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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

"ENDRAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER." "WHOM TO KNOW IS LIFE ETERNAL."

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NEW SERIES. }

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OLD SERIES.

The Family Portion;

OR, WORDS OF SPIRITUAL CAUTION, COUNSEL, AND COMFORT.

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 COR. i. 4.

A NEW YEAR'S MOTTO—"THY GOD HELPETH- THEE."

THE circumstances under which the above portion was presented to the mind were memorable, as far as we ourselves are concerned. We wanted a Scripture for the opening year, and we could but feel that, when one-third of that period should have passed away, we should, if spared, complete *our fiftieth year's editorship*. The reader may, in some degree, imagine our feelings as we contemplated this fact. They were the keener and the more intensified in consequence of the day of which we speak being the forty-third anniversary of our first starting for Ireland, and that at the time the never-to-be-forgotten famine was prevailing. There was a deep-felt sense of the boundless mercy, the wondrous forbearance and long-suffering, as well as the infinite love and bounty, which had marked the course of that three-and-forty years. But even this consideration awakened other exercises. The want of faith and the absence of a quiet resting in and upon the Lord, as to what remained in connection with the little residue of one's days, was a source of the very deepest humiliation.

It is vain to talk—much less to censure or scold—about the exercising of faith, where there is a personal and a practical knowledge that we are indebted to the Holy Ghost for every particle of the same, and the which we can no more create or cultivate, in and of ourselves, than we could stop the sun in his mid-day course. How emphatically did the Apostle insist upon this, when speaking of faith! He said, "And that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

But what adds immensely to this conscious want of faith is the deep sense of ingratitude, forgetfulness, and distrust, as well as a corresponding deeper insight into the blackness and baseness of one's own heart, in spite of the boundless love, the matchless

mercy, the astounding loving-kindness and compassion, which have attended one throughout the whole of his pilgrim-course. This, this is what humbles and crumbles in the very dust before a patient, long-suffering, and most merciful Lord God and Father; and this deepens and intensifies as one progresses onward and homeward.

In the "emptying from vessel to vessel," which is ever characteristic of the Lord's dealings with His people, He is never at a loss to find means by which to keep alive within them an ever-present sense of their momentary dependence upon Himself! However such may be established in doctrine, and with the fullest conviction of the unchangeable love of a covenant God to a covenant people, this will not suffice them. The Holy Ghost has enkindled in their hearts an EVER-CONSTANT CRAVING AFTER JESUS; and nothing short of His renewed visits, His smiles, His whispers of love—His precious, heart-warming, soul-uplifting "Fear nots"—His fresh and fresh assurances of ceaseless favour and never-failing good-will—will satisfy. The heartfelt language of all those who have known Him, heard His fear-assuaging voice, and by faith had glimpses of His lovely face, is—

"Yes, Thou art precious to my soul,
My transport and my trust;
Jewels to Thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust."

Reader, there is no mistake about it. This is how and where the lovers of Jesus, and the seekers after Jesus, are to be found in their walk, and in their ceaseless warfare with "the world, the flesh, and the devil," as they day by day come up out of the wilderness. Ah! yes, such in very deed can, with the utmost truthfulness, exclaim—

"Though words can never tell my case,
Nor all my sorrows paint;
This I can say before Thy face,
That CHRIST is all I want."

Past mercies, however precious, will not suffice, except as earnest and pledges. The more the followers of Jesus know of Him, the more they want to know. Hence their craving. Hence their so ardent plea, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" (Sol.'s Song i. 7.) Hence the language of the lovers of Jesus, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell Him that I am sick of love" (Sol.'s Song v. 8).

Apart, however, from the reasons to which we have adverted, there were other causes on account of which we laboured under depression at the time of which we speak. We had visited certain

sacred spots, in which the past, with all its varied scenes, was brought vividly to our recollection. Among these was that where the Lord spake, at our father's open grave, in 1834, the memorable words, "A Father to the fatherless." Jacob-like, this brought to remembrance an immensity—yea, a keen recalling—of the deep feelings which then possessed the mind in the prospect of life, so lengthened a proportion of which had since passed away. This was rendered the more marked in consequence of our being accompanied by our only surviving brother and widowed sister—the one in his eighty-seventh, the other in her eighty-third year. The family grave, therefore, under the circumstances, was rendered additionally sacred. What, however, added to the depression—for depressed we were—was a short visit to the church that had just been consecrated, and which occupied the site of the one that had been identified with one's earlier years, where we had both been baptized and married. In lieu of the former and far-famed building, as attached to the most extensive graveyard in the kingdom, was now this gorgeous structure, erected at a cost of little short of £50,000, and where the appointments were of the most Ritualistic or Popish character. We could not contemplate this scene without being reminded that the church was one of the many with which the once Protestant England was overspread, and which were but too sorry a sign and unmistakable a proof that the kingdom at large was completely saturated with Romanism, and that, unless an Almighty Arm interposed, we should, as a nation, be speedily under Romish dominion and entire Popish control. Hence what heart, duly affected with a sense of what the Lord had so long been to and for this highly-favoured land, could but mourn, and that most deeply, at the present aspect of events?

We have no wish to dwell upon, but merely briefly to allude to, these things by way of caution and remonstrance, especially as such a spirit of supineness and indifference seems to have taken possession of the people generally. Since our last issue we have been informed of most lamentable facts, in proof of how Popery is encouraged on every hand. Either from a judicial blindness, or a love of ease, or an utter want of thorough Protestant principles, the bishops and dignitaries of the Church, as well as the opponents of a national establishment, are largely aiding and abetting the accursed system of Romanism. We cannot, therefore, but feel, and that intensely, for what our children and children's children will, in all probability, be the eye-witnesses of, when we have "gone the way of all the earth." One fact, however, encourages us. It is that "the triumph of the wicked will be but short." Rome is doomed. Her ultimate and irremediable—yea, her speedy—destruction is as plainly declared as the language of Holy Writ can express.

Having touched upon the circumstances in which we were anxious for a New Year's word, both for our readers and ourselves, we proceed to state in what way it was given. We hope what we are about to record will be for the glory of our most condescending and gracious God, as well as for the comfort and encouragement of our readers.

We have already hinted at our depression, and what so contributed to it. Unable to rise above it ourselves, we could only plead with the Lord that He would send *relief*—that He would *revive* and *renew*. The wrestling and importunity was intense. "Strong crying and tears" were presented at His footstool during the wakefulness of the night-season. Plea after plea was presented, and argument upon argument plied at the mercy-seat. Promises and pledges, as well as His past dealings, were urged as grounds for venturing to implore His aid and His renewed assurances and support.

Reader, do you know anything of these exercises—these wrestlings and importunities—this "taking Heaven by storm"? All for a time seemed to no purpose. There appeared to be no response. At length we fell asleep, like a weeping child falling exhausted upon its mother's breast. When we awoke, there came the words, in the gentlest, most-unlooked-for way, "*Thy God helpeth thee*." Oh, it was felt to be such a precious word—so timely—so exactly suited to one's condition! It was the more welcome and the more savoury, in consequence of its having been so unthought-of. It so bespoke the Lord's condescension and kindness as the Chooser and Applier. It set one musing, moreover, as to its fulness and blessedness. There was, first, *Thy God*. Mark the claim, "Thy God!" and by whom spoken, even the Lord Himself! Hence the relationship was both recognized and declared by the Most High. And how blessed the response to the believer's or the Church's own claim—"This God is our God for ever and ever: He shall be our Guide even unto death." Then, as the word was spoken, after the so ardent and earnest appeal for the needed strength and the wonted succour, it bespoke a recognition of the want, and a giving heed thereto. Further, it implied the then present communication, "*Thy God helpeth thee*"—now, at this very moment—under existing circumstances, unaware as thou mayest be of the fact, and in spite of thy manifold fears and misgivings to the contrary. Moreover, it is *help! help!*—not *full, final, absolute deliverance!* That would be to render independent; that would *sever* rather than *unite*. The parent bestows upon the child according to that child's present necessities; it is little and little—no store! Not only would such store, in all probability, lead to misuse, but to withholding. The ever-recurring necessity leads to the so frequent resort and the so constant application. It affords the devoted husband as much real pleasure and satisfaction to respond

to the wife as, in like manner, she with unshaken confidence betakes herself to him for what she needs. She has no wish for a fund in hand, inasmuch as it would supersede her errand to her husband, and deprive her of the so constantly repeated proofs of his ceaseless attachment and unvarying interest. We see, therefore, that her very necessity would be a means of maintaining the intercourse and perpetuating the familiarity. Ah! reader, would that we could remember this in regard to our God and His dealings!

Again, mark the words, "*Thy God helpeth thee.*" Not, as we said before, administering full, complete, absolute deliverance, but present aid—little by little—fresh and fresh—this, that, and the other bestowment, just in the very nick of time, when and where the absolute need occurred, or the positive want was felt. Would Elijah have had nearly so marked a proof of the Lord's ceaseless and uninterrupted care of him, had he a week or a month's supply all at once, as when the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening? or would the same watchful Eye, tender interest, and never-failing care, have been nearly so marked, had the barrel been filled with meal, or the cruse overrunning with oil, as when there was a mere handful of meal so continuously eked out, and the oil lasting, even though but a few drops were at any one time to be found in the cruse?

"*Thy God helpeth thee!*" Yes, *thee*—poor, sinful, worthless "*thee!*" Yea, doubting, fearing, forgetful, distrustful "*thee!*" "*Thee—thee!*" poor sinner! "*Thee—thee!*" poor, trembling, Satan-harassed, sin-burdened "*thee!*" "*Thee—thee!*" poor, shrinking, timid, dismayed one at the thoughts of death, the chilly Jordan, the dark, cold grave! "*Thy God helpeth thee!*" Yes, and so timely and so real, effectual, and absolute will that "help" be that, as verily as there is a God in heaven, and that "His kingdom ruleth over all," so surely, when thou comest to the river, thou wilt exclaim, as myriads before thee have done, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Dear reader, how much those lines have run through the mind of late—

"Should ghastly death appear in view,
Christ's presence shall thy fears subdue;
He comes to set thy spirit free,
And 'as thy days thy strength shall be.'"

With respect to the "*thee,*" a case presents itself, at the moment

of writing, which occurred in the early part of our ministry at Bedminster. In the course of our parochial visits, we found a man far advanced in consumption. His name was JOHNS. We laboured under the impression that the most desirable feature of our visits, from time to time, as far as the wife was concerned, was the shilling we slipped into her hand, as we left the sick-room. As for the conversation with the dying man, she seemed wholly indifferent. Not a particle of interest was traceable. A year or two after the death of the husband, and when she had removed to another parish, she had occasion to call upon us, to witness a signature. There was a something in her manner that appeared to indicate a change from her former state of coldness and apathy. We ventured to question her; and, to our perfect astonishment, she opened up a line of experience that awakened in our heart the most grateful feeling. She said she had been in the habit of attending the week-evening services at our temporary wooden church, at the time we were giving a series of discourses upon the first chapter of the first Epistle of Peter. Returning home after the sermon, from the third and fourth verses, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," she said, "The words came again and again, 'It is for you—for you!'" It was in vain she questioned so great and glorious a fact, for again and again would come the blessed repetition, "It's for you—for you!"

Poor—yet rich—woman! Her faith was indeed sorely tried afterwards, both with respect to circumstances and her own bodily and relative affliction, for child after child was taken.

As we subsequently learned from the Scripture-reader, "The Old Pilgrim, of Bedminster," on one occasion she was a few shillings behindhand with her rent. It so wrought upon her that she could not rest. Hence, putting on her bonnet and shawl, she went out with the hope that a walk would give relief to her distressed and burdened heart. It seems, however, that that very morning we were hurrying to the station, to take the early express for London. We passed her on our way; but no sooner had we done so than the thought occurred, "Why, that's poor Mrs. JOHNS, and she will think I want to avoid her." Hence, we at once retraced our steps the few paces we had gone, and hastily putting a few shillings into her hand, said we were hurrying to the train, and therefore could not stop. As she told the Scripture-reader afterwards, that was how the Lord delivered her in that her time of trouble.

Yes, dear reader, that was one of His myriad ways of illustrating—applying—sealing home upon this and that one of His poor

and needy children His precious, precious "For you—for you!" "For me, Lord? poor, vile, worthless, ill-and hell-deserving me?" "Yes, for thee! even for thee!"

Ah! reader, here is the secret of the love, the gratitude, the praise and thanksgiving, that redound to the Lord. What can a poor sinner feel when that precious Scripture is applied with divine and irresistible power, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee"? (Jer. xxxi. 3.)

Now, with respect to the case just named, the facts are more remarkable because we never remember either before or after meeting the poor woman upon that road. It lay out of her usual track, more especially at that early hour of the morning. Her delicacy, too, was such that, but for the pressing circumstances aforementioned, she would not have ventured out. She, therefore, proved how marked the hand of God. How condescending and how gracious is the Lord of Hosts! There is nothing either too minute or too mighty for Him. Such are His "delights with the sons of men" that we had nearly said, He perfectly *revels* in administering to the wants of His poor and needy ones; and the poorer they are, and the more needy, the more tender His care and watchfulness. He keeps them poor on purpose (as we just now remarked) that the intimacy may be kept up and the familiarity maintained. He draws them to Himself by their cares and necessities.

The same applies to their varied states of mind—their weakness, their fears, their sadness and depression. All, all are as so many calls to His anxious, His sorrowful, His oppressed ones—"Let Me see thy face; let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

Reader, are not these facts borne out by experience? Often have we heard the late venerable ALGAR LOCK (Mr. HUNTINGTON'S successor) say, "We are cold and icy enough with all our troubles; what should we be without them?" Ah! what indeed? In spite of pressure of this or that sort, or from whatever source or cause, how cold—how heartless—how lifeless and indifferent—we are, in a spiritual point of view! What a clinging to the creature—what a "cleaving to the dust," as the Psalmist expresses it! Who would suppose we were united to Christ in indissoluble bonds—heirs and joint-heirs with Him to "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," and yet grovelling—aye, and grumbling, too—in this poor world, with all its humbling surroundings? Oh, shame, shame that it be so, and the more especially with respect to us poor, worn-and-weary, old and helpless ones! So much of the creature, so little of the Lord; so much of earth, so little of heaven; so much of the flesh, so little of the Spirit! Alas! alas! but so it is.

And yet, notwithstanding all, dear reader—mark the words—

consider the great and glorious truth, "THY GOD HELPETH THEE!" "*Thy God! Thy God!*" Oh, how marvellous—aye, and how glorious, too! "*Thy God!*" "The God of the whole earth shall He be called." Observe, moreover, the response, "*My God! my God!*" What an exclamation was that of poor, doubting, unbelieving Thomas, after being challenged in his own heartless, cruel language, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, *My Lord and my God!*"

In the sixty-seventh Psalm we read, "Let the people praise Thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, *even our own God*, shall bless us." That is very precious, "*even our own God!*" In 1 Chronicles xxviii. 20, there is a record which (if possible) seems even more blessed, because more personal and unquestionable—"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, *EVEN MY GOD*, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

There is something very touching and very blessed in this language, when we consider the circumstances under which it was spoken. David's heart had been set upon building the temple—a house for the Lord—but the Lord would not permit him, for the reason assigned that he had been a man of blood—that is, that he had been engaged in many wars. Nevertheless, the Lord approved of the motive, and accepted it as a service, as if actually rendered. David was not to build, but Solomon, his son. In proof, therefore, of the sincerity of his intentions, the Psalmist did his very utmost both in inspiring the people, and himself largely and liberally contributing the material for the magnificent structure that was to be raised. How striking, then, his comment in his counsel to his son, and in his preparatory leave-taking—"Fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, *even my God*, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

Ah! reader, how precious—how blessed—thus to stand, as it were, upon the margin of the two worlds—retracing the one, and recognizing by faith a prospective glimpse of the other, and then to testify of divine faithfulness and all-sufficiency! How soon after this testimony for God and truth do we read, in regard to David, "and he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honour." We care not about the "riches," but oh, we do care, and earnestly crave, that the Lord may, of His great mercy, grant that, when His appointed hour in regard to our departure shall have fully come, we may close our eyes upon the time-state

in like manner, with the same precious grasp as the Psalmist of divine relationship, "My God," and in the sweet assurance and blessed persuasion that, as He has been with *us*, so He will be with *ours*, never to *fail* nor to *forsake*! Amen and amen.

But to return. The circumstances under which the words, "*Thy God helpeth thee*," were spoken were both interesting and instructive. We read in 1 Chronicles xii. 16—18, as follows—"And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for *thy God helpeth thee*. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band." Now, this language implied interest, as well as observation, upon the part of the speaker. He was one whose attention had been drawn to the dealings of God with His servant the Psalmist. He saw, too, to acknowledge and admire; and that very acknowledgment would serve to stimulate and encourage David, in the midst of his responsibilities and perplexity. And how often does this prove to be the case, in the experience of the Lord's dear children! When, at times at least, they are walking in comparative darkness, and have no bright rays or light upon their path—when, for the time being, they are utterly at a loss to understand the Lord's then present dealings with them, *others* see—yea, and say, too—"Thy God helpeth thee." Such observers are in a position calmly to look on, and seriously to consider, the Lord's guidance and care, in regard especially to His ministers or this or that member of the King's household who is called to take some leading step or prominent part in this or that pathway of the Lord's guiding and opening hand. The words embrace—The Claim, the Consideration, and the Care; and this distinctly applies to the ceaseless watchfulness and the ever-constant ministration of all needed help and strength, upon the part of the Lord, to and for His people. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me," is a testimony of universal application to the every child of the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. Not the least member of Zion, or the weakest, feeblest, and most feelingly worthless and unworthy of the sons of God, but is watched over, guarded and guided, led and fed, upheld and sustained, and finally "brought off more than conqueror, through Him that hath loved them." Yes, blessed be God, it is a verity—

"The weakest saint shall win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way."

There is one thought more, dear reader, and with that we leave the subject, to enter, if the Lord will, upon the untrodden path of a new and perfectly unseen year. It is this, that where, by grace and love and power divine, it may be said of this or that pilgrim of Zion, "*Thy God helpeth thee*," it may be said with equal truth and a glorious certainty, "*I am the Lord that healeth thee*." Yes, blessed be His great and ever-adorable name, where He *helps* He *heals*! He has—He does—He ever will—in His own time and in His own way, give His poor, weak, wandering, and weary ones abundant cause, sooner or later, to exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who *healeth all thy diseases*; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. ciii. 1—5).

And now, O our blessed God and Father—"the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort"—prospectively we step over the threshold of a new and untrodden year. If we know not what a day or even an hour may bring forth, how little can we imagine what a whole year may witness! Lord, if one poor sinner may venture to speak on behalf of other poor sinners, we are bound to say that we are perfectly in the dark—altogether unable to imagine what may await us in the coming year. Doubtless with some—perhaps many—of us, it will be the last we shall see on earth. It may be the year that shall close our earthly pilgrimage. Oh, if so, Lord, we beseech Thee—we entreat Thee—we implore Thee—to grant us all needed grace and strength to meet our last hour! Oh, do, do, we pray Thee, grant dying strength for a dying hour; yea, fulfil that sweet promise, "At evening-time it shall be light." As it has pleased Thee, dearest and most gracious Lord, again and again, on our pilgrim-way, to speak those precious words to our hearts, "**Fear thou not**; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isa. xli. 10), do Thou, at the last, give us such a realization of Thy presence, and such an enjoyment of Thy power and divine all-sufficiency, that we may exclaim, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen and amen.

Southsea, November 10th, 1889.

THE EDITOR.

Wayside Notes.

CLEARING THE DOCKS.

“The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.”—
PSALM cxv. 14.

WE have heard plenty recently about our English Docks. Picture with us, beloved, a life scene. The ship has discharged her cargo, it may be, after a rough voyage. Busy hands have again placed the full complement of merchandise in her hold. Spars and sails have been adjusted, and the instruments of navigation carried on board. The compass—that faithful guide to the mariner—has been put into place, together with sextant and quadrant. Charts to warn off hidden dangers, and the log-book, have been carried into the captain's cabin; and now, all ready, the vessel *clears the docks*, and shapes her course to her desired destination. We can but wish her a prosperous voyage.

But this appears to us but an illustration of our present position spiritually, at the opening of another year. Storms—ah! we have indeed encountered many in the past, but they are over and gone, and now we have discharged our cargo of precious truths given us by our God, and are verily “shaken out and emptied,” seeking *fresh stores*, especially a goodly quantity of the oil of the Holy Spirit, together with cases of fruits and Gospel provision for craving souls. All ready, we clear the docks, blessed be God, having, above all, the Captain of our salvation on board. Wish us a prosperous voyage, beloved.

We read that “the children of Israel *set forward*” (Num. xxij. 1). We “set forward” once more in our yet unfolded course. We pray for increased blessings from above. We crave that the unction and power of the Holy Ghost may be so upon us that our testimony may be sound, clear, and convincing, carrying with it gain to souls, and glory to the God of our salvation.

Lord, bless reader and writer, for Christ's sake!

To our portion then. “The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.” See, it is both portion and promise, and both are linked with a covenant “*shall*.” Oh, we do love God's “wills” and “shalls” of purpose and grace! Such cannot be gainsaid.

And, first, our desire must be *to be increased with renewed instances of divine favour in providence*. We have had many in the past. Ah! beloved, what retracings you and I should have to recount, could we draw up together by the fire-side! Going back to early days, how marked in our experience was the protecting arm of God amidst youthful temptations! Then, when we realized the budding of divine grace, how the cold and unfriendly world tried to nip that budding; and Satan, too, insinuated that it was all a delusion, and we were but acting the hypocrite. How precious the Lord the Spirit nurtured and carried on the work of grace within! And since then, what multiplied castings down and liftings up! Storms and sunshine; joys and sorrows; temptations and triumphs; the arms of a covenant God around us. And, again, in the daily warfare, *hard hits* in business life, but

the Lord gave grace equal to every need. And, again, family cares, sicknesses, and affliction; yet brought through all, the *living* to praise a *loving* God. So we might trace up the way He has led us. What long-suffering!

And now comes the promise—"The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children"—a promise of renewed instances of divine favour in providence. And we shall have them too, beloved, depend upon it. There are more mercies ahead for us, if there are more miseries, and we shall prove the Object of our love to be "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

But, further, it becomes our uppermost desire that we may become *increased in the knowledge of the Scriptures*, which are the glory of the Christian's hidden life. Oh, when applied by the power of the Holy Spirit, how sweetly do they sustain us in trial; and under the heat and burden of daily care, we do well to have constant recourse to the truth of God. "Hear, O Israel, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily."

And what a treasure to us, beloved, is the Bible! Well is it called, not a Book, but *the Book*, for it is above every other book—yea, as high above as the heaven is above the earth.

Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. *All Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Yes, "*all Scripture* is given by inspiration." But see how the revisers of the New Version have weakened this important declaration. They put it—"Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable," &c., implying that some Scriptures are not inspired of God. But this is decidedly faulty, and has given a handle for BRADLAUGH to promulgate his errors. Yes, he says, "Parts of the Scriptures are inspired, and parts are not." But, to confute this, let me note what an able authority, the Rev. TALBOT A. L. GREAVES, M.A., Vicar of Clifton, stated at the Clifton Conference of 1888:—

"I believe the Revised Version is wrong. The conjunction joins together the two adjectives—'inspired of God and profitable,' and the verb 'to be' ought to be introduced before both of them. The true version I believe to be this—'Every Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable.' Or perhaps, because the Apostle had just before spoken these words in regard to Timothy—'From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus,' we may fairly take the Apostle's meaning to be this—'Every passage of the aforesaid holy Scriptures is inspired of God, and is profitable.'"

Well, beloved, whatever difference there may be in such nice points, we believe and will affirm that the whole of the Scriptures are inspired of God; and our earnest desire is, to become increased in the knowledge of them more and more, and that through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. That is a beautiful and truthful expression of SPURGEON'S

* See letter following "Wayside Notes."

—"Nobody ever outgrows the Scriptures. The Book widens and deepens with our years."

But again, it must be a superabounding desire with the Christian to become *increased in the knowledge of Him who is the Sum and Substance of that Word, "a precious Christ."* "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." "Whom to know is life eternal."

And what an inexhaustible theme is *Christ*, beloved! Some have dared to say it is a worn-out theme, and in these advanced days we want something fresh, and cannot bear for ever "harping upon one string." Poor, foolish, and ignorant beings! They do not know Christ, nor love Him, or they would not thus despise Him. It is indeed "one string," and a precious one too.

A curious arithmetical train of thought upon this point ran into my mind in the dark hours of the past night. I thought thus—"Why, how many references to passages in God's Word have we in CRUDEN'S Concordance, and how many, directly or indirectly, *point to Christ?*" In the morning I looked in the work, and found that each column contains an average of upwards of one hundred references; and, as there are three columns to each page, and 574 pages, this would give a total of 172,200 references. Add to this that each portion is a mine of told and untold truths of Him who is "the Truth," and say, is it a worn-out theme? Nay, as we have said, Christ is an inexhaustible fulness, and we have enough in Him for time, and shall find enough in Him for eternity.

But, blessed be God, as years roll on, Christ does increase in our experience, in spite of all that may tend to keep us low in divine things.

I found myself the other day, as I wended my way across some fields, holding a sort of soliloquy with my soul. I was exclaiming, "Oh, Thou Lamb of God, Thou art 'the Chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely' to my soul," when a response seemed to come—"Who made Him so?" At once I saw the work of the Spirit, which the exercises of soul were giving evidences of; and it further came to me, "Why, this work must increase, and it must have a glory ending." I was melted into tears, and praised God inwardly, but went on my way silently humbled before my God. Yes, "He must increase." The work cannot stand still. "The path" of the justified in Christ "is as a shining light, shining *more and more* unto the perfect day." It must increase till it finds its fruition in eternal glory.

Again, it becomes our fervent desire to gain an increase of the *gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit*. We must have Him honoured. The Scriptures can only be savingly understood by the inward illumination of the Holy Ghost. It is a sealed Book, and must have the Holy Spirit to unfold its truths, and His divine melting to receive such truths into the heart; and it is the flowings from the fulness of a precious Christ in the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit we need. From such graces in exercise, fruit unto God will appear, and glory redound to His great name.

Are we not right, beloved, in such a spiritual order of things?

And then, springing out of our subject is another important theme, namely, that of *divine guidance*. Clearing the docks, and entering into

fresh scenes and unfolded encounters, the great need will be the guiding hand of our God.

And here we remember that we have been recently asked by a dear brother in the Lord this question—"How may we know that we have the promised guidance of the Lord, so that we may recognize the way He would have us go?" This is an important inquiry. May the Lord lead us to pen words of wisdom concerning it.

First, let me put in a caution. Beloved, is there not such a thing as an exercised Christian *darting at a passage*, and considering that it just fits the desire; and therefore they think that it will most certainly be fulfilled in their experience, and because it is not, they become faithless, dispirited, and discouraged? when the fact is, if they would only weigh the context, and study the bearing of the promise, they would find it not applicable to their case, and promised unto totally different circumstances.

Dear JOHN NEWTON speaks of some who, when in doubt, have *opened their Bibles at a venture*, and expected to find something to direct them in the first verse they cast their eye upon, adding, "Can the opening upon 2 Samuel vii. 3, when Nathan said to David, 'Do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee,' be sufficient to determine the lawfulness or expediency of actions? Or can a glance of the eye upon the Lord's words to the woman of Canaan (Matt. xv. 28)—'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,' amount to proof that the present earnest desire of the mind (whatever it may be) shall surely be accomplished? Yet it is certain that matters big with important consequences have been engaged in, and the most sanguine expectations formed, upon no better warrant than *dipping* (as it is called) upon a text of Scripture."

Surely, beloved, there is no authority in the Scriptures for such hasty dipping. For instance, Nathan said to David, "Go, do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee." The question is, What was in the heart, and who placed it there? In this case, it was to "build a house unto the Lord," which he was bidden to do, for it was according to God's will and mind. This is a perfectly clear leading of the Lord, but it will not do to take such a promise and apply it to anything that is in the heart.

Do you say, "How may I tell whether the thing in my heart is right or wrong?" Look at the text before us, in the case referred to. "That Thy name may be magnified for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 26). Will God's great name be magnified if you have that desire, or only your name magnified—which?

But, further, others desire a certain thing, which seems right and proper in its place; and it may be even judged that it would bring glory to God if granted—at least we think so. Then, with such a desire, the Scriptures are resorted to. The desire becomes clothed, as it were, with promises; but we wait in vain for results.

But, beloved, too often, if analyzed, we shall find, as it has been said, that we first secretly determine for ourselves, and then come to ask counsel of God.

I may perhaps startle some when I say, in watching closely the Lord's dealings and leadings, He, for the most part, gives me *the very*

contrary to my desires; and this is but in keeping with the Master's earthly experience. His pathway was made up of *contraries*—yea, He "bore the contradiction of sinners against Himself." Is it not an honour to be called to tread in the Master's footprints? And such experience is in keeping with NEWTON'S well-known heartfelt testimony, where he shows how prayer is answered by crosses—

"I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

"'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He I trust has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

"Lord, why is this?' I trembling cried;
'Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?'
'Tis in this way,' the Lord replied,
'I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"These inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou mayst seek thy all in Me."

It may, then, be naturally asked, "If all these difficulties, how may we know when the Lord *does* guide us, so that we are able to learn His will in the matter?" Well, beloved, we acknowledge it is not easy. Still, I think there is a three-fold test which may help us to arrive at a just conclusion, namely, first, in our desire, is the creature nothing? Secondly, in it is Christ everything? Thirdly, does the Holy Spirit seal home the promise with unmistakable power and melting?

A few words upon these points and proofs.

First, *in our desire, is the creature nothing?* Are our wills in the matter entirely subject to God's will? "Father," said our dear Lord in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, *not My will, but Thine be done.*" Are we, beloved, brought to such hallowed subjection as this? Self renounced—self crucified—self nothing? Ah! this is difficult, for self is so insinuating and absorbing. Have we not sometimes said, "Oh, my precious Lord, I want more of Thee! I would live nearer to Thee, and desire that Thou mightest become the all-absorbing theme"? But self—wretched self—and its surroundings are so crushing, so overwhelming, so insidious. Yet the dear Lord knows the desire of the heart, and in His goodness takes, as we say, "the will for the deed." He pities us in our life-positions and earthly surroundings, and overrules all such conflicting circumstances to work our eternal good. But, as we have intimated, self is so insidious that it creeps into the craving. Christ is not all; and He must be, beloved. And very possibly all that discipline and suffering are just for this purpose—to crucify self, and crown Him.

This brings us to our second point and proof. *In the desire, is Christ all?* or is there a secret lurking of creature comfort and advantage, if the

thing desired were gained? Would it not exalt the man rather than the Master, and is not the man placed above the Master? Oh, the heart is so treacherous, so deceitful! It needs great watching.

But to our third point and proof. *Is the promise which fits into the desire sealed home with the melting unction of the Holy Spirit?* Are we stopped by an invisible power while reading the Word, and melted under it? Does it become opened out in a way never before realized? Is there a voice in the Word that speaks unmistakably to our souls? If so, we may take it that God is at work for us, and in us, and even through us.

Ah! beloved, there is all the difference between the Word of the Lord coming to us with power, and we going to it with some desire which, if closely looked at, contains a good deal of the essence of fleshly gratification. Of course it is a precious and joyous thing to be ever coming to the Word, looking out for a blessing, and that, too, not in vain. But you mark how again and again that Bible says, "And the word of the Lord *came unto me*, saying"—not, "I came unto it, saying." This is an important difference; and we want the Word so to come to us that it stops us, melts us, and proves that the Spirit means to work for our good. God's work is so far beyond our wills. Will the desire, if realized, bring fruit unto God, and magnify His name? This is a safe test, to show us whether it is of the Lord.

Let us, then, be sweetly assured that the promises of God will be fulfilled in our experience, in the Lord's own best way, "some time—somewhere." There is a beautiful little piece with this heading in last month's *Gospel Advocate*. It is so to the point that I must quote it—

SOME TIME—SOMEWHERE.

Unanswered yet, the prayer your lips have pleaded

In agony of heart these many years.

Does faith begin to fail? is hope departing?

And think you all in vain those falling tears?

Say not the Father hath not heard your prayer;

You shall have your desire some time—somewhere.

Unanswered yet, though when you first presented

This one petition to the Father's throne,

It seemed you could not wait the time of asking,

So urgent was your heart to make it known.

Though years have passed since then, do not despair;

The Lord will answer you, some time—somewhere.

Unanswered yet—nay, do not say ungranted;

Perhaps your exercise is not yet done;

The work began when first your prayer was uttered

And God will finish what He has begun;

For He will keep the incense burning there;

His glory you shall see some time—somewhere.

Unanswered yet! Faith cannot be unanswered;

Her feet were firmly planted on the Rock;

Amid the wildest storm she stands undaunted,

Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.

She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,

And cries, "It shall be done, some time—somewhere."

And then, speaking of divine guidance, mark, it is promised throughout the way to the heavenly home. Does not the Word promise that He will guide us "even unto death"? But methinks I hear some trembler say, "Ah! but it is that *death* I so much dread. It seems such a cruel and cold word." Yes, beloved, it does. When we look at the grave and into it, we do shudder then. But oh, let faith be given to look *beyond the grave*, then brightness takes the place of gloom. Glory, glory gilds the dark clouds, which roll away as the Sun of Righteousness shines forth from His chamber in the skies, and gives us a sweet view of the heavenly city. What we want, then, is faith to look beyond and above; then all will be well.

And then the closing expression of our portion, "The Lord shall increase you more and more, *you and your children*." What a volume of home-and-heartfelt tenderness to loving Christian parents there is in these words, "you and your children"! What chords of heartfelt love do they touch within! And often the care and love are increased when the child is a weak and suffering one.

When JOHN BUNYAN was sent to prison for conscience' sake, he grieved deeply at parting with his wife and children, and he said concerning such parting, it was like "pulling the flesh off his bones." But he had a *blind* child, and he added concerning that one, "But my grief is especially for my poor blind child, who lays nearer my heart than all beside."

And, even if loving parents have the pain of having an *idiot* child, yet such becomes the object of the most tender care, especially on the part of a fond and anxious mother. Nay, even if the boy is the *wild one of the family*, how parents follow such in his waywardness with anxious affection and many prayers!

And again, like as the divine Master pressed closer home to His heart of love the weakling, so Christians have a large place in their hearts for the weak and suffering one of the family group.

Oh, we repeat, there is a volume of home-and-heartfelt tenderness in the expression before us, "you and your children"!

But we must gather up our thoughts; and, in so doing, beloved, we ask you, in *clearing the docks*, as it were, and proceeding upon fresh seas in life's rough voyage, are not the things we have enumerated our mutual desires? Note them. We have craved, first, a deeper insight into the sacred Scriptures; secondly, an increased knowledge of Him who is the Sum and Substance of that Word; thirdly, fresh flowings of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; and lastly, the unerring guidance of our covenant God, who cannot err in leading us onwards and homewards in His best and right way. Thus may we and our children be blessed of God, and made a blessing.

Well, beloved, we look on and hope on. The expression, "the earnest expectation," is very emphatic, and denotes a *thrusting one's head forward*—a listening for the return of some one we expect—an anxious waiting for an important issue. And is not this our attitude? We are eagerly on the look-out for Christ. We are watching anxiously for His return. We are expecting the issue of all life's conflict to be a glorious victory. Our expectation is not a vain one. He will come again. He will take us to Himself.

In conclusion, let me say, in passing onwards and homewards, I am learning two lessons, which I leave with you. First, that day by day I am drinking into the experience and following in the footsteps of God's children of Israel of old. Secondly, that I am being, in some measure, led spiritually to tread in the footprints of the Master Himself. In such progress note, beloved, our New Year's portion and promise—

THE LORD SHALL INCREASE YOU MORE
AND MORE, YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN.

"More and more, as years roll round,
Thy dear mercies, Lord, abound,
And Thy kindnesses descend
Without measure, without end."

Burton-on-Trent.

G. C.

THE "WAYSIDE NOTES" WRITER'S BIBLE CLASS IN THE HOME.*

FROM A MEMBER.

DEAR MR. COWELL,—Since our meeting last Thursday evening, I have looked up the matter of the inspiration of *the whole* of the holy Scriptures; and I thought you might like to see what other Commentators have said or written on 2 Timothy iii. 16. You will see that it is a subject which has been explained in various ways from very early days.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," &c. (2 Tim. iii. 16, Authorized Version).

Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος
πρὸς διδασκαλίαν.—κ. τ. λ.

I. WORDSWORTH and many other expositors render this passage—"All Scripture" (*i.e.*, every portion of Scripture) 'being inspired of God' (*i.e.*, because it is 'inspired of God'), 'is also profitable,' &c.

II. From ALFORD'S Greek Testament I find that ORIGEN, THEODORET, the Syriac Version, the Vulgate Version, LUTHER, and some few others translate it—"Every Scripture" (*i.e.*, all) 'given by inspiration of God is also profitable,' &c.

III. CHRYSOSTOM, ATHANASIUS, CALVIN, and others, render it as in the English Authorized Version.

Dean ALFORD inclines to No. II., but states that he follows it "hesitatingly." He evidently does *not* consider his translation (No. II.) to leave a doubt as to the inspiration of "*all* Scripture," for he adds, "the word 'also' [in the sentence, 'is also profitable'] must mean something besides its quality of inspiration."

From the above it will appear that, although Dean ALFORD'S transla-

* See page 12.

tion (No. II.) is by no means the same as Dr. WORDSWORTH'S (No. I.), yet the former supports the latter on the subject of the inspiration of all holy Scripture. For myself, I may add that Dr. WORDSWORTH'S (No. I.) seems the most literal and the easiest rendered of the three.

G. H. C.

READING IN PUBLIC.

I AM glad to hear (says a writer in the *City Press*) that the Bishop of London intends to urge upon the younger clergy the necessity of good reading, and of adapting their voices to the church or room in which they are ministering. It would be a good thing if more attention were paid to reading aloud at schools. It is one of the rarest things in the world to meet with a really good reader, who understands emphasis and expression; and yet many a pleasant evening may be spent by the fire-side if there be a good reader in the family circle. It often happens that an eloquent preacher or speaker will completely murder a quotation when he attempts to read it. Reading is an art which has been too long neglected.

We gladly quote the above, from a deep conviction of the necessity for such a course as that intended to be adopted by the Bishop of London. For many years we have felt that the reading of some of the clergy was disreputable in the extreme. On one occasion, we heard the service read at a church in Croydon in the most disgraceful manner. We thought, at the time, we might have taken a boy from our parochial school who would have acquitted himself far more creditably than did this University B.A. or M.A. A very large proportion of the clergy read with their heads down, as though reading into the book, instead of standing erect, opening their chests, and throwing the voice out, so that they may be heard in the distance. Moreover, how commonly is it found, not only that the prayers are not feelingly read or *prayed over*, as they ought to be, but the Old and New Testaments are, as it were, slurred over—read rapidly, and in an under-tone—as though the officiating minister were anxious to get through his task, and save himself and what little energy he had for the pulpit, there to make a display of himself. We contend that this is a most objectionable and God-dishonouring proceeding. What comparison can anything he may advance in the pulpit bear with the testimony of God's own holy Word? As the contrary is the habit of but too many, in conducting the services of the sanctuary, we have heard it said of some readers of the Lessons, "The very way in which the Lessons were read were sermons in themselves." This is as it ought to be.

THE love of Christ flows through streams of blood, Spirit-directed into broken hearts.

GOD'S servants have to unmask the wiles of Satan, the depths of sin and unbelief, and to portray the conflicts which arise out of them, to help others, and to this end have to pass through them themselves.

Pilgrim Papers.

AN EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISE.

"Thou shalt call Me, My Father."—JEREMIAH iii. 19.

"WHATSOEVER things were written aforetime were written for our learning" was the testimony of the Apostle Paul, by the Spirit, when writing that marvellous Epistle to the "beloved of God" in Rome (chap. xv. 4); and again, when writing to the Church at Corinth, after the relation of the Lord's goodness to His ancient people Israel, and of their sinfulness, murmurings, unbelief, and rebellion manifested towards Him, the same Spirit leads him to add, "Now, all these things happened unto them for ensamples [or types], and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." We cannot, therefore, be wrong in looking at the "exceeding great and precious promise" above, in relation to God's spiritual Israel at this time.

Conscious of our own utter insufficiency to think aright, much less to write in accordance with Jehovah's will and Word, without the direct leading of the Eternal Spirit, we would look up to Him to reveal to us the glory and grace contained in every word. We plead the precious promise of Jesus to His blind and ignorant disciples—"How much more shall your Heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" He cannot deny Himself.

We note, first, the person addressed—"Thou." The chapter in which the words occur, and the foregoing one, are full of instruction and replete with grace to the Spirit-taught reader. Come with us, beloved, to the second verse of chapter ii.—"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord: I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." There is a striking analogy between this verse and that expression in the Spirit's message to the Ephesian Church, through the Apostle John, recorded in the fourth verse of the second chapter of the Revelation—"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The words distinctly indicate a state of declension and degeneration, and the solemn exhortation to "remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works," claims our attention, and should lead to deep searching of heart. It is painful indeed to see this declension in others; it is humbling in the extreme to feel it in ourselves. "Lord, quicken us, help us, uphold us, keep us!" should be our constant cry. "I remember," says our God, "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals."

Oh, beloved, where is the fervour of our first love? Where is the zeal for His glory of our youth? Where is the ardent desire to be kept from, in any way, displeasing our precious Husband? Then, when He first revealed His love, we "went after Him in the wilderness." We wanted no other love; we sought no other companion; we needed no arm but His to lean upon. Now, alas! are we not often "far from Him"? (ver. 5.) Have we not "become vain"? But oh, how tenderly He says, "I will yet plead with you. . . . Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But My people have changed their

glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this! . . . My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (chap. ii. 9—13).

Exactly in this way, at the present moment, is the declension of Churches or individuals marked—by forsaking the Lord, and seeking satisfaction from earth's broken cisterns. Then the truth of verse 19 must be proved by the erring ones—"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that My fear is not in thee." When we say, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go," Jehovah says, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone!" He makes us feel His absence, and know the hidings of His face; but He also determines to recover His backsliding, treacherous bride, though He says to others, "Let her alone." He will not give her up or cast her off! Oh, no! Blessed be His dear name, He pleads with her. She is still the object of His heart's affections, and from all her filthiness and all her idols He will cleanse her. Listen to His gracious expostulation—"I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? . . . They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord." Oh, what tenderness and compassion are here manifested to His spiritually idolatrous and adulterous bride! He will not be thwarted in His purposes to gain the whole of her affections and possess her undivided heart. She may say, "I will go after my lovers," and attribute all her enjoyments and comforts to another hand save His; but He will hedge up her way with thorns, and make her loathe herself for her abominations; and then she breathes the resolve, "I will go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now."

Oh, beloved, is it not humbling indeed to know that the person so graciously addressed in our text is this base backslider in heart, who has been filled with her own ways—who has sown to the flesh and reaped corruption? Will not each member of the family of Jehovah remember his own ways and be ashamed? Must we not each sigh—

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart; Lord, take and seal it—
Seal it from Thy courts above?"

Or, with another poet—

"Let me be with Thee, where Thou art,
Thine unveiled glory to behold;
Then only will this wandering heart
Cease to be false to Thee, and cold?"

Oh, may the constraining power of the Holy Ghost be felt within, drawing us continually after the Beloved of our souls! May we love more fervently, and serve more faithfully! May He make us of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, that we may be more sensitive

to His smile of approval, or the hiding of His face, that, when we have sinned against Him, we may straightway acknowledge our offence, and then hear His merciful response, "Turn, O backsliding children; for I am married unto you" (Jer. iii. 14). Blessed be His dear name, that union can never be dissolved, though our communion may be, for a time, disturbed. In our most hallowed moments of intercourse with Him, we are closely watched by the great adversary, plied with temptations, and if left but for a moment, we are sure to fall. Not unfrequently are we "brought low" through that "pride" which springs up upon receipt of spiritual gifts. When consciously made "perfect" through the comeliness put upon us by our precious Lord, we "trust in our own beauty," and must be reduced again to abject poverty, that we may glory alone in Him.

Well, the great Jehovah says to His most unworthy children, "Thou shalt call Me, My Father." His *shalls* and *wills* are the glory of the covenant of grace—that precious covenant which He Himself established upon better promises when "He made the first old." No covenant of conditions would meet the necessities of such perfectly depraved and ruined mortals. Every command of the law proved to us our absolute weakness, and, indeed, every precept of the Gospel, in itself, does the same. We read them; we admire them. We confess we have not obeyed, nor can we obey, them, except as the blessed Spirit "works in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure."

God's "shall" is a charming word to helpless sinners. They love to contemplate Him as a Being with a will, and power to carry it out. They glory in that declaration, "What His soul desireth, even that He doeth," and "He worketh all things after the good pleasure of His will."

"Thou shalt call Me." Glorious certainty! The prodigal may say, in the far-off land, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants"; as though he would say, "I will lisp the word once more, and then take simply the place of a servant in His house." But the Father, whose compassions fail not, stops him with the kiss of reconciliation ere he can make that last request, calls upon His servants to "bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry: for this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Yes, He says, "Ephraim is My dear son; he is a pleasant child; for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore My bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him." "In spite of all his wanderings, his perverseness, his rebellion, and his sin, he is Mine, and he shall be Mine for ever."

(To be continued.)

THERE is a fear peculiar to awakened consciences, and this fear operates powerfully when the mind has been dwelling on the dangers and difficulties of the way, instead of looking to Jesus as all-sufficient.

FAMILY SECRETS.

FAMILY secrets are known only to the family. If they are divulged to others who are not of the family, they cease being, in the proper sense of the term, family secrets. Where the feelings of members of families are what they should be towards each other, there will be a jealousy exercised in relation to matters pertaining to the family. No improper disclosures will be made to outside parties respecting family affairs, but a becoming secrecy will at all times be observed. Love and sympathy for each other will so operate as that the secrets will be looked upon as too sacred to divulge unnecessarily to those not of the family circle. With what pleasure sometimes the family secrets are talked over! How the repetition of them tends to cement the family together in closest affection! If the members of the family are, by God's providence, scattered here and there, and they, in consequence of this, meet but occasionally at "the old house at home," such meetings have an additional interest in them owing to the separation; and as the family secrets are talked over again and again, how each member of the family evinces his or her regard for them! None can fully appreciate these secrets—none can really understand them—like those whom they concern. They might be told to a stranger in their fullest detail, and told, too, with the very greatest of interest on the part of the speaker, but would they awaken such feelings in the heart of the listener as were felt by the speaker? Impossible! Why? Because there would be a lack of *relationship*, and for this nothing could compensate. The details in question might attract the attention, and excite considerable curiosity, but all would fall very far short of what would be felt by those directly concerned—the members of the family.

Now, as *relationship* is the cause of all true and real loving interest in family secrets of an earthly or natural character, so spiritual relationship is the cause of all interest in those secrets which are heavenly and divine; that is to say, as in the case of the earthly family secrets, real appreciation flows from relationship, so, as it respects the heavenly family secrets, there must be, and is, a spiritual relationship made manifest. The soul is born again before there is a real interest desired or felt in them. And it is absolutely impossible for any individual, be their station in life what it may, or let them be as highly educated as they will, to appreciate, to know, to understand, or love the blessed secrets set forth in God's holy Word except by revelation.

It is my intention, dear reader, as the Lord may see fit to enable me, to speak of some of the family secrets which are made known to the "*whole family*" of whom Paul writes where he says, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 14—19).

If you are of the family, made manifest as being of the seed royal, I trust what I may be led to pen may be owned of the Lord to your soul's profit; but if you are not of the family, then I know that the precious family secrets I intend to speak of, at most, will afford but momentary interest or curiosity. Well, be this as it may, I feel I cannot forbear touching upon the subject before me, feeling persuaded that

"There is a family on earth,
Whose Father fills a throne;
But though a seed of heavenly
birth,
To men they're little known.

"Whene'er they meet the public
eye,
They feel the public scorn;
For men their fairest claims deny,
And count them basely born.

"But 'tis the King who reigns above
That claims them for His own;
The favoured objects of His love,
And destined to a throne."

To begin with, then, the family secrets I desire to bring to your notice, dear reader. What a deep, what a sublime, and yet, to living faith, what a precious, family secret the *incarnation* of the Lord Jesus Christ is! Contemplate, my soul, the blessed fact that the Second Person in the adorable Trinity, Jehovah the Son, was "*made of a woman*, made under the law," for the express purpose, as the inspired writer goes on to affirm, "to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). Now, if Christ was "*made of a woman*," surely He must have taken her nature. It does not say that He was made *in*, or *by*, a woman, but "*made of a woman*," conclusively proving the truth of that precious Scripture concerning the matter—"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise *took part of the same*" (Heb. ii. 14).

Again, there is another sweet portion on the same subject—"Wherefore in *all* things it behoved Him to be made *like* unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17). Now, I cannot see how these Scriptures can mean anything more or less than that the Son of God took upon Him a nature *exactly* like our own, sin excepted, notwithstanding the following, which appeared a short time ago in a monthly periodical of long standing—"The human nature of Jesus was of a character wholly unique, that is, not another like it; so that it is as incorrect to refer to it as being of the character of Adam in his unfallen, as of Adam in his fallen condition, Christ's human nature being begotten holy, which Adam's, in his original state, was not, it being only pure and good."

I prefer most certainly believing what the Word of God says concerning this matter, rather than what the writer above quoted says. For his memory I entertain very great respect, and for his writings too, but I must say that I fail to see how the quotation just given agrees with the Scriptures. How could Christ consistently be said to have "suffered for us in the flesh," and be the "seed of the woman," "the seed of Abraham," "the Son of David," and "One chosen out of the people," if His nature were unlike theirs? To redeem His people, He must—and, blessed be His name, He did—assume their nature, sin excepted. As far as I can understand what my Bible says about this

secret, this great mystery, "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16), it tells me plainly, in almost numberless instances, that Christ assumed a nature in all respects like that of His dear people, whom He came to redeem, with this exception—His was without sin, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26) in the constitution of His sacred humanity. Where would be His blessed sympathy, His being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities"—our being *members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones*—His being the "Head of the Church"—in a word, how could there be that indescribably precious *union and oneness* spoken of in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, if there were a difference of nature? From my very soul I believe Him to be the "*Child born, the Son given,*" and yet, at the same time, "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. ix. 6).

How to the point is this Scripture—"The Word" (the uncreated Word) "was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). Surely there is something beyond the powers of nature set forth here in this portion. John and the rest of his fellow-apostles had never beheld the "glory" here spoken of, except that they had been made acquainted with it by divine revelation. They belonged to the family of whom he speaks in these words—"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). How promptly Peter replied to the Lord Jesus, when He put that close question to them concerning His Person, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." How remarkable and how flesh-and-blood-ignoring the Saviour's reply—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 15—17).

Reader, has this family secret been revealed to your soul? It is said, in immediate connection with the Scripture just cited, that some said Christ was "John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets," which plainly proved that they were ignorant of His Godhead and incarnation. And as it was then, so it is now.

"Some take Him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most."

But can you and I add what follows in connection with these two lines?—

"Sure these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost,

"So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in His blood,
Nor on His protection rely,
Unless I was sure He is God.

"If asked what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, 'He's my meat and my drink,
My life, and my strength, and my store.

“My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord, and my all.”

This language conveys the feelings of my soul in respect of myself as a poor, guilty, wretched, lost, helpless sinner; and my estimation of the Lord Jesus Christ as being “God over all,” “the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.”

I know that “God manifest in the flesh” is one of the family secrets. It is “hidden from the wise and prudent” after the flesh, but is revealed to the members of the family. It is past *comprehension*, but not past *reception* by faith. It is the foundation upon which the *whole family* build their hopes of salvation. Here it is faith resorts in times of deepest trial, and it is from hence she draws her sweetest comforts. She views her once suffering, but now risen and glorified Saviour, “clothed in a body like our own,” “set down at the right hand of the throne of God,” invested with “all power in heaven and in earth”; and, led of the Holy Ghost, no matter what her present needs may be, she says—

“My soul, ask what thou wilt,
Thou canst not be too bold;
Since His own blood for thee He spilt,
What else can He withhold?”

Paul, speaking of God the Father's gift of His dear Son, says, “Thanks be unto God for His *unspeakable gift*.” Here Paul speaks of Christ superlatively; and surely there is that in connection with His assumption of our nature which will call forth eternal hallelujahs from the *whole family* when they meet around their Father's throne in glory, when they are clothed in a body like unto the glorified body of their divine Head, Jehovah-Jesus. What a blessed prospect is opened to our view in the words, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, *we shall be like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 1, 2).

(To be continued.)

THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR.

In a few words the following lines aptly describe the Christian pastor—

Give me the man these graces shall possess—
Of an ambassador the just address;
A father's tenderness, a shepherd's care,
A leader's courage, which the cross may bear;
A ruler's awe, a watchman's wakeful eye;
A pilot's skill, the helm in storms to ply;
A prophet's inspiration from above,
A teacher's knowledge, and a Saviour's love;
Of a mild, humble, and obliging heart,
Who, with his all, will to the needy part.

PASSING NOTES.

ON my short sea-trips, I had often seen a passenger of middle-age, dressed as a Roman Catholic priest; but as the apists (as the Ritualists have been well called) so assimilate themselves to the Papists in dress, as well as in other respects, I was not certain whether the passenger in question was a priest or not. A gentleman, who was likewise a frequent passenger on board these steamers, told me that, on one occasion, he fell into conversation with this stranger; and that, when speaking upon the one thing needful, he replied, "*I love Jesus!*" This remark always recurred to me whenever I again saw him, and I have often mentally asked him, in response, "*Ah! but do you love Him with a single eye and an undivided heart; or are you (according to your profession) sharing it with the Virgin Mary and the saints? Can you say, 'It is Jesus' only I look to and depend upon,' or are you appealing to the saints as joint-intercessors with Him who is 'the only Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus'?*" Ah! as I have seen this gentleman pace the deck, from time to time, in quiet meditation, how these inquiries have mentally presented themselves.

Upon a very recent occasion, however, having presented one of the captains with a copy of *Old Jonathan*, as I commonly do, I saw him, some little time afterwards, in conversation with the passenger to whom I have alluded; and as I walked to and fro on the deck of the steamer, I presently saw the latter closely scrutinizing the *Old Jonathan*. This naturally increased my interest and curiosity. When we reached the pier, and the passengers had dispersed, I asked the captain if it were a Roman Catholic priest he had been conversing with? "Yes," was his reply; and he added, "I showed him the *Old Jonathan*, and asked him to accept it, but he declined, and said he should take it in himself every month." This I trust he will do; and may God, of His great mercy, if it be His will, bring the Scriptural truths it contains, from time to time, to bear upon his heart and conscience.

I think my interest was the more deeply aroused from the fact that, as a brother clergyman and I were dining in the saloon of the steamer, the gentleman in question was dining likewise at the opposite table. In consequence of my deafness, my companion spoke quite loud enough for him to hear. Names and incidents were mentioned which I thought it was better should not be overheard. Hence I sought to check my friend, who, as a stranger from the sister-isle, was, as usual, very loud and outspoken. I have no doubt, as far as my feelings are concerned, there is much of the pride of poor fallen nature that actuates me in such circumstances; but, as there were other parties dining at the same time, and, like the gentleman aforementioned, within hearing of all that passed, I am so afraid of "throwing pearls before swine," or of reproach or censure being, by passing remarks, awakened against that great "name which is above every name." It is possible, however, that the remarks made in the hearing of the priest awakened the interest which he subsequently exhibited in regard to the *Old Jonathan*.

I may add that my diffidence, or pride, or whatever it is that

makes me hesitate to show my colours at any and at all times, meet with whom or where I may, divests me of the least ground whatever for creature boast or fleshly satisfaction, in any little attempt I may make to benefit my fellow-men. Numberless times have I mentally been put to shame, when I have contrasted myself with others, upon the ground of "sowing beside all waters"; and repeatedly have I been afraid lest I should come under the reproach expressed in the passage as at this moment fallen upon, when turning to the sacred Word—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix. 26).

Reader, I could but be struck with the fact that, under the circumstances, and when taking up the dear old Book, for the purpose of correctly quoting the text, I should so instantly drop upon this very word. Does not such a fact intensify the importance of the word itself? Does it not assume the more the character of a Divine message?

D. A. D.

Sermons and Notes of Sermons.

"SOUND DOCTRINE."

BEING THE OUTLINE OF A SERMON PREACHED AT GROVE CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL, ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 17TH, 1888, BY GEORGE COWELL, AND TAKEN DOWN IN SHORTHAND BY A YOUNG LADY IN THE CONGREGATION.

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."—TITUS ii. 1.

I HAVE been drawn, I trust, by the Spirit of God to this passage from the circumstance of being called, in the providence of God, to preach the Gospel within these hallowed walls,* and that for three reasons—first, because you, beloved, are accustomed to hear nothing else proclaimed from this pulpit but "sound doctrine"; secondly, because God, in His infinite mercy and goodness, has kept me walking in the good old paths of covenant verity and truth for many years, and I have nothing else to proclaim but "sound doctrine"; and thirdly, because nothing else but "sound doctrine" will suit such poor, perishing, unworthy sinners as you and I. Therefore, it seemed as if the Holy Spirit said, "In going to Grove Chapel, speak to them words 'which become sound doctrine.'"

But, my friends, if we are to have words that "become sound doctrine," we must uplift Christ. We must have Christ first, we must have Christ at the middle, Christ last, Christ all. We must have Christ "All and in all"—complete salvation.

Have you ever noticed, in your studies of divine truth, that, wherever Christ is, has been, and will be, it is *Jesus in the midst*—Jesus in the centre? May I take you, in thought, to the conclave of heaven before

* No. 5 pew in Grove Chapel was the spot where the Lord first met with the "Wayside Notes" Writer, broke him down in contrition of heart, and revealed Christ to him as all his salvation.

the foundation of the world? "There," says Christ, "I was as One brought up with Him. Before the hills were brought forth, there was I, Jesus, in the midst of the Eternal Three."

Pass on, in thought, to the canon of Old Testament history and Scripture, and is not Jesus in the midst of all—all pointing to Him, no matter what view you take of it? As He summed it up in His own words—"You think, you Jews, in the Pentateuch, that you have the words of eternal life, but they are they that testify of Me."

Jesus in the midst! So in the very creation of the world. Jesus in the midst. "Let *Us* make man," and immediately afterwards the Spirit breathed upon the waters. Jesus in the midst, the Creator.

And so if you go on to the birth of our blessed Lord. Look at Him in a lowly stable, adjoining a roadside inn. When the wise men of the East presented their gifts to Him, Jesus was in the midst. Go on in His life. Where did His earthly parents find Him but in the temple—in the midst? Think of Him at His crucifixion, between two thieves, one on each side—Jesus in the midst. Go on to His exaltation, transfiguration. He was there and is there, Jesus in the midst.

And, my friends, I am asked sometimes to describe what heaven will be like. I cannot tell you till I get there, but it will be Jesus in the midst, and that is sufficient for me, for He is to me "the altogether lovely" now, and certainly will be there.

Wherever, then, you see Jesus, you will find Him, Jesus, in the midst. And we have no "sound doctrine"—don't believe in the doctrine, however plausibly it may be put forth—unless the sum and substance is the Lord Jesus Christ, "mighty to save."

I have to speak a little upon "sound doctrine," and I want to put it not in a *dry* way, for, as dear HART says—

"Dry doctrine cannot save us,
Blind zeal, or false devotion;
The feeblest prayer,
If faith be there,
Exceeds all empty notion."

But I want to put it in such a way that it shall be brought into divine experience—experience of doctrine—to put it in the way the Holy Spirit puts it, and so bring it down to our faith's view of our precious Christ.

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." It might be said by scholars, "Oh, yes, when Paul speaks of 'sound doctrine,' it is of things of a practical character with regard to the life"; and some tell us, who know nothing about us, that those who hold the doctrines of grace are loose with regard to the life. I always say, that is dishonour cast upon the Holy Spirit, because I read in my Bible that the Holy Spirit is the Leader; and will He lead into unrighteousness and sin? Never! Therefore it is casting a slur upon the work of the Holy Spirit to say that those who hold the doctrines of grace live loosely in practical life. We must have the doctrines first, as the foundation—the elements first—then the fruits and effects. I am not here going from the Scriptures of truth, and will draw your attention to the doctrines which are laid down here by the Apostle

to Titus, before he comes to the things of practice. For instance, just by way of proving this, in the first verse—"the faith of God's elect." In the second verse, "the hope of eternal life." Again, in Titus i. 2, you have divine predestination. Trace them out at your leisure. Then redeeming grace (Titus ii. 14); so you see the Apostle, in all his teaching, lays first the foundation right, then goes on to expound the various doctrines, then gives us the fruits and effects in the life of the child of grace.

Let me be clear. Where have I to begin to tell you about "sound doctrine"? We like to begin where the Holy Spirit begins; and I must first draw your attention to that "sound doctrine" of the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, for every true Christian is a sound Trinitarian. Every child of God must be. Divine teaching will lead him to be so.

"But," say some, "the word 'Trinity' is not in the Bible." No, it is not, because the truth is so patent that it is like a golden vein of ore that runs through the length and breadth of the Bible. The whole Bible has reference to the teaching of this doctrine. Shall I prove my point? Why, the doctrine of the Trinity is the first in the Bible, and the last also. It runs through, like the vein, as I have said. I have already quoted the passage which shows it in the first chapter of the Bible.

Go on, in thought, with us to that time of the manna, which was given to the children in the wilderness. Did not that preach the Trinity? Where did the manna come from? The God of heaven. What did it set forth? Christ, the Second Person in the Trinity. Where did it fall? Upon the dew—token or emblem of the Holy Spirit. It came from heaven, and set forth Christ in a very prominent way too. Remember the manna was a small, white, round, sweet thing. Is not that Christ? Was He not the small One, the little One among ten thousand, the little One from the land of Ephratah, "the land of bread"? He came despised, rejected, the little One alone, was He not? Why, "He was in all points tempted like as we are." When the dew rose, there was the manna, and the children of Israel never got it except when the dew lifted. And when it comes with melting grace, subduing power, and lying upon it, what rejoicing of soul there is! You remember they had to stoop to get it—to pick it up—and you will have to stoop too, you and I. With pride and vain-glory you will never get the manna. You must be brought in lowliness of spirit to pick it up.

Just notice another thing with regard to it. Did they buy it? No. It was obtained "*without money and without price.*" So is the hidden manna. There is nothing to pay in getting it.

"Nothing in my hands I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling,"

is commonly said, but I love to sing it—

"Simply to Thyself I cling."

Then, again, there was a *portion for each*. None went away empty. It sustained them through the wilderness. The bread of life is given us throughout our journey to the heavenly home.

I must go on. I have said, the Trinity in Unity runs throughout the Word of God. I can only just stop to show you one or more points. The baptism of our Lord. A voice came from heaven. Whose voice? The eternal Father's voice. What did it say? "This is My beloved Son"—Second Person in the Trinity—"in whom I am well pleased," and immediately the Spirit descends in bodily shape like a dove. There is the Trinity as clearly as possible.

I take you to another portion. Three parables in one chapter—the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost piece of money, and the parable of the prodigal son. There is the Trinity. Jesus is that Shepherd-King who goes forth after His lost sheep, and, when He has found him, lays him across His shoulders of almighty strength, and brings him into the fold. There is the work of the Second Person. And do not you think, in that woman searching in the midst of the rubbish of the house, there is the work of the Spirit? I know it was so, personally. He found me amidst the rubbish of the fall, brought me out, and burnished me for the kingdom of heaven. And have you not the work of the eternal Father, who received with open arms the prodigal son, who had left his father's home, and spent his all in riotous living—brought home in sovereign grace and mercy? "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Not to put it on himself. "Put it on him, and a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found." There is the work of the Trinity in our Lord's own teaching.

Well, I might multiply case upon case, in proof of our point that the Trinity runs through the Word of God, but I have told you that it is in the last chapter of the Bible, and shall prove our point. Are you not there told that he that dares to add a single word to this revealed will of God, "God shall add to him the plagues written in this Book"? What does it say directly after? Why, it speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ at the very end twice. There is the Second Person in the glorious Trinity. And does it not say, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come"? There is the Holy Spirit. There you get the Trinity in the very last portions of the Word of God—the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity.

And what, to my mind, is such a comfort, is this. Don't you see there is a fourth? I thought "Trinity" was "Three," but there is a fourth brought in. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"; and there is the Church, and Christ as glorified in the salvation of Zion, His Church. You cannot live without Christ, can you? And Christ cannot live without you. I say, with all reverence and humility, Christ cannot live without you. He purchased His Church by the shedding of His own most precious blood, and the bride is wrapped up in the Trinity; and I have often said I would not give a straw for a man's religion that is not wrapped up in this doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity.

I will just touch upon another branch of this subject—the Trinity in Unity. We might give you the whole covenant of grace, because, mark you, the Trinity in Unity must outflow in *divine sovereignty*—another "sound doctrine." Acknowledge as far as we have gone, you must

"acknowledge divine sovereignty and power in every movement, as the result of the doctrine and truth of the Trinity. You thus see that God is a God of purpose and plan. It could not be Trinity in Unity without, or divine sovereignty without, therefore those who make the Church a matter of confusion, hap-hazard, free-will, are put out of court, because here, upon Bible standing, the divine power of Jehovah is manifested in Trinity in Unity. It must result in the Church chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world (Prov. viii.). In thought, plan, and purpose, all was arranged. Here you make salvation a matter of certainty. "Put a ring on his finger." It is everlasting. And as God is from everlasting to everlasting God, without beginning or end, so must His salvation be a complete salvation.

There are other doctrines, but I want to come to one which must inevitably spring from the divine sovereignty of God—the *atonement of Christ*—Christ "All and in all," therefore we must have the atonement of Christ. And is it possible that, in this enlightened day, so-called, a witness for the truth of God has to insist upon the doctrine of the atonement? I can tell you, looking at the outward Church—I mean, not merely the Church of England, but many Dissenters, persons calling themselves witnesses—are most cloudy upon this doctrine; therefore it requires that we substantiate it.

It has been said, "Surely you do not believe in a bloody sacrifice? You cannot believe in that?" Read your Bibles. Tell me what this passage means—"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," because, if you say there is none, your sins are still upon you, and you are a lost man; but if you acknowledge the blessings of the atonement, then your sins are put upon the vicarious Sacrifice. But men of the world cannot bear the plain truth of God. Take away the atonement, we are lost. It is God's plan and purpose of salvation, and it is a gracious and glorious plan too.

Why, my friends, as the sun is the centre of the solar system, so is the doctrine of the atonement the centre of the solar system of truth. We must prove our point. The doctrine of the atonement was fore-ordained, foreshadowed, and foretold. It was fore-ordained first in Jesus as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It was foreshadowed in so many ways. I can only point out one or two. There goes good, faithful, old Abraham up Mount Moriah, having laid the wood upon the shoulder of his son. Methinks I see the lad. "My father, my father, here is the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" That father's heart must have been full. "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb," and He did. Just as the uplifted hand was about to strike the blow upon the son—the only son, mark, the only son—"Stay! stay!" There was the ram caught in the thicket, slain instead of Isaac. Oh, does it not preach to us, surely enough, Christ was to be the Slain One, instead of the Church? Let Isaac go free, you and I saved. All falls upon our precious Sacrifice for sin—Jesus, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Look again at the paschal lamb. I cannot stay here, for it is too great a subject for us. The lamb taken from the flock without blemish. So was Jesus without blemish, and He will make His Church "complete in Him," without spot, &c. Was not the lamb killed by the people? So

was Jesus. And was it not to be eaten, and not a bone of the lamb to be broken? Mark that! What was said of Jesus on the cross? "When they came to Him, they brake not His bones." According to the common practice of crucifixion, the bones were broken; but not so of Jesus. "Not a bone of Him shall be broken."

Oh, little one in Zion, you shall not be broken—cannot be removed from the body. How frequently is it the case that some little bone gives more pain than a large joint. The more necessary, the more cared for, so that the little ones in Zion are closer to Him—carried in the bosom of Jesus. Not a little one shall be lost. "Not a bone of Him shall be broken," to fulfil the Scriptures of truth, the foreshadowing of Jesus' crucifixion.

Then I might go on to tell you how it was eaten with bitter herbs. Jesus Himself is so sweet, but oh, the bitter herbs! We murmur at the bitters. I am too apt to do so myself; but oh, I am feeling more and more, when we are so murmuring over our miseries, we want more to rejoice in our mercies; and, though we have bitter herbs again and again, it is that which shall sustain us all the journey through. They had to eat it with their loins girt, too. There are those who tell us we care not for the practical life. It is not so. We are anxious that there should be no loose living; no loose garments flowing about. The loins girt, their staff in their hands, they went on their way in the battle of life.

I have showed you briefly how it was foreshadowed. Was it not foretold? Look at that passage in Zechariah, where it speaks of a day when "a fountain shall be opened." What for? "Sin and uncleanness." Have you washed there, dear friends? "Sin and uncleanness"—all your sins washed away in that fountain opened by Jesus, by the precious blood of Jesus, "which cleanses from all sin."

I might go on to recount a great deal with regard to that Sacrifice, but I must forbear. Springing out of this doctrine there are so many doctrines. Look at justification by faith, through the mighty righteousness of Christ—that comes out of the atonement. I hear it called "imputed nonsense." Is it? Then tell me how you will stand before God when the great white throne is set? "There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus," but all judgment to those out of Christ. How will you stand, if you have not His righteousness? Do you think God's searching eye will accept you without righteousness? Will your own do? It is filthy rags, fit only to be cast aside now. How will it do in that great judgment day? Put upon him that best robe, that, when that time comes, there shall be "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," because they have the imputed righteousness of Christ put upon them. What do the words mean—"Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption"?

Then we have justification and sanctification—blessed truths. And we must not forget regeneration. It is a dangerous day for our young friends. You must go to church, be baptized, confirmed, and not a word about regeneration. What did our Lord say to the teacher, the great ruler of the Jews, when he, with Eastern grace, bowed before Him? Our Lord did not seem to take the least notice of it, but came

to the point—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Oh," said the puzzled man, with all his teaching, "how can this be?" Our Lord says again, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." "The wind bloweth where it listeth," or "whither it willeth"; "thou canst not tell whence nor whither; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." "Ye must be born again." What, then, about your confirmation, baptism in infancy? Will that suffice? These are the words of our Lord, not mine—"Ye must be born again"; therefore, if we are preaching "sound doctrine," we must have the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost.

I cannot go on in many things I might bring before you. I must close. Just one doctrine, which was the closing doctrine of the portion we read together—the final perseverance of the saints. I would not give a straw for a religion that does away with this. But what grounds are there to go upon? I have this ground to go upon. I have the ground that God's people are His heritage—are the gift of the Father—and will Christ lose the Father's gift? Did not our Lord say, "Those whom Thou hast *given* Me"? The Father's gift. And will you tell me they may be lost? Never, never, upon the ground of the covenant of grace, "ordered in all things, and sure." *There* is our final security for the final perseverance of the saints. We are bought with the price of His precious blood, and shall there be one lost? Never, never, upon the ground of God's faithfulness and promises. I say, we have the sweet assurance of the final perseverance of the saints—His "shalls" and "wills." "They shall" and "I will," over and over again. Then on the ground of His divine faithfulness and promises also. The teaching of the dear Lord Himself—"My sheep hear My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of My hand." Is not that enough? Christ's own words—"They shall never perish." He blessedly seals the assurance thus—"Neither shall any man pluck them out of My Father's hand." There is grace and mercy for you, token upon token, seal upon seal, assurance upon assurance that "the righteous shall hold on his way."

And finally, dear friends, not merely is the testimony of the Apostles confirmed again and again, but also the very intercession of Christ. He ever liveth to intercede for His people. Will they fail? They may fall, but never fail. They will receive, in the Lord's own time, a final entrance into His everlasting kingdom.

"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." We have tried to do so. What a mercy that you and I can sing—

"My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase," &c.

May the Lord own and bless these few words, and His dear name shall have the praise. Amen.

ATTENDING religious ordinances, and approving of sacred things, is far from proving a man to be renewed in his mind. There may be much light around while all is darkness within.

A TOKEN AND ITS TEACHING.

"SHOW me a token for good" was the prayer of holy David "in the day of his trouble," when the "assemblies of violent men sought after his soul." This was not, as is sometimes supposed, a petition that he might be indulged with some inward and evidential sign of his interest in the salvation of God, precious though such experimental indications are to all to whom the Lord is dear. It rather expressed his desire that his God would originate some providential event, so striking and significant that even his enemies might observe it, and "be ashamed" (Psa. lxxxvi. 17).

Nor was David alone in prizing such manifestations of our Heavenly Father's preserving and protecting care. Full often still doth faith cry, "Show Thy marvellous loving-kindness, O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them that put their trust in Thee." Full often do grace-taught hearts view with astonishment and gratitude events that demonstrate how comprehensive is His wisdom, and how wonderful His love; and full often do trembling lips tune anew the strain—"By *this* I know that *Thou* favourest *me*."

Such tokens are, moreover, occurrences, small in themselves, which owe their interest and significance to their connection with other objects of paramount importance. The transmutation of the rod of Moses into a serpent (Exod. iv. 3, 4); the action of the dew upon the fleece that Gideon left exposed (Judges vi. 36—40); the murmuring of the wind in the tops of the mulberry trees at Rephaim (2 Sam. v. 24); the return of the shadow ten degrees upon the dial of Ahaz (Isa. xxxviii. 8), were but trivial incidents *in themselves*, yet how precious as indicating the presence and good-will of the great God of heaven and earth! They manifested that He was, in the plenitude of His power and grace, on the very premises that His troubled people occupied, and assured them of His intention to do greater things for and by them. They read infinite love in the changed rod, the drenched wool, the whispering leaves, and the retreating shadow, and their faint and fluttering hearts grew calm and strong.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples," and what true child of God has not sought and obtained some such little signs of His loving-kindness who pitieth us "like as a father pitieth his children," and treats us with such marvellous condescension and consideration?

An anecdote, the authenticity of which is unquestionable, pleasingly exemplifies these important truths.

About a hundred and twenty years ago, the late JOSEPH HART was ministering to the congregation assembling in Jewin Street Chapel, London. His career had been singular; his experience almost unparalleled; while his knowledge of the letter of the Gospel, combined with his acquaintance with its savour and power, must have given to his sermons a weight and unction of which we can form some idea from his pathetic and heart-searching hymns. For the brief period of about seven years only he was permitted to feed the blood-bought flock of God, and in May, 1768, his voice was hushed in the silence of death. The people who gathered round him were, we are sure, for the most part,

true and tried Christians, for none but such would, or could, appreciate a ministry so solemn and Christ-exalting.

One of their number, Mrs. HANNAH PORTER, had, in 1766, been recently bereaved of an affectionate husband, after only ten days' illness; and it devolved on her to maintain herself and her four little children by her unaided industry. Having some knowledge of the ivory-turning business (which her husband had followed), she ventured, in the fear of God, to take the premises at No. 446, Strand, and to open them as a shop in this line.

Doubtless her expectations were far from ambitious. Very possibly she knew and acquiesced in her pastor's own lines—

“Great things we are not here to crave;
But if we food and raiment have,
Should learn to be therewith content.
Into the world we nothing brought,
Nor can we from it carry aught;
Then walk the way your Master went.”

To “provide things honest in the sight of all men” was, however, no easy task for the young widow. The times were hard, the necessities of life were scarce and dear, and the struggle for existence severe on every hand.

One morning, her trouble was unusually great. Her taxes were overdue, and she had received a pressing demand for them, and an intimation that the collector would call that day, and she had not wherewith to pay him. “In her distress” she had earnestly besought the Lord to help her, and send her what she so urgently required for this purpose. It was at this juncture that a token for good was shown her, and in a way so singular as to be worthy of record.

On that very morning, a young woman entered the shop to purchase some trifling article, for which she threw down the price in copper money, and immediately departed. As Mrs. PORTER was about to put the coins in her till, some peculiarity in one of the halfpence attracted her attention. She sounded it, and it returned a dull, hollow noise. She sounded it again, and, to her surprise, it parted into two, proving to be really a most ingeniously-made box, in one of the halves of which, nestling in a receptacle expressly prepared to contain it, was a quarter-guinea—a small gold coin then current.

Her first anxiety was to restore this precious little curiosity to the person who had parted with it, in evident ignorance of its value. Going to the door, she looked out, but the young woman had disappeared. The singularity of the circumstance then began to impress the widow's mind. Following as it did her earnest prayer for divine help, she was led to recognize the hand of God in the matter. Her faith was strengthened and her heart assured that He would not fail her in her present and pressing trial. Nor was she disappointed. Ere long, other customers came in, the price of whose purchases more than made up the sum she required. The young woman never returned to claim her treasure, and all endeavours to trace her failed.

Providence continued to smile on Mrs. PORTER'S business, nor did circumstances ever compel her to part with what had proved so signal a token for good.

Not long since the halfpenny, preserved as a precious relic in the family, was shown us. It lay beside another of the same date, and, save that the image and superscription were unusually clear, presented no external features of interest. It still easily parts asunder, disclosing a quarter-guinea of George III., dated 1762.

Christian reader, hast thou learned the secret of a life of faith in thy Heavenly Father? He "is good: a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." Dost thou trust in Him, with patient confidence "committing thy way unto Him" in all things? Then He will not leave thee to thyself in sorrow's gloomy hour, but show thee in some way how near and dear thou art to Him. Art thou a stranger to His salvation? Then how poor thou art! What wilt thou do in the day of thy calamity, "when other helpers fail and comforts flee"? May it be His pleasure to show thee that thou art a poor helpless sinner, and to bring thee to His beloved Son, that thou mayest obtain mercy through Him.

Our story has, moreover, a postscript. Among the children of that gracious woman was a little boy who, in due course, grew up and became a manifested child of God; and it was from the lips of his daughter, who herself has long been favoured to know and love the Lord, that we learned what we have related. Grace, it is true, is not hereditary. It does not run in the blood, but how often it does in the line! Godly parents are thus encouraged to bring their loved ones to Him who has said "one generation shall praise His name to another, and shall declare His mighty acts."

May I and mine, and thou and thine, dear reader, be interested in His great salvation.

Islington, London.

W. J. STYLES.

COMMENTS.

How it warms our too-often cold and thankless heart to read such precious proofs of a Father's care and loving interest as the foregoing! Increasingly convinced we are that there is nothing beneath His notice. As "there is nothing too hard for the Lord," so there is nothing too small, minute, or insignificant for Him. He who does not overlook the lighting down of a sparrow, and who "numbereth even the hairs of the heads of His children," will not—cannot—be indifferent to their actual wants and real necessities. No; blessed be His name, He may keep them long in waiting; He may try their faith and patience to the very last degree; He may appear to have forgotten and forsaken; but no, He will not—He cannot—either forget or forsake; but He will, in His own time and way, ratify and confirm that precious testimony—

"Just in the last distressing hour
Our God displays delivering power;
The mount of danger is the place
Where we shall see surprising grace."

Ah! yes, indeed it is, and shall be so, even to the very last of the dispensation.

Reader, have not you thus found the Lord to be the condescending, the gracious, the faithful and all-sufficient God His Word declares

Him to be, and His people have proved Him to be in every age and through each and every generation? "He is faithful that hath promised." Yes, yes, blessed be His great and ever-adorable name! "He will not deny Himself." No, never! never!

Ah! dear reader, resist and rebel as men may in these last days of rebuke and blasphemy, still nothing, nothing shall ever militate against that glorious verity—

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
He'll never—no, never—desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
He'll never—no, never—no, never forsake."

Oh, that we could be instrumental in the Lord's hands of stimulating and prompting any poor tried or tempted reader to put the Lord to the test! Oh, that such an one might cast himself at the footstool of mercy, with a "Lord, hear! Lord, help! Lord, deliver! Lord, save, or I perish!" Yes, and may he be encouraged to do this, in spite of his felt sinfulness, worthlessness, and apparently undone state and condition. Instead of waiting for some manifestation or hopeful sign of mercy and forgiveness, in regard to his manifold sins and transgressions, be it his to test the Lord as a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. *Just as he is*, in his present uncertain, feelingly unpardoned condition. Be it his, we repeat, to plead for help, even *as he is, guilty, filthy, lost, undone!* Let him take the pressing trouble, the felt want, or the trying circumstances to the Lord, as He who alone can help! Let him ask the Lord to help! Press Him! Beseech Him! Intreat and implore Him! Ask Him to do it by way of proof of what He is and Who He is; and let such an one mark the result. Let him note the answer. Yea, let him look out for it—aye, and *expect* it, too. And then be it his aim and end to give God the glory. Let him regard it as a sign, token, proof that, if He does the one, He can and will do the other—that if He heeded the cry for the *earthly*, He will do so for the *heavenly*—that if He cared for the *body*, He will care for—aye, and cure—the *soul*!

A fact comes to our remembrance, at the moment of writing, which will serve to illustrate that for which we are contending. At the time our late beloved brother-in-law was engaged as chaplain at the Plymouth prison, he was brought in contact with an aged man who was, for some very trifling offence, committed to gaol, and through which he forfeited his pension. It was a source of intense grief to the poor man, who stated to our brother that the loss of his wife had led him to drinking, and that, when intoxicated, or the worse for what he had taken, he stole the article for which he was imprisoned. Our brother sympathized with the aged offender; and after talking with him, urged him, as soon as he withdrew, to kneel down by his humble bed-side, and tell the Lord in plain words all about it; at the same time ask Him to give him favour in the sight of those who had the power to restore his pension. Having afterwards laid the case before the Mayor and magistrates, it was our brother's real pleasure and happiness to wait upon the poor old prisoner with the grateful tidings that his offence had been overlooked, and his pension renewed. The offender heard the good

news with intense thankfulness; and, at the same time, in answer to his supplications, with grateful tears expressed his belief that *the Lord had also pardoned his sins.*

Now, this is the point, dear reader—this is what we are anxious to set before you—the testing and trying the Lord with the *human* as a stepping-stone to the *divine*—the *cares of the body* as introductory to the *claims of the soul!* Ah! are there not some of us who can bear testimony to the precious fact that we have seen answers to prayer—and those most marked and unquestionable, too—long, long ere we could say, “The Lord is mine, and I am His”?

The correspondent who forwarded the foregoing precious facts to us, in the letter which accompanies the narrative, writes as follows:—

“As I have the little coin by me, in proof of the truthfulness of the anecdote, I thought it would preserve the circumstance from oblivion, and be very interesting to the family.

“In one of the GOSPEL MAGAZINES, you mention your delight in hearing of the Lord’s gracious answers to prayer. It was that which led me to hope that you would like to hear of this one, although I am quite sure you could bring innumerable instances. I also can attest to the fact, ‘He is faithful that promised.’ His love is so wonderful and so overcoming at times, that my heart is melted at the almost unlooked-for loving-kindness.”

THE EDITOR.

Protestant Beacon.

THE RITUALISTIC PRACTICES AT THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

THE Ritualistic practices at the London Hospital have at length been got rid of by a process which is familiar to the House of Commons. When a Member of the Opposition makes himself very objectionable to the Government, he is elevated to the House of Lords. In much the same way the chaplain of the London Hospital, who objects to abstain from exhorting patients to private confession, has been accommodated with a living by the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s. If it had been a question of preaching the Gospel in a school-room, the Church dignitaries would be very angry; but because it is a case of encouraging Romish practices, the chaplain is invited to go up higher.

I have a vivid recollection of a poor girl who died in the London Hospital one Christmas Eve. She was a pure-minded, religious girl, but had the misfortune to be a member of a Nonconformist Church, and for that reason was refused the Sacrament, while it was administered to a woman in the same ward, who disturbed all the patients with her foul language.—*City Press.*

DISCRIMINATION is the life and soul of preaching. “If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth”; and walking with God, thinking with Him, growth in experimental knowledge of ourselves and His Word, are involved in this.

SUNDAYS IN IRELAND.

A CORRESPONDENT has sent us the annexed, which bespeaks but too plainly the lamentable state of things in at least some parts of the sister-isle :—

To the Editor of the Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette.

SIR,—Happening to be in Dublin, a few weeks ago, I found that football matches were in full swing in the Phoenix Park on the Sunday afternoon; while in the train, on the same evening, six men in our compartment were playing cards for money throughout their journey. I do not know the hours of their Sunday closing, but on the following Sunday I found the country public-houses full of men drinking stout at three o'clock in the afternoon. The Protestant Church service—the solitary one for the day—was without music or singing. Although the clergyman was a most eloquent preacher, the congregation numbered seven, including two visitors, and I should think there were forty holes in the windows of the small church, caused by stones.

Practically, we may say that Mr. GLADSTONE has driven the English Bible out of the rural districts of Ireland—that Bible which we have been taught was “the secret of England’s greatness.” No doubt those who assisted Mr. GLADSTONE by their votes believed him when he said that the disestablishment of the Church—that upas tree—would make Ireland contented. Many, however, believe that it would have been “better for that man if he had never been born.”

Your obedient servant,

A LOYAL DEVONIAN.

THE INTERLEAVED PRAYER-BOOK.

“I DREAMED a curious dream last night. You remember, sister, yet Our mother’s Prayer-Book, with silver clasps?” “Ah! yes, I do not forget.”

“I dreamed of it, but between the leaves most exquisite pictures lay—Our Prayer-Books oft are interleaved with pictures, we may say When, as we turn the well-worn page, our memories bring again, From treasures of a cherished past, the scenes of joy or pain Bound in association close with words of prayer or praise, Read from our books, with glistening eyes, in dear, but long past days. ’Twould take a volume to describe such pictures—e’en a few—To others, but a word may serve to bring some back to you. The grand old church, the old high pews, the crowd (e’en in the aisle) Listening with eye and ear attent through patient hours the while The preacher’s Irish eloquence Rome’s fatal wiles laid bare To Scripture light, and bade us of her teachings false beware. What books he piled on pulpit-desk, from which he used to show From Rome’s own witness how she was to God’s pure truth a foe. That preacher long has passed from earth, but God be thanked to-day For that good counsel in our youth, which warned us not to stray In Romeward paths, or labyrinth of PUSEY’s ritual maze, Where Satan’s Minotaur, unchecked, on hapless victims preys.”

Clifton.

E. L. T.

Correspondence.

A CHEERING TESTIMONY.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MY DEAR DR. DOUDNEY,—Last Lord's Day I was preaching in Yorkshire, and the good friend with whom I stayed has a copy of your "Credentials, Call, and Claims of the Christian Ministry," and having the privilege of looking into it for about an hour, my mind was greatly invigorated, and my soul sweetly refreshed, by what you have therein written. Many of your descriptions of your family trials and ministerial exercises were peculiarly helpful to me, and were the means of lifting me out of despondency and anxiety.

Being a young man, it was exceedingly encouraging to read your early experiences in the ministry. Many times had I wondered why the Lord permitted me to be the subject of such sinkings and upliftings—such burning desires for the Word to be blessed, and yet such apparently small results—but now I see that He is training me in His own way, that I may learn the purposes of His blessed will, so that my feeble ministry may be made more useful to His dear tried ones.

Oh, yes, I do thank God for the brief opportunity of glancing at that book. I heartily wished I had another hour to have perused it. Surely the Lord will bless it to His exercised servants and people generally.

Moreover, while in conversation with the good friend above referred to, she spoke of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, and when I said I should like to take a stray Number home with me, if she had one, she very kindly gave me the unbound volume for 1885.

I have just read your article in the September number for that year, entitled, "Chastenings and Cheerings," and I must testify that it has been full of comfort and counsel to my soul. Immediately I was enabled to commit afresh unto the Lord my ministry and its engagements and exercises, the needs of my young family, and the affairs of my life. How sweet to lie passive in His dear hands! May He be pleased to keep my mind stayed upon Him!

May the Holy Spirit's all-gracious influence ever accompany the reading of your valuable Magazine, books, and booklets, wherever they may find their way! They deserve an ever-increasing circulation. May the Lord put it into the hearts of many of His people, who possess the means, to aid the distribution of such wholesome literature!

I pray that God may bless the Church of England, which has been the bulwark of Protestantism, with many more such as the beloved Editor of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE and *Old Jonathan*.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE BANKS,
Baptist Minister.

Willenhall, November 13th, 1889.

[The above has since been supplied with the book he so valued, and we rejoice in the value he attaches to it.—ED.]

WAS IT FROM THE LORD?

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

"I TRUST you are deriving blessing and benefit from the change inland. Above all, may you be 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.' And is it not in a felt *nearness to Christ*—yea, a very 'leaning upon the Beloved'—which gives us power under all circumstances? 'In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' Is not that a precious word, when we feel weaker than the bruised reed? And to know how utterly powerless we are, is surely *the* time to seek for that blessed and abounding help. Certainly, the Lord knew how much we should need *His* strength and guidance, or He would not have caused so much to be written in the Bible to tell us where to go to. I believe many of the Lord's people *have not* because they *ask not*.

"Sometimes I have felt so heavily burdened, and yet kept planning and trying all sorts of ways, if possible, to avert the looming sorrow; when all of a sudden a sweet word comes rushing into the mind which calms all fear, and comforts beyond expression. A few days ago, this precious word came—'The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.' One would think that seemed enough; but, alas! doubts and fears soon again beset us, or at least they do *me*."

And not only *you*, dear friend, but very many in common with you. If we mistake not—and we speak feelingly upon the subject—the more marked and conclusive the word spoken, the severer the after-test. Hence the conflict. Satan and our own unbelieving hearts conspire to cavil at—dispute—deny the Lord's Word and work. On the other hand, if the word applied comes in a less forcible and more gentle way, we are tried upon that ground. "Ah! there was not power and point enough for that to be the Lord's home-and-heart-spoken word." We well know one that has been thus much exercised as to whether this or that was from the Lord, or merely from memory and a familiarity with the Scriptures. Take, for example, a very recent instance. After much conflict and ardent wrestling, with an earnest cry to the Lord for a word from Himself, when all seemed a blank—dark, dark as was the night-season itself, when one was the subject of this wrestling and importunity—after a lengthened pause, and not so immediately upon the craving and solicitude, there came the words, "Thou shalt see the King in His beauty, and thine eyes shall behold the land that is very far off." No words could be more suitable, timely, or precious. They embraced all that could be desired—the everything that could meet the case. But the very gentle way in which they came, and the interval or pause between the application and the answer, suggested doubt and awakened fears as to whether the word was from the Lord Himself. This was the grave inquiry. Upon careful reflection, however, the best way (if we mistake not) to decide this all-important question is, What are the effects of such application, be it forcible or so very soft and gentle? Does it produce gratitude?

Does thankfulness spring up from within? Is there such an uplifting as silent praise, heart-glow, the mental acknowledgment and admiration of the Lord's leading and dealing? Is there a loathing of self—creature-distrust—a looking and a longing for deliverance from the flesh—a world-despising? In a word, is there a hearty response to the poet's utterance—

“More frequent let Thy visits be,
Or let them longer last;
I can do nothing without Thee;
Make haste, my God, make haste”?

If such be the case, depend on it, the word was as much from the Lord as the “*still, small voice*” that brought the Prophet to the mouth of the cave, to answer the momentous question, “What doest thou here, Elijah?”

THE EDITOR.

WORDS OF CHEER FROM AN OPPRESSED HEART.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I duly received the other two volumes of “Kept.” Will you be so good as to send one volume each to each address enclosed? This will make me your debtor for sixteen shillings. I enclose my cheque for £1, in payment; the four shillings over will help to pay the postages you are out of pocket.

I am pleased to tell you I have enjoyed reading it very much, as I am sure many others like myself will, for the very life of religion is enjoyed by experience; therefore, to compare notes with others, it is always agreeable to find that we are in good company.

We well know, whatever changes God's Israel may pass through in this world, God never changes in His purpose towards them. You say truthfully, on page 49—“All our knowledge and experience—extend as it may over many years—will be as a thing of naught, if it clashes with the simple, childlike, helpless, pauper-like, poor-and-needy appeals to Jesus,” &c. How true this is where I am, and always expect to be!

We are all poorly. My dear wife is worse, very depressed—the evil is spreading—the Lord only knows—still He is gracious. She is obliged to keep her bed entirely to-day—she never leaves her bed-room. I hope you are feeling no worse for any fatigue or exertion you are attempting.

I had a few lines from RUTH LINDSAY last week. She is very grateful for anything done for her.

My tongue and pen are somewhat silent to-day. My harp is hung upon the willows. Still, a bruised reed (as I feel myself to be) can sound the key-note from the heart to the tune of “omnipotent grace.” What a mercy and a privilege to plead divine satisfaction for all my sins!

Sinner (a great sinner) as I am, His grace is superabundant. I dare not make a promise to Him, but He has made many to me, and has kept every one of them; and only as He bestows can I render Him anything in return. My heart is vile, unstable, deceitful; and I

am glad He knows all about it, and has provided a fountain of blood which can cleanse it from all sin. Oh, I do bless Him that He is more full of grace than I am of sin (bad as I am of sin); and were it not so, I must die of despair. But He saves to the "uttermost," therefore I feel there is hope even for me, and this is how I hope to go to heaven, and I presume you do, my brother, and so you shall; and we shall meet there, bow low before His face, and put our crowns on His blessed head (Rev. xix. 12), to our everlasting satisfaction and delight.

Look up, dear friend! Our "redemption draweth nigh." Accept our Christian love to the whole household of faith, wishing you all needed grace and strength. The Lord bless you each continually, is the prayer of

Yours affectionately in Him,

Lee, Kent, November 25th, 1889.

GEORGE A. NORTHOVER.

COMMENTS.

1. Depend on it, dear brother, we shall never get beyond the experience that prompts the cry, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." And what a mercy to have a Scriptural hope and a blessed faith's assurance that those thoughts are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give us an expected end." As for myself, it appears to me that I never had so deep and so abiding a sense of my own wretched vileness and bankruptcy, in a spiritual point of view, as now. The longer I live, the more astounded I am at the Lord's marvellous patience, wondrous forbearance, and infinite long-suffering. When I look back upon my lengthened career, and contemplate my utter unprofitableness, and the Lord's amazing mercy, I am, as it were, lost in adoring wonder. This I am compelled to acknowledge before the Lord, in a careful review of the pathway—that the brighter and the more marked and blessed His manifestations, the greater has been my subsequent departure and my after-ingratitude and sinfulness. Hence this one fact convinces me that we are *not to be trusted with much enjoyment*, nor is it safe for us to be without ballast—a something or other to keep us poor and needy suppliants at the mercy-seat.

2. The continued illness of your dear wife, and her ailments assuming a more serious form, led me to think of the very varied way in which the Lord deals with His poor, helpless creatures. Three days since, at the urgent request of my dear friend, the Rev. W. SAUNDERS, I went with him to his dentist's, he having for some time been suffering greatly from his teeth, with the depression which so commonly attends it, and with which I have personally been not a little familiar in by-gone years. Whilst at the dentist's, he spoke of a recent case that had been under his care, at the same time stating that the patient was in the house, and within a minute or so he was introduced. A more striking specimen of surgical skill could scarcely be conceived. The whole of one diseased cheek and eye having been removed, the blank had been so artificially supplied as to baffle detection. I was perfectly amazed, and could but say to the patient that, whilst so much credit was due to the operators for such skill as had been brought to bear upon his case, I hoped he saw and acknowledged the hand of the

Good Physician in the matter. What further, however, struck me, in regard to the case, was, *the love of life!* How much had that poor man undergone, in order that his existence should be prolonged! For two hours he was under chloroform, during the operation; and how extremely critical was the whole case, in various points of view! How soon was this visit to be followed by another of a totally different character! I had looked, on the Sunday evening, during the service, for one of the oldest attendants at the church. How great was my surprise in the morning to read in the paper of his so sudden death! When afterwards calling at the house, I found he had passed away after a few hours' illness, during which he was for most part utterly unconscious. It was a touching scene to visit the poor widow, under the circumstances, the more especially as she has been in most delicate health even for years past. How little did one imagine that she would ever outlive her husband! This case was the next day followed by another, in this parish of Bedminster. One who had for years taken a most active part in the temperance cause, had just been addressing a gathering, upon their assembling together at their eleventh anniversary, and, whilst they were in the act of singing a favourite hymn, she of a sudden fell fainting into her husband's arms. At the moment of falling, she was understood to say, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul!" All attempts to restore her were to no purpose. The spirit had fled! Such are the incidents presenting themselves in daily life.

Whilst one tarries long in weakness and weariness, another is called, as it were, in a moment! How well may it suggest the need of sitting loosely to all creature things, and to be ready at any moment for the Master's call! In the instance just named, I could but think of the high privilege of being summoned hence under such circumstances. Not only was the departed spared long and painful suffering—wearisome days and sleepless nights—but to be called away whilst in the act of singing the praises of the Lord—to begin a song on earth, with all its anxious and sinful surroundings, and take it up on high, amid the glories of that scene which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." I cannot contemplate such a transition—so instantaneous and so free from the usual distressing associations—without desiring that such might be mine, were it the Lord's will.

3. With respect to the depression under which Mr. and Mrs. NORTHOVER are suffering, it can easily be accounted for, especially at this season of the year. Nevertheless, it is not the less real, or the more easily to be borne. Of this, however, I am certain—and I speak very feelingly upon the subject, suffering as I do from depression constitutionally—it renders us the more alive to the words and the sweet voice of Jesus! We are more upon the alert—more intensely watching for the whispers of His love—His precious "Fear nots"—the renewed assurances, "It is I: be not afraid!" Oh, how timely and how blessed are such renewed indications of His love—the fresh pledges of His favour—the precious signs and tokens that all shall ultimately end well! At such times and seasons, what an *instantaneous recognition* there is that it is indeed "the voice of my Beloved" (yes, "my Beloved"—no doubt about it—at any rate for the time being—"my Beloved," "my Beloved"—and the more certain and unquestionable, because of the recent so contrary

exercises); "behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." Assuredly His previous absence renders His fresh visits the more welcome and the more Christ-endearing. Under the circumstances, are not His own words rendered so much the more precious, because of their so great suitability and exact appropriateness to our state and condition—"Ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again [how comforting that '*I will see you again*'!], and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"?

Again, does not another divine secret, known only to the Lord's redeemed and quickened ones, spring out of this very experience of darkness, doubts, and depression—"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"? Again, He says, "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for *they know His voice*, and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." And depend on it, dear brother, that voice which we have so often heard, and with which we have been so many years familiar, during our wilderness journey, we shall still hear—yea, to the very end of our earthly career. Let our creature fears and our fleshly shrinkings and recoilings be what they may, from my heart I believe that, "when the time of the promise draws nigh," and the Lord's time for our departure and our going home to our Father's house is come, we shall hear—aye, and recognize too—His blessed, fear-assuaging, soothing, reassuring voice—

"Come, My beloved, by purchase thou art Mine;
Be life—eternal life—for ever thine."

And it shall be said of us, poor, vile, worthless, ill-and-hell-deserving creatures as we are—

"The Lord for glory made His servants meet,
Then called them home, to worship at His feet."

That is a precious verity—"I know My sheep, and am known of Mine." How prone are the dear children of God to overlook this knowledge—this so rich and blessed a divine bestowment. Why, their sadness and depression arises for most part from what they have had, but now miss. Had they not heard the voice—aye, and recognized it, too, as "the voice of their Beloved"—they would know nothing of their present solitude and desolation. It is this that strictly constitutes them *mourners*. They mourn an absent God—that is, as to present realization and enjoyment. Had they never heard or known Him, they would not—could not—feel nor fear as they now do. It is past knowledge, holy familiarity, divine intercourse, that, by contrast with the present state of things, constitute the blank—the more especially as they overlook, for the time being, what it is to walk by *faith*, and not by *sight*—yea, personally to realize what the Master meant when He said, "Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." And what can be a greater proof of their love of the Bridegroom than their very fasting? But not only do these adopted ones know the voice of their Beloved,

and at once recognize the same, whensoever and wheresoever He speaks, be their darkness, desolation, and temporary misery what it may, but I believe that, apart from His ineffable greatness and glory, no sooner will faith give place to sight than there will be an instantaneous recognition, upon the part of the disembodied spirit, of the Person of Jesus, as that great and gracious Redeemer, Mediator, Leader, Guardian, and Guide, with whom they had such intercourse and holy familiarity during their time-state and wilderness wanderings.

Bedminster, November 27th, 1889.

THE EDITOR.

LOVE-WORDS FROM AFAR.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR DR. DOUDNEY,—I have been away from Hackensack some time, visiting at different places in the State of New York, and only returned a few days ago, which is the reason you have not heard from me. I am now very well. The Lord, in mercy, has strengthened my feeble frame. Your book I have read with a great deal of interest, and I trust, profit. It is well calculated to supply the great lack there is in the ministry of the present day, and I pray that the Lord will pour out a rich blessing upon it.

I was very glad to see, by the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, that Mr. COWELL'S last work was published, and ready to be spread abroad.

Popery is increasing here, and a life-giving ministry is scarcely to be found. Yet the Lord has promised that Zion shall arise, and shine again as a light in the world.

I was greatly rejoiced to hear that you were enabled to preach again the precious Gospel of God's dear Son. God is a wonder-working God, and all His gracious purposes must, and shall, be accomplished, however improbable and impossible it may appear to us. He bringeth down and raiseth up, according to His good pleasure and His infinite wisdom, and "blessed are all they that trust in Him."

I did not find much spiritual benefit while absent. The Christian friends I visited could not find a ministry they could acknowledge as the Gospel of God's dear Son, and were therefore deprived of so rich a blessing. It does seem as though the Church of God were sinking lower and lower here. Yet God has fixed his limited power—"Thus far shalt thou go, and no further."

How joyful it will be to God's dear saints when the word of God goes forth, "Arise, and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon thee."

I am now the only one that is left of thirteen children. I have lost two brothers and a sister within the last year. My last sister died in October. It is not likely I shall be here much longer. If I live a few months more, I shall be eighty-four years old. Pray for me, that I may be fully prepared to receive the summons of death with peace and joy in the Lord.

The Romish Church here is complaining much of her being restricted in her religion, but that is not so. Her aim and desire to overthrow God's truth are increasing. But God remains the same eternal and

unchangeable God. Oh, for faith in His promises, which are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus," and will assuredly be fulfilled in His own time and way.

Do write to me soon. I am always glad to hear from you. When you write, let me hear what texts you preach from, that I may meditate upon them, and thereby get food for my soul. I am low, and in a low place, which you may easily discern from my letter.

Yours in the unity of the Spirit and the love of Christ,

Hackensack, November 19th, 1889.

LOUISA MOORE.

REPLY.

We were truly glad to hear again from our far-off friend and sister in the Lord. We say "far-off," but that is merely in a human point of view. Blessed be God, there is a nearness, in a spiritual sense, among all the members of the household of faith, however remote or far off from each other with respect to their earthly position. Nor does this distance in nature interfere with the true spiritual union and communion one with the other. There is a solid and a refreshing fellowship in the Lord. There is a oneness and identity in the leading and teaching that connects heart to heart and soul to soul. It is under the self-same anointing and divine power of which the Psalmist speaks at the close of the 148th Psalm, where we read of "a people near unto Him." Adored be His name, in spite of all their fears, and notwithstanding all their deeply-felt and so constantly acknowledged sinfulness and unworthiness, they are, nevertheless, not only *near to Him*, but *dear to Him* likewise, and "whosoever toucheth them toucheth the apple of His eye." It seems impossible. As they are led increasingly into a discovery of their own bankrupt state, and as they detect in their journey onwards and homewards additional proof and evidence of their own utterly corrupt condition, they again and again ask themselves the momentous question, "Is it possible that a holy God can ever dwell in such a loathsome, filthy, sin-steeped heart as mine?" Moreover, the hidings of His lovely face, and their so frequent darkness and desolation, seem so to negative the hope and shadow the assurance that He is where He is and what He is, as their Redeemer, their Daysman, their Brother, their "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," their Portion, their eternal All in all!

In their deep exercises, and in the testing and trying of their faith, the Lord's dear people (for the time being at least) fail to discover that these very exercises—these their doubts, fears, and misgivings—instead of militating against them, are only so many proofs and evidences of the genuineness and reality of the work that the Lord the Spirit is carrying on within them. The discovery to them by the Holy Ghost of their carnality, their spiritual leanness, their loathsomeness, their cleaving to the flesh, their shrinking from the ordeal of dying, their willingness to tarry in this poor corrupt world—all this, coupled with the hidings of the face of their Beloved, bespeaks a restlessness, a dissatisfaction, a longing after that which alone can produce a solid contentment; and what is that? Nothing short of the Lord Himself! These exercises and experiences intensify the former testimony, which is ever springing up in newness and vitality—

"Though words can never tell my case,
Nor all my sorrows paint,
This I can say before Thy face,
That CHRIST is all I want."

Is it not so, beloved? And in proof of that nearness and oneness and identity of which we just now spoke, are we not thus furnished with additional proof of the fact? Here we are. We have never seen each other in the flesh, nor shall we ever meet face to face till we meet before the throne. Some six thousand miles of ocean roll between us, and yet, without doubt, what we now write, as you read, will meet a response in your heart. Our language you will perfectly understand. With our daily experiences you are most familiar. You have the same fears, the same regrets, the same lamentations, the same doubts and misgivings, the same hopes, the same occasional assurances, the same longings, and aspirings, and pleadings, as ourselves. We are thus one in heart and feeling, fellowship and communion.

And, beloved, is not this ground for thankfulness and gratitude? Need we say, as one of old, "Doth He not speak parables?" No, blessed be God, there is no such necessity, inasmuch as there is a perfect understanding—a blessed uniformity. And why? Because of being in the self-same school, and under the leading and instruction of the self-same Teacher.

Yes, blessed be His great and ever-adorable name, we are redeemed by the same blood, justified by the same rich and free and sovereign grace, clothed in the same righteousness, combating the self-same three-fold foe—"the world, the flesh, and the devil"; travelling across the same waste wilderness, journeying to the same home, guided and guarded by the same ever-watchful, ever-vigilant, almighty Friend, and destined for the same eternal inheritance and everlasting dwelling-place, to mingle at last with the same blood-bought throng, in the immediate presence of the adorable Three-in-One and One-in-Three—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And, in the midst of such realities and with such prospects, beloved, is it not worth *wrestling* for and *waiting* for—aye, and *weeping* for, too? for is it not recorded, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"? And what said the dear Lord and Master Himself, in the days of His flesh? "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh"; and "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you."

We see and mourn with you, dear sister, in the present sad state of Christendom. Matters are certainly waxing worse and worse. The flood-gates of Popery are open indeed, and it is rapidly invading the whole land; and, alas! alas! the people love to have it so. A wretched infatuation has taken possession of the professing Churches. Entertainment, novelty, and sensationalism, are the order of the day. The Lord, moreover, is either sorely afflicting His people, or calling them home—"taking them from the evil to come."

You say you are the only one left out of thirteen children. Three of fifteen remain as far as our family circle are concerned—a brother,

in his eighty-seventh year; a widowed sister, in her eighty-third; and ourselves, well-nigh seventy-nine.

Well, dear sister, at your advanced age, nearly eighty-four, neither you nor ourselves can tarry much longer. It will soon be said—how soon the Lord alone knows—"The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Oh, to be both in readiness and willingness! Loins girt, lamps trimmed, and oil in our lamps, ready at any moment to go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The great—the momentous—question with us is, that we may be permitted and privileged to "finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus." Words utterly fail to express what we feel upon this ground. It is a matter of day-and-night concern with us as to how it will be with us in the swellings of Jordan. The nearer we approach it (we grieve to say), the more we shrink from it. It is the Lord, and the Lord alone, can bring relief in this, as well as in numberless other particulars. We are greatly struck in contrasting ourselves in this particular with what we felt, for most part, for nearly forty years. With little variation, during that lengthened period, we could rest under the sweet assurance that we should have dying strength for a dying hour—then, and not until then, for we should not need it before. But since that—under an illness, two-and-twenty years ago—we seemed, of a sudden, to lose our foothold. For a short season we could no longer feel our standing on the solid Rock! We seemed sinking in fathomless depths. Except at intervals (more particularly in the pulpit, or with pen in hand), we have never since wholly lost what we then felt.

We feel not a little upon the subject of death, inasmuch as two persons have just been called from this parish very suddenly. One was one of the oldest attendants at St. Luke's Church. He was seized with illness in the night, speedily became unconscious, and passed away without his reason being restored. The other had been speaking at a temperance meeting; and, whilst in the act of singing a favourite hymn, fell fainting into her husband's arms, and breathed her last. Moreover, at the time of writing, our dear friend, the Rev. W. SAUNDERS, having had a seizure, is lying in a most precarious state. The doctors say he may die at any moment. These facts press upon us greatly, and lead to searching of heart. Well indeed may we adopt the poet's language—

"How stands the case, my soul, with thee?

For heaven are thy credentials clear?

Is Jesus' blood thy only plea?

Is He thy great Forerunner there?"

How little cause, dear sister, is there for creature or fleshly boast! How soon even a well-grounded confidence may leave us! How soon may the Gospel mariner be overtaken by a storm that, in spite of compass or chart, shall threaten to hurl his poor frail barque to destruction!

How struck were we, the other day, in listening to the testimony of a young friend who, during the late summer, on a fine sunny morning, started by steamer for Ilfracombe! Soon, however, the sea gradually rose, and, for a time, she revelled in it. She thought the

sensations attendant upon the rolling and the pitching of the ship were delightful. But shortly an equinoctial gale got up, and the sea became terrific. Terror now took possession where pleasure had previously prevailed. The change was such that the captain was compelled to watch for the opportunity for putting the ship about, and, for safety, making for the Welsh coast, instead of proceeding to Ilfracombe. Moreover, we were astonished, a few months ago, to hear the testimony of a pilot of one of the noble class of steamers plying between Bremen and New York—ships of between five and six thousand tons. He said there were times, even within the Isle of Wight, that the greatest care was needed in steering those monster vessels, such was the power of the sea. What does all this bespeak but the extreme folly of presuming upon strength, courage, or past knowledge or experience, either in a temporal or spiritual point of view? The Lord is never at a loss to humble, to lay low—yea, to bring down the stoutest nerve and the most courageous to the weakness, the timidity, the dread and terror, of the veriest babe! Ah! yes, the Lord knows how to humble and to crumble us at His blessed feet.

Dear sister, cheer up! All is well! "Our times are in His hands!" "He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness." Ah! and cannot you, as well as ourselves, say, "These forty years—[yea, in *your* case, more than twice forty]—the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing"? Oh, how cruel—how God-dishonouring—is our wretched, carnal, vile, despicable unbelief, that, after so much mercy, such astounding goodness, such marvellous tenderness and compassion, such aboundings and superaboundings of loving-kindness and bountifulness, we should so doubt and fear about the little residue of our time-state, and how it will be with us in crossing the little narrow streamlet of the Jordan! Personally, we are bound to say we are perfectly ashamed of ourselves that we should, for one moment, call in question the fact that He will be with us to the end, and "perfect that which concerneth us." Oh, as we have often said, and still maintain, it cuts us up root and branch when, under such circumstances as that in which we are placed, and after all He has been and done, the question is asked us, "Is this thy kindness to thy Friend? Do I deserve this at thy hand?" It leaves us without excuse, and places us, in our own estimation, among the very lowest and vilest of sinners. Their sin, never having *known* the Lord as we have, is not to be compared to ours, considering all the way He has led us and fed us to the present moment. It leaves us, we say, without a stone to cast at the vilest rebel in God's creation. Hence, should we at last reach home, and be brought off more than conqueror over death, hell, and sin, we shall enter heaven as the most marvellous trophy of rich, and free, and sovereign grace ever admitted there. Well indeed may our constant cry be, "Lord, increase our faith!" "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!"

Bedminster, December 1st, 1889.

THE EDITOR.

P.S.—You ask, dear sister, what were our texts? Upon our return to Bristol, the first portion we spoke from was 1 Peter ii. 7—"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." These were the words we spoke

upon when we came to Bristol, on October 6th, 1868; and each year we have commented upon the same text as near that date as possible. Last year was the only exception to this rule. Last night, our subject was Acts viii. 35—"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Words utterly fail to testify of the Lord's goodness in regard to last night's service. Both the night previously and yesterday had been seasons of *extreme heaviness*, as far as we were concerned. Intense had been the wrestlings at the throne of grace, but the Lord seemed to give no heed. The "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," as far as our feelings were concerned, met with no response, so that we were left quite in the dark in regard to the service of the evening. This state of mind continued up to the moment we entered the pulpit. We were quite at a loss to know how matters would issue. But, blessed be His name, no sooner had we opened our mouth in prayer, and afterwards announced our text, than all fears and disquietude fled, a precious freedom took possession, and Jesus became both Object and Subject. It was a privileged season, and of all engagements the most highly favoured. Oh, how great was the contrast in feeling to what we have undergone during the last eighteen months! How confirmed were we in the conviction that of all human engagements, nothing can vie with that of the ministry! All other occupations retire into the shade, and dwindle into a miserable insignificance and obscurity. Oh, the work of the Lord—the *work of the Lord*—nothing, nothing can cope with it! We would ten thousand times sooner speak, in His dear name, to the humblest, the poorest, the least thought of, than occupy the highest place in the State, or be placed in the most prominent of all earthly positions.

Moreover, after the season of which we have spoken, as far as pulpit ministrations were concerned, the Lord was so good and gracious in the night-season. So directly contrary to the night previous, when, as in the days of His flesh, in regard to the poor distressed applicant, "He answered not a word," in the most unlooked-for way He awoke us with His own sweet Word, pouring the same into our admiring and adoring heart—"Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy Keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psa. cxxi. 4-8). Oh, it was so sweet—so timely—so precious! Moreover, it was a word that He first gave us, many years ago, at Plymouth, when in a state of great uncertainty and anxiety, and the which, blessed be His name, He has since applied again and again, and always attended with additional sweetness, because so confirming—so proving His unchangeableness and His divine faithfulness.

Again, last night, shortly after the application first named, there came, in the same unexpected way, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." Oh, how sweet and how timely was this assurance, and so helped to "bring to remembrance," inasmuch as, in September, 1856, the Lord was pleased to speak the self-same words in the midst of a storm which prevailed when we were on shipboard

between Scotland and Ireland. With what a soothing, fear-assuaging power was that word, so timely spoken, attended !

Should you happen to use the Polyglot Bible, dear sister, you will find that this precious word stands on the opposite page, and nearly in a line with that distinguishing plea in Psalm cxix., "Remember the word unto Thy servant upon which Thou hast caused me to hope." Times without number that pledge and plea have stood out before us, perhaps when preaching, or when turning over the Bible in search of a word, or in quest of a text. Hence, too, the benefit of marking a passage, or notifying a promise when thus applied. The practice proves so hopeful and helpful in after-days.

Furthermore, with respect to the past night, after the applications to which we have referred, upon again arousing from sleep, there came at once welling up in the heart the sweet lines—

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land," &c.;

so that we literally had a "song in the night," and this so soon after the heaviness of heart of which we before spoke.

Ah! dear sister, were we not such slow and forgetful hearers, we should have learnt, long ere this, that the *fast* precedes the *feast*—that when the Lord has been seemingly standing aloof, and failing as yet to respond to the entreaties and importunities of His poor and needy ones, it has only been for the purpose of sharpening their appetites, and giving them a keener relish for the dainties He is about to bestow. Moreover, had we but a more vivid recollection of His past leadings and dealings, we should see how closely allied were the times of *sorrow* with the seasons of *joy*—how the *darkness* so immediately preceded the *light*—in order to intensify the sweetness, and the power, and the blessedness of His so seasonable and precious gifts. It is time, dear sister, that especially some of us old and weather-beaten ones were upon the alert in these matters. But, alas! facts prove both our slowness to learn, and our forgetfulness when we fancy we have learnt. Had we learnt to better purpose than we have done, we should construe the Lord's seeming silence, or apparent indifference to our poor prayers, into an indication that He was about to confer some fresh boon upon us, and that the delay was only to make it the more marked and unquestionable as being from His own kind and gracious hand. Past experience backs up and confirms this fact, and hence our forgetfulness, ingratitude, and distrust become the more unmistakable and unworthy.

We are quite aware that professors in general, and those who know little or nothing of the plague of the heart, will ignore and set at nought these statements, and regard them as signs of weakness, or the utterances of the old and worn-out creatures of a by-gone period. There are others, however, who take a different view, and regard them as experiences which betoken the cravings of heaven-born souls, who sigh and cry for a clearer knowledge and a growing intimacy with Him who is "all their salvation and all their desire." Such want Him *here* as well as *hereafter*! They wish to walk with Him and talk with Him in the wilderness, on their onward and homeward way, as well as when

they shall sit down with Him in their Father's kingdom. It is His absence that constitutes their chief grief. It is when He so stands aloof that they can neither see nor hear Him, that they, like children indulged with much of their parents' company, mourn their lonely and desolate condition; and that this is no new nor strange path is ratified by the experience of the Church of old, as so specially expressed in the Song of Solomon and the Psalms of David.

Monday, December 2nd, 1889.

TO OUR READERS.

WE beg very gratefully to acknowledge the very many letters of congratulation which we have received from our readers, far and wide, since our return to this parish, where it has pleased the Lord we should enjoy the sacred privilege for so many years to labour. Since our return, in the little we have been enabled to do, that privilege has been immensely enhanced. We can by no means express what we feel in once again being permitted to occupy the pulpit, and minister in His great and ever-adorable name!

We wish the sum and substance of our closing testimony to be—JESUS! JESUS! The Lord being our Helper, we hope more than ever to keep before us the dying message of our dear early companion, J. D. LANE. "Tell him," said he, in allusion to a certain Nonconformist minister of his acquaintance, "to preach CHRIST, and the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England." Now, this is what we want more than ever to be our key-note—CHRIST! CHRIST! CHRIST! "CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED!" The Lord, in His great mercy, make this increasingly our theme during the little residue of our time-state!

With respect to our proposed thank-offering, on account of the Lord's goodness and mercy, in permitting us to return to this parish, we gratefully acknowledge the annexed contributions towards the three-fold objects we proposed, namely—the *Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society*; the *Printers' Pension, Almshouse, and Orphan Corporation* (Almshouse Extension Fund); and the *New Parish Church at Hornsey*. In reference to the proposed gift of twenty-five thousand copies of the penny edition of "*Walks and Talks with Jesus*," the sale of which was undertaken by Miss COL INGRIDGE, we are happy to state that, among other sums paid her for the purchase of the said twenty-five thousand copies, was one of £20 by a gentleman who did not wish his name to be published. Hence, our young friend is making good progress with her work, and will doubtless secure the £100 for the building fund of Hornsey Parish Church. We take this opportunity of stating, that we have seen in print a lengthy letter in a local journal, complaining of the want of adapting the services of the said church to the customs of the times. Of course this want, in the writer's estimation, is to us a great recommendation; and we trust that the Rector and all connected with the new building will adhere to the good old lines.

Our readers will recollect what we stated in regard to our mind being so identified with Hornsey. It is in its churchyard lie the mouldering remains of the entire of our first family, with the exception of the dear motherless boy who was spared, like his father, to become

a minister of the Gospel. Both (casually, as men say) met at that grave some thirty to forty years after standing there so bereaved and broken-hearted. It was by that grave, moreover, as resorted to from time to time, that the Lord lovingly diverted us from our loss by the hope that He would permit us some day to enter His blessed and privileged service. Hence the spot cannot but be sacred to us, and hence our wish to connect with it our thank-offering; to send from it, far and wide, the voice of loving counsel, in regard to salvation matters, which the booklet, "*Walks and Talks with Jesus*," contains.

With respect to the annexed list of subscriptions, we beg distinctly to state that the express wish of each contributor is carefully kept in view, as to which of the objects their gift is to be applied—whether to the *Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society*; the *Printers' Pension, Almshouse, and Orphan Corporation* (Almshouse Extension); or the *Hornsey New Parish Church Building Fund*. Here, then, are the names and amounts contributed—Mrs. Knight, £1; Mrs. Gardner, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 6s. 8d.; Ditto, 6s. 8d.; Mrs. Ballard, 9s.; Mrs. Hibberd, 2s. 6d.; Mr. W. Bennett, £4 5s.; Miss Smith, 10s.; A Lover of Truth, £1; Miss Williams, £1 12s.; From Halifax, 2s.; Miss Robson, £5; Miss Wilkins, £1; Mrs. Cammell, £5; Mr. J. Summers, 10s.; Mrs. Baldwin, £1; Mrs. Byles, £1; Mrs. Walker, £20; Mr. J. Emberson, 2s. 6d.; Miss Ann Fryer, 2s.; G. T. N., 5s.; Miss Bullock, 2s.; M. R. B., 2s. 6d.; Mr. G. Welchman, 10s.; P. Rowayn, 2s.; Dr. Rose, £5. The foregoing are up to date, December 21st.

It has occurred to us that, as possibly some of the readers of this Magazine may not have seen or had their attention called to our proposed thank-offering, as given in a previous Number, it would be well for us to here restate what our proposal was. It was, then, that we should give twenty-five thousand copies of the Penny Edition of "*Walks and Talks with Jesus*" to the three aforementioned objects—that is, the *Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society*; the *Printers' Pension, Almshouse, and Orphan Corporation* (Almshouse Extension); and the *Hornsey New Parish Church*. In order to do this, we asked for contributions from our readers, so that we might supply the said seventy-five thousand copies at cost price, which would be £1 10s. per thousand. By the friends of the different Institutions aforementioned undertaking their sale at the publishing price, the funds in the three several cases would be augmented by £100 each.

The booklet itself contains 128 pages, and the fifty thousand now passing through the press are supplied with a cover. They pass through the penny post with an additional sheet of notepaper.

As already stated in the proposal, our great wish and aim has been, not merely to augment the funds of the different Institutions, but to make it a means of thus circulating the truth far and wide, so that the simple Gospel may thus be proclaimed, and the deadly errors which are being poured forth from the press like a mighty torrent may be counteracted, in so far as it may please the Most High to smile upon human instrumentality. Again and again have we, through these pages and by other channels, expressed our deep-felt responsibility of the talent entrusted to us, in connection with the press. Hence our intense desire to use that talent whilst yet entrusted to us; and hence, likewise, our

most ardent wish that the little residue of our time-state should be marked by additional effort to leave behind us that which shall speak for the Lord, and spread far and wide, when we shall have passed away.

Dear reader, bear with us whilst we affectionately urge you to consider these things. Oh, be it yours and ours to "work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh [and oh, *how soon! how soon!*] when no man can work." The testimonies which (especially of late) we have received of the special blessing attendant upon the perusal of "*Walks and Talks with Jesus*," make us additionally anxious to extend its circulation by every means in our power.

Readers, come and help us, and who can tell the blessing that may follow?
THE EDITOR.

GOSPEL BOOK MISSION TO THE ARMY AND NAVY.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR DR. DOUDNEY,—We have received from your valuable Printing Nursery twenty-five "Looks To and From Jesus," twenty-five "Walks and Talks with Jesus," twenty-one "Victory through the Blood," and fifty sets of Booklets, for which please accept our sincerest thanks. They have come in just when wanted for our Christmas parcels to our dear sailor and soldier friends.

Please ask the readers of your valuable Christian Magazine for their prayers and sympathies on my behalf, as it has pleased Him to lay His afflicting, yet loving, hand on me, necessitating the calling in of the doctor. I am very thankful to say that my sons are improving.

FROM A WORKER.

"Please accept my sincere thanks for the parcel of tracts you so kindly sent me to Newhaven, Sussex.

"As the work there is finished, they were sent on to me here, and I have used them for my work in London. While writing, please let me thank you for all your kindness in the past. The large number of books and tracts dear Mr. BRIDER sent me were a boon indeed. How many were led to the Saviour by these silent messengers eternity alone will reveal. Numbers of them went forth in various cabins and fore-castles over the boundless ocean, and were well used, as the library bags testified on the ships' return. Others were given to the navvies and fishermen. and it was a most pleasing sight to see the men leave their dinners and run for a booklet or tract, and then to sit and read until their hour was up. I pray that God may richly and abundantly bless your work for Him."

FROM A SOLDIER OF THE "QUEEN'S BAYS," INDIA.

"I cannot thank you enough for your kindness to me in sending such a nice parcel of books. The small ones are thought a lot of by all, and I hope, please God, they will do a lot of good. They are so handy to put in one's pocket, and, when there is a spare minute or two, to read; and in so doing it draws us near to Him who is ever

watching over us, for He is ever near, though we are at times far away.

"You will see by my address that I am again on the plains. We have a very strong band of Christian young men in this station. I am glad to say we are looking forward to much good work being done this season. Please remember us in your prayers, asking that a great blessing may rest upon this band of Christian soldiers, and believe me to remain,

"A BROTHER IN CHRIST."

FROM A TOWN MISSIONARY.

"Accept best thanks for the large box of truth."

FROM A CORPORAL IN THE ARMY WHO SERVED IN EGYPT.

"Thank you for the leaflets, &c., you have forwarded to me for some time past. I have now, as you see, returned home, and would be glad if you will send the parcel to —, Cairo, Egypt, instead of to myself.

"Yours in Jesus,
"————."

FROM A CHAPLAIN.

"We received from you a small parcel of literature the other day. We are very grateful to you for kindly sending the same. There is a great demand for old books and magazines here, and often we are hardly able to supply the crews of smacks asking for bags of books to take to sea, so that any contributions, small or large, are welcome.

"With thanks, believe me,
"————."

A FLASH FROM A LIGHTHOUSE.

"I am glad to see by your Report that you are able to still hold on in your work, and trust the supply may not fail you to hinder your work, which is such an acceptable one to so many hungry minds far and near. May the Lord's sustaining hand be towards you in providence and in grace. Accept of Christian love and best wishes from

"Yours in Jesus,"
"————."

FROM AN EARNEST WORKER IN IRELAND.

"Just a line to thank you so much for the monthly packet of tracts. The young men of the army like them so very much. I think they are very good and appropriate reading. I feel so thankful for your kindness and thoughtfulness in sending them, as I come in contact with so many, in visiting the hospital and barrack-rooms, to tell the dear young men what the Saviour has done for me. I should be much obliged if you would send me another Christmas card.

"Hoping the dear Lord will bless the work 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,' and to Him be all the praise,"
"————."

This beautifully got up scrap-book is destined for a Soldiers' Home in South Africa. We shall feel deeply thankful to all Jesus' disciples for help in any way they can, either in books or money, &c.

With grateful feelings, I remain, dear Dr. DOUDNEY, yours very faithfully in the service of the King of kings,

ANN E. BRIDER.

Old Gaol Mission Hall, Salisbury, December 14th, 1889.

COMMENTS.

When reading, a few days since, in one of the publications just issued, of the vast amount of sceptical and impure literature that is now so continually despatched to foreign climes, especially to India, we thought of the great importance of the BRIDER and similar Missions. By such means, it is hoped that the evil may, in some degree, be counteracted by the efforts thus to sow the good seed, and to bring the truth, as set forth in the sacred Word, before the minds of our poor, fellow-fallen sinners. Our own mind has been additionally imbued with this feeling, in consequence of several most solemn events having been very recently brought before us. One case, for example, that we have visited this very day, is one of the saddest description, as appertaining to a young man in whom, when we occasionally met him, some years ago, we felt the most lively interest. Evil associations, we presume, were the first steps to a course that has just ended, alas! in the most hapless and hopeless way! How true is that, as well as all other Scriptures—"The way of transgressors is hard"! "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death."

THE EDITOR.

"FAINT, YET PURSUING."

(JUDGES viii. 4.)

How fitting and appropriate are the words contained in the Scriptures of truth, when God the Holy Spirit applies them! No Scripture is by private interpretation. The children of God are ever learning "here a little, and there a little; line upon line, and precept upon precept."

The life of the believer in Jesus is a series of paradoxes, therefore, as he journeys homeward—heavenward—he still finds it a "narrow way."

"False lights delude the eyes,
And lead the steps astray;
That traveller treads the surest here
That seldom sees his way."

After much experience, he is ready to exclaim with the same poet—

"Lord, what a riddle is my soul!
Alive when wounded, dead when whole!
Fondly I flee from pain, yet ease
Cannot content, nor pleasure please."

Paul the Apostle has sketched a series of paradoxes in the strongest outlines. In his address to the Corinthians, he thus describes them—"As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. vi. 9, 10). Unaccountable as this may appear to the

carnal mind, the truth is literally fulfilled, more or less, in the history of the living family of God in all ages. They are *unknown*, despised, and frequently oppressed by the world, yet *well known* and highly esteemed in the sight of God. In themselves and in all their interests they seem to be dying to the eyes of men, yet in the midst of all they not only live, but live everlastingly secure from all real danger, and are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." And though chastened by the tender affection of a Father who is too wise to mistake their interests, and too gracious to be unkind in His appointments concerning them, yet they know nothing of those rebukes of His displeasure by which He condemns "the unbelieving world." Men of the world are apt to suppose that believers are always gloomy and sorrowful, whereas, in reality, they are always "rejoicing in the hope of God." In their own eyes nothing, yet, having Jesus, they may be truly said to "possess all things."

Many have thought that among the enjoyments of heaven, a portion of them will be to look back and trace the wonderful path of grace in which the Lord hath brought them, amidst all the difficulties and discouragements by the way—the preventions by reason of His love in the days of their unregeneracy; the display of the Omnipotent Arm that kept them so unremittently before the work of grace was formed in their hearts. It is now pleasing to mark down the many instances of His pardoning mercy, both before and since, in the numberless transgressions and departures they have been guilty of, by which the walk of the most upright amongst them might be traced.

I often think, "What a volume of His merciful forbearance would my undeservings form!" They are so numerous that I should be at a loss to know where and how to begin. What a mass of particulars! But the whole result proves one thing—His distinguishing mercy towards me. "Who has *saved us*, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, [oh, no!] but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before* the world began."

Yes, dear reader, you were saved *before* you were called, according to His eternal purpose. Yes, the conversion of all depends upon the sovereign Spirit who worketh where and how He will (at least, *my* Bible teaches me it is so).

Now, what is the truth? Listen. *Election, particular redemption*, and personal conversion by the *Holy Ghost*, and the truth of each and all these cardinal doctrines carried out *practically* and *experimentally* by the power of God in every believer's soul, and by which the Christian stands distinguished from the whole scheme of Popish and Arminian errors. And it is our mercy further to know that every *elect* and every *redeemed* man must be "born again" of the Holy Spirit *at the set time of favour*. The work of God is absolute, therefore there can be no doubt about the conversion of souls; and the personal and experimental test of this will be the cry of the soul. This knowledge in our own hearts urges all who savingly know it to obey the Master's command—as positive now as it was in the Apostolic age—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every* creature." It is the Holy Ghost alone who can and does apply it to the hearts of His own prepared people.

God many times saves His people by sufferings, and brings them to the shore on the planks of a broken ship, and makes that which was the occasion of their loss to be the means of their safety. Our Saviour usually delighted to choose such that had not the least pretence to merit—Matthew, Zacchæus, Saul. What was that woman that He must needs go out of His way to convert? A harlot and idolater, for the Samaritans are reported to have had a mixed worship, and hateful to the Jews. She continued in her adultery at the very time Christ spoke to her, yet He makes her a monument of His grace, and not only so, but the first preacher of the Gospel to her neighbours—“Is not this the Christ?” Was any more defiled than Mary Magdalene? “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils,” and turns her into a weeping saint. The Canaanitish woman sprung from a cursed stock, hateful to God. She comes as a dog, but returns as a child. When He came to finish His last act, He saves a thief on the cross, who is at the very gate of hell, ready to be thrust in by Satan.

Yes, it is among the unknown to men whom God calls by His grace—“not many mighty, not many noble”; but He chooses “the foolish, the poor, the weak things of the world, and things which are not, that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. i. 27—29).

The worst of sinners take heaven by violence, while the proud Pharisees lose by their own righteousness. From the sweet experience of those who have gone before in the Christian path, we gather therefrom perpetual instruction and consolation; but if we want a closer experience still, it is in our own life, if your forgetful heart does not lose sight of the multitude of instances which testify of His unremitting care and watchfulness over you. I think it is well to accustom ourselves to study this more. The view of past evidences of God’s faithfulness would be sure to strengthen our future dependence upon Him, and prepare us, under His blessed influence, against any of the remaining trials with which His providence may see fit to exercise us upon in the yet unfinished period of our present life. How apt we are to be cast down, and say, “Could not God have spared us this trouble?” Yet, when we reflect upon His past mercies and deliverances, we must come to the conclusion that “all is for the best,” and will “work together for our good”; and though “faint, yet pursuing,” we may rest assured that all will be right in the end, although new difficulties and discouragements arise unexpectedly at every step. Such is the spiritual warfare of the believer. Whatever sharp encounters you may have already gone through, depend upon it, more yet remain; and you can have no better testimony, as a true soldier of Jesus Christ, on your banner, “Faint, yet pursuing.”

What a variety there is in the believer’s experience of the various methods by which grace is brought into exercise! You may be brought, like one of old, to say, “I shall certainly perish by the hand of the enemy.” How many whom we have been acquainted with have been bowed down with soul-distress from the various impediments met with in their path, that their hearts may be discouraged! But there is still “balm in Gilead, and a Physician there.” The Holy Ghost can and does

administer relief in such cases, and every faithful follower may arrive at the same conclusion as the Apostle. Though he can do nothing by himself, yet he can say, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

All that can be said of those who are strangers to these conflicts is—they know nothing of religion who know nothing of these workings. I am not naming any trial in particular, but I maintain that those who are totally unacquainted with the conflicts which arise between grace and corruption, they know nothing of the religion of Jesus Christ. They may be at peace and rest, but it is a false peace. "They are not in trouble," as the Psalmist says, "as other men, and they have no bands in their death" (Psa. lxxiii. 4, 5).

It is our blessedness to know that, however situated the true believer may be in his spiritual warfare, he is yet pursuing "the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and is enabled to hold on amidst all difficulties through the grace of Christ, which is sufficient for him, and whose strength is made perfect in his weakness. May the dear Lord refresh the weary, and comfort the faint, and so renew us from day to day. A contemplation of this subject is humbling to pride, but when our eyes are opened, we see the old man, though crucified, is not dead. We must still expect opposition from this source; and the more we feel and consider it, we see with what weakness and languor the believer is introduced into spiritual life. It is then we know something of "the bruised reed." Indeed, it is a fit emblem for illustration, as it cannot stand of itself. Yes, "the smoking flax," which hath no flame, and but little heat. Such are the characters the Word of God gives of the renewed nature, and in such a state of weakness is the believer introduced into the renewed life. It must be so, for it is in creature weakness that divine strength is perfected.

"Thus up from the desert she goes,
Sustained both in fire and in flood;
Victorious to vanquish her foes,
And all through the Lamb and His blood.

"By faith she's enabled to view
Fair Canaan's delectable plains;
And faint, yet her course shall pursue,
When on her Beloved she leans."

You who know the various exercises of the soul, in the struggles of grace with corruption—like the Shulamite of old, of the two armies in the uninterrupted skirmishes—can best describe the faintness therefrom.

"In Christ he is perfect, and free from all guilt,
Yet in himself evils are both seen and felt."

And it is our mercy to know—

"For though sin and devils against us unite,
'Tis Christ fights our battles, and puts them to flight."

If you know the plague of your own heart—and that you must do, if you are the happy partaker of grace—you will find plenty of opposition, both from within as well as without, and at every step the enemy

will dispute with you inch by inch all through the way, and you will be found crying out, with the Apostle, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And when you have passed through the season of deadness of soul—no freedom in prayer—a silence at the mercy-seat which deeply-exercised believers groan under. These seasons are well known to the faithful.

Have you not found, my brother, that Satan hath availed himself of those dark seasons to harass the soul with temptations? When God withdraws His light, and does not shine upon the soul, and darkness is brought upon the mind, the enemy creeps forth and adds to our gloom ten-fold darkness by his suggestions, as to make you doubt if you really are an object of divine favour, and perhaps deeply wonder, by reason of fresh contracted guilt, and prompted to say, "Surely the Lord would not look on all this while and be silent, while Satan thus triumphs over me, if I really were a subject of grace." I believe these are the constant exercises amongst the experience of the believer. What those feelings and faintings are, are better conceived than described, for "the heart knoweth its own bitterness."

How many are the avenues by which distress creeps into the life of the believer, from the dark and mysterious dealings of God with His people, would be difficult to ascertain, and would too much enlarge this paper. The trial of faith in a gracious soul often produces sorrow of heart. The soul must be sifted, but grace will live through all of it, and thus convince us that divine strength is manifested in creature weakness. And if these important lessons be taught you by the Holy Ghost in the experimental teachings of your own heart, which is the best of all schools, your sharpest exercises will ultimately prove your sweetest comforts, for what furnishes subject for prayer will lead to, and produce cause for, praise.

Faint you may be, but *lost* you never can be! How shall any sink under whom are the "everlasting arms"? May this sweet promise be our comfort—"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing"; and that, however "faint" you may be, you are still "pursuing" against all opposition, for God the Holy Spirit will be sure to carry on in the heart of the truly regenerated believer the work of grace amidst a thousand difficulties. However low the life of God in the soul is, remember one thing—it *can never be lost*. Though apparently dying, it is never dead. Yes, believer, rest assured of this. Jesus sees your situation—knows under what you groan. He beholds the power and malice of the enemy, therefore His grace, and not your strength, becomes the cause of your security.

"And when the fight's ended the crown thou shalt wear,
And glory immortal with Christ thou shalt share."

Lee.

G. A. N.

COMMENTS.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that the portion upon which our friend and brother has so truthfully written, was that upon which we dwelt in July, 1840. "*Faint, yet pursuing*," was our second subject after becoming connected with this Magazine. We cannot contemplate the fact without adoring wonder and grateful astonishment—that we

should have "fainted" ere a second Number of the work was issued at our hand, and yet that we should have been led on and on to the present moment—month after month, and year after year, till we have well-nigh completed our half-century! Oh, the goodness and mercy—the grace and forbearance—the tenderness and faithfulness—of our God!

Well does our correspondent testify that it is good for us to look back in review of all the way in which the Lord has led us, and to bear our own personal witness to what He has been and what He has done, the which we may sum up in the expressive lines of the poet—

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
Once I was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see."

Well, likewise, may we add—

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee."

THE EDITOR.

Reviews and Notices of Books.

The Great Rubric (John iv. 24). *Helps and Hindrances to Spiritual Worship*. London: *English Churchman Office*.

THIS halfpenny pamphlet consists of a paper read by Mr. JAMES INSKIP, at the eleventh Annual Conference of the Evangelical Protestant Union, held in Manchester, October 17th, 1889. It is a most telling address, and ought, at the present crisis of the Church and nation, to have a wide-spread circulation through the length and breadth of the kingdom. Mr. INSKIP has the peculiar power of coming at once to his subject, and, in the most forcible way, striking home to its very core. There is no waste of words—no going round and about matters, in a shilly-shally, easy-going, peace-to-all kind of style, just to tickle the ear and suit the taste of this miserable, compromising age. In a respectful, yet strong, plain, matter-of-fact way, he dives beneath the surface, explores to the very depths, and brings forth the old-fashioned, well-tried divinity that has its warrant in, and is well supported as its just and equitable standard by, the Word of the living God. No man adheres more closely to the divine counsel than does the man whom we are proud to regard and esteem as one of our oldest Bristol friends. That counsel is, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20).

Eight Tracts Assorted. Wilts: Mrs. A. Bennett, Broughton Gifford, Melksham.

AN admirable series. Precious truth presented in a small compass, and worthy a wide-spread circulation.

The Sectarian Idolatry of the Roman Apostasy. A Lecture delivered by Mr. I. BURNHAM PEGG, Bath House College, Twickenham, by request of the Executive of the Sunday School, Devonshire Road, Greenwich. London: Robert Banks and Son.

As written by one who has given much thought and considerable research to the subject upon which he treats, this work is well worthy of a close reading, especially in the times and under the circumstances in which our lot is cast. The minds of the rising generation cannot be too deeply imbued with the facts here brought before them.

The Gentleness of Christ, illustrated by His Teaching, Training, and Perfecting of the Apostles Peter and Andrew, James and John. By M. S., Author of "Chosen, Chastened, Crowned"; "Biblical Geography in a Nutshell," &c. London: W. Wileman; Dublin: G. Herbert.

A GLORIOUS theme, enlarged upon by one well instructed in the Word, and which she calls to her aid in the most edifying and encouraging manner. This little work cannot but be a favourite with every lover of the sacred Volume.

Crosses, and Crucifixes, and Musical Services. A Sermon on Spiritual Worship. By the Rev. A. METCALFE, Vicar of Gorsley with Clifford's Mesne, Gloucestershire. Ross: William Hill.

A CLEAR statement, on the one hand, showing the pretentious and unscriptural character of all image and idolatrous worship; and, on the other hand, in what real devotion and true spiritual worship consist. The sermon is well deserving a wide circulation. It is published at the low price of three-halfpence.

Signals for the Voyage of Life. London: Religious Tract Society.

A NOVELTY! Ship-signals spiritualized. The designs are well executed, and the poems interspersed throughout the whole, tasteful and fraught with the best of teaching, as bearing upon the Scriptures so aptly chosen as signals to life-voyagers.

NEW YEAR'S MOTTO, 1890.—"WATCH!"

(MATTHEW xxv. 6.)

ART thou ready—watching, waiting,

For the midnight cry?

Is there oil within thy vessel,
And a full supply?

Is thy lamp but dimly burning,

Or with constant flame?

Looking for thy Lord's returning,
Trusting in His name?

Art thou going forth in spirit,

Waiting at His feet?

Thou His kingdom shalt inherit,
Made to serve Him meet.

Leicester, December, 1889.

Then, altho' the Bridegroom tarries,
And perchance thou sleep,
Wearied at His long delaying,
Constant watch to keep—

When the midnight cry ariseth,
Thou shalt hear His voice;

Lo! the heavenly Bridegroom cometh!
All ye saints rejoice!

For with Him in to the wedding

Ye anon shall pass,
Knowing well the heavenly watch-
word—

Saved by sovereign grace!

S. S.



I am yours Truly
Francis Poole