are I forwarded them a large box of books last month. I too, like you, have of late been much encouraged in that line. I do not remember whether I mentioned to you previously, that, for some time past, there has been a good deal of interest in reading, in a district just north of Mount Hermon. I have sent them supplies of books and tracts, and had another request just before I left Beyrouth. It is a place I have never visited, but, by means of some whom we know who are there from Mount Lebanon and Beyrouth, and who have a good knowledge of the simple truth, an interest sprang up in the minds of many there since the early part of the summer, and it is still increasing. Among others, my correspondent mentions some schoolmasters, some Greek priests, and, in his last letter, he tells me that the Bishop himself was recently visiting there, and, by chance, found a gospel volume, called "Grace and Truth," in the house of one of his parishioners, and got to reading it, and he became so much interested, he took it away with him, telling its owner that

LETTER FROM THE EAST.

81

he could go and get another copy where he had obtained that one.

I have learned to greatly value awakenings of this nature here in the East. When God's Spirit moves minds and hearts in a quiet and unofficial way to read and hear the precious truth, without any excitement, and without the thought that they are getting a hold of a new *religion*, they seem to find in the books an unfolding of Christianity, which they have so long professed without understanding it. We do not attack what they have got, but quietly, on the part of God, explain in love what the Christianity is which we all profess, or, rather, what Christ is whom we all confess as our Saviour. The great thing we all need is, to go on patiently with God, with the eye and heart set on Christ and coming glory.

But I must write very briefly, for I have a good many to look after during my few days' stay in this city.

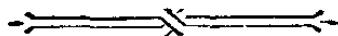
I cannot see what there is in the title of my tract to shock any christian person, or give the impression that it means to affirm that atonement was made in heaven. "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men?" is, to my mind, a similar sentence, and it does not imply that the Lord is going to affirm that it was *of men*. . . . The devil hates the confession of the finished work of the cross, of this we may

be assured. At all events, we have neither misunderstood nor misrepresented —.

I would like to write more, but must close for the present. Love to all saints with you.

Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.



THE LOVE THAT PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

“Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” (John xiii. 1.)

LORD Jesus, Thine is love indeed,
Beyond our highest thoughts of love,
Which met us in our deepest need,
And brought Thee from Thy home above.

A love that led Thee here below
To tread a lonely path in grace,
To pass through sorrow, grief and woe,
The portion of a ruin'd race.

This love it was, our gracious Lord,
Which led Thee on to that dark hour,
When, faithful to Thy Father's word,
Thou mettest Satan's rage and power.

“The power of darkness,” Lord, it was,
The hour when man by Satan led,
In deepest hatred without cause
Did crown with thorns Thy blessed head.

Yet, Lord, e'en there Thy love we see
Supreme o'er all the wrath of men,
For Thou in grace didst deign to be
The willing victim for us ther-

LETTER FROM THE EAST.

Beyrouth,

May 1st, 1887.

DEAR BROTHER —,

Your former note, giving me a little account of the London meeting, reached here in due time, and gave us real joy; so also your other note, of April 15th, giving an account of the precious meetings in Rotherham, came to hand by last post, and filled me with thanksgiving. Truly this binding of hearts together is a most evident work of the Lord.

I have now been at home about a month, but have been suffering much from the re-action which followed the protracted strain on the poor body. I am not well yet, but I feel that I am now better. For the first fortnight after my return I had ophthalmia, and when my eyes got better, I began to feel the re-action in my whole body, and for the last fortnight was scarcely able to do anything. But a few days ago I seemed to get a turn for the better. I do not complain of bodily prostration after prolonged service, nor even of pain, for I find it very profitable. One ceases from all activity, and reviews things quietly in the Lord's presence.

I had a letter from a new correspondent last winter from Mousul. He says, "I thank my

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for His surpassing grace which He has caused to abound towards us through His Son, by whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. I have to inform you that we have heard that you have expository helps to the understanding of the scriptures and other religious books. And we have seen some of them, and seen that they afford much profit and joy to the believer, inasmuch as they teach him to put all his dependence on God's work alone, through Christ crucified," &c. He then asks if I can send them a supply of books direct to Mousul. The books, which had reached them, had come to them from Mardeen, five or six days to the north of them.

Mousul, you will know, stands near the site of ancient Nineveh, and there are a good many Christians there and in the surrounding country. Since my return, I was enabled to send them a box of books, with the hope that a good many more may get joy and blessing by a clearer apprehension of God's work for us through Christ. I have also had a good many letters from my old correspondents in Mesopotamia, and sent them also a fresh supply of books, and I trust that I may be enabled to see them all some day, if we live, and the Lord will.

I have had good word from Egypt since my return, and was specially glad to hear that the Lord's table had been set up in S., a place we

have had at heart for a good while, but hitherto there has not been sufficient courage for the saints there to take the step. But I now hear that they have done so, and that the Lord is working there and in neighbouring places with increasing power. This place is at the extreme south of the regions in which gatherings have been formed. But the work is extending both up the river and down it.

In E., a place near S., five or six Mohammedans have been converted. When I was labouring there recently one young Mohammedan, who had believed and was consorting with Christians, was stripped quite naked and severely beaten before our eyes. He had been with us all the afternoon, and at sunset went to his home, when his father and friends set upon him and beat him with savage cruelty. He fled naked from them into the streets, and they followed him. We met the sad scene as we were going to our evening meeting. The lad recognised us, and said, "Help me, O Christians!" But we were powerless as so many sheep among wild beasts. One brother turned aside to remonstrate with the lad's father, but was told to go about his business, that the boy was his child and he would do with him as he pleased. We turned into our meeting-room with broken and bowed-down hearts, for we thought that they would certainly kill the poor lad that very night. But we poured out our

hearts in prayer to the Lord for him ; and were surprised within a quarter of an hour to see him coming into our meeting, clothed, and his face beaming with joy. The rage of his persecutors had spent itself, and when he got his clothes he came straight to the meeting, and sat listening to the word of God as happy as could be. He told us afterwards that the beating was very painful, but nevertheless he was full of joy all the time.

Such scenes, dear brother, bring the blessed Lord Jesus very near to us. We feel at the time what a reality it is to confess the Son of God in the midst of a world that will not have Him. When a Mohammedan is converted he gives up his old name and takes a new one. This lad had of his own accord called himself by a new name: "The servant of our Lord." He was soon made to experience the reality of it. A brother had affectionately warned him that he must expect great suffering, and, while the words were still fresh, it came upon him. But suffering for Christ makes souls dear to us. We all felt that night that we would gladly have taken some of the blows on our own bodies. I think, too, it tends to make us more real in the ministry of the word. There is no room left for mere sentiment and imagination. We feel that it must be Christ ministered in the present power of the Holy Ghost. You might, comparatively speaking, call it the lowest round of the ladder, but,

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE, ETC. 181

nevertheless, I always find myself on the very top of it also. Christ Himself is the way, the truth, and the life. And what we all have to seek is increased reality in the things of God.

Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHILDREN.

II.

THE YOUNG MEN.

3. We now have a warning against the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This is indeed a solemn word for any Christian whose heart is set upon anything in this world. Love of the world and love of the Father do not go together. They are opposed to each other in every way. The world has murdered God's Son, and this has revealed its state of utter enmity against God. God has indeed raised Him up from the dead, and crowned Him with glory and honour at His own right hand ; and the Holy Ghost has come down to witness to the fact of His resurrection, and of His exaltation to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of

LETTER FROM THE EAST.

Beyrouth, November 22nd, 1887.

DEAR BROTHER —,

You will be glad to hear that our beloved brother Schlotthauer arrived safely last week, greatly improved in health from what he was when we parted with him nearly two years ago. His restoration to health and return to the East afford us all much joy, and greatly encourage our faith, for there had been much looking to the Lord to preserve him longer for the work in the East, in which he has been engaged nearly a quarter of a century. Such a period of time gives one links with hundreds, I may say, thousands of souls; hence such a labourer, if taken away, would be greatly missed. After a week's visit with us here, he went on his way yesterday to Palestine.

I myself have only returned home a few days since, as I had been away for a fortnight's visit to an assembly near Hamath, which you know is a few days' journey North of this. The fatigues of an inland journey affected my health somewhat, but I trust that I may be better in a few days, and, if the Lord will, I shall go again to Egypt, to visit the saints and see how they do. From letters received from them they seem to be walking in peace, while there is much activity in carrying the truth to new fields, several of which have been recently opened. All

feel how much better it is to be occupied with Christ and His grace than with questions of human arrangements. When all became occupied last year about the question of appointing elders their wings drooped, open doors were not looked for, and, perhaps, not discerned if existing. But the moment their hearts and thoughts got occupied again with the Lord in simplicity, there was peace and love at home, and grace again led out in activity towards needy souls without. O that saints everywhere could learn once for all, and never forget, how simple and blessed is the sheep's path, as following the great Shepherd in resurrection, hearing His voice, and going on to be with Him and like Him for ever. How simple it is to trust in His care, and how blessed to enjoy His protection and love. He never forgets the feeblest, and strong and weak alike need His guidance and the rich pastures His provident love secures.

A dear Egyptian brother recently wrote me, from Upper Egypt, a letter full of encouragement as to progress of the work. I give you the translation from Arabic. He says, "I begin with spiritual salutations from a heart longing to see you. For the love that is in us is of the fruits of God's Spirit, who ceases not to produce in us longings for the heavenly Bridegroom, and also towards one another as members of His body and His bride; for the Spirit has united us

to one another, and to the Head in glory, in whom we are one.

“I have not forgotten our meeting together last winter, and all that then passed at the time of your visit. Truly the Lord ordered it in His wisdom and goodness, thanks to Himself who causes all things to work together for good to them who love God. Our circumstances then were in appearance sorrowful, but our God can turn that which is sorrowful into joy, and bring sweetness from that which is bitter. We now see that formerly we had been over-anxious about the Lord’s work, and did not sufficiently trust in His care and guidance for His saints. But it pleased Him in this way to teach us more of what it is to look to Him alone, apart from human wisdom and arrangement. And now our hearts can rest in His promises, being assured that having begun to raise a testimony and gather His witnesses, He will establish and sustain them.

“His own hand will lead, and we can say with confidence, that He who hath begun a good work will carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus. We can now more easily commit all our affairs into His hand. Formerly we knew this as doctrine; but it pleased Him to allow us to pass through circumstances bitter and trying, and then deliver us with a new experience of His faithfulness and love, and taught us to wait

on Him for everything, and cast all our cares on Him in prayer and supplication. Then He will accomplish the good pleasure of His will for us, and give our feeble hearts rest and comfort. He is full of pity, and will not allow us to be burthened beyond our strength. He would exercise our hearts that they may be watchful and diligent: and ever draw our thoughts to Himself on high, as He leads us forward to meet Him, and be with Him, and like Him for ever.

“ As for the state of the assemblies, there is now greater quiet, and much conferring together over the word of God, and all the brethren edify one another. There is also much comfort in praise and prayer in our nightly meetings, and on Lord’s day, and brethren are learning more and more to be quiet and to avoid haste in these exercises. It may be that in outward appearance the state seems to be weaker than formerly; but we are assured that there is an advance in true edification; and the assemblies feel more and more their weakness, and are cast on the Holy Spirit to strengthen our weakness, comfort our hearts, and fill them with increasing desire towards Christ, our heavenly Bridegroom.”

It would seem that the Lord Himself is teaching the same lessons to His gathered saints everywhere. The process may be bitter, but the lessons taught are invaluable.

Your brother in Christ, B. F. PINKERTON.

power, oh the eternal blessedness of the word of God. I have known a dying man, by five words of Jesus, turned from a blaspheming infidel, to a happy believing child of God here, and in a few hours in heaven. Those words were, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." God grant that the reader may never reject that book of books, that treasure of all treasures. Well do I remember singing, when a youth fifty years ago—

"The word of God, the word of truth,
Instruct our childhood, guide our youth,
Uphold us through life's middle stage,
And be the comfort of our age."

Praise be to God I have found it so. No, fellow believers, let us earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. It may possibly be asked, How am I to know what was the faith once delivered to the saints? Let us then turn to the sure word of God. May He grant us grace to reject everything concerning which we cannot, with our Jesus, say, "It is written." What is written then let us turn and see.

LETTERS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrouth, Syria,

April 4th, 1888.

I RETURNED from Egypt a good deal run down in strength, but, thank God, my health remained very good. Often my voice was well-nigh gone, from having to speak constantly and often

when the fine dust was blowing about and filling the throat and lungs. But the work goes on very quietly, and the brethren there hold all their meetings, even where the Table has not been set up, in connection with the one body and the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Their custom is to meet every night; and this is adapted to the habits of the people. And whether they be few or many in a place they come together every evening to worship, as they say; although they clearly recognise the special character of the meeting to break bread on Lord's Day, or a meeting for discipline. So the first thing in all hearts in every meeting is to wait on the Lord in recognition of His presence, and the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost. And generally half an hour, at least, is spent in prayer and praise, as those present are guided and enabled. Then comes the ministry of the word according to the present need and the ability given. And after that, all join again in prayer and praise. This is generally the course the meetings take without any human attempt to order them.

Three or four years ago, after the awakening had been going on for a little, some labourers were inclined to conduct preaching meetings on individual responsibility; but it was not viewed favourably by the brethren, who said it reminded

them of system. Hence it was not insisted on. I said at the time, that a labourer might if so inclined, conduct a teaching or preaching on his own responsibility; but for my own part I had always preferred to have every meeting in the unity of the body where there were as many as two or three present to take part, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. When this is possible even in meetings, where the gospel is primarily needed, I have invariably found it for the greater edification of all present. I am aware that this same question was raised years ago in the West, and some labourers preferred to have meetings for the exercise of gift, on their own responsibility; and perhaps rightly enough in the circumstances where they were called to labour. But, as I said, the brethren in Egypt viewed this with disfavour, and I think all the labourers are fully convinced that the present course is fully in the current of the Spirit's guidance for them. They never fail to find plenty of time to exercise whatever gift they may have. So, too, I have always found it for myself. In fact, if it was necessary, I would prefer to sit silent during the entire meeting, rather than to have it all thrown on me. In opening up new places where as yet not one is known to have been converted, a labourer is generally accompanied by a companion in labour, or by some brethren, one or more, and as soon as the

Lord begins to open some hearts to the word, they are instructed as to the presence and guidance of the Spirit in prayer, and it is remarkable how soon their mouths are opened in prayer. But converts are generally brought right into the unity of the body, as to the spirit of it. Hence when the Lord begins to bless in a place, a meeting is set up at once; but not the Table, that is the breaking of bread. Those blessed are gathered at once, and continue to meet even when the labourer goes on to another field, and these are known and cared for as brethren gathered, and so recognise themselves. Hence when there, you will hear of many such meetings. They are visited and helped with a view to setting up the Table among them. And they do so understand it. Then when some of them have become established in grace and walk, some labourers or brethren in the neighbourhood go and help them to set up the Table, and that is generally a day of power and joy. I must say that I never have seen such care in setting up the Table and in receiving into fellowship generally, as is there exercised. There is usually an immense concourse of people when the Table is set up in a place. Nearly all the Christians in the neighbourhood come, and experienced brethren have told me that the ever-faithful Lord never fails to render a most manifest testimony to His own

Table. Often the vast congregation will be bathed in tears. Whatever may be the habitual state of the on-lookers, they are made to feel that God is there in their midst, and their hearts are humbled and bowed as they hear the name of the Lord Jesus, the ever blessed Son of God, exalted.

You are aware that the Copts have been long distinguished for their tenacious clinging to the truth that Jesus Christ is God. When the whole weight of the empire was against Athanasius, in his testimony against Arius and his deadly heresies, the Egyptian Christians on the whole firmly stood with him. Afterwards came the scourge of Islam; and the Copts who maintained their integrity, became despised and downtrodden, and so remained till the present day. We know that a dark night of ignorance settled down over them, but they held on to the foundation truth that Jesus is God. And to this day if you exalt that blessed One, you scarcely ever fail to meet a response in the heart of a Copt. I have no doubt that God has remembered their sorrows during ages of oppression, and has not forgotten that they held on through it all to the confession of His Son. He has visited them in these last days in His grace, and they feel it. You feel when labouring among them that it is a distinct visitation of grace. I may remark that all the old brethren had been well grounded in grace,

and in a measure in the whole range of truth, before separation began. They have progressed immensely since; but there had been a good foundation. And hence one has the feeling that the work is solid. And so they also feel; although we all know well, that the Lord alone can keep them or any of us walking in His path a single day. And their confidence in Him and in His grace is simple and fresh. There is much brotherly love and care for one another. Many not devoted wholly to ministry find time to visit assemblies, and such visits are much owned of the Lord for mutual joy and comfort. And generally in places where an unusual work is going on, you will constantly see brethren from assemblies elsewhere coming and going, and thus help in the work without any human arrangement. This also reflects on their own assemblies, for they carry back with them the cheering news of the Lord's work. I was present when the Table was set up at three new places last winter. A great revival had been going on there for four or five months, and many souls had been blessed. Those labouring there had felt the need of much help at the setting up of the Table, and it came at the right time, without any attempt to arrange for it. In the first of the places, I think there were about fourteen of us, labourers and other brethren, who were present on that occasion

from other places. And they were days and nights of unusual power; and especially on Lord's day, there was not an available spot inside the building (without any roof) or outside in the street and on the walls and roofs of adjoining houses that was not occupied, wherever there was a prospect of seeing or hearing. We all felt the exceeding pressure of the occasion, but looked to the Lord for help and He did help us. All hearts were bowed and a deep solemnity was manifested in all countenances. Such a great concourse of people was not new, for crowds had been coming nightly for weeks and months; but the presence of so many in suspense and expectation, was not, as we know, suited to the exercise of worship in those gathered around the Table. Some twenty-five new ones had been received into fellowship. And we began in the early morning and did not get through with the Table until about noon. But the Lord helped us in a marked manner. And the prayers and praises shewed that hearts were more occupied with the Lord than with the sight of so many people. I was led to speak at some length on Isaiah liii. and later on was helped in giving thanks at the Table. We all came together again at 3 p.m. and one of the labourers and I were helped in the ministry of the word. It is remarkable the new character the ministry of the word takes as soon as the Table is set up. We observed it

on that occasion ; the gospel continues to go out as sweetly and fully as ever to the impenitent ; but we address the saints differently. The following week most of the labourers went elsewhere, some of us to two places about an hour's distance, where the Table was also set up with much blessing. Fifteen were received at one place, and forty-one at the other. Some of the labourers were led to a new place distant about three hours' southwards, where a marked awakening began, as we afterwards heard, and was going on when I last heard ; and some others of us came a short distance to the north, and the awakening began in another place, where there were already a few souls that had got blessing, but had not yet begun to meet in separation. But they got a room ready and invited us to come to them at once, and the very first night the place was filled, with perhaps as many more outside. By last accounts there were about five hundred coming every night to hear the word. There is of course blessing in many villages where no such marked awakenings have occurred. It often occurs that a man gets blessing when present at a meeting in a place where he has come on business ; and on his return home communicates his new found joy to his neighbours, and thus a work begins. Simple brethren also often take the light to new villages where darkness has reigned for ages.

I have not spoken of the difficulties and the opposition which is often encountered. There is and has been plenty of all that, as must be the case when God is working. But opposition from without is easily met, when God is working, and the saints themselves are walking together in unity and love.

Love to all saints with you.

Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.

BELOVED BRETHREN, is not the above letter a direct word from the Lord to us all ? Are we not in danger of falling into the groove of human arrangement ? Let us not forget those words, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Oh let us prove the faithfulness of our God and Father. We would ask ALL who profess to be gathered to the Lord, to come together, for prayer, at least half an hour before the usual time of preaching the word on a Lord's day evening. Both brethren and sisters. Let every heart be lifted up to the Lord for His blessing, whomsoever He may use to preach the gospel. Let it be felt that the absence of every one able to be there, is an evidence of indifference as to the Lord's honour, and the conversion of precious souls. We feel led to make this solemn call, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the

fullest assurance that if we thus honour the Lord, and look to Him, the "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb," shall flow forth with life-giving power.

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

8. J. L., Coatbridge. Isaiah lxvi. 7, shews that before the travail of Zion, or Israel, the man child, or Christ, would be born. "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child." Then verse 8 as distinctly foretold, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." This also will come to pass. When Christ was born there was no particular travail or trouble to Israel or Zion. But when the time of tribulation shall come, such as never was, then the remnant of Israel will appear.

Compare Micah iv. The chief dominion shall come to Zion. (Ver. 8.) This does not hinder the previous travail of the daughter of Zion. (Vers. 9, 10.) In chapter v. it is foretold that Messiah shall be born in Bethlehem, that He would be caught up to God; and that He is from the days of eternity. "Therefore will he give them up [Israel], until the time that she which travaleth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." Then, as in Isaiah, follows the time of Israel's blessing.

Christ was born in Bethlehem: He was re-

LETTER FROM THE EAST.

BELOVED BROTHER,

Through the Lord's mercy and goodness, I have reached home again, after an absence of two months. Both my way out and my way back were made plain before me, although there was enough of trials in detail to give exercise of faith and patience ; yes, and to afford opportunity also for our gracious Lord to display His ways of grace and love, and His wonderful care that condescends to count the very hairs of our heads. If He did not send us trials by the way, could we ever know that care ? Nature in us would be willing to serve, if all things were arranged so as to be agreeable, and even lead us to take some credit to ourselves from the very fact that circumstances and details all conspired to make us comfortable. It would seem to us that we were a kind of favourites with the Lord. But trials touch nature where it was not expecting, and, at least, shew us what we are and our need of mercy. Satan himself knows what nature is, even in a saint, and how prone we are to use God's blessings to foster in us a good opinion of ourselves. Hence he could say, "Doth Job fear God for nought," &c.

I thought one night when I was lying in the

hospital at Alexandria, ill with fever, that when I got a little better I should return home at once ; but the next day I was better, and my desire to see the brethren in the upper country regained its force, and I was happy in committing my way again to the Lord, who graciously enabled me to resume my journey much earlier than had seemed possible at one time, and when I finally reached the upper country, I was not very strong ; yet I was glad to be there, and felt that I was in my right place. It matters little how weak we are if the Lord give strength from day to day as need requires. The brethren there are united and walking in peace ; and their faith and love being fresh, they are more occupied with the Lord and His grace than with themselves. May this ever continue to be true of them and of us all. For occupation with ourselves collectively will always prove in the end as fruitless of good as self-occupation is to us individually. I suppose that if we talk much about brethren either good or bad, it is because we are occupied with brethren. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And, for my part, if I were asked to propose some very unprofitable subject, I would say, "Get occupied about ourselves collectively." We read "that Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." It is this that occupies the thoughts of the Father and Son, and is the object of the mission of the Holy Ghost to this earth ;

and our fellowship, to be true and happy, must rise to the height of God's counsels. If we separate ourselves, even in thought, from the whole church of God, it is really a sect we are thinking about and not the church. And then we must manage the matter for ourselves as best we can, for the Holy Ghost is not here to help us to think and talk about ourselves as a sect.

I am referring to the subject rather in its practical bearing, as it affects and tests our thoughts and feelings and prayers. It is not difficult to repeat as doctrine, "The feet in a narrow path where obedience to the word ever leads; but the heart expanded by grace so as to embrace all saints in the world;" but O how far short of this all of us come in both its aspects! The walk gets loose, and the heart narrows accordingly. And even where there is true piety and a good zeal, the sight of abounding evil may overcome us and, like one of old, we repeat the testimony to self: "And I, even I only am left." (1 Kings xix. 14.) Blessed man of God as Elijah certainly was, the sight of abounding evil had filled his heart with gloom and obscured the vision of faith. He was much nearer God a few days before, on the top of Carmel, when he repaired the broken-down altar of the Lord. "And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that

was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name." (1 Kings xviii. 30, 31.) He was in the very midst of a scene of unparalleled wickedness, but he spoke in grace to a fickle and half-hearted people, and there was a response in them, for it is said, "And all the people came near unto him." As the apostle says, "For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

Such are we all, that nothing but grace will touch and melt our hearts ; and it is only as we feel our own need of it personally, that we apprehend its source and character, and can speak and act in it towards others. We see that Elijah then thought of the twelve tribes, but when He fled to Horeb he thought of himself only ; and even made intercession to God against Israel. On Carmel he had power with God for others, and got fire and rain for them in answer to his prayers. But when his faith failed, his heart contracted into itself, and he instinctively betook himself where the fiery law had been issued, for that, rather than grace, was suited to the state of his gloomy heart. And let us observe well that he there neither asked nor got blessings for others, but was dealt with in a personal way, and had to hear of approaching judgment on the people which in heart he loved.

And after all, the grace of God had not exhausted itself. But the zealous prophet himself was to be set aside to make room for a successor, whose ministry was wonderfully characterised by grace.

Moses, too, the greatest of prophets, was set aside, and not allowed to complete his course, because he failed to glorify the Lord when the unthankful people forgot His presence and vexed His servant with their murmurings. He, too, forgot the Lord, and thought of himself. "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" He had been told to speak to the rock—a beautiful type of Christ, in unwearied grace, following His saints in the wilderness to bless them, even when they do not deserve anything but judgment. But Moses, in the vexation which arises from self-occupation, smote the rock twice with the rod. He would have government rather than grace, and so he got it; but it shut him, not Israel, out of Canaan. What a solemn warning it is to us all, especially if we occupy position as leaders to the church of God! Moses failed, as we so often do, to rise to the height of that grace which is superior to the evil it meets, and can conquer everything. How much nearer to God he was when he only thought of His goodness and glory in Exodus xxxii., and interceded for His forgetful and sinful people. Oh for enlargement of heart and an ever-deepening knowledge of grace and our own personal

need of it. Even when judgment is at the very door, grace grows more tender and importunate. It entreats and waits for a response with a patience that never belies its own nature, for it is divine. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, Israel ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? how shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." (Hos. xi. 8.) The prophet's expostulations in the last chapters remind us of the Lord's weeping over the beloved city. How many tears have we shed for the church of God ? Much knowledge of the truth may enable us to speak and write about it, correctly enough it may be ; but love alone will cause us to weep for it.

I sometimes say to myself, if those who know the church of God doctrinally do not embrace it practically in their affections, who is there beside them to love it, and speak and pray in that wideness of heart which alone suits the subject ? One knows from experience how narrow the heart is, and how impossible it is for nature in us to love naughty, disobedient saints. But God has love for such, else He never would have loved me. It is natural for us to love them who love us, or who are, at least, of our way of thinking. But the publicans can do that. And I am astonished at myself sometimes to see how much I resemble them in this respect.

I find, dear brother, that thus far in my letter I have told you very little about my recent visit. I seem to be more inclined to dwell on the reflections which have resulted from it. I believe that I always get more profit for my own soul from a visit to the saints, especially those in Egypt, where God has vouchsafed to work very remarkably. I was able to visit nine or ten assemblies, and I saw, through the Lord's good orderings, many labouring brothers, a mutual joy to them and to me. The table was set up in one new place while I was there. It was a large christian village, into which no ray of gospel light had entered until about five months ago. A very simple labouring brother went there, and an awakening began. Some others had helped him from time to time ; but he remained until some souls had got ready for fellowship. The entire village was awakened, and from two to three hundred came together night after night to hear the word. I spent three days there in company with some other labourers. There had been a little re-action on account of some of the head men of the village drawing back after they had professed conversion. The labouring brother there had been a little down on account of this ; but those with me had more experience, and told him not to mind about it, that the Lord had only used those head men for a while, to encourage the others to come an

hear ; and now that many had got blessing, these might go their way if they preferred darkness to light.

The place of meeting—two large booths made of cornstalks—was filled while we were there, the one with men, and the other with women. A good many of these had found blessing, also some children. This, I always say, is a good sign. But females here must, like Sarah, listen to the word of the Lord “behind,” in a tent of their own. (Gen. xviii. 9.) They like seclusion, nor do I see that the Lord regards them less on account of being hidden from the gaze of men. Perhaps western sisters think this a little strange. But this custom, at least, is good for labourers, who are sometimes a little spoiled by being noticed and run after by sisters. It is wholesome for us to be much in contact with men who are less governed by their feelings, and say “no” to us sometimes. Be this as it may, we had exceedingly happy meetings in our cornstalk shelters. There was the same freedom and heartiness in prayer and praise, under the Spirit’s guidance, which generally characterises all their meetings in that country. And the labourers who were with me remarked how fully we were all led out in ministry of the word, three or four of us speaking every night, some to saints and others to sinners, in happiest fellowship. And as for the hearers, had we gone on till midnight,

few of them would have stirred from their places.

I may remark, that while the brethren distinguish between the gifts, they do not decide beforehand what character a meeting must take ; except the Lord's table which of necessity has its own character. That is, they do not say, To-night we are to have a gospel meeting, or a prayer-meeting, or some other kind of meeting. They meet in simplicity, and pray and sing, and then what the Lord gives they accept. The older assemblies get close dealings at times, and have to spend their time in silent exercise or in crying to the Lord ; at other times they are happy, and praise much ; at other whiles they are more occupied with the word. They say there must be fresh guidance every time, or else there will be little edification. I have never seen two of their meetings just alike. But dependence gives deep and varied exercises, to escape which we are in temptation to fall into grooves, and drop into systems—man's substitute for the Spirit of God.

In ministry I usually find myself led to address believers, but I should not like to feel myself bound to a particular line at a given meeting, for in the ministry to saints, I am often led to address the unconverted as far as I am able, and I do not think that the others lose anything by it. If I were an evangelist, it seems to me I should not like to feel bound to only hold gospel

meetings. I do not know that there are any evangelists who act thus; but I have sometimes thought that there may be a loss by attempting to decide beforehand just what character a meeting must take; especially when we take into consideration that our evangelising now is generally among nominal Christians, many of whom need rather to be better founded than to be called. At first it was to Jews and idolaters. Then again we are to remember that something of the pastoral gift is always manifested in a faithful evangelist. It has been observed that these two gifts may appear in the same person. And I quite believe it. Only the evangelist must be a man of God and walk with the Lord; and be characterised by a love of souls, rather than the desire of preaching. For example, the brother labouring in the place I have referred to, is rather an evangelist, but he cares for souls converted also, and had been used in both ways in some other places. But I do not think he has ever stopped to ask what he is, or whether he has any gift or not. Blessed simplicity! How near the Lord is to the simple, who are occupied with Him and His grace rather than with themselves.

He was a soldier and a policeman until two years ago. And when he got to know Christ as his portion, he began at once to seek others in grace. He could not preach what is called a

sermon, and yet the Lord uses him much; and if you go where he has laboured you find the proof of it, for there is fruit; and a fruitful ministry is always better than the critical acumen which can define and draw nice distinctions.

And now, dear brother, I must close this letter, already too long, I fear. The fever continued to hang about me, and occasionally returned, until I got back to the cool weather here, and then it left me. When the brethren saw how weak the poor body was, they consented to my returning this year earlier than usual. For this I was thankful, for it is happy when the Lord gives oneness of mind to those who love us and desire His glory in us; poor and feeble vessels as we are. Love to all saints with you.

Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.

Beyrouth, Syria,

January 30th, 1889.

CORRESPONDENCE.

7. G. R., Yarmouth. 2 Corinthians v. 10 is not merely a question of reward for services; neither can it possibly be that the believer should be judged for his sins whether before or after his conversion. In that sense he shall not come into judgment. (John v. 24; Heb. ix. 27, 28.) In Christ he is even now justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 24; iv. 24, 25; v. 1; viii. 1; &c.) All this is most

NEWS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrouth, Syria,

July 1st, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER,—I will give you a line or two to tell you that we are all well, through mercy, and getting on our way in peace, although, as you know, a summer here is no light thing.

Just now we have with us another brother from Mesopotamia. He has been one with us in spirit for six or seven years, and corresponded with us, but has not before had the opportunity of breaking bread in fellowship. He has come, or rather the Lord brought him, a long journey, and we are very thankful. He gives a good account of the blessing which many souls in those parts have got through reading the books, and I have no doubt that the time is near for us to seek to see them, and help them by oral ministry. This brother will start back next week, taking a mule's load of books with him for use as the Lord directs. He goes by way of Damascus, and thence north, visiting many places by the way. But we have a large field before us. He himself has been a schoolmaster and preacher, and for many years has had acquaintance with many persons and places. He is now elderly (about my own age), quiet and intelligent, with a good deal of gift as a pioneer. He has faith and love for souls.

And now the question before us is to seek strength and energy to follow the Lord as He is working, and visit souls in these northern parts. This brother speaks three or four different languages, although the Arabic is used in most of the parts immediately before us. But there we

begin to meet the Nestorians, whose language is Chaldaic, which this brother knows. Turkish speaking Christians are also found there, and he speaks Turkish; some of the descendants of the ancient Medes are also there, called Kurds, of whom some are Christians, and their language is Kurdish, which he speaks also. Arinenians also adjoin them. Well, thank God, it seems all clear for us to go on where He is working. It may be His will for some of us to go about the last of September. The brother here who went two months ago visiting some of the assemblies in Egypt, will be on his way home this week, having visited those assemblies that were specially on our hearts, and it seems has been blest and refreshed. It may be the Lord is preparing him for the north. He would do well in giving them a clear gospel, and also helping any who gather to get on their way. Also the other young brother from here, who is off in ministry in Damascus, would do well in the north country, as he has a nice gift and clear knowledge of the word. Now, whether either of these or both may be led of the Lord to go north, I do not know, but I feel it is possible. And also that He may enable me to go also. It would be better if I could go with them at first. Perhaps an absence of three months would suffice for me. The others, if led, might remain. *The door is open* for a clear gospel, and some are far enough to desire to break bread, a few at two places. Still it is the primary needs of souls that press upon me. The poor Yezedecs or devil worshippers are also there, and this brother knows them. There are also several of the Christian sects, especially the Syreachs who are

Jacobites, like the Copts, are simple and accessible. Also the Nestorians, who allow of no pictures or images in their churches.

The word from upper Egypt is that the work goes on with much blessing in many places. But I do not give details to-day. We do not think less for Egypt, although we are now caring more for regions north. In fact, the Lord Himself has brought these brethren so as to encourage us, and to assure us that He has gone on before. Much love to all saints with you. Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.

Beloved brethren, God is answering many prayers; let us not cease to pray. He is opening doors in these ancient lands. Long have I felt deep interest in these very Yezedees, and had a strong conviction that God in the riches of His grace would bless even these very Yezedees. Oh, let us cry to God to grant a deep wave of blessing there as in Egypt. How remarkably He openeth and no man shutteth. May we all be stirred up to more sympathy and prayer. And may He sustain our beloved brother in this long and dangerous journey. Blessed to be in such a work in the company and fellowship of Him who said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the glad tidings to every creature," and again, "Feed the church of God." Many of that flock are in those dark and cruel lands. The Lord preserve His dear servants.

C. S.



Gathered to Thy Name, Lord Jesus,
 We expect Thee soon to come ;
 Here we wait for Thee to fetch us
 Hence, to our dear Father's home.

EXTRACT FROM THE EAST.

“ ALL things are now quite clear for my journey north (Mesopotamia, &c.), and I have appointed the 4th of November, the Lord willing, to start. I have to wait for some rain to cool the air and moisten the parched face of the earth. All is quite clear and happy before the Lord. He has also provided me a suitable companion—the one I had in mind from the first ; I mean the young brother now labouring in and around Damascus. He wrote to me this week that he is free and happy to go, in fact has been for some time exercised about going north to labour.

Yesterday I had good letters from Mesopotamia, shewing that a very great many are awakened and anxious to hear the word. The brother from there who was here and returned, wrote me that since his return home his house has scarcely been free from visitors from this place and elsewhere, who are all deeply interested to hear. As I have said to you before, it is the primary need of souls that presses upon me, although I am sure that there will be gathering power also.”

B. F. PINKERTON.

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

BEYROUT, SYRIA,

December, 2nd, 1889.

I AM still improving slowly, I am now up all day, and can go out for an hour or two; but that does not signify a very great amount of strength. I wrote you a fortnight ago that my journey northwards is impossible at present; but I am sure that all my exercises about it have been of the Lord. If nothing occur to prevent, the young brother I have spoken about, will set off on his journey next week. He was here last week, and went up to the mountains to bid his mother good-bye, so may be down to-day.

I have had late word from there and from Mousul also. And it is good and cheering from both places. My correspondent in Mousul is a nice stedfast man, who has corresponded with me for five years, and has got all his light and comfort through reading. I will give you some extracts from his last letter, because I am sure they will comfort you. He writes the 2nd of last month. He says, "After presenting my desires towards you, and my christian love, beloved brother, I thank God, the Father of mercies who has made us meet, along with all saints for fellowship in the glorious inheritance reserved for us. Lately, while reading Philippians I derived an unusual spiritual benefit. Especially while I was reading iii. 20, 21, the Holy Spirit enabled me to grasp the glorious form in which the children of God shall be; even the form of our glorious Head, the Lord

Jesus, who is soon to return for us ; when we shall be with Him and like Him, therefore we have no citizenship here ; for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we expect a perfect Saviour, &c. Again while studying chapter iv, 1-4 I got something as it were new to me, as to, the only foundation of the believer's joy, and it is *Jesus Christ in glory* ; while all our names are written in the book of life, from which nothing can ever blot them out, for they have been written there by virtue of Christ's blood, and by the love of God our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. O, beloved brother, are we not deficient in joy in the Lord, and should we not confess this deficiency to Him ?"

" I also informed you that a little while ago there was with me a young man, a christian brother of the Chaldean Church, who knows the Arabic language, and I gave him the diagram tract on the 'Coming of the Lord, and rapture of the Church,' &c. ; and he became greatly awakened as to the coming of the Lord in glory and His millennial kingdom. He began to ask his priests about this important subject ; but they could give him no answer, except, that this was an heretical opinion. But he pressed them with the plain testimonies of holy scripture, and they failed to convince him to the contrary ; and he declared that he would live and die in the hope of the return of Jesus Christ to take us to glory."

I give you these simple extracts, dear brother, for I am sure they will refresh you. Mousul, you know, is near the site of ancient Nineveh. You can see *how* the Lord Himself is working to give His truth to souls. My heart is quite

EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

55

in the work in that vast region, where there are thousands of Christians, many of whom, I doubt not, are dear to Christ, the great Shepherd, risen and glorified, but leading on His own after Him in the path of resurrection.

I have good word from Upper Egypt also. It seems that I am to be kept here for the present at routine work. I never leave Beyrouth to find work, but am often glad to get away for a change of work. The burdens here are heavy and continuous; it is this that weighs me down physically here. S. was with us a few days last week. He has now gone back to Palestine, and will soon be on his way to Egypt. He is uneasy about my health, and thinks I ought to take some change. But I am in the Lord's hands who has put me here; and what with my regular printing work, and sending off books, and keeping up links by constant correspondence in Arabic with many different places, I see no way for a change to the West; and I have not been exercised about it. I am happier in my soul in the East than I ever was in the West, because here I feel that I am in my place. I am sure we have a good Master, who knows all our wants and trials, and will not overburden us. *Weak* we must be, and contented to be so, for He needs our weakness not our strength, He joins not His strength to ours, but perfects it in our weakness. Blessed be His name.

(Signed), B. F. PINKERTON.

glory always shone upon Him ; and thus He trod His sorrowful path, for while all was dark below, all was light above.

To be continued.

TIDINGS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrout, Jan. 22, 1890.

THANK God the word is good about the Lord's work, and very comforting. From Egypt I have had many letters of late telling of peace and quiet among those gathered, and of new places where the Lord is working in grace. Dear — is much comforted. He had already seen a good many gatherings, and finds them fresh and occupied with the Lord, and labourers diligent and humble, with evidence of blessing in their service. Perhaps he is by this time as far up as Assouan, near the southern limit of Egypt. There is no gathering yet in the far south, but a good many pious persons whom he has long known, who are interested in the truth, and whom he likes to visit and comfort, and convey to them books.

Others have written to me, and their letters are encouraging. For instance, one of them from an old gathering writes about the recent conversion of a man whom I have known for some years, but who bore a very bad name, although a man of means and fortune in the world. He says of this one : "He had spent his past life in the service of the devil, but the Lord has wrought

in him by the Holy Ghost, and he is born from above, and now he assembles with us daily and prays with tears, and you will now find him singing with joy, and expecting the return of the Lord from heaven. He now longs to see you." Such items of news refresh the heart. I remember well at both my last visits to this place that I saw this man present at every meeting, and I told the brother who now informs me of his conversion, that that man was under conviction, although he perhaps could hardly think so, as he knew what a bad life he had been leading. Hence my heart has been specially refreshed by the news. But oh, think of the joy in heaven over even one sinner that repenteth ! I think, too, that it is a good sign in an old meeting when souls are drawn thither and converted. It shews that there is freshness and life. We are all so apt to become formal, and assume a kind of stereotyped condition. We become estranged from heaven's joy over returning prodigals, and perhaps think that this work only belongs to evangelists. Thank God, it does pertain to their blessed mission, for God has sent them for it, and pronounces their feet "beautiful ;" but this does not exclude His other saints from participating in this blessed service. Christ Himself is "the truth," and this is needed by sinners and saints, and what is specially needed to convict the former will always refresh the latter.

From Mesopotamia I hear very good news. The brothers there had been anxious lest I was on the way, and feared that the rain and the cold would be too much for me, and were relieved when they got my letter telling them that another brother was coming instead of me. I thought this an evidence of real love. The brother will have reached there before this, but there has not been time for a letter to reach here telling of his arrival. I am sure the Lord is working in those regions to cause the midnight cry to be heard, and to proclaim the grace of the gospel. Patience is always needed in order that we may work with God: as Paul tells Timothy that the husbandman must first labour before he gathers fruit.

You will be interested to hear that I had the other day a visit from one who has been evangelising a little among the Yezidees, "devil worshippers," of that region. He cannot report fruit, but has been among them a good deal, and says they received him kindly, and allowed him to read to, and talk with them, only he must not speak against Satan. They admit that he is fallen, and under God's displeasure, but say that, as God is merciful, He will not be wroth with him for ever, and when He pardons and restores him into favour, they will share in his mercy, that is, the mercy shewn to him. There are 72,000 families of them in the region where this brother has laboured, and are said to be rather

superior as a race of people. Few of them can read. They date the beginning of true religion from the time of the Mahomedan conquest, as their founder, "Yezreed," lived about that time and rejected the new creed. One can suppose that their ancestors had a measure of Jewish and Christian light, but had lost hold of Christ, and only had Satan, His adversary, left. This shews us, in a naked, undisguised form, what took place, very extensively, amongst the mass of the Christians in those countries about that time. Only some remnants of them retained the confession of *Christ the Son of God*, and that under oppression and loss. However, the principle of what then took place is, I suppose, always true; if we lose or give up Christ, one then falls under the direct power of His adversary. Did not the Lord shew this to Peter when He rebuked him? However God can work among "devil worshippers," for He has done so among us, who were at least his slaves! Let us all seek to hold fast to the Son of God and grace."

B. F. PINKERTON.

Thus after years of deep interest and trusting God to reach these poor Yezidees, the Lord has again answered prayer. I ask all who read this, who are Christ's, to join in prayer for these remarkable people, and for the work of God in those vast regions of darkness. God is working, praised be His name.

C. S.